

PRECONDITIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF COOPERATIVE GROUPS STRUCTURE IN COUNTRYSIDE

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Introduction

Situation of rural residents in the changing world of the market requires flexibility and ability to get a handle on the changing social environment. Situation is such that a lot of farmer problems would be solved if they are able not only to apply subject knowledge, but also are able to communicate and work in team and more expressed cooperative relationships. Times require that for the rational structures of team work cooperative groups to arise in the traditional organizational forms of farming, with the members of such structures able to apply the methods of activities related to projects, to apply means of self-presentation in the market; to take part in exhibitions properly; to plan strategically the cooperative activities related to agricultural production. The developing rural society and unions of the farmers in regions have different structure of the group. It is desirable that the aims of the group should be reached in the cooperative structure of the group allowing the generality of individuals to consolidate their resources and to reach the general aims of the group through the individual aims.

The **subject-matter** of this research is preconditions stimulating the development of cooperative groups' structure in countryside of Lithuania.

Goal of the research is to analyze the preconditions and trends of the development of cooperative groups' structure, and to substantiate such preconditions and trends with researches of farmer personality expression.

Tasks: 1. To analyze the psychological aspects of cooperation given the living and working in the countryside. 2. To assess the psychological factors of cooperation: person's openness and non-competition with others, as well as values prevailing among the farmers.

Research methods: The farmers of rural North Lithuania were surveyed (104 respondents). The qualitative and quantitative research methods as well as questionnaire, prepared on the basis of methods of personality assessment (Solomin, 2006) and estimation of expectation level (Schneider, 2001) were applied.

Cooperative group, individualistic structure of farmers groups, values, farmer's personality, values of family relationships, labour values, personal openness, social education.

I. Psychological aspects of cooperation in the countryside

Structure of the aims of cooperative group arises when the members of the group conceive that they are able to reach their individual aim if other members of

the group – who are related through cooperation – acknowledge their aim (Savanavičienė, 2005). When assessing the cooperative relations of the team work in this sense, we can find similarities with the main methodological idea of the market (Adam Smith), ... that every person “thinks only about profit”, but he/she is “led by invisible hand which pushes the end which had not been the part of intention ... He/she meets the interests of society when reaching his/her own aims, as if he/she wanted it truly” (Hart, 1992).

We strived to assess the psychological preconditions of individualistic and competitive structures of farmer groups when researching the farmers of North Lithuania in respect of cooperative relations possibility. The summarized data allow to conclude that the values typical for the farmers are those reflecting the individualistic structure of the groups. This conclusion is based on the fact that the surveyed have ranked the personal but not group organization (popularity index PI 24) criteria as well as his/her own responsibility (PI 16) and strong-will (PI 15) in the professional expression as the main personal characteristics necessary for success of their professional expression (Daukilas, 2007). The qualitative research (interview) revealed that both organization and responsibility or strong-will of the farmer exhibited the attitude typical to the farmers that personal characteristics can help him/her to maintain profitability of his/her farm independently, if he/ she will spare no efforts, will do everything in time and if his/her activity will be well organized. Similar researches (Daukilas, 2002) were performed in 2002. Then larger part of respondents indicated that they tend to make decisions independently, without consultations with others (PI 56), when planning the activities at farm. Such attitude is more evident comparing to farmer's striving to coordinate the decisions and aims of the common activities with others (PI 22). It is traditional individualistic attitude that good results from the activity may be achieved only thanks to good organization of production processes and his/her own devotion to the activity. The qualitative analysis of research results revealed that individualistic structure of farmer groups stimulates farmers' disinterest in each other's aims, and the prevailing neutral interdependence is considered as being acceptable and justificatory. Frequently the successful farmers tend not to consult with others, and they consider the decision-making independence as their success precondition (Daukilas, 2006). But such withdrawal does not allow to perceive the dependence on each other and to understand the aims of the activity (Sadava, 1997).

The prevailing individualistic structure of farmers inter-groups (farmers of neighbouring lands, farmers of the same district, etc.) is also proved by the research of farmer values (Daukilas, 2006). Out of 36 values included in the research, the prevailing values are those which are characteristic of the persons who are distinguished for the expression of individuality. Values of reach for material well-being (MG), sociotarie (S), fundamental (F), family (Š) and hedonism (H) were allocated to this group of values (Table).

Table. Prevailing values of farmer according to the areas of life expression

Number	Values	Percentage
1.	Values of healthy lifestyle (S)	17
2.	Values of family relations enhancement (S)	15
3.	Values related to work (MG)	13
4.	Values of social relations with the people round about (S)	12
5.	Values related to money (MG)	10
6.	Values of positive senses (H)	10
7.	Passive and active recreation (S. H)	8
8.	Values related to taking a pleasure (H)	6
9.	Relaxation (H)	5
10.	Values of Christianity (Kr.)	5

Enhancement of family relations and values related to work activity are the prevailing values as the results of the research reveal. Individualistic structure of farmer groups proves once more that family is a value for the farmers. The qualitative assessment of research results revealed that the substantial farmers emphasize the significance of family more frequently. They see continuity of their agricultural activity when they devise the land to their children, and therefore they are interested in the enhancement of family traditions. Only businesslike relationships are with the neighbours, and the close relations are enhanced only in family.

The research did not reveal the competitive structure of farmer group as the farmer's purpose to be ahead of other farmers, to outrival, to compete or to distinguish oneself from the group of farmers otherwise was not revealed both considering the lists of personal characteristic and given values. The exhibited context of the social relationships with the people round about revealed that farmers strive for the good neighbourhood because of the following factors: when immediate assistance is needed in case of unstable activity of agricultural professions; there is a shortage of expensive (especially specialized) technical assistance; feasts; devotions; and common village issues. The qualitative analysis of the research data revealed that the possibilities of cooperation will arise when the farmers start to understand the economical benefit of the cooperative relations. The particular personality development, with openness and non-competition characteristics, is necessary in order to reach the attitude that the aims of economical activity are easier to reach in case of support from others.

II. Personality openness and non-competition with others

The openness (open communication) and trust (non-competition and support) are necessary for the coordination of the farmer activity, consolidation of resources, and division of labour. According to Barvydienė V. and Kasiulis J., the positive attitude towards the open communication and support to each other (non-competition) develops not only through the practical experience or positive exam-

ple of persons of high standing (ward officials, members of municipality board, etc.) but also through the teaching how to be more open and more easy to get on with in relations (non-competition) (Barvydienė, 2001). According to Rogers C., each person should perceive the openness of his/her own personality as “flowing river of changes but not as block of solid material; constantly changing asterism of possibilities, but not as fixed set of characteristics” (Rogers, 2005). Therefore, according to the opinion of humanitarians, the self-satisfaction and jointly the openness will come when a person is able to dissociate oneself from the “compulsory things”, from the expectations of other people and are is able to be himself/ herself (Palujanskienė, 2005). Everyone should strive to understand his/her own desires, learn to express these desires and to speak openly about them with others. According to C. Rogers, the fully functioning person is open to his/ her own experiences and perceives them without feeling a threat. The person understands his/ her minds and feelings; and he/ she does not seek to suppress them; and his/ her behaviour corresponds with his/her feelings. He lives completely in this moment; and each experience is new and unique, it is independent from the preconceived expectations, it is spontaneous.

What could stimulate the openness of rural residents? It’s manifold positive interdependence. It could develop through feasts which should be celebrated not only among the family members and relatives, but also together with village community; and in case of farmers – together with the farmers of district, where the incentive of the feast could be the charitable activity to the village community, uncared-for children or old people, large families, common funding of culture events for the village community, etc. The ways of how to spend the leisure time together (travels, cognitive excursions, sport competitions, gatherings with songs, poems and memories, etc.) as well as ways of mutual assistance should be found. The open personality is a person who knows himself/ herself and does not hide from others (Johari window).

Non-competitive behavior is called *easy to get on with* and *supporting to others* by psychologists; and the personal characteristics which stimulates a person to behave so is trust in others as well as self-confidence. According to the author of the theory of epigenetic personality E. Erikson (2004), the development of the trust is the first task in life, and it is solved during first twelve months of human life and is directly related to parents and their devotion to the child. If the parents immediately and adequately meets the physiological and biosocial needs of the child, the child develop the feeling of trust in world (others). Otherwise the jealousy and insecurity develop, and the possibility of the trust in others, willingness to reveal his/her needs and goals of activity disappear. The values related to work have always prevailed among the farmers of Lithuania, and these values frequently casts into the shade the social – psychological preconditions which ensure the development of the attitude related to the trust in others. Maybe it’s a reason why Lithuanian senior farmers lack the feeling of trust in others? How the trust feeling could be enhanced? The way to do so is to bring back not only Christianity values, but also “reduced” moral, i.e. sticking to moral principles, to our life (Palujanskienė, 2005). Christian values were ranked the tenth (last) (ref. Fig. 1) by the surveyed farmers

from North Lithuania; and there is no any hint about non-competitiveness and failure to trust in others among the characteristics of personality.

The ideas of the paper stimulate to change the attitude of rural residents on the cooperative activity when working in a team. If only the individualistic idea of the structure of farmer cooperative groups will be developed in rural social environment, there will be no basis for the material changes in common activity of rural residents.

Conclusions

1. Individualistic structure of the group is prevailing among the farmers in countryside of Lithuania. It is revealed by the values prevailing among the farmers.

2. The positive interdependence of the members of group is obligatory when developing life of the rural community and cooperative structures of farmers groups. Such interdependence arises through the open communication and mutual trust (internecine non-competition).

3. The upbringing of non-competitive behavior of the members of rural community may cause the better expression of social relations among the community members, of support to others and of trust in others. This requires development of the social education means in rural communities. These education means shall be orientated not only toward the farmer's personal expression of individuality, but also of sociability. The combination of farmer's personal individuality and sociability ensures not only the rural life conditions based on the market relations, but also the preconditions of meaningful life. The balance of the values related to farmer's abilities, emotions, health (expression of individuality), as well as social relations, family and work (expression of sociability) is typical for these preconditions.

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KOOPERACINIŲ GRUPIŲ STRUKTŪROS FORMAVIMOSI KAIME PRIELAIDOS

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Santrauka

Šiame straipsnyje nagrinėjamos prielaidos, skatinančios kooperacinių grupių struktūros formavimąsi Lietuvos kaime. Tiriant Lietuvos ūkininkų vertybes kooperacinių santykių raiškos aspektu buvo išanalizuotos ūkininkų kooperacinių grupių struktūros ir jų formavimosi prielaidų tendencijos. Šios tendencijos pagrįstos ūkininkų asmenybių raiškos tyrimais. Gauti tyrimo rezultatai byloja, kad Lietuvos kaime, ūkininkų tarpe, dominuoja individualistinė grupės struktūra. Siūloma plėtoti kaimo bendruomenių socialinį ugdymą, formuojant kooperacines grupių struktūras ir plėtojant kaimo bendruomenių narių teigiamą tarpusavio priklausomybę. Teigiama grupės priklausomybė atsiranda atvirai komunikuojant ir pasitikint vieni kitais (nekonkuruojant tarpusavyje).