

RURAL COMMUNITY MOVEMENT IN LITHUANIA FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENT

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After Lithuania regained the independence, the state confronted with many political, social, economic, and cultural challenges, which led to changes of norms, values, forms of activities and consciousness of citizens. Changing situation led to the marginalization of rural areas, the rural community movement raised. The main reason for the rising movement was dissatisfaction about current situation and willingness to change it using communities' resources. This movement is allied to new social movements, which arose in 1960 in Western world. For the creation of post-industrial rural areas the paradigm of innovative, sustainable, inclusive rural development determines that new theories, explaining transformations, are necessary. The aim of this research is to identify correspondence of Lithuanian rural community movement to new social movement theory. Scientific literature, related documents, and secondary statistical data were analysed, the theoretical framework of six dimensions was created and applied. The research results confirmed that rural community in Lithuania is to be viewed as a new social movement with some features of traditional movements. These findings may be useful for increasing the awareness about social transformations in rural areas.

Key words new social movement, rural community movement, Lithuania.

JEL Codes: L31, O21, R58.

1. Introduction

In 1960s new social movements (NSMs), with an aim to attain particular social goals, underlying new values, started to emerge alongside traditional movements (TMs). TMs and NSMs are usually described as an urban phenomenon, but rural residents, acting together in collective forms, also seek to evoke changes in the quality of living in their rural areas. Mooney (2000) states that there is no reason why urban places should have a greater tendency to form NSMs, only type, course could differ compared to the rural places, concerned to the specific urban or rural everyday life demands. According Woods (2008) the changes in power structure of rural society created the space for mobilization of NSMs that are actively involved in the processes of the re-making rural society.

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According to Paulauskas (2004), manifestation of NSMs are very rare in Lithuania. The first movement, with features of a NSM emerged in 1988 was related to the environment protection. Until 2004 the Lithuanian Green Movement and Lithuanian feminist movement were identifiable as the only examples corresponding to the features of a NSM. Considering social movements rising in Lithuanian rural areas, rural community movement was a response to the post-socialist crisis in agriculture, with the aim to cope with the growing economic, political and social marginalization of the rural population Juška (2005). The rural residents started their action with a purpose to protect their right to live comfortable, culturally active life with appropriate infrastructure, to enhance the needs of community members and to bother about them by their self, to make rural areas an attractive place to live. The question, therefore, is whether actions of rural communities do form a NSM or are they still attributable to the TMs?

Social phenomenon of NSM was broadly analysed by Klandermans (1986), Diani (1992), Melucci (1995), Pichardo (1997), who researched basis assumptions of NSM theoretical approach. Simsek (2004) analysed NSMs in comparison with TMs, Wiewiorka (2005), Touraine (1981), analyzed the history of social movements and a place of NSMs in it. Fuchs (2006), Saunders (2007) analysed conditions required social phenomenon to call a as a movement. The significance of social movements to rural studies and theoretical insights has been made by Woods (2008). Gorchach (2008) analysed three cases corresponding to different types of rural movements: “dance-house” movement in Hungary, Greenpeace in Czech Republic, and animal welfare movement in rural Poland. Theoretical frameworks on social movements were provided by Lithuanian researches Paulauskas (2004) and Žukaitė (2016). Some attempts to conceptualize rural community movement in Lithuania were made by Juška (2005, 2010) but they were based on historical perspective instead of social movement approach.

The aim of the study is to identify correspondence of Lithuanian rural community movement to new social movement theory.

The methods of the investigation. To achieve the aim of the article, scientific literature review is applied. Analysis of related documents, statistical data about rural community activity results from National Paying Agency under the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania (NPA), Statistics Lithuania webpage, The Centre for LEADER Programme and Agricultural Training are used.

2. Theoretical framework: features of NSMs vs. TMs

The NSM approach is one of the dominant theory in social movement researches. The NSMs emerged in 1960 and underlined the new quality of life, new values and rise as the reaction to political and societal events (Fuchs, 2006). They could emerge only in open, free civic and post-industrial society at the same time marking the maturity of the society (Paulauskas, 2004). Although the emergency of NSMs is possible only in post-industrial society, at the same time it marks the maturi-

ty of the society, certain level of social consciousness and material well-being. There are numerous definitions of NSMs. Most commonly used and quoted definition by Diani (1992), defines NSMs as networks of informal interactions, between a plurality of individuals, groups or associations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity. They emerge in civic society, not in a politic arena, and seek to influence the norms of society, to stimulate the activity of society and the consciousness of people (Žukaitė, 2016).

Offe (1985) compares traditional and new social movements according to actors, themes, values and forms of acting. The *actors* of TMs rely on established political codes or on the socioeconomic codes, on socio economic groups, struggling primarily for their material interests, the actors of NSMs rely on groups and individuals, gathering around various themes on behalf of diverse sections of society. The main *themes* of TMs are economic growth, income distribution, social security, and social control, meanwhile NSMs attention is directed towards maintenance of peace, environment, human rights, cultural and ethnic heritage. *Values* for TMs are freedom, security of private consumption, material advancement, for NSMs – individual autonomy, identity, decentralization, self-government. TMs are based on formal organizations, large-scale representative unions, where majority rules, NSMs *major forms of acting* are based on internal informality, minimum vertical and horizontal differentiation, decentralization, small-scale, locally based groups (Offe, 1985).

Another difference, identified by Wiewiorka (2005), is less clearly defined social adversary. Unlike the traditional, working-class, movement, whose social adversary was relatively clear and associated with leading and dominant actor, the NSMs have only inchoate, unstable representations of their adversary. The NSMs conflict with adversary is impersonal, distant. Paulauskas (2004) perceives difference in a way of goal seeking – NSMs, compared to their traditional counterparts, uses exclusively peaceful, non-violent measures.

The most famous examples of NSMs are ecology, environment, anti-racist movement, protection of human, women, homosexual, disable people rights, anti-globalization, peace movements (Klandermans, 1986; Diani, 1992). In general NSM are qualitatively different (Pichardo, 1997). They are as catalyst for changes in civic society, when society does not agree with existing reality anymore and aspire to change it. The generalization of literature sources (Melucci, 1995; Klandermans, 1986; Pichardo, 1997; Paulauskas, 2004; Simsek; 1980; Diani, 1992; Fuchs, 2006; Saunders, 2007; Wiewiorka, 2005) allowed systematizing and distinguishing main common features (table) of NSMs which were chosen for further research.

Table. Features of NSMs

Feature	Description
Quality of life and life-style concerns	NSMs emphasize life-style concerns, culture and self-expression. The goal of NSMs is to underline the quality of life, not material gains and the redistribution of material resources
Activity is based on a common identity	Identity claims are the most distinctive feature of NSMs. They seek to disseminate ideas and values they advocate rather than to cause any particular social or political change. The activity on NSMs is based on a common identity and shared values.
Transnationality	NSMs are usually transnational and global. They act not only within the country but outstep the boundaries of the state.
Networking	NSMs are based on networking. Organizations can be considered to be the part of the movement if they are networked to other organizations that engage in similar issues.
The movement rises from the grass-roots activities.	Social movement has been associated with emerging grass-roots action which function through small scale, locally based groups. It is voluntary and enthusiastic initiatives which raises public consciousness about particular issues or try to put a particular problem on the political agenda. This grass-root action is seen as empowerment of community.
Origin – response to marginalization.	NSMs as protest from the groups affected by modernization and left behind.

This theoretical framework of six dimensions was applied for further analysis of rural community movement in Lithuania.

3. Rural community movement correspondence to NSM theory

The first rural community was created in 1994. Its goals were directed towards mobilization of local residents to deal with their social, cultural, political and economic problems (Juška, 2005). According to The Centre for LEADER Programme and Agricultural Training, in the beginning of 2018 in Lithuania were 1982 communities which united more than 104 thousand members. The number of community members varied from 1 to 586, and on average there were 57 members per community. Rural communities were most widespread in Kaunas municipality (85 communities), and the least in Birštonas (8 communities). According to data provided by Statistics Lithuania, 0.7 million of adults (18 years and older) lived in rural areas in the 2018, and rural communities united at least 13.8 percent of them. It rather resembles the documented number of community members as more people usually participate in community activities without official membership. Rural communities strengthens civil society, civic participation and responsibility, changes the quality of life related to infrastructure, stimulates the growth of the third sector, strengthens social capital. In the Programming period of 2007–2013 using LEADER support 3375 projects were implemented in rural areas and the most of the applicants for local development projects were rural communities.

Further analysis presents the main findings of comparison between rural community activities in Lithuania and NSMs within constructed theoretical framework of six dimensions.

The goal of the movement – new quality of life. The main objective of the development of rural communities, their participation in the local action groups (LAGs), and using of the EU LEADER support measures is to change the quality of life in rural areas, addressing emerging issues that cannot be solved at governmental level. Rural communities seek to participate actively in processes related to the improvement of their living environment.

According to the results of survey with 2004 rural communities, carried out by Luobikienė and Butkevičienė (2010), the vast majority of community leaders indicated the creation of distinctive Lithuanian village as the main goal raised by rural communities. On the hand, Mačiulytė (2013) states that the main goal of communities is to restore social relationship between rural residents through joint activities, and to solve local problems simultaneously.

One of the questions of Žiliukaitė's research (2007) was to analyse the tasks that were raised by the communities. Communities most often mentioned the task of resident mobilization for joint activities, and development of community spirit. In the second place, the task of solving community's economic, social, protection and other problems was emphasized. In this case it definitely indicated the presence of economic goals among rural communities, and they are eliminated by the NSM theory as a feature inherent to the traditional social movements.

Despite the economic goals rural communities set, according implemented projects they has implemented activities related both to economic and non-economic objectives. In Lithuania up until 2014 the priority was to improve the quality of life (Mačiulytė, 2013), and the vast majority of projects in 2007–2013 were designed to improve infrastructure or organize events.

Another fact which raises doubts about rural community movement being the new one is the insight of Nefas (2008) that part of these communities were established artificially with the sole purpose to receive EU support. Such a statement shows that rural communities correspond to the analysed features of NSMs only partly, because alongside the quality of life, new norms, and values, economic goals also took place.

The movement is transnational. Rural community movement is inherent not only in Lithuania but also in other countries of the world. Such issues as rural ageing, de-agrarization, remoteness, unemployment or rural poverty are not limited to the boundaries of a separate state but are rather common in many countries. Lithuanian communities are directly connected with rural communities in the rest of the EU that are involved in the implementation of CAP policies and have the opportunity to reach common goals. Therefore, social movements oriented towards these goals cross state boundaries and are transnational in their nature. According NPA data in programing period of 2007–2013 38 transnational cooperation project among rural communities

were implemented. The rural communities from Italy, Latvia, Poland, Finland, Estonia, Sweden, Czech, Slovakia and Austria as partners were chosen. Entrepreneurship, crafts, cultural and historical heritage was fostered, and new services were created in the countryside. A number of projects have been devoted to the employment of young people, the promotion of national culture and traditions. In 2014–2020 period 4 transnational cooperation projects are certified.

The basis for mobilization – common identity. The mobilization of NSM members is based not on class struggles, but rather on a common identity. Members of rural communities identify themselves through the categories of rurality: the rural surrounding, culture, area, rural way of living, with the protecting and defencing rurality from the outside threat or the regulation of rural space. Woods (2008) states that social movements develop as the response to localized conflicts over regulation or development of rural space. In Lithuanian case, this conflict originates from the underdevelopment of rural areas, of paying scarce attention to rural issues and abandonment of rural policy.

Another aspect proving the existence of common rural identity is that many rural dwellers are united by living together for a long time, new members are very rare and the communities are quite closed as well as exclusive. Moreover, most of rural residents perceive themselves as community members demonstrating their strong sense of shared identity (Luobikienė, Butkevičienė, 2010).

Due to the unsuccessful rural reforms, growing unemployment, poverty, social problems, and farmer's protests, negative image of the rural areas was being formed in mass media. The content analysis of major daily newspaper disclosed a negative depiction of rural areas as socially and morally degradation and dependent on social welfare (Juška, 2010). Rural communities attempted to generate a new sense of identity rejecting the image of degrading rural population. Activists declared to create a self-aware, active and inclusive rural community (Juška, 2010).

Activity based on networking. Networking is described as sharing of ideas, information, knowledge, and experience between participants, who seek common goals. Formally, rural communities in Lithuania belong to a wider net of communities – all communities in every municipality are united under the umbrella of LAG. Union of the Lithuanian Rural Communities is the next level organization that acts as the network of participants and unites 1341 rural communities with purpose to strengthen the partnership net. The European Network for Rural Development unites all LAG's and endows platform for networking.

Rural communities share knowledge, examples of good practices, and raise questions and seek to find solution by organizing Rural Parliament. They make connections with communities from different municipalities or even abroad. It was estimated that 89 percent of rural communities had interacted with other communities, 73 percent of them had held meetings with other communities few times a year, and 44 percent of communities had been engaged in the same activity. (Žiliukaitė, 2007). This confirms the collaboration between rural communities and the collaborations is one of the essential features that signal the relevance to NSM.

NSM is a grass-roots activity. The activity of rural population and creation of communities is based on a “bottom up” approach. The connection among people in an active empowered group is based exclusively on voluntarism, self-help, willingness to influence situation. No individual gains any material profit or individual benefit, instead everyone is seeking for a common welfare. Right before and after the Lithuania entrance to the EU in 2004, rural communities had multiple possibilities to use EU funds to achieve their goals and this can be viewed as a “top down” approach when the government is artificially stimulating communities to act. On the other hand communities still analyze the needs of community, initialize researches and have freedom to adjust measures to their demands and they make use of that possibility. EU funds operate rather as an instrument for the achievement of rural communities’ goals in that context, and the activities of rural communities are in line with the characteristics of the NSMs.

NSM origin – response to marginalization. Until 1990, governmental organizations and chairs of large collective farms performed the role of institutions ensuring rural well-being in Lithuania. Authorities ruled almost all areas of life, individual initiatives were not encouraged but rather inhibited. The management of territories took place on a centralized “top-down” principle. In length of time, the community spirit was lost during the Soviet period (Treinys, 2002). After Lithuania independence restoration, the countryside has faced the degrading social, economic, cultural environment, degradation of infrastructure and service accessibility, turning rural population into a marginal group facing social exclusion. It was felt through the deterioration of living conditions, increasing poverty, high unemployment rates, and difficulties to access health care service, educational institutions, and abandoned infrastructure. The gap between rural and urban areas started to increase. Compared to urban dwellers, which were still completely served by the government institutions, rural residents had to take responsibility for the quality of their life and to make changes on their own initiative. The attention of government to the rural issues decreased dramatically impelling a new approach to emerge. It consisted of at least partial rural residents’ personal responsibility for their own well-being. Mačiulytė (2013) and Juška (2005) note that the active development of rural communities was a response to the marginalization of the rural population in Lithuania. As the government was incapable of solving the problems, rural residents started to unite into communities in order to change the quality of life and overcome the inactivity of the authorities to the problems of the rural population.

The analysis of NSMs features disclosed that rural community movement in Lithuania strongly correspond to them, with only one doubt about the goals proclaimed by the communities appearing. On the other hand, as Paulauskas (2004) considers, only the minority of modern movements correspond with the ideal type of NSM, while others share some kind of a mix between traditional and new move-

ments. In this case it could be stated that Lithuanian rural community movement is more of a NSM than not.

4. Conclusions

1. The rural community movement in Lithuania raised as the response to the changed political, social, cultural, and economic situation after the country regained its independence in 1990s. By acting rural communities restructure rural space, rearrange social relations, in the countryside. The rural community movement, by its origin, resembles the features of NSMs, which emerged in the Western countries in 1960s.

2. The analysis of NSMs features revealed that rural community movement in Lithuania strongly correspond to the characteristics of NSMs, with only one doubt about the goals proclaimed by the communities appearing. From the point of view of communities' goals, activities of rural communities could be named as forming a fragmented NSM, since some of the goals are economic, which is typical for traditional social movements.

3. The analysis of the rest of dimensions shows that the rural community movement implemented many projects contributing to the development of citizenship, volunteering, self-help principles, social capital development, and infrastructure in rural areas. Transnationalism, shared identity, networking, grass-roots activity and response to marginalisation of the rural community in Lithuania meet the features of NSMs.

4. As this research is one of the first attempts to analyse rural community movements from NSMs perspective, further researches are needed to extend the knowledge about NSMs and potential of them in rural areas.

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**KAIMO BENDRUOMENIŲ JUDĖJIMAS LIETUVOJE NAUJŲJŲ SOCIALINIŲ
JUDĖJIMŲ PERSPEKTYVOJE**

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Lietuvos agrarinės ekonomikos institutas

Pateikta 2018 08 01; priimta 2018 09 21

Santrauka

Atkurta Lietuvos valstybė susidūrė su daugybe politinių, socialinių, ekonominių, kultūrinių iššūkių, inspiravusių visuomenės normų, aktyvumo ir žmonių sąmoningumo kaitą. Kaip atsakas į besikeičiančią situaciją kaime, kilo kaimo bendruomenių judėjimas. Pagrindinis kylančio judėjimo tikslas – nepasitenkinimas esama padėtimi, noras keisti gyvenimo kokybę savo jėgomis, artimas Vakarų pasaulyje susiformavusiems naujesiems socialiniams judėjimams. Poindustrinio kaimo kūrimui svarbi inovatyvaus, tvaraus ir įtraukaus kaimo vystymo paradigma suponuoja, kad šiandienos kaimo tyrimams būtinos naujos kokybinės dimensijos ir teorijos, talkinančios aiškinant vykstančias transformacijas. Šio straipsnio tikslas – įvertinti Lietuvos kaimo bendruomenių judėjimo bruožų atitikimą naujesiems socialiniams judėjimams. Tikslui pasiekti remiantis pagrindiniais naujųjų socialinių judėjimų bruožais sukurtas ir pritaikytas šešių dimensijų modelis. Tyrimo rezultatai patvirtina daugumos kaimo bendruomenės veiklos bruožų panašumą su naujaisiais socialiniais judėjimais, inspiruojančiais gyvenimo kokybės pokyčius kaimo vietovėse. Tyrimo prieiga naudinga kaip nauja kokybinė dimensija, gilesniam vykstančių transformacijų kaime pažinimui.

Raktiniai žodžiai: kaimo bendruomenių judėjimai, Lietuva, naujieji socialiniai judėjimai.

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