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TEAMS OF INDIVIDUAL FARMERS - STIMULATORS AND BARRIERS

1. Introduction

Problems of shaping the socio-economic model of agricultural farm, its internal structure and external relationships belongs to top priority tasks in the modern village and agriculture. In Poland where technological and socio-economic reconstruction of rural areas and agriculture is under way, this problem must be solved while taking into account several of its aspects, and namely technical and economic, socio-cultural as well as ideological and political.

Present-day models of an agricultural farm are mostly treated in dichotomy: on one hand, different variants of the family-type farming, and on the other hand, collective farming. In fact, in our conditions both theory and practice are searching for various indirect solutions which would combine advantages and eliminate disadvantages or drawbacks of both extreme solutions.

There is quite common conviction that in agricultural production the model of the family-type farming continues to afford opportunities for a considerable technological and organizational progress, big reserves of effectiveness and social attractiveness. In our conditions, however, any bigger progress cannot be effected within an individual, independent-autonomous peasant

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farm due to the scale of its size, economic and technical possibilities as well as elements of poor social attractiveness ensuing mainly from close relations between productive work and family-life sphere. A concept of remodelling the family-type farm, aiming at minimization of its restrictions and inclusion of collective elements in the agricultural production system is represented by the concept of horizontal-vertical integration of agriculture: horizontal integration implies concentration of main production factors (land, buildings, machines, labour), which hitherto have been operating on the scale of small family-type farms; vertical integration - implies fusion of particular production units into one whole being represented by the national food economy system.

One of forms of implementing this concept of socio-economic reconstruction of agriculture are simple co-operation forms, and - first of all - teams of individual farmers which were holding an important position in Poland's agricultural policy in the 70's. Usually as an organization-economic model of these forms are considered: a) co-operation team, grouping at least three users of agricultural farms not running a common household; b) co-operation team consisting in co-operation between individual farmers or their team and the State Agricultural Farms, Agricultural Production Co-operatives, Agricultural Circles Co-operatives and other organizations and institutions connected with agriculture. Economic co-operation between farmers may assume different forms, e.g. traditional neighbourly assistance, joint use of some production means, and finally - production teams of individual farmers. The last mentioned may encompass a collective form of running whole farms or co-operation only in the sphere of some areas or stages of production.

This paper sets forth to determine and analyze social stimulators and barriers to development and effective functioning of individual farmers teams in Poland. The analysis will be based on results of empirical researches.

2. Problems, hypotheses,  
and characteristics of research materials

Empirical researches, conducted in 1976, encompassed 100 teams of individual farmers in the Sieradz Province (out of the total number of 189 such teams). The researches were focussed: on one hand - on teams of individual farmers, and on the other one - on members of these teams. The team was made a basic analysis unit.

The following empirical materials were collected and submitted to analysis:

a) pilot survey of problems concerning simple co-operation forms in one rural commune (the survey comprised 10 teams), there were collected 320 questionnaire interviews, along with interviews conducted in institutions rendering services for the village and agriculture;

b) questionnaire on teams of individual farmers' (189 questionnaires collected from particular Administrative Offices of rural communes and concerning general characteristics of all teams); the obtained data were utilized for selecting a representative sample for analysis;

c) free interview recorded on tape-recorder with members of teams and focussed basically on mechanisms of establishing, functioning, overcoming difficulties, and external contacts of the team (241 interviews);

d) individual charts of the team and its members providing specifications;

e) statistical data and official documents of the Provincial Administrative Office and Rural Commune Administrative Office.

Application of differentiated research techniques allowed also for internal verification of data obtained by different methods. It proved to be fully successful and hence the information presented here may be treated as reliable.

In conceptualization of researches and analysis and interpretation of materials there was applied systems analysis. It was recognized that the teams, being small target groups based on formal and informal relations, might be treated as social systems of some kind. Application of systems research approach was

based not only on theoretical assumptions but also on results produced by the pilot survey. It revealed that a decisive impact on formation, and especially on effective functioning of the team is exerted by: character of individual and group objectives, self-regulation capacity of the team, and its relations with the environment. These categories constitute an essence of the concept of teleological system and the so-called developed systems analysis. It consists in analysis of the existence and character of the directional analysis of a system (i.e. possession and nature of the team's objectives) as well as self-regulating processes in functioning of the system (removal and overcoming of internal and external difficulties in relation to the team in its attempt to achieve a goal). The team fulfilling conditions of directional organization and self-regulation is recognized as a teleological system.

The question about teleologism of individual farmers is a basic question since it is assumed that only such teams exist and function effectively whose character of objectives and strength of self-regulating mechanisms determine the success of the concept of developing teams of individual farmers.

### 3. Stimulators and barriers

The performed empirical analysis of a hundred teams of individual farmers in the area of one administrative province allows to formulate a number of conclusions including also those concerning social stimulators and barriers to development and proper functioning of these teams.

From among the examined teams there were distinguished 31 such teams which were meeting the requirement of joint production activity. These teams received the name of "operating teams", while 62 teams, which were not involved in joint production, were called "non-operating teams". This latter group proved to be very much differentiated internally since it included both such teams which had earlier been involved in joint production and teams the members of which had never intended to undertake joint production.

In further analysis we were trying to verify a hypothesis

that operating teams were meeting the requirements of the teleological system while non-operating teams were not. This hypothesis was verified through analysis of individual and collective targets and through analysis of teams' responses to various difficulties, troubles, internal and external disturbances. It was revealed that all the teams were target-oriented (i.e. they had common targets), and there were present self-regulating mechanisms in them (effective overcoming of different obstacles, difficulties, and disturbances). On the other hand all teams not operating at the time of our survey were not meeting, first of all, the requirements of self-regulation, although in most cases they were characterized with target-oriented organization. Some of the teams had never been fulfilling the requirements of systems since they existed only formally.

A part of teams, which had been suspending their operations at different stages of their existence, was of teleological character and this state had been preserved by particular teams for a short period of time.

The next stage in our analysis was aimed at determination of the most essential characteristics of operating and non-operating teams. Simultaneously these characteristics should be treated as determinants and correlates of teleological and non-teleological character of both types of teams.

A. The most essential features of operating teams proved to be the following:

1. In the genetic aspect the most characteristic feature for the teams is existence of different common targets constituting the so-called set of targets. It included: striving for improvement of working conditions, improving effectiveness, punctuality and specialization of work, increase and definition of production type and range, material benefits, benefitting from external facilities to which the teams were entitled, and general improvement of life quality. Almost every team possesses at least one common target i.e. a target pointed out by all members irrespectively from one another.

These teams were established either on the initiative of the later manager or on the initiative of appropriate institutions providing services for agriculture and the village, which were located and operating within a given rural administrative com-

mune. Predominance of any of the two ways of setting-up teams was not discovered.

Farmers to a given team were mostly selected by its later manager, who was applying here a criterion of confidence based on family ties or earlier long-term co-operation.

2. From the structural point of view the operating teams represent multiple forms due to family ties and power relationships. There prevail family teams (18 out of 31 teams), often bi-generational which affects leadership styles and management techniques. Various situations appear here: partnership teams (10 teams), and teams with supremacy of father, son, or son-in-law. On the other hand, in non-family teams a dominant position was usually held by a person being "organizer of production". In partly family-type teams the weakest position was that of persons not related to a given family. Using here S. Czarnowski's terminology we can say that it represents some kind of formalization of previously existing patronate relations between farmers.

Researches revealed also formation of a new type of patronate relations. The patron's role was performed by a specialist - organizer of the team and production, who subordinated to himself the remaining members through his qualifications, organizational skills and personal characteristics.

3. In the functional aspect, the most important characteristic of the teams was operation of self-regulating processes. These teams possessed big possibilities of overcoming difficulties, obstacles, and disturbances taking place in the course of their functioning. Most disturbances (both of economic, organizational, and social type) were eliminated by them.

Difficulties, obstacles, and disturbances of economic and organizational nature were overcome on the way of the team's intervention in appropriate institutions of different administrative levels: rural commune, province, and also central level. Contacts with institutions of above-rural-commune level were usually caused by the fact that institutions operating within the rural commune were unable to satisfy the teams' needs for different reasons. The analyzed teams usually included one person who was able and, at the same time, had predispositions to carry out functions of the team's representative and protector

of its interests on the outside. These were in most cases managers of the teams since they were usually better educated than other farmers in the team (three managers had academic diplomas).

Teams operating very seldom were experiencing difficulties, troubles, and disturbances of social nature; and whenever such obstacles appeared they would usually be overcome within the team, and without participation of the environment. This testifies to the fact that composition of teams was proper, that they were composed of farmers trusting one another, able to understand one another and consequently avoid bigger conflicts.

In relation to a big number of teams there was favourably improved the attitude of their village's inhabitants which must have been a consequence of successful results of team work.

Thus the most important characteristics of operating teams appeared to include: existence of common goals of different kinds; size of structural forms of the team treated as a social group, and big effectiveness and efficiency of operation both in production and social sphere, both in internal and external situations being revealed in contacts with appropriate institutions and inhabitants of the village.

This allowed to confirm a hypothesis that the above mentioned groups of factors were shaping a teological character of the team in complementary rather than substitutional way. This fact determines the team's character as a social phenomenon; it is characterized with a complex structure of objectives and ways of operation calling for an appropriate state of the environment and other already quoted factors. Consequently the analyzed teams represent a social phenomenon highly "sensitive", exposed to deviations and distortions from the functionally conceived model.

B. In turn, the most essential characteristics of non-operating teams proved to be the following:

1. In the genetic aspect most teams possess common targets although these are single targets, targets-means. Joint production as the team's target was seldom quoted. There can be observed here lack of a bigger number of common goals - "set of targets" almost never appears here - majority of teams were aiming at achievement of one-time single target (especially purchase of agricultural machines). Thus these are indirect tar-

gets, which should appear jointly with main targets (of production nature). The latter ones are, however, missing.

The analyzed teams were more often established on the initiative of institutions providing services for the village and agriculture than on the initiative of their future members. It appeared that circumstances accompanying formation of at least some teams would, as it were, in advance augur the failure of the undertaking - random choice of farmers, argument of the type "you will derive big profits from it" (which, on top of it all, did not come true) - these were basic drawbacks in operation of these institutions.

Farmers for a given team were usually selected by its future manager. There were, however, instances that personal composition of teams was worked out by different institutions. Sometimes a negative selection would result (accidental for lack of farmers willing to join a team).

2. In the structural aspect, in the analyzed sample there is lack of predominance of family ties - in almost equal proportions appear here family-type teams, mixed, or heterogenous teams.

It is rather difficult to discuss in any bigger detail methods of management in non-operating teams. It can, however, be stated that in 29 (out of 63) teams there is no visible leader controlling the remaining farmers; in others, one of the members - usually a manager - holds a dominant position. In non-operating teams managers possess unsatisfactory educational background similar to that possessed by other members. The composition of these teams seldom includes a person being able to properly represent and effectively protect the team's interests on the outside.

3. In the functional aspect, the analyzed teams at the time of our survey were not implementing any main, formally envisaged objective i.e. joint production. In fact, a part of them never intended to implement such an objective. Thus these teams could not be an object of a more detailed analysis. On the other hand, much more interesting is the question related to reasons of non-functioning of the teams which intended to carry joint production.

Besides the above mentioned circumstances, the most important reason was lack of possibilities for overcoming various

obstacles, disturbances and difficulties appearing during attempts at launching joint collective work. These disturbances - both of internal and external nature, both social and economic-organizational ones - were not removed by the teams. What we mean here are especially conflicts between members of a team appearing as a result of dishonesty of one of them and lack of mutual trust. Additionally, there can be mentioned here, lack of proper assistance on the part of institutions and organizations responsible for production in a rural commune.

The problems of providing services for teams of individual farmers by appropriate institutions has gained special importance in the light of analysis of reasons determining success of teams. Very many teams in the course of their attempts at organizing joint production activity were not able to secure proper production means for them (agricultural machinery, construction materials, fodder etc.). The rural commune institutions, on the other hand, were not able to assist these teams, and the teams themselves were unable to make further attempts at seeking assistance in higher level institutions.

The analysis confirms one of the main hypotheses of the article saying that the most important reason for non-functioning of teams grouping individual farmers was a failure to meet requirements of self-regulation. The sources of this situation are different but they boil down to the fact that given teams did not have sufficient "trumps in their hand" (such as e.g. persons capable of arranging matters vital for the team through their intervention) and lacked ability of breaking through the "resistance" of unfavourable environment.

Thus an important reason of success or failure of teams was the type of relations maintained by them with the environment, including primarily institutions providing services for the village and agriculture. It appears desirable here to formulate several socio-technical conclusions for these institutions.

It is very necessary to provide proper information about privileges to which farmers-members of teams are entitled. It is undesirable, however, for this argument to be abused by various institutions while creating such teams since that leads to formation of a large number of teams whose sole aim is benefitting

from these preferences. Such teams when faced with various obstacles and difficulties cease, in fact, to function.

This big number of teams, which are not functioning - to a large extent - is a result of a situation when legal and organizational forms created by the state and their practical implementation outrun material and economic possibilities (especially in the sphere of agricultural production means). Results produced by our researches allow to formulate a conclusion containing a directive of practical nature and concerning principles of extending assistance for these teams - the assistance must be extended in such a way that obtaining it does not represent a goal in itself (and especially the only goal in forming a team).

Negative phenomena in formation and functioning of teams (big number of teams which are not operating and multitude of factors hampering their operation), as disclosed by our researches, do not undermine advisability of developing this form of agricultural economy, they do not testify to its inadequacy in the process of socio-economic reconstruction of the village and agriculture in Poland either. The analysis of operating teams confirms that they offer an opportunity for realization of non-peasant life style. That is due to the fact that within the team a new quality of working conditions is created; through collectively organized work particular farmers systematically obtain free time during which they do not have to stay on the farm. This is of enormous importance especially for the young generation in the contemporary village. Desire to improve working conditions, and thus to make work easier, more pleasant and effective was accompanying majority of farmers joining the teams.

#### 4. Final remarks

The performed analysis makes it possible to formulate conclusions concerning the place and role of teams of individual farmers in the socio-economic system of the present-day Polish agriculture. There is confirmed a thesis that fuller horizontal integration (which should be achieved by teams) is not possible without vertical integration occurring parallelly, which is mani-

fested in ties with institutions providing services for the village and agriculture. In this sense, simple co-operation forms do not represent exclusively a problem of organization of a single farm or several family-type farms.

Increasing number of good, operating teams creates conditions for more "healthy", more harmonious process of socialization in agriculture free from many dislocating elements. The operating teams are a good school of joint work, a proof of production-economic supremacy held by collective forms in relation to an individual farm. Finally they create conditions for popularization and implementation of non-peasant system of values and life style in the village. Of great importance is also the fact that joint investments will become in future an integral element of large agricultural farms than smaller individual investments.

On the other hand, non-operating, fictitious teams - at least in their sociological aspect - hamper the socialization process since in the opinion of the village community it is direct evidence that collective farming is destined for conflicts and failures.

Finally, it should be stated that teams of individual farmers - in relation to family-type farms - represent a higher form of socio-economic organization of agriculture, they create and consolidate prerequisites of its socialization. It can, however, hardly be expected that they represent a model of a farm which will be directly transforming into a socialist type of agricultural company.

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AGRUPACIONES DE CAMPESINOS INDIVIDUALES -  
ESTIMULADORES Y OBSTÁCULOS

En la ponencia se abordan los problemas del funcionamiento de agrupaciones de campesinos individuales en Polonia. Estas agrupaciones, obteniendo nuevas formas estructurales en el campo polaco, desde 1971 constituyeron a mediados de los años 70 un fenómeno numeroso. En la formación y en el desarrollo de este tipo de cooperación tuvo la intención de

alcanzar objetivos tales como: mejoramiento de la estructura agraria de las explotaciones agrícolas, aumento de la producción agrícola, aportación de elementos colectivos al sistema de producción agrícola del campesino individual, creación de premisas objetivas para la realización del estilo de vida no-campesino en su lugar de origen (lo que es especialmente importante para la juventud).

Esta ponencia tiene por objeto tratar de determinar y analizar los estimuladores sociales, los obstáculos para desarrollo y el funcionamiento correcto de agrupaciones, las cuales han sido investigadas en base a las experiencias empíricas de 100 conjuntos de campesinos individuales. Al dividir las investigaciones (las agrupaciones que funcionan o no funcionan), tratamos de determinar los rasgos esenciales de los conjuntos en los planos genético, estructural y funcional.

Los rasgos más importantes de las agrupaciones que funcionan son: presencia de diferentes objetivos comunes, multitud de formas estructurales de agrupación, considerada ésta como un grupo social, una gran efectividad del funcionamiento social y de producción tanto en las situaciones interiores como exteriores, que se manifiestan en los contactos con varias instituciones y población rural. Los obstáculos particularmente importantes resultaron los contactos mantenidos con el ambiente, teniendo en cuenta ante todo las relaciones con las instituciones que prestan servicios al campo y a la agricultura.

Al término de la ponencia, las conclusiones giraron en torno al lugar y rol que juegan las agrupaciones en el sistema social y económico de la agricultura polaca. Lugar y rol que juegan las agrupaciones en el sistema social y económico de la agricultura polaca.

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#### КОЛЛЕКТИВЫ ЕДИНОЛИЧНИКОВ - СТИМУЛЯТОРЫ И БАРЬЕРЫ

В докладе рассматривается проблема функционирования в Польше коллективов, состоящих из единоличников. Эти коллективы, возникающие в польском сельском хозяйстве в своей новой форме с 1971 г., в половине 70-х годов составляли значительную группу в численном отношении. Создание и развитие нового типа кооперирования имело целью достичь: улучшения аграрной структуры сельских хозяйств,

повышения сельскохозяйственного производства, внедрения слагаемых коллективизации в систему сельскохозяйственного производства и, наконец, создания в деревне очередных объективных предпосылок для реализации "несельского" образа жизни (в частности, имеется в виду молодёжь).

Основной задачей доклада является определение и анализ общественных стимуляторов и барьеров развития, а также правильного функционирования изучаемых коллективов на основе результатов эмпирических исследований 100 коллективов единоличников. Автор выделяет действующие и не действующие коллективы и пытается установить их существенные черты в генетической структурной и функциональной плоскостях.

Основными чертами действующих коллективов оказались: наличие разных совместных и коллективных целей, многочисленность структурных форм коллектива, понимаемого как социальная группа, и большая эффективность действий как внутри, так и вне коллектива, т.е. поддержание связей с соответствующими сельскими институтами и населением. Весьма важным барьером оказались связи, поддерживаемые коллективами с окружающей средой, в частности, с организациями обслуживающими деревню и сельское хозяйство.

В заключение подводятся итоги касательно места и роли коллективов в социально-экономической системе сельского хозяйства.

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#### ZESPOŁY ROLNIKÓW INDYWIDUALNYCH - STYMULATORY I BARIERY

W artykule podejmuje się problematykę funkcjonowania zespołów rolników indywidualnych w Polsce. Zespoły te, powstające w nowym kształcie na wsi polskiej od 1971 r. - stanowiły w połowie lat siedemdziesiątych zjawisko znaczne liczebnie. Poprzez tworzenie i rozwijanie tego typu kooperacji zamierzano osiągnąć kilka celów, takich jak: poprawa struktury agrarnej gospodarstw chłopskich, wzrost produkcji rolnej, włączanie elementów kolektywnych w system chłopskiej produkcji rolnej, wreszcie stworzenie kolejnych obiektywnych przesłanek do realizacji niechłopskiego stylu życia na wsi (szczególnie ważne dla młodzieży).

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest próba - dokonana w oparciu o badania empiryczne 100 zespołów rolników indywidualnych, określenia i analizy społecznych stymulatorów i barier rozwoju i właściwego funkcjonowania badanych zespołów. Wyróżniając - wśród objętych badaniem - zespoły działające oraz zespoły nie działające, dokonuje się próby ustalenia istotnych ich cech w płaszczyznach: genetycznej, strukturalnej i funkcjonalnej.

Najistotniejszymi cechami zespołów działających okazało się: występowanie różnego rodzaju celów wspólnych, zespołowych, wielkość form strukturalnych zespołu ujmowanego jako grupa społeczna oraz duża efektywność i skuteczność działania zarówno w płaszczyźnie produkcyjnej, jak i społecznej, tak w sytuacjach wewnętrznych, jak i zewnętrznych, przejawiających się w kontaktach z odpowiednimi instytucjami oraz ludnością wsi. Natomiast szczególnie istotną barierą okazał się rodzaj utrzymywanych przez zespoły kontaktów z otoczeniem, w tym przede wszystkim z instytucjami obsługi wsi i rolnictwa.

W zakończeniu formułuje się wnioski dotyczące miejsca i roli zespołów w układzie społeczno-ekonomicznym polskiego rolnictwa.