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WOMAN IN THE PEASANT FAMILY AND IN THE WORKER'S FAMILY

The basic factors differentiating Polish families are the following: the fact of pertaining to a social class, to a certain social milieu and to a certain occupational category. The fact of pertaining to a social class is to be considered most significant since it implies the other categories through which one may examine and describe Polish families¹.

In this context both the peasant family and the worker's family constitute attractive objects of research since all of the factors mentioned above co-exist in these types of families. The selection of these families for comparative studies is substantiated by the fact that in their model state these families differ to extremes: in each of these types there exist features which are mutually strengthened and which at the same time on their own appear as features differentiating these families. As for example, in its model state, the peasant family consists of three generations and possesses many children, the woman does not work professionally beyond the farm, the man is the manager of the commonly owned by the family farm, the distribution of roles in the house, the farm and family is based mainly on sex and age, the family is firmly implanted in the local social milieu which controls the behaviours of its members, etc. The model worker's family consists of two generations, possesses two to three children, the woman works professionally (often also in the industry as a worker), the rhythm of family life is deter-

¹ Cp. Z. T y s z k a, [ed.] Wstęp (Introduction) [in:] Wybrane kategorie współczesnych rodzin polskich (Selected Categories of Contemporary Polish Families), Poznań 1984.

mined by the rhythm of professional work (often in shifts) of both the husband and wife, the distribution of family-house roles is slightly less strict in the sense of conducting exclusively "male" or exclusively "female" chores, the family lives in an anonymous urban society, etc.

The intermediate type between the peasant and worker's family is the peasant-worker's family, that is such a rural family which supports itself from farming on its own land (usually small in size) and at the same time from professional work performed by the man beyond the field of agriculture (in the industry, at construction sites).

From the point of view of our studies, the most significant difference between the types of families mentioned above is the difference in relations between the work place, and the house and family, which is the cause of a different organization of family life, i.e. the applied distribution of roles and functions and in consequence the varied social positions of the family members.

A family which is considered "modern" or "contemporary" is one which is advanced in achieving the model of a partnership family. "Partnership" is most often seen (at least in the case of families with small children) as cooperation of the parents in fulfilling all family functions such as: economic, social, etc. In other words, this signifies a common - both by woman and man - fulfilment of roles and functions which assure the duration of the family and its everyday functioning without greater disturbances. Partnership at a higher level signifies something more - it stands for the social equalization of relationships within the family. It concerns then not only the parents but also the children who are treated as rightful members of the social group together with the privileges and duties which such treatment entails. The children, according to the possibilities determined by age and sex, take their part in fulfilling the tasks enabling a normal undisturbed functioning of the family, though as a result they participate in certain decisions concerning the whole family, as for example: plans of significant purchases for the household, plans for holiday leave or vacations, etc. Full partnership is surely difficult to realize - it requires, after all, a conscious adoption of such a model by the parents and con-

sistency in its realization in relation to oneself and to the children.

The process of social equalization of family relationships cannot be univocally appraised as a positive phenomenon. The social and psychological results of this process for the family - and in a wider sense - for the society are still not well known. One may expect that the problem of egalitarianism in performing functions and roles, and adopting certain positions is not the same as that of the individual's personal feeling which in this new situation may not necessarily be that of content or satisfaction.

The aim of this study is to present the means of realizing the partnership model in the three chosen types of families i.e. in the peasant family, the worker's family, and the peasant-worker's family.

The factor which we adopted in order to present the extent of the equalization process of relationships within the family is that of the changing position of the woman in the family in relation to the position of the man.

In our opinion each of the mentioned types of families pursues in the direction of a partnership family, though the means of realizing differ significantly due to the characteristics of the family itself and due to the differences in the external conditions of its functioning. It is our task then to point to both the factors which favour the equalization of relationships within the family and factors which set back the process.

To illustrate the problem we will utilize results of empirical investigations dealing with the position and role of the woman within the family. Forty free interviews were conducted with women from peasant and peasant-workers' families living in villages of central Poland, as well as with women from workers' families living in a large industrial city². The studies were conducted with young economically independent families having two

² The studies of workers' families have been carried out in Łódź - the second largest, as regards population, city in Poland. Łódź is a city of abundant possibilities of employing women, since the textile industry predominates here. All the families studied lived in the Łódź-Chojny district which has a well-developed network of shops and services.

or three children up to the age of 15. The workers' families consisted of two generations, the peasant and peasant-workers' families sometimes comprised three generations for it oftentimes happened that the parents-grandparents lived together with the family. The free interviews concerned the roles played by the women in the family, the participation of the husband and children in fulfilling the duties resulting from the roles, and a tentative assessment by the women themselves of their role in the family. The results of the investigations deal then rather with certain declarations than facts. The statements of the women reflect their state of mind concerning the image of their situation in the family and the relationships within the family³.

Thus our study intends to present various types of families and situations existing within them basing the information on certain data which, although does not allow for generalizations, it may be a starting point for future investigations.

Women in peasant family

The main factor which delays the modernization of relationships within the peasant family is the unity of the farmstead and the household. This single feature is the cause of the traditional distribution of spheres of activity and the connected with it distribution of roles between husband and wife: the farm and the man in the role of a farmer; the house and homestead with the woman in the role of a mother and housekeeper.

The situation is especially difficult for a woman in a peasant family due to the fact that she is constantly forced to weigh the priority of the two roles, at one point giving more attention to the farmstead, in another to the house and children.

Though barriers exist in the form of definite relations be-

³ Cp. G. Chrobot, B. Chróścicka, Pozycja i rola kobiety w rodzinie chłopskiej i robotniczej (The Woman's Position and Role in the Peasant and Worker's Family) [The Master's Thesis written under the supervision of dr Ewa Malinowska, in the Department of Rural and Urban Sociology of the University of Łódź], Łódź 1981.

tween the workplace, and the house and family, it was observed that in the peasant family there exists a trend towards changes in the direction of a partnership family.

The position of the woman in the family changed significantly together with the change related to her role as a housekeeper. This role always had in other types of families its unique dimension and range of functions. The examined families stressed the fact of an increase in the significance of this role of the housekeeper which was connected with home and family. The point of the matter was the growing importance attached to the appearance and cleanliness of the house, to a determined standard of dressing and style of living in the eyes of the husband and the children. This found its result in the modernization of the household (the purchase of the refrigerator, washing machine, vacuum cleaner, installation of a gas line, etc.). The independence of women in fulfilling this role and the pursuits of other members of the family in meeting these demands brought the position of the woman to a higher status in the eyes of the woman herself.

Today in the contemporary peasant family great importance is attached to the upbringing and education of children. In this sphere of family life, more than in any others, tradition and contemporary trends collide. The upbringing of children of preschool age is exclusively the women's domain. Social institutions such as day care centres are not of a significant help since often they do not exist in the villages or their help does not sufficiently satisfy the needs. Women-mothers of small children constantly face the choice of what they would like to offer their children, and what they are hardly able to offer due to the participation of women in work on the farm. In this sphere we find the traditional priority of work on the farm over work for the house and family: the rhythm of work on the farm determines the range and means of realizing the role of the mother (Women, for example presented the opinion that in the summer and autumn, that is during the time of intensified work on the farm, the children "need only be dry and fed". In the winter, though, organized playtime appears as an important element of the children's upbringing.)

The education and upbringing of older children in the peas-

ant family is of two dimensions: learning at school, doing homework at home, and teaching children to participate actively in work done at home and on the farm. (All the examined families declared the priority of school education seeing it as the first duty of the child, primary to that of work on the farm.) The participation of men in realizing the "everyday" role of the father is an important element in the process of breaking the traditional distribution of roles and functions in the peasant family. In the examined families this role of men took the form of life interest in the educational achievements of the child, help in doing the homework, as well as control over the educational progress.

As if in return, women began to participate more and more actively in exercising the men's role of a manager of the farm and decided jointly with the husband about the direction and scale of investments in the farm, about the purchase of machines and farm tools. They themselves displayed initiative in some projects as for example: arranging for bringing the running water supply to the farm, organizing the transport for the purchased farm equipment, etc.

Training the children to participate in work done on the farm and at home is carried out in a traditional manner: the sons are taught by the fathers to perform more "male" jobs, the daughters learn from the mothers to perform the traditionally "female" activities. Nevertheless, it is an important factor in the equalization of relationships within the family because: first of all, both the parents take part in realizing this function, secondly, the children are prepared to participate in the everyday functioning of the family and its work place.

Traditionalism in upbringing the sons and daughters also through work is at the same time confronted constantly with the fact of growing "exchangeability" of the functions and roles of the parents. One needs to add that in no other of the examined types of families is the process of the children's cooperation in fulfilling the basic functions of the family realized with such consistency as in the peasant family. (This takes place mainly because the process would require relatively constant contacts of children with parents, and in the case of separate spheres of work and family life, this is almost impossible.)

Although women from peasant families retain certain functions solely for themselves, as for example: care of the ill, and the cultivation of holiday and other traditions, it was stressed that men now engage in once traditionally female functions, as for example help in the household.

One could state that in the peasant family the positions of the men and women are slowly leveled through the participation of women in realizing some traditionally male roles and through the participation of men in exclusively female spheres of activity⁴. (The active participation of women in substituting men in their production functions comes across such barriers as the insufficient mechanization of farms which could recompensate the "feebleness" of the weaker sex and which could allow for performing the heavy work.)

The significant element which could become an accelerating factor for the equalization of relationships within this type of family is that of developing in the children the habit of co-operating with the parents in realizing the basic everyday functions of the family.

The factor which retards or rather makes it difficult for the changes to appear is the naturally strong bond between the farm, and the house and family, which to a great extent modifies some of the family roles even if the concept of these roles is a contemporary one. At the same time, the woman from the peasant family is not assisted by sufficiently developed services, shopping centres or day care-educational institutions for the children. Even these functions which could be even temporarily (e.g. in the summer or autumn) carried out beyond the family thus relieving the women from their heavy load of work, still need to be within her scope of duties. Thus even any small amount of help on the part of the husband and children constitutes for these women an enormous relief.

The changes taking place in a peasant family are a proof of a tendency to consolidate its peasant character since the scale and range of these changes are conditioned by the pursuit to maintain the family character of the farm.

⁴ Cp. B. T r a y f a n, *Rodzina wiejska* (The Rural Family), Warszawa 1977.

Woman in the worker's family

In all the workers' families we have studied, women did occupational work out of home. Their position in the family equalled their husbands' position, since it is in the workers' families that the fact of earning to support the family was a fundamental determinant of "the head of a family" position along with the privilege of wielding authority in this social group. Originally, this role and its high position due to it was a domain of men. Thus, the undertaking of occupational work by women is a basic factor equalling their position with that of the husband.

The woman in a worker's family has become the man's partner in securing one of the basic functions of the family. Let's ask, then, if the man has become the woman's partner in realizing her traditional household - family roles instead.

It is difficult to give a univocal answer to this question, since in the families studied, the woman was almost entirely substituted by the man in the household duties, but only during her absence from home caused by the fact of work or in other emergency situations. When they both worked at the same time, the man had free time after his work, while the woman undertook household activities, counting, at most, on her husband's or children's slight assistance in doing her duties. Helping their older children with doing homework and shopping are the roles in which men substitute their wives a little more readily and oftener than occasionally. Participation of children in household activities is a ticklish problem for women from workers' families. Accustoming children to help with housework is treated here in a traditional way as a task for women. The fact of children's participation in the work for the house and family is still treated as "coming to mother's help" and not as a chance of reaching a position of the parents' partner. Whereas, most of mothers of the families studied worked in shifts, and the children learnt in school working in shifts as well. It means that the mothers stayed with their children only from time to time. Then, however, the mothers had too little time to train their children to perform certain functions, not to speak of reminding them of some duties.

Hence, in every-day life, members of a worker's family are engrossed in their own roles and functions: the man is mainly engrossed in work, the children in school and the woman in occupational work and household.

It may be partly due to the fact that the women from workers' families are often assisted by various institutions. In the families studied, e.g. none of the women took a leave for bringing up children, but they consigned the young child to the care of nurseries and nursery schools.

However, the women of workers' families do not free themselves from all the roles very fast despite the existing conditions. For instance, in most cases, the parents eat at factory canteens and their children in school canteens, but on non-working days the women always cook themselves; they rarely send their linen to the laundry and they never make use of house-work services.

Men's traditionalism is another factor delaying the acquiring of partnership family character by the worker's family. Men relieve their wives of some definite functions, but in their consciousness it is still encoded as "relieving", and not as new, more adequate to the family with the mother-wife doing occupational work, division of labour in the family.

Thus, in workers' families, women's occupational work has turned out to be the most important factor egalitarizing the relations between husband and wife, while the model of a family being realized is an example of occasional partnership and is not always a reflection of modern conception of division of roles between husband and wife and between parents and children. The sign of egalitarization in this type of family is an increasingly prevailing habit of making common decisions about more important purchases for the family members or the household, common planning of leaves and holidays, common planning of the children's future, their occupations and line of education.

In our opinion, this common wielding authority in the worker's family is a simple consequence of women's economic self-dependence, and not an intentional change resulting from the conception of the partnership family model assumed.

Woman in the peasant-worker's family

Each voluntary, small social group is a strong community of its members' aims, therefore, all the basic changes are advisable and undertaken from the point of view of the group's interests, and its members are inventive and active in securing, realizing and consolidating this, profitable for the group, state of affairs.

In our studies, the families of peasant-workers have turned out to be an example of such openness and flexibility and almost immediate adaptation to essential changes in the model of existence prevailing hitherto. This essential change in the family life was the fact of taking up a job by the farmer outside his own farm (in industry, building trade). Such a decision is, of course, made in some definite conditions, i.e. if there is an appropriate labour market and possibilities of being employed by the man and when there is a chance of relieving the woman of some of her traditional functions, the chance offered by an access to the nursery school or nursery. Sometimes, the children's age is taken into account - having school-age children exempts the woman from taking care of the child for several hours. In schools there are sometimes day-rooms where the children can also get a hot meal.

The first and essential consequence of the fact of the man's occupational activation outside the farm is his limited presence on the farm and in the family. This, in turn, is of decisive importance to changes in the range of roles and functions realized by women and men on the farm and in the family, hence to their position in the family. In peasant-workers' families, the traditional position of the woman changes - the house and farmyard ceases to be her only domain which now comprises the farm as well. Thus, she takes over men's traditional activities and starts playing traditionally man's role - the role of a farmer. The women's position in the family is strengthened nearly from day to day. It is interesting that in the families studied, the women themselves identify themselves with new functions and they readily activate in the roles of farm managers. A big change in their situation is representation of the farm,

for example, in the rural or district community, in the institutions for agricultural services, etc. Of course, the decisions concerning farming, also in these families are made in common by husband and wife, but it is the woman who realizes them. In this sense, the occupational activation of the woman in a peasant-workers' family (as a farmer) can be considered a consequence of the man's occupational activation in non-farm jobs.

The man's absence from the farm and family is repalced by heightened activity of women, especially one the farm. Then, what happens to traditionally women's roles whose functions require intense everyday activity as well? As it has been said before, part of tasks resulting from, e.g. the mother's role are taken over by social institutions, in some cases they are turned over to the older generation - grandmothers and grandfathers. In turn, a certain set of functions belonging traditionally to the housewife's role is taken over by the husband - it concerns providing the family with food products and other articles bought by the husbands in the town or city and brought home by them. The contact with "urban style life" leads to modernization of the household, which allows the woman, playing the role of a farmer, to save time needed for the realization of the housewife's role. Of course, it should be remembered that in a peasant-worker's family the farm is usually small and that these farms often adopt such a pattern of agricultural production as to make the possibility of woman's reconciling different roles real.

In spite of this, it should be noted that the partnership in these families gains a particular dimension - it is genuine co-operation of husband and wife in the situation of the change in the manner of functioning of the family and farm; the co-operation resulting from heightened occupational activity of both sides and realized on the basis of the change in the area of the activity pursued hitherto and the change in the range of roles and functions performed by both sides.

Lack of consistency in accustoming children to everyday duties and turning over part of the functions resulting from parental roles to other persons or institutions is what makes the image of the peasant-worker's family slightly similar to that of the next type of the families studied, i.e. to the worker's fa-

mily. The feature likening this type of family to the peasant family discussed is leaving to the woman the role of maintaining family and Christmas or Easter traditions and the protective role in the case of an illness in the family, etc.

Double occupational activation: of the man outside farming, and of the woman as a farmer is what makes the peasant-worker's family obtain the features of a partnership family. Certain traditionalism of these families is conditioned by the fact of living in a rural community, on the other hand, continual contacts of these families with urban style of life make some features of the urbanized family be adopted by them.

In this family, as in the peasant family, there is eagerness for consolidation of its agricultural-rural character, which manifests itself in keeping and using the farm.

The above comments make us draw the following conclusions:

1) In all the types of the families studied, a tendency towards the equalling of the woman's and the man's position has been observed.

2) The manner of realization of the partnership family model is different in the types of the families studied, since it is bound with specific features of the family and its field of activity.

3) In the peasant-worker's and worker's family, women's occupational activation, e.g. participation in realization of the economic function of the family is the most important factor promoting egalitarianization. This fact is the basis for participation in wielding authority by the woman, it is also the reason for introducing new division of labour in the family in the sphere of household. An additional factor promoting egalitarianization in the peasant-worker's family, is the fact that the woman represents the farm outside, while in the worker's family it is the fact that the woman has her own system of reference outside the family.

In the peasant family egalitarianization is promoted by women's activity in obtaining participation in the authority in the family, introducing modification of division of labour in the family by them, and participation of children in the work important to the existence and functioning of the family.

4) The latter factor in workers' and peasant-workers' families

should be included in the ones that delay egalitarianization of the inter-family relations, since children's participation in the realization of important functions of the family was slight. The traditionalism of men and women of the peasant and workers' families as regards the division of roles and functions in the family should be included in the same group of factors hindering egalitarianization. In these families, occasional partnership is not accompanied by the changes in the consciousness of the family members, which would testify to the acceptance of the conception of the egalitarian family model. In this sense, the peasant-worker's family is the most progressive.

5) The external conditions of functioning of the family⁵ have turned out to be considered significant, where they were unsatisfactory (the countryside), whereas, these conditions were not used and the women's traditionalism in performing roles and functions prevailed, where there were enough institutions assisting the family.

It should be added that stereotype viewpoint as regards inconveniences of leading "rural life" and privileges of urban families are not justified, since a large city is varied in this respect as well. Housing estates being built in the areas of large cities are, like small villages, badly-equipped with a fundamental set of institutions, which taking into account a long distance between the place of work and the place of residence, calls into question the privileges of urban families as regards the external conditions of their functioning.

Ewa Malinowska

KOBIETA W RODZINIE CHŁOPSKIEJ I ROBOTNICZEJ

Pozycja i rola kobiety w rodzinie to jeden z podstawowych czynników różnicujących rodziny polskie.

Badania, z których wnioski chcemy zaprezentować, miały na celu porównanie pozycji i roli kobiety w rodzinie chłopskiej, zamieszkującej wieś rolniczą i rodzinie robotniczej, zamieszkującej

⁵ "External conditions of functioning of the family" have been reduced, in the present paper, to the fundamental facilities of the socio-spatial environment in which the family lives.

w wielkim mieście przemysłowym. W badaniach wzięły udział rodziny młode, posiadające dwoje lub troje dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym albo szkolnym, samodzielnie ekonomicznie, dwupokoleniowe.

W obu typach rodzin stwierdzono utrzymywanie się w pewnym zakresie tradycyjnego podziału na role kobiece i męskie, ale równocześnie włączanie się mężczyzn do ról dawniej tradycyjnie kobiecych oraz podejmowania przez kobiety niektórych ról tradycyjnie męskich. Struktura decyzji dotyczących domu, rodziny, przyszłości dzieci itp. ukazała wzmocnienie pozycji kobiety w badanych rodzinach. Pozycja kobiety w rodzinie chłopskiej i robotniczej wzmacnia się stopniowo wraz z tendencją do uzyskiwania przez nie charakteru rodziny partnerskiej. Inaczej wygląda to w innym typie rodzin wiejskich, a mianowicie w rodzinie chłopo-robotniczej, gdzie pozycja kobiety wzrasta nieomal natychmiast po przejściu męża do pracy poza rolnictwem i zyskaniu przez kobietę roli kierownika gospodarstwa produkcyjnego. Nasuwa się przypuszczenie, że z podobnym zjawiskiem możemy mieć do czynienia w rodzinach robotniczych chłopskiego pochodzenia (robotniczych w pierwszym pokoleniu), w których wzrost pozycji kobiety jest także dość szybki i jest związany z podjęciem przez nią pracy zawodowej i uzyskaniem niezależności ekonomicznej.

Zewnętrzne uwarunkowania funkcjonowania rodziny uzyskały w cytowanych badaniach zaskakujące oceny. Niedogodność życia "po wiejsku" wynikające z braku podstawowych instytucji wspomagających kobiety w wypełnianiu jej ról i utrudniających codzienne funkcjonowanie rodziny są także udziałem rodzin robotniczych zamieszkujących współczesne osiedla mieszkaniowe usytuowane na obrzeżach wielkiego miasta.

Zewnętrzne warunki funkcjonowania rodziny okazały się jeszcze jednym podobieństwem, choć do niedawna stanowiły istotny czynnik różnicujący i pogłębiający różnice między rodzinami, z wyraźnym wskazaniem na upośledzenie wsi i rodziny chłopskiej oraz uprzywilejowanie wielkomiejskiej rodziny robotniczej.

Generally speaking, however, they are complex, and both changes and processes taking place in the whole society as well as these relations that belong to the meso scale should be included in them. Cp. E. M a l i n o w s k a, Evolution du statut de la femme dans la famille, the paper presented at the symposium on "L'évolution des modes familiaux dans les pays de l'Est et en URSS", Paris 1986 [in print].