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SOME CONSEQUENCES OF SPECIALIZATION AND PROFESSIONALIZATION
PROCESSES IN RURAL INSTITUTIONS

1. Introduction

The village, from the period called traditional rural local community in the Polish sociological literature, was a social system based on subject, personal, non-formalized ties. Institutions based on social unpaid work and similar roles performed in villages of this period were functionally linked satisfying all needs of isolated and self-sufficient village aggregations. From this point of view the existing set of institutions and roles was complete (and although supplemented by external institutions it was strongly connected with the local community through different types of ties e.g. parish, manor). "Concentric" character of ties typical for village community, strong sense of isolation and identification of the community's members with the community itself accounted for the fact that the local community was isolating itself from its environment.

In the period of the village community disintegration initiated by "opening up" of the traditional local community there started appearing more and more frequently formal institutions in the village. Linking of the village with social life on the macro-scale, new socio-economic conditions generated new social needs. To satisfy them there were set up these formal indirect structures.

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Gradual decay of the life system typical for the traditional village, economic changes and transformations in rural families and aggregations are connected directly with dynamic development of rural economic, social, political, administrative, cultural, educational and other institutions and organizations.

Simultaneously there appear the roles of "social activists" (volunteer unpaid social workers). Originally these were functions performed voluntarily but gradually these functions became connected with the line of work providing livelihood (e.g. role performed by social activists in co-operative organizations undertaken by farmers).

Some sociologists directly put forward and empirically exemplify a thesis about a direct relationship between the level of modernization of a village and the so-called index of its institutionalization.

The role played by institutions of the new type, as a factor integrating the village, was underlined many times. Thus e.g. J. Turowski put forward a concept of reintegration of rural and urban territorial aggregations based on a new type of social ties - institutional ties (purposeful, normative, indirect). "New integration forms oftentime surpass boundaries of individual villages, they do not consist in restoration of former neighbourly assistance and co-operation since they encompass only some parts or categories of village inhabitants, they organize their co-operation within a definite scope of needs and goals with this co-operation being of formalized and not occasional character and being formally exacted. Studies on these new integration forms prove that they take a form of a system of organizations and associations properly co-ordinated and created in the settlement system area - a number of settlement units linked with one another (by means of transport, services, spatial distribution etc.)"¹.

Accordingly personal ties lose their importance as a basic

¹ J. Turowski, Rozwój badań w zakresie socjologii wsi i miasta w XXV-leciu PRL (Development of Researches in the Field of Urban and Rural Sociology during 25 Years of the People's Poland), [w:] Socjologia wsi i miasta w Polsce. Dziesiąta Ogólnopolska Konferencja Socjologów Wsi i Rolnictwa (Urban and Rural Sociology in Poland. 10th Polish Conference of Urban and Rural Sociologists), Warsaw 1971, p. 41.

reintegration platform. Functional, formal relationships between social workers carrying out their roles within a given institution assume a growing importance.

Simultaneously, personal ties in the contemporary village, besides former ties between people, assume a shape of relationships between performed roles.

2. Synthetic outline of professionalization process in institutions and organizations operating within former rural administrative districts

Especially pronounced expansion in institutional equipment of the village along with changes of place and roles performed by social and professional workers took place in the "rural district period" of the Polish village, i.e. towards the end of the fifties and in the sixties of our century. This period was characterized with, first of all, quantitative expansion of formal structures accompanied by "invasion" of permanent professional positions in rural settlement units. This fact, along with a growing share of people seeking jobs outside agriculture, accounted for differentiation of the professional structure of village inhabitants. It is worth stressing here that the professional differentiation of the village was mainly reflected in growing participation of different professions in provision of services for villages and agriculture. Quantitative increase as well as increase in importance of this category of people was connected with the specialization process in rural institutions and ensuing needs for professionalization of roles performed on behalf of these institutions. Thus in the "rural district period" we were observing a trend away from social unpaid activities characterized by spontaneity, material disinterestedness, unpaid form of activity and lack of special professional background. These volunteer functions were being replaced in specialized institutions by professional roles based on permanent professional status and performed by persons meeting definite professional requirements.

These processes of institutional specialization and role professionalization became an object of our research interest from

the point of view of qualitative change in two basic types of roles - professional roles accompanied by permanent status and social unpaid roles.

There were observed the following consequences and trends in changes:

1. operation of institutions of various kinds, distinguished by means of the share held by roles according to their status (permanent and social status);

2. two "variants" of the role professionalization process in institutions and organizations:

- a) employment of specialists on full-time basis,

- b) quasi-professionalization of social roles;

3. different course in the professionalization process of permanent status and social-status roles determined by character of the role performed (managerial, executive) and thus by a set of performed functions as well as utilized operational means.

In the system of institutions and organizations there were operating specialized institutions employing professional personnel on permanent basis. All roles and functions in institutions of this type were performed as professional engagement. Differentiation of employees resulted from varying character of their roles and varying type and level of their professional qualifications. They would hold posts (or perform roles) corresponding to their professional background or possessed qualifications (e.g. drugstore, health care centre, post office).

Within the framework of institutions operating on social unpaid basis there can be observed a bigger differentiation. Along with institutions grouping many social roles (Circle of Rural Housewives, political organizations) there are others of one-person type (e.g. village chief, local welfare agent).

The Social Conciliatory Commission was an example of specialist social institution. Role of the chairman and members of the conciliatory court did not surpass the formal bounds of obligatory activities and they were of executive-role type. Allocation of these roles was based on definite formal subjective characteristics. The fact that social workers employed in these commissions were meeting expectations as regards their qualifications would point at their professional competence. We might similarly describe a monofunctional role of the local welfare agent.

Importance of subjective qualifications was best visible in political organizations since they were determining the authority enjoyed by a given social-political worker (especially in the case of people undertaking managerial roles). In these organizations a growing significance was attributed to instrumental qualifications combined with performance of basic political functions.

Among institutions with social status there were also such in which we could encounter a phenomenon of "pseudospecialization". This consisted in continual undertaking of the same functions, but not on the basis of conscious selection responding to expectations of receivers but along principles of restricting activity due to deficit of operational resources materials and financial resources).

A unique example of a social-type institution was a complex, multifunctional role of the village chief. This role was combining managerial and executive elements as well as wider functions and tasks performed by the village chief than those assumed. It was an example of quasi-professional social role since the above mentioned conditions were imposing a requirement on the social activist to possess appropriate and diversified skills.

The next type of institutions was represented by those employing workers on permanent basis and co-operating simultaneously with a wide group of volunteer workers. They serve as an example of taking away from social activists the implementation of the professional operational goal due to far-reaching operational specialization (e.g. savings and loans co-operatives, rural co-operative "Peasant Self-Assistance"); they confirm the need for partial professionalization of roles hitherto performed voluntarily (Rural District People's Council), and of increased significance of professional qualifications in various forms of social-voluntary activities (e.g. rural co-operative movement).

It is within the framework of these institutions that there simultaneously takes place the quasi-professionalization process encompassing social-voluntary roles based on the assumption that they are to meet advisory and control functional requirements ensuing from a place held within an institution.

Agricultural circles and joint machinery parks provide a specific example of transformations in activities linked with

the specialization process. They provide the best evidence confirming existence of dilemmas in the field of professionalization of previously voluntary roles and functions. Thus e.g. agricultural circles, which initiated the process of functional specialization and favoured professionalization of executive roles oriented exactly at these functions - preserved their independence while changing their character. They changed from purely social-voluntary organizations into social-voluntary organizations in which occurs professionalization of executive roles. The purely social-voluntary character was preserved in those agricultural circles which transferred their technical operational resources to newly-formed joint machinery parks - being new specialist institutions employing skilled workers on permanent basis. Formation of these institutions was a testimony of growing specialist needs in this area passing beyond limits offered by activities of voluntary unprofessional type. A further consequence of this distinction calling for employment of professional personnel is creation of the Agricultural Circles Co-operative within the rural commune with preservation of agricultural circles.

An import role in the system of institutions was played by the school - specialized and professionalized institution in which social activists had an insignificant scope of functions. The importance of the school lies in the fact that it was one of the first specialized institutions possessing long experience and tradition in performing this role and implementing its functions through professionally skilled specialists. This institution, while remaining within a rural aggregation was "...always a link between this aggregation and national macro-structures and national culture on different principles than it could have ever before been achieved by any other institution". There must be stressed here diverse voluntary roles performed by teachers, who ranked among the most active inhabitants of rural areas. And thus e.g. teachers constituted an important segment in local People's Councils representing, at the same time, institutions and organizations especially important for a given rural community, through their multiple social role they were representing not only the school but also a number of other institutions and organizations.

The Voluntary Fire Brigade provides an example which synthetically illustrates changes in social-voluntary activity forms. It represents one of the oldest rural organizations. This organization groups at present all "categories" of workers-volunteers (performing executive roles of firemen), quasi-professionals (social activists with high instrumental qualifications undertaking training of others), and professionals employed on permanent basis charged with executive roles involving definite production-service functions.

The above mentioned examples of institutions allowed to trace the change of place held by social activists consisting in the fact that in specialist and specializing institutions social-voluntary workers are replaced by professionals. This process is often accompanied by a change in the scope of functions performed by social-voluntary workers. Consequently a characteristic trait of these changes is increased importance of professionals in rural and agricultural services along with preserving limited forms of social-voluntary activities.

It was, moreover, observed that:

- there occurred changes in actual position of some roles and institutions in the system of rural institutions and organizations in comparison with the formal hierarchy of the system as a result of, among others, roles professionalization process;

- system of rural institutions and organizations, which operated in the "rural district period" did not fulfil the criteria of a simple system; the result of "nonsystem" character of the group of institutions and organizations were, among others, certain barriers in roles professionalization being especially important due to the formal position they deserved in the group of institutions.

The roles professionalization process was reflected in real positions of some roles or institutions in the system of rural institutions analyzed in this area. Thus e.g. the real autonomy of the village chief and its importance at the village level as well as the role played by him as a middleman between the village and the rural district were determining the real position of the village "head". A rich range of specialized functions and professional roles in some institutions, such as e.g. the Rural Commune Co-operative, caused that they were holding a leading

position in the system despite the fact that this position should have been attributed to the Rural Commune People's Council or the Local Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (that was also affected by the process of roles professionalization in the Rural Commune People's Council). Poor functional links between institutions and organizations of the system were hampering professionalization of certain roles (e.g. that of the chairman and secretary of the Rural Commune People's Council which was caused by drawbacks in formal and legal acts regulating their status).

In this situation apart from intrainstitutional conditions the process of roles professionalization was also affected by conditions determined by characteristics of a given system. And not always their restrictive impact could be compensated by growing in this period personal ties between rural institutions, which were mainly promoted by the whole group of social-voluntary workers.

3. Opportunities for social-voluntary activities in the period of dynamic development of formal structures with professional character

Observed changes in positions held by social activists in rural institutions and the above mentioned process of social-voluntary roles quasi-professionalization accompanied by quantitative increase in the number of formal institutions equipped with qualified personnel may undermine further prospects of social-voluntary activities in the rural commune. It seems that such activity may continue to assume forms of organizational activity provided in competition with professional institutions. This organization will assume specialist character being expressed in application of modern operational means including quasi-professional human resources. Another way of ensuring a position for voluntary-social organizations among formal structures is employment of professionals in implementation of specialist functions (at least in the sphere of executive functions).

The basic form of social-voluntary activity, which reflects

the principles of our socio-political system, is a form of social self-government being obligatory and employed in many key rural institutions of the rural commune level. Members of the self-government are required to possess at present qualifications enabling competent supervision and control of tasks performed by professional workers permanently employed in institutions.

Social-voluntary workers will continue to perform important control and advisory functions, especially so since they represent needs and interests of their areas on the forum of rural commune's institutions and organizations. The success of this activity will be largely determined by the extent to which a social-voluntary worker can play the role of a competent adviser in partnership with a professional social worker employed on a permanent basis.

According to us the place and role of social-voluntary workers in rural communes will be, moreover, determined by the type of the rural commune. In areas with predominance of individual farms, it is predicted that such roles will be consolidated in institutions formalizing and specializing themselves. This implies a search for an appropriate form of village self-government within limits and capacity of quasi-professional social-voluntary workers. In rural communes characterized with mass agricultural production, with predominance of socialized or state farms it can be expected - when we take into account the above mentioned processes - that participation of social-voluntary workers in management will be similar to that prevailing in industrial companies. Similarly social-voluntary activities of village inhabitants will be assuming features of territorial self-government in towns. In rural communes possessing specialized individual farms there can be expected further progress in the process initiated in the previous period - i.e. increasing participation of economic elite of a village in management and "specialization" in voluntary forms of activity through undertaking chosen, single (or not numerous in comparison with the former multifunctional activities) social-voluntary roles corresponding to the performed profession.

4. Limits of specialization and professionalization of social-voluntary activities

In our opinion there can be pointed out several basic factors restricting professionalization of these activities. From among them special attention should be paid - in the case of examined institutions - to a definite level of their specialization being reflected in such complexity of nonpersonal operational resources that their utilization calls for professional experience.

This factor is linked with another one, and namely with progressive professionalization process of work constituting the main source of livelihood. Already in the previous period of administrative rural districts we could come across permanently employed professional social workers, whose posts and roles largely restricted possibilities of combining many social roles (e.g. it was the case of rural co-operative institutions in which social activists employed on managerial posts were restricting the scope of their social activity). The above situation was accompanied by choice of few social-voluntary roles within their operational field corresponding to professional activity. Restriction of multifunctional social-voluntary activity and relative unwillingness to improve qualifications for social-voluntary roles differing from the basic profession pursued will most probably prevail in the case of farmers. At present, a farm is becoming a production plant or a company linked through co-operation ties with local and external institutions. Agriculture ceases to imply a mode of living alone and becomes a place of work and production activity. This produces a need for bigger time outlays on improvement of professional qualifications, which in turn - may lead to restriction of social-voluntary activities. On the other hand, the process of the farmer's work professionalization will call for improvement of qualifications necessary for a social-voluntary worker performing his functions in institutions economically co-operating with agriculture, and in self-government bodies. It can thus be expected that multifunctional activity will be reduced, and accordingly there will arise a need for specialization of voluntary activities in line with professional qualifications.

Concentration of social-voluntary efforts is a prerequisite of consolidation of a group of competent social-voluntary workers. Professional employment providing livelihood creates a possibility of combining "small outlays" of social work, which through utilization of professional knowledge and skills in social work appears to be a positive trend. Thus we might put forward a hypothesis that specialization of rural institutions producing a need for professionalization leads in consequence to reduction of the multifunctional activity, and thus to specialization of permanently employed professionals and professional farmers in social-voluntary roles.

5. Development of formal structures and possibilities of local vertical mobility

The system of institutions and organizations starts playing an important role in the modern village in formation of socio-professional and demographic structure of rural population. In the last few years there have been observed changes in the category of individual farmers. These changes are determined by guidelines passed by central and local institutions. There is observed a trend towards enlarging the area of farms so that they can meet certain requirements (production specialization, higher level of mechanization, professional qualifications of farmers, high level of production intensity). They are "quasi-peasant" farms, whose managers constitute the élite of social workers performing their functions in councils, boards etc. of local, and especially economic, institutions. A basic factor differentiating other peasants is still the size of the farm along with its technical equipment and its ties with the system of economic institutions.

Development of institutional infrastructure calls for employment of personnel possessing different specializations. And thus there appear in rural districts various professional categories - state administration workers (teachers, clerks, health service personnel, cultural centres personnel) creating a stratum of village intelligentsia, technicians with different

specializations employed in economic institutions, craftsmen employed in service units, workers employed in industrial companies or construction companies if there are such in the rural commune's area.

Today one can hardly speak about a general relationship between a place of dwelling (town, village) and uniform work character (industrial, agricultural). The town has been always characterized, although to a different extent, with professional differentiation of its inhabitants. Today this trait can be, to a growing extent, attributed also to the Polish village. Besides the above mentioned professional categories there has been existing in the village still another, the so-called mixed category, i.e. people combining work on a farm, usually small one with non-agricultural professions, e.g. peasant-clerks (finding more and more often employment in the village), or peasant-workers (in most cases employed outside the village, but also in some villages - in local production plants).

We are today witnessing a high level of the work professionalization process with reference to rural population. If we accept the fact that there exists a process of creation of the farmer's profession, we should all the more distinctly stress the real participation of different professions both in the widely understood sector of services for an agricultural farm and in functioning of the rural commune's aggregation.

Simultaneously, as a requirement posed by modern life and as a feasible possibility, there will be widely opened the road to social promotion of the village inhabitants through improvement of their educational background. This promotion should be seen in two dimensions - opening of new jobs in the village and filling them with workers possessing appropriate professional qualifications, and promotion of social-voluntary workers with quasi-professional qualifications to the local élite of power. This latter phenomenon is a reflection of change in positions held in the rural aggregation by a farmer-social worker, teacher-social worker etc. as qualified professionals gearing their professional knowledge to specialist social-voluntary activity.

6. Personal ties between institutions as a sphere of shaping the local social system

Subjective character of institutional ties forms a characteristic feature of the traditional rural local community. "Opening-up" of local communities and invasion of formal structures produced, among others, elimination of such basis of the social system formation.

The period of rural communities disintegration was, among others, characterized with insufficient strength of the normative institutional relationships. These relationships no longer based on personal ties were simultaneously hindered by shortcomings typical for a system of institutions. The most important features will include here functional incompleteness, lack of consolidating steering element, and isolation of the rural commune from its environment. Still, already in the period of existence of administrative rural districts we could observe a systems-forming role of personal ties. It was on the basis of personal links that there were distinguished in the system of rural institutions some systems composed of several structures. Formation of these systems was, among others, determined by a list of institutions formally and practically present in a given rural district as well as by characteristics specific for a given district.

It seems that in the rural commune's community we are dealing with continuation of a subjective systems-creating relationship which dates back to the period of the traditional rural local community.

Such a chance was provided for rural territorial aggregations inhabiting the rural commune's area by assumptions of the administrative reform. The system of rural institutions functioning at present in a definite form envisages in its objectives satisfaction of social needs belonging to almost all spheres of life while the spatial coverage of these institutions corresponds to administrative boundaries of the rural commune. Both farms and rural families, particular socio-demographic and professional categories are linked with institutions, which along with their other functions are also performing functions simi-

lar to those once performed by the traditional village community. Normative ties and informal organization, which still continue to appear in villages, on the rural commune's scale are dominated by ties and organization of formal institutions. At the same time, these institutions through their personal vertical links (with the area) and horizontal (between them) carry a chance of becoming - exactly along these lines - a system of institutions and simultaneously an important element of the village life system in the contemporary rural commune.

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ACERCA ALGUNAS CONSECUENCIAS DEL PROCESO
DE ESPECIALIZACIÓN Y PROFESIONALIZACIÓN
EN LAS INSTITUCIONES RURALES

Al comienzo de la ponencia se caracterizan los procesos de la especialización y la profesionalización en las instituciones rurales, tomando en cuenta tanto las condiciones interiores de dichos procesos institucionales, como las condiciones determinadas por los rasgos colectivos de la institución.

A continuación tratamos de determinar posibilidades de actividad social en la época del desarrollo impetuoso de las estructuras formales de carácter profesional, intentando a la vez fijar los límites de especialización y profesionalización de esta actividad. También notamos las posibilidades de traslados locales de carácter vertical vinculados al desarrollo de estructuras formales y manifestados, en términos generales, en la profesionalización del trabajo de la población rural, lo que se refiere no sólo al oficio del campesino, sino también a los servicios de agricultura interpretados ampliamente.

Señalamos a la vez que en el campo moderno nos vemos con la continuación de relaciones subjetivas que crean sistemas, el comienzo de las cuales tuvo lugar en la época de tradicional sociedad local del campo, ya que las instituciones formales precisamente en este plano tienen posibilidad de convertirse en un elemento importante del sistema de vida rural por medio de los enlaces personales verticales (con la región) y horizontales (entre las mismas instituciones).

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О НЕКОТОРЫХ ПОСЛЕДСТВИЯХ ПРОЦЕССА ПРОФЕССИОНАЛИЗАЦИИ
И СПЕЦИАЛИЗАЦИИ В СЕЛЬСКИХ ИНСТИТУТАХ

В начале доклада дается характеристика процессов специализации и профессионализации в сельских институтах (учреждениях) с учетом условий, в которых имеют место эти процессы внутри институтов и условий, именуемых чертами совокупности институтов.

Затем предпринимаются попытки определить шансы общественной активности в эпоху бурного развития формальных структур профессионального характера и пределов специализации и профессионализации этой деятельности. Указывается также на возможность местной вертикальной подвижности, связанной с развитием формальных структур и проявляющейся, вообще говоря, в профессионализации труда сельского населения (касающейся как профессии земледельца, так и обслуживания деревни и сельского хозяйства в широком значении этого слова).

Одновременно подчеркивается что, в условиях современной деревни, имеет место продолжение субъективной системообразной связи, начавшейся в период традиционного сельского местного общества, ибо формальные институты через свои личные вертикальные (территориальные) и горизонтальные (взаимосвязи) связи располагают шансами — именно в этой плоскости — чтобы стать существенным элементом системы сельской жизни.

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O NIEKTÓRYCH KONSEKWENCJACH PROCESU SPECJALIZACJI
I PROFESJONALIZACJI W INSTYTUCJACH WIEJSKICH

Artykuł rozpoczyna charakterystyka procesów specjalizacji i profesjonalizacji w instytucjach wiejskich, uwzględniająca warunki wewnątrzinstytucjonalne tych procesów, oraz warunki określone cechami zbioru instytucji.

W dalszej części podjęto próbę określenia szans aktywności społecznej w dobie gwałtownego rozwoju struktur formalnych o profesjonalnym charakterze, a także określenia granic specjalizacji i profesjonalizacji tej działalności. Zwraca się również uwagę na możliwości lokalnej ruchliwości pionowej powiązanej z rozwojem struktur formalnych, wyrażającej się, najogólniej rzecz biorąc, w profesjonalizacji pracy ludności wiejskiej (nie tylko zawodu rolnika, ale także szeroko rozumianej obsługi wsi i rolnictwa).

Jednocześnie wskazano, że we współczesnej wsi mamy do czynienia z kontynuacją podmiotowej więzi systemotwórczej zapoczątkowanej w okresie tradycyjnej wiejskiej społeczności lokalnej, gdyż instytucje formalne poprzez personalne powiązania pionowe (z terenem) i poziome (między sobą) mają szansę, właśnie na tej płaszczyźnie, stać się istotnym elementem systemu życia wiejskiego.