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SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DETERMINANTS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS IN POLAND

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship is one of the most important factors of economic success in the terms of the market economy. The paper attempts to explore social and cultural context of entrepreneurship development in Polish rural areas. System of values, morality, attitudes and social influence can stimulate or limit rural entrepreneurship. To examine this issue the author concentrates on the communist system, which destroyed the ethos of work, independence and activity of Polish farmers. Looking at the transformation process after 1989 in Poland in rural areas, the author explores that resignation and passivity predominated among rural people. Current sociological research presents that a small percentage of rural residents is trying to actively influence their fate and economic position. They select life strategies of “waiting out” or “belt-tightening” much more frequently. Rural entrepreneurship in Poland is strongly supported by family and neighbourhood relationships and the peasant tradition of “working in private farm” learned from many years of ownership and farm management. The analysis concerns the peculiarity of rural entrepreneurship having not only economic, but also the social dimension. The paper is based on the relevant academic literature, statistics, public opinion research and empirical studies of rural communities in Poland.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, rural areas, culture, attitudes, farmers, transformation

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship studying has become a necessity in terms of the Polish political and economic system transformation after 1989. Entrepreneurship is one of the key success factors in terms of the market economy, determining

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entrepreneurs', companies', or certain social and professional groups' efficiency and economic success. It also refers to the ethos of an individual, consisting of standards, values and motivations to act. Linking between entrepreneurship concept and business activity dominates in the literature on the subject; however, it will be used in a broader context in the paper, as the characteristic of personality and attitude, demonstrated in empowerment, activity and being resourceful. These qualities of an individual determine his/her satisfaction and success, and they support the development of this individual's milieu (Fedyszak-Radziejowska and Kłodziński, 2002: 26).

Social and cultural context of entrepreneurship development refers to the ideas, values, and social environment, which can stimulate or limit individual entrepreneurship. Culture imposes certain standards of behaviour, which are the values and opinions of the community manifestation. The role of beliefs, values, and attitudes in economic development was the subject of Max Weber consideration, who described the influence of the Protestant religion on the development of capitalism (Weber, 1994).

The rural entrepreneurship development is limited, due to difficult access of entrepreneurs to financial and consulting services, as well as, the limited nature of the local markets. The dimension of these barriers is not only formal and legal. The system of values, mentality, attitudes and behaviour of the villages' inhabitants should be examined in order to implement effective policies to promote entrepreneurship in these areas. Due to a higher level of unemployment, a lower chance of employment, and limited access to education, health or transport services, rural areas in Poland are vulnerable to marginalization and developmental backwardness. Formation of entrepreneurial attitudes of Polish village inhabitants is a challenge for public authorities, and sustainable rural development will not be possible without this. The entrepreneurship development in rural areas, reflected in the economic initiatives growth, is not only desirable, but; from the perspective of the interests of inhabitants, also essential.

After Poland accession to the European Union in 2004, Polish village has taken advantage of a number of financial instruments of the cohesion policy and the Common Agricultural Policy, aimed at the financial support for the development of rural areas in Poland. The programmes financed from the European Union's budget, relate to both: the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation in the agricultural sector and other sectors of the rural economy, inter alia: tourism, recreation, natural resources management and services development. They mainly focus on promoting the development of micro-enterprises, which play economic and social roles in the small local communities. The implementation of the various programmes should foster entrepreneurial attitudes and promote rural inhabitants' professional activity in the economic field, mainly through the advice and consultations organizing; not only for business establishing but also business running, to operate on the market successfully.

The entrepreneurship level of rural areas inhabitants is dependent not only on the legal, institutional and financial conditions, but equally on the social and

cultural factors. Although entrepreneurship is an individual feature, as the result of knowledge, competence, skill, courage, ingenuity and activity, social and cultural context can strengthen or weaken the entrepreneurial attitudes of individuals. The rural communities' mentality in Poland, formed under the certain historical conditions influence, mainly of real socialism system, is defined by sociologists as not susceptible to change. Hence, may result the pessimism, insecurity and uncertainty, fear and passivity of the rural areas inhabitants prior to the new challenges. Katarzyna Duczkowska-Małysz claims that entrepreneurship in rural areas in Poland in the period of transformation, meant the ability to adapt to market economy requirements (Duczkowska-Małysz, 1993: 8).

The purpose of the paper is to define the social and cultural conditions for the entrepreneurship development in rural areas in Poland, which is seen as one of the factors reducing the marginalization of rural areas and unfavourable phenomena occurring there, such as: unemployment, poverty, economic stagnation, apathy and depopulation. Research will concentrate on the changes in rural areas as a result of the structural transformation and Poland accession to the European Union. Both events have after-effects in the social and cultural sphere. In the article the impact of social capital on entrepreneurial attitudes of the rural areas inhabitants will be also presented.

2. Peculiarity of rural entrepreneurship

As the result of the large interest of the researchers on entrepreneurship subject, in the scientific literature there are many definitions of it. Tadeusz Hunek suggests it is an activity connected with a business activity which aims at profit, dominated by micro companies, in the context of rural entrepreneurship. (Hunek, 1993:42). This is mainly due to the limited scope of the local market, low demand caused by low income of a local population and investments outflow on areas, which are better developed and equipped with the necessary structures. Low level of public services, especially difficult educational attainment are not incentives to start up business (OECD, 2006: 32). According to Iwona Nurzyńska low level of human capital and a shortage of skilled labour are the crucial factors which limit rural entrepreneurship development. Limited access to the training institutions hinders economic activity (Nurzyńska, 2011: 116). Poor rural technical infrastructure is another problem not only social but economic as well. In the absence of local roads, water mains and drainage the costs of running business in rural areas are higher than in cities (Kociszewska, 2010: 40).

Entrepreneurship can play a key role in the rural areas development. Firstly, in the rural population incomes increasing, which are significantly lower in contrast to the urban residents' incomes. Higher revenue positively affects the living standard of the rural population and also; by the increase in consumption, the development of local markets and the increase in the purchasing power of their participants. Business increasing results in the appearance of more posts, not only

for persons starting business activities, but also through the additional posts creation by rural entrepreneurs.

The economic initiative of the rural inhabitants will certainly contribute to the change of economic structure in rural areas. Non-agricultural economic activity development promotes reducing an evident unemployment and also “hidden” one, which is characteristic for the agricultural sector in Poland. Despite the ongoing systematic decline in the number of persons employed in agriculture in Poland for several years, this process raises specific challenges in the form of absorption of the released labour force and exploitation of the potential of it. Entrepreneurship should be an alternative, at least for the part of people retiring from agriculture. There is also an opportunity to move away from the political thinking of the village in sector, agricultural categories. This approach requires, however, the adaptation of rural inhabitants to functioning in the new reality, and entrepreneurship refers to the ability to search for new business opportunities, based on the use of specific local potential in rural areas (Kaleta, 1997: 24).

Development of non-agricultural economic activities can facilitate the process of modernization, not only agriculture, but also it can strengthen the multifunctionality of rural areas. The increase of non-agricultural economic activity, particularly in the services sector, will bring other numerous advantages; in a long run, the inhibition of the exodus of the rural population to the cities. The new jobs generated by the entrepreneurial attitudes can encourage residents to remain in the villages and cause an inflow of urban populations to rural areas. Such trends are being observed in parts of Western Europe, where some people decide to live and work in the countryside, owing to the high quality of life in rural areas.

Rural entrepreneurship has not only economic, but also the social dimension equally. Carrying out certain types of economic activities in rural areas not only contributes to the incomes of residents increasing, but; to various extents, provides residents with a better access to specific public or commercial services, which deficit is particularly noticeable in rural areas, not only in Poland, but also in other European Union’s countries. I particularly mean health and education facilities at the elementary level, as well as, transport and recreational services, owing to the low level of small municipalities incomes, are supplied by public authorities to the limited extent. This creates a broad field for business establishment, which generates profit for entrepreneurs and meets the basic needs of local communities. Rural enterprises primarily are small family businesses, based on the ingenuity, courage, organizational skills and intuition of the business owners (Kłodziński, 2010: 21). They remain in close association with the surrounding, because local residents and municipalities are the main recipients of their services. Hence, the social context of the functioning of rural enterprises is very important.

Due to the deficit in the services of a commercial nature, the countryside appears as a chance for the entrepreneurship development in sectors such as construction, broadband internet, consultancy and training services, as well as, postal and financial services. In addition, due to the environmental and cultural Polish village wealth, another sector requiring management is active, semi-natural

business; in particular, farmtourism (Jędrzyak, 2010: 20–23). Despite the fact that the development potential of rural areas in Poland is fairly rich, it is worth noting that there is a significant shortage of business environment supporting rural entrepreneurship (Dziemianowicz, 2000: 133). Numerous technological parks and business development centres have been created in urban areas, also with financial support from the structural funds; there is a lack of them in rural areas.

Interesting approach to the rural entrepreneurship is represented by Marek Kłodziński from the Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development Polish Academy of Sciences. The researcher concludes that the “Entrepreneurship today in the village does not have to be associated only with the activities of the operators and their owners but this also as a widely understood social activity” (Kłodziński, 2006: 70). Rural entrepreneurship concerns the individuals, who decide to establish and run the own companies, which is connected both benefits and risks, and the inhabitants, who activate a local community in overcoming passivity and other developmental barriers. High quality social capital can strengthen the entrepreneurial attitudes and activities in the rural economy.

The opportunity to use the local potential and meet the local needs is the social entrepreneurship development, due to the specific characteristics of the rural environment. Its definition is presented in one of the subsequent sections, however, it is worth pointing out that this type of entrepreneurship focused on profits, as well as, on collective objectives. In addition, the social entrepreneurship is rooted in the community, which means that it is a response to the specific local needs. It is worth noting that this type of entrepreneurship supports inclusion of people marginalized for different reasons on the labour market. In addition, it is based on the collective action, aspiration to stir up those “helpless and excluded (...), who can only dream about equal opportunities” (Hausner, 2008: 27). Although social entrepreneurship often becomes a result of economic coercion, rather than free choice and it is centrally supported by external institutions, it can use and activate the local social capital.

3. Transformation of rural communities and the development of entrepreneurial attitudes

Rural communities are subject to the intensive transformation process that began in Poland in 1989. The system transformations of the Communists state in the direction of democracy and centrally-controlled economy toward the free market, were not only in political and economic sphere, but had a direct impact on the social and cultural aspect of the Polish country functioning. The second important breakthrough for the rural areas inhabitants was Poland accession to the European Union in 2004. Modernization and transformation processes were and still are the challenge for the rural inhabitants, creating opportunities for the development of the village, but at the same time, the risk of marginalization and economic collapse for many of them. Entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviours of the inhabitants are determined by social and cultural conditions, which are reflected in specific responses to the changing reality.

In the real socialism system, authorities assessed farmers' activity depending on the phase of the system. After 1945, a priority for the Communists country became a liquidation of private property, rural and agriculture collectivization. Farmers were one of the most resistant social class to the impact of the Communist ideology. They strongly defended the right to their land, which was not only of the economic importance and treated as a source of income, but also of spiritual and symbolic meaning. Husbandry was identified with moral obligation to care for "Mother Earth", providing a prosperous existence. Individual agriculture which was more rational and efficient than the economic activities carried out within the framework of the State-owned farms, was initially the object of attacks of the Communist State authority. Private entrepreneurship; both urban and rural, was seen by authorities as a threat to the stability of the system (Wesołowska, 2003)².

Together with the process of liberalization of the Polish Workers' Party policy towards the society, the approach to farmers and the role that they played in the economy was changing. Expression of these changes were the reform introduced by Edward Gierek, which contributed to strengthening the civilization gap between the city and village in the long run. Admittedly, income of Polish farmers increased in conditions of the economic crisis and a limited food supplies, but it was constantly consumed and not invested. In the later period it became a reason of low competitiveness of agriculture in Poland and difficulties in adapting to the requirements of the market economy (Szafraniec, 2002: 85).

Firstly, the rural inhabitants were mainly identified with peasants, and the village was associated with a place of agricultural industry. Secondly, specific legal and economic solutions, such as: the creation of the Fund for the agricultural social security system, preferential social benefits system for farmers, provided the market with agricultural goods regardless of economic calculation, and this had the consequences in social and cultural areas. Social support system led to the formation of passive, expectant and claim attitudes and in fact; rather than strengthen the agricultural sector, led to its collapse. Farmers, as recipients of the specific measures of care from the state loose their motivation to action, especially in the economic dimension. Entrepreneurship did not have, therefore, opportunities for the development under a centrally-planned economy, which destroyed the ethos of work, independence and activity of Polish farmers. The traditional values of Polish countrymen were replaced by passivity and waiting for assistance from the state taught by the system. This issue was particularly revealed during the economic reform undertaken by Leszek Balcerowicz, when agricultural activity was involved in market game rules. The open market economy has set the new requirements before residents of the rural areas, related to the growth initiative, mobility, activity, which are difficult to face with regard to cultural reasons.

² Expression of hostility, both the authorities and the majority of Polish society to the private entrepreneurs were terms: greengrocers or *prywaciarze* operating in the common language.

The increasing of political support for populist parties, representing the interests of farmers, mainly *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (Polish Peasant Party)* and *Samoobrona (Self-Defense)* of Andrzej Lepper, was an expression of loss of faith in the effectiveness of economic activities to improve living conditions among the rural residents. The process of radicalization of the rural population was the result of systemic transformation, which was not accompanied by financial, educational and information support from the state, needed in time of change. The lack of understanding and acceptance of the logic of the transformation processes, often created passive or even anti-systemic attitudes.

A new opportunity for the rural inhabitants came with the Polish accession to the European Union. Not only the Polish agriculture, but also Polish rural areas gained widespread financial ability to support development processes, mainly under the Common Agricultural and Rural Development Policy (Michalewska-Pawlak, 2010: 161–162). With the emergence of financing new opportunities for business and entrepreneurship, there has been a slow process of moving away from the attitudes of resignation and passivity. Although the initial level of trust of the rural population to the European Union was limited, now people express their support for integration processes due to positive results of the Common Agricultural Policy. Polish accession to the European Union improved the economic situation of the rural inhabitants, but also resulted in cultural change in the perception of rural problems by the Polish authorities. Although the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union has the anti-market and protectionist orientation, it caused the back of the issue of the village and its development in the public discourse. The rural residents have been increasingly activated thanks to its impact.

Since 2000, for the first time in 30 years the positive net of internal migration has been noticed; the population living in rural areas has been slowly but steadily growing, and in the light of data from 2009 it is 39 percent of the total population (Central Statistical Office, 2010: 227). It has the social and cultural implications, because the influx of external population has an impact on the attitudes of the indigenous population in the long run.

The level of persons employed in agriculture has been systematically reduced; in 2006, it was 14.7 percent of the total employed population, and in 2009 it was only 13.3 percent (Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, 2011: 43). This means that agriculture loses the status of the main branch of the rural economy, leaving the undeveloped area for development of the services sector. Also, the model of agriculture currently promoted by the EU assumes to extend its functions beyond the tasks associated with food production. This implies openness to change, not only of people coming down from agriculture, forced to outplacement, but also of the farmers, whose holdings are increasingly forced to operate on the principles of companies that provide additional services related to environmental protection, recreation, tourism or craft. The processes of social and economic transformation that have occurred as a result of Polish accession to the European Union, contribute to a change in attitudes and

behaviours of rural residents, who have to be active, and to become the beneficiary of these changes.

4. Cultural barriers of entrepreneurship development in rural areas in Poland

Analyzing the impact of cultural factors on the development of entrepreneurship, it is needed to refer to several aspects. The first is the level of individualism, which indicates how many individuals are ready to take up the self-activity and responsibility, in relation to collective action. Another relates to the values cherished in a personal life, whether they have an individualistic dimension: competition, the success or a communal dimension: collaboration, relationships. The way of dealing with uncertainty and attitudes towards change, as well as, focus on long-term perspective and the ability to invest in the future, associated with virtues such as: thrift, patience, and perseverance determine the level of entrepreneurship (Howe, 2002: 206). On the threshold of systemic change among the population engaged in agriculture there was a conviction that the best form of rural interests protection is not economic activity but above all a strong representation of farmers' interests in national and community political structures. This attitude was the result of passivity and attempts to transfer responsibility for its fate to external entities, and in this case these were the state authorities. Rural residents want to improve their financial situation, not through their own activity, but primarily through the implementation of social policies in support of their financial situation. Government policy should undoubtedly promote entrepreneurship of rural residents using the legal, financial or advisory tools but cannot substitute the bottom-up individual activity. Communist state managing the economy under a system of central planning until 1989, restricted the entrepreneurial aspirations of the rural population. The policies towards the rural population strengthened its claims, distrust and reluctance to cooperation and risk taking (Krzyminiewska, 2010: 154).

A major threat is the passivity of the inhabitants of rural areas and a focus on the current present. Social changes gave the uncertainty, alienation and threat feelings, particularly in light of the policy towards the village and its inhabitants after 1989. Limited access of rural communities to the institution of advisory, training, and a small number of NGOs, which promote cultural change in the democratic societies, caused the mental barriers progressing. This problem is related mainly to areas of former state farms, where there was accumulation of all the problems of the Polish rural areas. Social and professional passivity of the population is not only an economic but also cultural issue. Thus, stimulation of economic activity is not only a need of creating opportunities, but also of monitoring progress. One such project was implemented in Płoskinia community, where instead of paying social benefits for the unemployed, they decided to give them specific resources of management in a form of livestock, potatoes and cereals. The activity opportunities were created for the unemployed, limiting the policy of

lazy making and humiliation of communities through social assistance reduction (Trusewicz, 1998).

It is worth recalling that entrepreneurship, which is expressed in making attempts to run business mainly, is a subject to a considerable degree of risk. Pessimism and a lack of self-confidence of the rural population weakens the driving motivation for taking up activities in the economic sphere. The change of mindset of the rural population about their role in economic processes and the possibilities of influencing of the local communities life is as important as financial support and implementation of development programmes in many cases. Mistrust, fear and risk incurring a failure, inhibit the economic initiatives of the rural population effectively.

At the same time, in sociological research, villagers appear as a group with significant capacity to adapt to all conditions. This conclusion, however, does not indicate their willingness to take up challenges, take risks and adopt entrepreneurial attitudes. They select life strategies of "waiting out" or "belt-tightening" much more frequently. This means that creativity is replaced by passivity, which is the result of aware choice to ensure the survival in the material and social difficulties. A small percentage of rural residents is trying to actively influence their fate and economic position. Despite the difficulties, few of them use the courses and professional trainings. This phenomenon can be described as learned helplessness, which refers to the individuals who have lost the sense of influence in their own destiny and do not see the relationship between individual activities and the possibility of their position improving.

The main motive for taking up economic activities by villagers is a desire to improve their financial situation. The level of entrepreneurship is; therefore, primarily dependent on living conditions, to a lesser extent, the entrepreneurial attitude expresses the desire for independence or a desire to self-realization. Entrepreneurship and economic activity of rural population are often associated with the need to acquire new competencies, learning a new profession, and even changing the lifestyle. This is a serious challenge for rural communities engaged in the soil cultivation or animal husbandry, because the job and spatial mobility force individuals to make the organizational and intellectual effort. Implementation of the new plans and ideas require extra time and often patience in waiting for concrete results, which involves starting a business or other types of activity.

The traditional culture of the Polish countryside is based on strong family and neighbourhood relationships and a commitment to work on the farm, especially in the absence of access to external factors supporting enterprise development, contributes to making the people more active. The confirmation of this thesis are the results of studies conducted in 108 small rural companies located in the north part of Poland. Although the main motive of setting up a business was loss of job, the family financial assistance allowed to start the projects. Strong family bonds guaranteed financial capital and support for rural entrepreneur, without which he would have no chance to start a new business. The study's authors also stressed that the peasant tradition of "working in private farm" learned from many years of

ownership and farm management, was one of the key elements of entrepreneurial success (Hałasiewicz and Kaleta, 2000).

The economy market facilitation has also had its impact on the change of life goals and aspirations of the rural population. The research carried out in 2001 on the psychological, social and educational potential of the Polish countryside, shows that the desire for a sense of security among the rural population, has been replaced by the need for consumption. 56.8 percent of respondents consider it as their main goal in life. On the other hand, 67 percent of surveyed rural residents prefer a post that gives job security and effortless, which means that the high aspirations in life and material needs do not necessarily mean a willingness to take the effort to achieve those (Michalska, 2006: 227, 229). Entrepreneurship of the rural residents is not so deeply rooted in their axiology, it rather fulfils a secondary role, less important than the material stabilization.

5. Social capital as a source of entrepreneurial attitudes among residents of rural areas

Shaping the entrepreneurial potential of the rural population depends largely on the social environment that can support or inhibit economic initiatives of individuals. The state of social environment could be defined in terms of social capital. This concept is widely discussed both in literature and commentary, due to the popularity of the theory showing its important role in the economic development. The most common definitions of social capital of Pierre Bourdieu, James S. Coleman, Robert Putnam and Francis Fukuyama, point a positive dimension of collective actions which generate the desired results for individuals, social relations and institutions (Klimowicz, 2010:43). Social capital, that is, common standards, especially the standard of reciprocity, values, trust and cooperation enhance the quality of civil society and democracy. Francis Fukuyama points out that it is equally important to the economy and individuals' participation in the economic capital. It causes a transaction costs reduction because the human, and especially economic, relations are based on mutual trust. Fukuyama's theory confirms the impact of cultural and normative sphere on the economy, including the entrepreneurial attitudes of individuals. Social capital is created through cultural mechanisms: religion, tradition or historical habit (Fukuyama, 1997: 37).

The social capital of a territorial unit refers to the relationships existing between the inhabitants, reflected in the number and quality of NGOs, which are active in the local environment. They can provide a range of direct services for local communities, associated with professional development and business consulting, but primarily affect the state of consciousness of individuals. Local NGOs have different roles associated with the promotion of entrepreneurship, its promotion and provision of information services. E. Stern mentions several ways of organizations' activity, which can create mechanisms of the unemployed or the excluded reintegration or it can facilitate access to finances for local business (Stern, 1992).

The example of a specific project has shown that NGOs can stimulate entrepreneurship in rural areas, through using the social and cultural potential development of the rural population. These activities should be adapted to the entrepreneurship development cycle (Zaremba, 2008: 161).

Three NGOs: the Institute of Public Affairs, Academy for the Development of Philanthropy in Poland and the Working Community of Social Organizations in Poland implemented the project between 2004 and 2007, to create the locally rooted social enterprises in rural areas with high level of unemployment, a predominance of agriculture and lack of opportunity of foreign investors attraction. The most important result of the project was the launch of seven social enterprises. Four of them were born in Lublin district, two in Elk district and one in Nidzica and Biłgoraj districts. The participants of the project have completed study visits in Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands and they had an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the similar businesses operations in other countries. In addition, non-governmental organizations gave substantial support to those, who were interested in running a social enterprise (Rymsza, 2008: 9). Participation of rural communities in the project implemented by NGOs enabled them to utilise social ties and use hidden cultural potential to cooperation. Although not all social enterprises came in the commercial success in the market reality, the third sector organisations inspired passive and apathetic people to business activity. Therefore their role in stimulating the entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviours is significant.

Social entrepreneurship is different from the traditional understanding of entrepreneurship, primarily because of the goals focused on generating social benefits. However, social entrepreneurship carries out the same role as traditional entrepreneurship: energizes people outside the labour market and it is an effective instrument to combat unemployment and social exclusion. Additionally, it provides recovery of subjectivity of the social groups excluded from the economic processes (Sobocka-Szczapa, 2010: 12)³. Moreover, social enterprises are subject to the same rules of functioning in a free market economy, as other types of economic activity. They must constantly evolve, compete for customers, win over the suppliers and search for markets for their products or services; they are subject to the risk of bankruptcy.

Social entrepreneurship should be rooted in the community and build on its internal potential. The results of the project *Toward the Polish model of social economy – we are building a New Lisków* show, that the success of social enterprises created in rural areas largely dependent on the presence of a leader or a social animator, who assisted passive and atomistic rural communities in decisions and actions. Very often, taking the activity up must be preceded by making people realize their need to be active and enterprising.

³ More about the peculiarity of social entrepreneurship: C. Miżejewski (2010), H. Sobocka-Szczapa (2010), J. Herbst (2006), J. Hausner (2008), www.ekonomiaspoleczna.pl, access: 06/01/2011.

The conclusions from the project indicate that the entrepreneurship development largely depends on the social and cultural specificity of the community, so the implementation of specific organization solutions needs to take into account the social and cultural environment and cannot be limited to copying ready-made solutions (Rymsza, 2008: 152). This thesis is also empirically confirmed in the macro-scale. The reaction of the rural inhabitants, mainly farmers, to rapid economic and social changes associated with the centrally planned economy towards a market economy transformation, resulted in misunderstanding and resistance to the liberalization of the economy and all, both positive and negative, consequences associated with this. The culture of individualism based on individual ingenuity and entrepreneurship is unfamiliar to Polish country and has proved to be unsuitable for the social and cultural norms.

High level of social capital refers not only to social organizations supporting entrepreneurship, but to individuals who have better access to other goods, necessary for economic activity, through their participation in the network of knowledge, contacts and affiliations. The research of Barbara Fedyszak-Radziejowska shows that there can be observed a deficit of the formal civil structures in the rural areas but there is a willingness to cooperate simultaneously (Fedyszak-Radziejowska, 2004: 33). In light of the results of a survey organized by the Public Opinion Research Centre in 2010, the level of readiness to cooperation in rural areas is 1.69 points on a scale from 0 to 4 and it is much lower than in urban areas (CBOS, 2010: 9). The biggest problem is lack of trust among residents of rural areas and the deficit in relation to the institutions and external stakeholders. Ties based on trust and a willingness to cooperate applies only to family and close friends, not to the local community and the public sphere (CBOS, 2010: 15, 17).

Poor quality of social capital causes individual and social limitations because not only to the community, but also the individuals benefit from a cooperation between people. Community may support the individuals in solving their problems, including the economic nature and support activity.

6. Summary

The analysis shows that the entrepreneurial attitude of rural people are associated with favourable social and cultural contexts to a small extent. Economic activity is rather due to the orientation to profit and consumption, than the social and cultural values such as individualism, hard work, savings or the self-development desire. Entrepreneurship is treated as a form of economic interests protection. This assertion is reflected in the results of the report *Entrepreneurship Survey of the EU25. Secondary analysis. Poland*. According to its conclusions more than a half of Poles start up business as “being pushed” by internal forces and circumstances. For most of them, a decision to take up an economic activity is more connected with the lack of alternative in labour market than with personal aspirations and ambitions. Most of respondents have a negative image of entrepreneurs: „they only think about their wallet and they exploit other people’s

work”. Poles prefer to be employees rather than to be employers. Readiness to take a risk is limited by the desire for social security and occupational stability (Eurobarometr, 2009: 3)

The results of *Entrepreneurship Survey* correspond with the results of regional entrepreneurship survey organised in świętokrzyskie region. The main motivation for starting up a business by entrepreneurs from rural areas in Świętokrzyskie Voivoidship was added source of income – 89% and the lack of job – 86%. Interests and hobbies were indicated only by 17% of entrepreneurs and 7.9% decided based their business on local demand for products and services. According to the author, it is an evidence that an economic activity in rural areas has no professional organisation (Gąsiorowska-Mącznik, 2011: 163–164). The basic form of rural company organizations are the micro-enterprises, based on the financial support from family and friends.

Due to limited opportunities for traditional activities in rural areas the importance of social entrepreneurship has been increasing. It is a specific type of economic activity, which aim is to activate individuals excluded from the labour market. Social entrepreneurship is also focused on the development of local communities where initiatives are implemented. The appropriate level of social capital, having been reflected in the trust, and cooperation between individuals is needed for the development of social entrepreneurship. Rural areas are characterized by a shortage of social capital.

Finally, it is worth noting that the social and cultural context of the low level of entrepreneurship of the rural population is largely the result of the impact of real socialism, which has limited self-reliance and initiative of the rural population. Cultural changes reflected in individual attitudes and behaviour are significantly slower than the political and economic changes.

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SPOŁECZNE I KULTUROWE DETERMINANTY ROZWOJU PRZEDSIĘBIORCZOŚCI NA OBSZARACH WIEJSKICH W POLSCE

Przedsiębiorczość jest jednym z najważniejszych czynników sukcesu ekonomicznego w warunkach gospodarki rynkowej. Celem artykułu jest wyjaśnienie społecznego i kulturowego kontekstu rozwoju przedsiębiorczości na obszarach wiejskich w Polsce. System wartości, moralność, postawy i wpływ społeczny mogą stymulować lub ograniczać wiejską przedsiębiorczość. W celu zweryfikowania powyższej tezy, autorka koncentruje się na analizie systemu komunistycznego, który zniszczył etos pracy, niezależność i aktywność polskich rolników. Proces transformacji polskiej wsi po 1989 r. tłumaczy rezygnację i pasywność dominujące wśród mieszkańców obszarów wiejskich. Badania socjologiczne pokazują, że niewielki procent mieszkańców wsi próbuje aktywnie wpływać na swój los i ekonomiczną pozycję. Większość z ich wybiera strategię „przetrwania” lub „zaciskania pasa”. Wiejska przedsiębiorczość w Polsce jest silnie uzależniona od stanu więzi rodzinnych i przyjacielskich oraz od chłopskiej tradycji pracy w gospodarstwie. Analiza dotyczy specyfiki przedsiębiorczości wiejskiej, która ma nie tylko wymiar ekonomiczny, ale również społeczny. Artykuł oparty jest na literaturze przedmiotu, wynikach badań statystycznych, sondażach opinii publicznej oraz studiach empirycznych wiejskich społeczności w Polsce.