

# The Modern State of Geographical Studies on the Problems of Peripherality in Ukraine

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## Abstract

*The modern state of geographical studies on problems of peripherality in Ukraine has been analyzed. Three main factors which influence the intensity of carrying out such studies were determined: the influence of Soviet and Russian geographical science; the connection between studies of peripherality and the scientific range of economic-depression problems; and the specific features of the modern development of Ukrainian human-geography. The general features of a study of this range of problems in Ukraine at the regional and global level; structural characteristics of center, semi-periphery and periphery; and approaches by Ukrainian scientists have been described in relation to the mechanisms of forming peripherality, along with methods for its study and criteria of selection.*

## 1 Background of geographical studies on the problems of peripherality in Ukraine

Ukrainian geographical science over the long-term developed within the limits of Soviet geography (except for geographical studies in the scientific environment of the Ukrainian Diaspora), being fully dependent upon it theoretically and methodologically. The important features of Soviet geography, as well as most directions of scientific knowledge in the former USSR, were: (1) excessive theoretisation of science, (2) insufficient knowledge of foreign geographical studies, (3) preference for studies on global and national levels to the detriment of the local level.

Despite Ukraine's twenty years of existence as an independent state and the considerable scientific achievements of modern Ukrainian geographical science, the negative influence of Soviet geography is not yet fully overcome. In addition, it is possible to trace the formation of a new dependence — on modern Russian geography. In fact, the scientific outlook of the most well-known Ukrainian geographers was developed in the Soviet period and in close relation with leading Russian geographical schools. Furthermore, there is the problem that most modern Ukrainian geographers, including people of a young age, have insufficient knowledge of foreign languages, except for Russian. This factor predetermines their ongoing position in the orbit of Russian-language geographical science.

This phenomenon also relates to human-geographical studies in Ukraine, which touches the range of problems of peripherality, which, as known, relates to traditional and most current trends in world geography.

In the Ukrainian geographical scientific environment, it is only recently that separate scientific publications relating to peripherality have appeared. Analysis of scientific studies, in particular subjects of candidate and doctoral dissertation works (published in the magazines “the Scientific world” and “Announcer of the Higher Attestation Commission of Ukraine”) shows that for the last ten years in Ukraine in geographical specialities there was not a single dissertation defence in the name of which there the word “peripherality” or derivatives of it appear. Analysis of the titles of the articles in scientific geographical magazines also shows a dire lack of interest or study. It can be concluded that only in recent years this has come to the attention of the following Ukrainian

geographers: L. Volovyk (2009), I. Pylypenko (2008, 2009a, 2009b), I. Pylypenko and G. Topchiev (2009). Generally, it is possible to note that in Ukrainian geography at least, among relatively developed national geographical schools in Europe, serious studies about the range of problems of peripherality until recently have been non-existent.

It is possible to distinguish some causes. The first is the influence of Soviet and Russian geography, mentioned above. In modern Russian geography research peripherality is represented sufficiently, but it is mostly studied on global and national levels predefined by the continued considerable geopolitical role of the Russian Federation, and also by the enormous territory of the state. In Ukraine, which is considerably smaller than Russia, and has a relatively insignificant geopolitical role, theoretical and methodological works of the Russian geographers on peripherality do not find application.

Secondly, there is a “competition” which is created by research of peripherality with the scientific range of problems of economic depression. In Ukraine, subjects of scientific studies, which are performed in state research institutes and higher educational institutions financed by the state budget, are preliminarily confirmed by the related ministry. This procedure is considerably bureaucratic. An official in the capital, even supported by a scientific consultant, mostly does not understand the essence of the range of problems of peripherality in full, while the term “economic depression” for him is more clear. Therefore, introduction of the word “peripherality” in the title of a budgetary scientific theme, at present guarantees that it will not be selected for financing.

As it is known, problems of economic depression and peripherality are not identical, although they intersect quite a bit. Accordingly, in economic and geographical studies of the problems of economic depression in Ukraine, it is possible to find quite a few interesting aspects which have direct linkage to the problems of peripherality (Baranovs'kyi 2008a, 2008b, 2009; Zastavnyi 2006; Oliynyk 2009).

The third reason are features of development of geographical science in Ukraine within the last decades. In the state, there exists only one specialized geographical research institution – the Institute of Geography of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (established in 1991 on the basis of the sector of the same name). Out of six departments at the institute, only one is named a department of human geographical studies and it carries out research on economic geography. Human geographical science is developing foremost on the geographical faculties of higher educational institutions, foremost in Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa, Chernivtsi, and Kharkiv National Universities. Unfortunately, most teachers, after securing their dissertation for the receipt of the scientific degree of candidate of geographical sciences (an analogue of doctoral dissertation in Poland), almost cease their scientific activity. The process of writing and defence of dissertations is considerably formalized and does not stimulate original scientific studies. A typical dissertation on “economic and social geography” is rather a standard analysis of a specific public sphere (industry, agriculture, tourism, transport, etc.) and it is carried out at the level of the administrative region. A scientist by defence of such work actually only confirms their ability to use the scientific methods of geographical studies. Deeper analysis of problems of peripherality requires an addition to the same scenario and that is why scientists do not usually attempt to work out and defend such works for their scientific degrees.

However, the problem of peripherality is included in geographical scientific discourse in Ukraine; it is present mostly in summarising theoretical works from human geography, in separate textbooks and manuals for the students of higher educational institutions. The modern understanding of periphery or peripherality in the environment of Ukrainian geography can be described in a few positions which will be described below.

From the theoretical point of view, a popular interpretation of periphery is in the monograph of one of the most authoritative Russian Soviet economic geographers, E. Alayev “Socio-economic geography. Concept-terminology dictionary” (1983). In his understanding the periphery is a part of the geographical taxon, which is in contrast with the core as a spatial combination of knots and centres, and focuses of public activity with reverse functional dependence. Thus, periphery comes forward foremost as an antipode of the core in all aspects — resources, politics, economics, cultural, etc.

Developing such an understanding of periphery, Ukrainian economic geographer I. Pylypenko entered the concept of human-geographical periphery — as a part of public space within the limits of which the speed of human-geographical processes is minimum or their vector does not coincide with the vector of development of the cores of public life (Pylypenko 2009a, 2009b).

The range of problems of peripherality in Ukraine is mostly considered in the context of economic-geographical, political-geographical and geopolitical studies. In studies of economic-geographical direction, Ukrainian geographers usually consider the theory of “poles of growth” by F. Perroux (1950), the conception of “diffusion of innovations”, presented by T. Hägerstrand (1967) as a theoretical basis of the range of problems of peripherality; they allude also to the classic studies of J. Friedmann (1966; Friedmann and Weaver 1979), devoted to the problems of regional development. In the field of geopolitics, the theoretical basis of studies on the problems of peripherality considers the theory of the core natural habitat of H. Mackinder (1904, 1919), and also conceptions of N. Spykman (1942; Spykman and Nicholl 1944). In Ukraine, in the study of the range of problems of peripherality at a global level greater popularity is noted of the world-system analysis bases described in studies of I. Wallerstein (1974, 1980, 1989).

The world is divided into a center, semiperiphery and periphery (fig. 1). Under global periphery, we mostly understand districts with extreme natural conditions, which restrict the possibility of existence of wildlife (arctic districts, highlands, deserts, etc.) or districts with the robust natural life, but in which there are limitations for development of society (for example, districts of equatorial forest massifs). Such global periphery in scientific studies comes forward foremost as a strategic resource reserve, or as a source of biological substance, sources of raw materials, genetic potential, etc. A traditional rural locality is not considered a periphery in such an approach, it is a semiperiphery.

Besides the traditional chart of division of geographical space as “center – semiperiphery – periphery” in Ukrainian geography, the alternative chart of the Russian geographer has certain popularity, by V. Kaganskiy: a “center – province – periphery – boundary” (Kaganskiy 2001, 2004). Periphery in this chart is foremost a dependent outskirts, a place where other elements of the system make the decisions for its tasks; it is a resource base. The space of the periphery is appropriated by a center, but it is not mastered, it is set outward. The periphery is not self-sufficient, does not have corresponding levers for self-development and that is why the various functions of the center are only excuted here. The periphery is also not an independent cultural landscape.

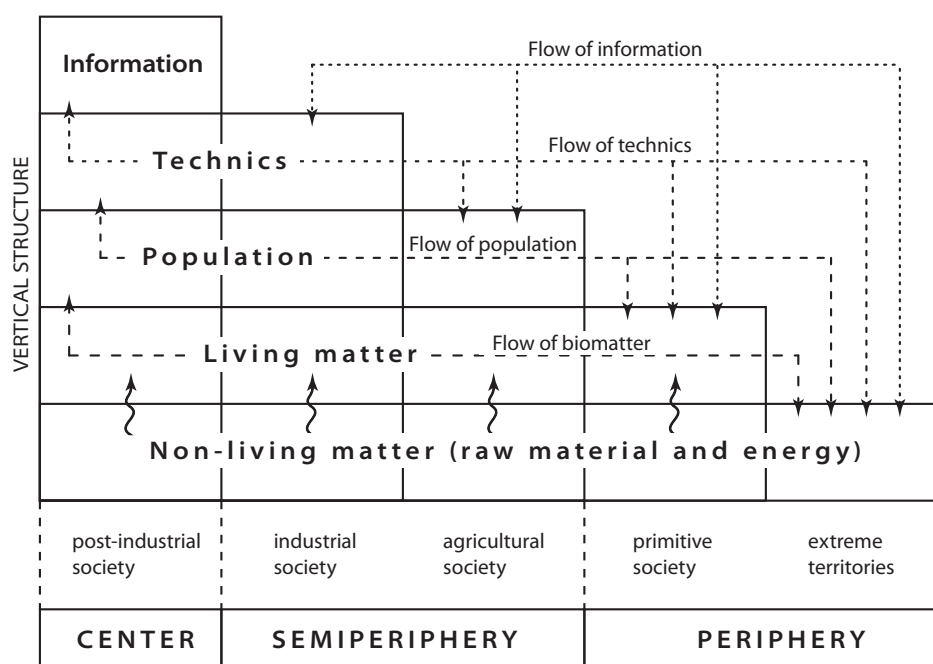
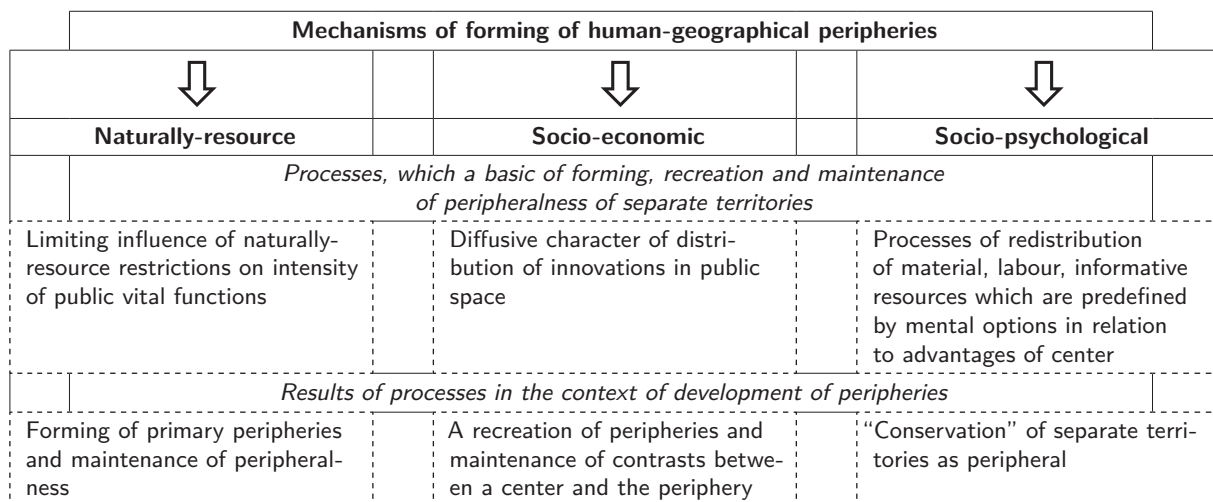


Fig. 1. A vertical structure of center, semiperiphery and periphery in the global scale (Skopin 2001)

**Tab. 1.** Basic dynamic and structural descriptions of central, semiperipheral and peripheral territories (Gritsay and Treyvish 1990; Pilipenko 2008)

	Center	Semiperiphery	Periphery
Dynamics of development	Not high, but proven rates of development.	Dynamic, but unsteady development.	Unsteady development at its low initial level.
Economic pattern	High and growing share of unproductive sphere. Concentration of functions of decision-making and research developments (functions of generating scientific and technical progress). Structural alteration and “washing off” of old industries.	High share engaged in industry. Concentration of the executive functions related to scientific and technical progress, strong dependence on a center. Development of modern industries with the ready technology (forming of a “headless economy”).	Increased share engaged in traditional industries of primary sector and service business. Participation in the territorial division of labour through industries which do not determine scientific and technical progress. Weak internal integration and limited nature of participation in the different forms of division of labor.
Social structure	“Bureaucratisation” in the structure of workplaces (an increase of unproductive subdivisions in all spheres). Polarization of the social structure of the population. An orientation of population towards increasing social status.	Advantage of workers with traditional skills of industrial labour. Relatively homogeneous social structure of population. An orientation towards increase of earnings for strengthening of social equality.	Advantage of workers with traditional skills of agrarian labour. Homogeneous or sharply contrasting social structure of population. An orientation towards the economies of traditional core values, conflict with new concepts.
Territorial structure	Urbanized district which has tendencies towards expansion. High agglomeration of industries of population and economy. Monocentric and concentricity (polycentric structure as an exception).	Active urbanization of polycentric or agglomeric character. High or middle territorial concentration.	Increasing polarisation of territory; variants: (1) maintenance of the traditional socio-economic modes, (2) their degradation out of poles of height, (3) the mediated mastering of new districts.
General orientation	Increased value of creative and innovative functions. An orientation towards development with maximal conservation of sources.	The periodic strengthening of innovative or conservative functions with constancy of adaptive mechanisms. Orientation towards possible growth, with development and maintenance of resources.	Maintenance of conservatism, partial introduction of adaptive functions. An orientation towards growth and maximal use of resources.



**Fig. 2.** Mechanisms of forming, recreation and maintenance of human-geographical peripheries (Pilipenko 2009b)

The study of the range of problems of peripherality at regional level in Ukraine is foremost based on original Russian geographical studies, in particular researches of the Russian scientists of O. Hrytsay and V. Treyvysh (1990, 1991). Popular is the conception of the polarised landscape, expounded in the research of the “legend of Russian geography” by B. Rodoman (1999, 2002, 2007). In regional studies, periphery from a center and semiperiphery differs foremost in the dynamics of development, structure and general orientation of geographical processes. In particular, periphery is characterized by unsteady development at its low initial level, increased share of employment in traditional industries of the primary sector and services, weak internal integration and limited participation in the different forms of division of labour, and orientation of the population towards maintenance of traditional core values (tab. 1).

By the mechanisms of formation, peripheries can be divided into those which are natural-resource, socio-economic and social-psychological (fig. 2). Formation of a natural-resource periphery is predefined by the influence of natural-resource limits on the intensity of social functions. Socio-economic periphery is related to the diffusive character of distribution of innovations in society, social-psychological periphery is predefined by mental options in relation to the advantages of the center. The primary form of peripheries is a resource periphery.

## 2 Methods and approaches of the peripheral territories selection

Concrete methods and approaches of the selection of peripheral territories usually adhere to the differences in quantitative descriptions of human-geographical processes, in particular to the process of concentration. A concentration is a process at which the closeness (intensity) of some phenomenon in one area rises more rapidly than in other areas under study (Alayev 1983). The selection of peripheral territories is performed by the construction of surfaces of trend changes of certain coefficients, which are the criteria of differentiation of center and periphery.

For the basic criteria of differentiation of center and periphery are taken: (1) indexes of formation of quantity of population and, foremost, an index of the balance of migrations; (2) specific features of how populations settle apart (correlation of urban and rural population, populousness of settlements, etc.); (3) general level of development and agglomeration of industries of socio-economic activity; (4) levels of development of infrastructure and public welfare of population (Pylypenko 2008).

Study on the range of problems of peripherality at local level, in particular at the level of administrative districts and separate basilar administrative units (village soviets) in Ukraine is almost non-existent. The local level of consideration of a scientific problem does not come into the notice of scientists, because it is usually not sufficient for writing of a dissertation in the works for scientific degrees. Local communities are not financially solvent enough to independently finance such studies.

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