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PLURIACTIVITIES ON FAMILY FARMS

Abstract: The article elaborates on pluriactivity, i.e. taking non-agricultural jobs by farm household members. According to the research, pluriactivity is a universal phenomenon which can be observed in any country, regardless of its development level. It exists on large as well as small farms, although it is of more economic importance for those living on the latter. Pluri-activity is a response to a global concern known as the agrarian question, which is related chiefly with agricultural income disparity. Pluriactivity is a common and relatively stable phenomenon concerning a significant group of farmers. These facts are a cue for policy makers who should make non-agricultural job creation a part of rural development support programmes.

Key words: pluriactivity of the farmer, economic diversification of the holding, off-farm employment, off-farm income

INTRODUCTION

According to the history of economy, farming has never been the one and only way of life for rural populations [Skodlarski, Matera 2004]. The highest level of job diversification was observed in pre-industrial rural populations. The then traditional farm was self-sufficient, which means that in addition to farming itself, members of a farm household were able to do various other types of work required on site.

The 19th century industrialization of urban areas increased enormously a demand for human labour force which was accumulated in rural areas. This made some rural family members give up full-time farming. A specific phenomenon was observed: rural family members started to work as industrial workers in towns, without, however, breaking ties with the farm. This was possible thanks to a development of commuter transport services, which made it possible for rural inhabitants to commute to work in towns. That rapidly developing phenomenon was classified as

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dual occupation, and a peasant who worked additionally as an industrial labourer was dubbed a "peasant-worker".

Although the industry restructuring processes resulted in an increased reduction of the number of jobs, especially those performed by farmers, the phenomenon of farmers having an extra off-farm job did not disappear despite socio-economic changes, but instead, it manifested itself in new forms, especially in the sector of services and entrepreneurship. Currently every third farmer (36%) in the European Union has an off-farm job [*Other gainful...* 2008]. This is commonly known as pluriactivity.

Pluriactivity of farming families is an interesting phenomenon to study because this specific trend is observed in the agricultural sector only, the overall economy being focused rather on job specialization. This peculiarity of agriculture, as well as the wide-spread persistence of the pluriactivity phenomenon, inspired the author of this paper to study the issue and to present the study results. Aim of this paper is to analyze and present pluriactivity phenomenon in global, European and selected countries level. Analysis is based on existing literature related to the subject, and author's own empirical research.

1. PLURIACTIVITY AND ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

There are two basic concepts in contemporary literature which are related to off-farm jobs of farmers and their families. These are pluriactivity and economic diversification. Durand and van Huylenbroeck [2003] defined pluriactivity as a combination of agricultural and non-agricultural activities performed by farmers or members of a farm household. Diversification concerns rather a work place and production, in this case a farm and agricultural production. It is understood as broadening the range of farm products and services offered. In many cases diversification is aimed to give or ascribe value or validity to existing production factors such as labour, land, equipment or to reduce a risk of production. According to the above mentioned authors, diversification may also be achieved by adding non-agricultural activities, which are nevertheless performed on a farm; in such case diversification and pluriactivity are combined.

Some authors perceive pluriactivity from the point of view of income source diversification. For example, for a sociologist Pevetz [1994] pluriactivity is identical with income source diversification and it is a way to solve the problem of insufficient incomes of rural families. Similarly, Kaleta et al. [2005] define pluriactivity as a situation, in which an individual or a farm household may rely on two or more sources of income [*Diversification*... 2005]. Bessant [2006] uses this concept to denote situations in which individuals or households combine farm and non-farm employment or revenue streams, regardless of their origins or locations.

As regard to concept of diversification, there may be different definitions of diversification, however there is a general agreement that diversification relates to activities that are pursued on a farm or depend on farm based land and capital. Mc Inerney et al. [1989] define diversification as a diversion to other – income earnings uses of any of the resources previously committed to conventional farming

activities. According to Shuckmith and Winter [1990], diversification is the on-farm use of the resources of the farm for producing new agricultural products, which are not in surplus, or non-agricultural products. Knickel et al. [2003] perceive diversification as new forms of agricultural production that are oriented at non-food use, e.g. energy crops, herbs for medicinal uses, agro-forestry (for wood and biomass production), deer farming. The broadest understanding of diversification, which approximates the concept to that of pluriactivity, has probably been presented by Chaplin et al. [2004] (derived from [Slee 1987]). Agricultural diversification is defined as the generation of the other gainful activities by farmers outside of the primary production of food, i.e.: non-agricultural enterprises (on-farm and off-farm), non-agricultural employment and unearned income.

Bessant [2006] pointed out that in the beginning (1930s) of academic interest in non-agricultural activities of farming families, a term "pluriactivity" (as part-time farming) was used to define an activity connoted with small, marginal, or "inefficient" agricultural holdings. This denoted chiefly the survival strategy of farming families (a way to cope with poverty, secure income and ensure the feeling of financial security). Throughout years the way of perceiving pluriactivity changed to a norm denoting a stable component of the farm structure and a relatively common lifestyle [Albrecht and Murdoch 1988]. Pluriactivity represents a variety of activities within a farm household which result from various work and lifestyles adopted according to a certain acknowledged system of values and needs.

The various ways of understanding the concepts related to off-farm activity make it worthwhile to try and harmonize the definitions for research purposes. In the European Union, a clear distinction of the concepts of pluriactivity and diversification was introduced for the purposes of Farm Structure Survey conducted in all the Member States.

According to the survey methodology [*Other gainful*... 2008], pluriactivity is defined as an activity other than farm work for remuneration. This relates principally to three categories of farmers:

- a farmer employed in a non-agricultural enterprise
- a farmer working in another agricultural holding
- a farmer who has set up diversification activities on his farm, that do not include any farm work (e.g. tourism, handicraft.)

On the other hand, diversification means engaging in income-providing activity which does not include agricultural production, but which is directly related with the farm due to its being based on the farm resources or products.

According to the definitions assumed, pluriactivity relates to a farmer – the main operator, his spouse or other family members who live in the common household. In such case we talk about pluriactivity of the farmer. Diversification, on the other hand, relates to a farm holding. A precondition for the activity to be regarded as diversification is that farm assets or farm products are made use of (land, buildings, machinery, excluding labour) for the purposes of conducting the activity concerned.

The concepts of farmer's pluriactivity and diversification of a holding are related with a concept of multifunctionality of a farm. We can talk about a farm

multifunctionality if a farmer or members of his family engage in new business, within a farm as well as off-farm, including agricultural or non-agricultural activities. An interesting model of a multifunctional farm was presented by van der Ploeg [2002, 2003]. He differentiated among three spheres of farm operation: "agricultural side", related with food production, "rural side" and "mobilisation and use of resources". Applying multi-functionality on a farm involves changing its status quo as a result of changes within the above mentioned aspects. As far as agricultural side is concerned, a change towards multi-functionality involves deepening typical production-related activities, such as e.g. the production of quality products, on-site processing or direct sales. Changes in the rural side involve broadening the range of activities. This involves starting new non-agricultural operations on the basis of the farm resources, for better valorisation of work on a farm, e.g. rural tourism, care for children and the elderly. And the changes in resource mobilisation and use involve regrounding, i.e. the use of new resources for farm operations and/or the use of the existing ones, but in a different way. For example, a change in the use of labour resources is manifested by pluriactivity, i.e. starting off-farm operations.

2. PLURIACTIVITY IN THE LIGHT OF SELECTED CONCEPTS AND THEORIES

The pluriactivity phenomenon may be rooted in concepts and theories which focus around the so called agrarian question. According to a simple definition, agrarian question is a global problem of maladjustment of the agricultural sector, in terms of structure and operating mechanisms, to the system dominating in the economy. Among the symptoms of the agrarian question there is a disparity of rural population incomes, which is a consequence of lower (as compared to the rest of economy) work productivity, lower productivity of other production factors and limited flexibility of agriculture in terms of both production and production methods [Wilkin 1986]. Agricultural income disparity stimulates rural population to seek off-farm income (pluriactivity) in order to increase the family budget. In this way the agricultural and non-agricultural domains become interrelated.

This is what a Nobel Prize winner, a British economist Lewis wrote about a role of agriculture in economic development processes and its relationship with the rest of economy: *industrial and agrarian revolution always go together* and (…) *economies in which agriculture is stagnant do not show industrial development* [Lewis 1954, p. 433]. Thus, a lot of studies in economics are dedicated to the role of agriculture and its development. Among all the theories, a theory of induced development model stands out. It was formulated by Hayami and Ruttan [1985] who underlined the role of agriculture as a source of economic growth and development and acknowledged that it was possible for agriculture to overcome developmental constraints by means of technological and institutional changes. In their model it is farmers who make economic decisions as do enterpreneur in a neoclassical business model. Farmers strive for maximizing agricultural profit or income by subordinating production structure and production methods to achieve their goal. A farmer is

innovative and keeps adjusting to constantly changing prices and economic production conditions. The assumption concerning innovativeness of farmers who react by adjusting to a variety of changes in business environment is admitted not only in the area of agricultural production, but also as concerns their off-farm operations, i.e. the pluriactivity phenomenon.

The role and importance of human capital in the development and knowledge as a production factor is highlighted in a classical work by Marshall: *Principles of economics: Capital consists in a great part of knowledge and organization* (…) and *Knowledge is our most powerful engine of production* [Marshall 1962, p. 115]. This thought was further developed by a theoretician of agricultural development, a Nobel Prize winner Schultz, in his book *Transforming Traditional Agriculture* [Schultz 1964]. He said that *differences in land are least important, differences in the quality of material capital are of substantial importance, and differences in the capabilities of farm people are most important in explaining the differences in the amount and rate of increase of agricultural production* (p. 16).

In his view, appropriate incentives for farmers are critical in the process of selecting appropriate forms of investment: *once there are investment opportunities and efficient incentives, farmers will turn sand into gold* [Schultz 1964, p. 5]. Thus, in order for a farmer to decide to change farming methods, new, strong stimuli must appear, along with new opportunities which facilitate such a change. Schultz regards farmers' behaviours as rational and rejects a hypothesis concerning impulsiveness of their actions.

Schultz was an enthusiast of human capital and of investing in human capital, especially in education; he regarded it as a source of economic development [Schultz 1981]. In his book *Economic Growth and Agriculture* the author highlighted a chapter on the importance of education in economic development by giving it a meaningful title: *Education as an Economic Goal* [Schultz 1968]. He compared economic growth to a new and fashionable game which everyone likes to play. The game is about finding sources of additional income and choosing the ones which are relatively cheaper. This rule applies also to pluriactivity.

Pluriactivity is an important issue in light of a declining importance of agriculture in the structure of GDP. According to a three-sector theory concerning the process of economic development, the role of agricultural sector tends to decline in favour of the services sector which gains on importance [Fischer 1945]. According to the figures from World Factbook [*Factbook* 2014], currently the services sector in the developed countries accounts for approx. 50–70% of the total number of employed and for the similar share of the GDP. However, in the most developed countries of the world only a few per cent of those employed work in agriculture (3–5%). The USA is an example where the share of working force in agriculture amounts to 0,7% (2009), and the share of agriculture in GDP amounts to 1,2% (2013 est.).

In light of changes undergoing on the job market in agriculture, non-agricultural sector has been gaining on importance among those who are referred to as redundant workforce in the agricultural sector. However, work in agriculture can be given up, wholly or partially, only if there are stable and convenient forms of earning income

outside agriculture. An interesting theory about it was presented by a Russian economist Chayanov [1966]. In his opinion, family members are going to take an additional job if the need to satisfy the demands is bigger than the arduousness of the job. According to Chayanov: *the family labour unit considers capital investment advantageous only if it affords the possibility of a higher level of well-being; otherwise, it re-establishes the equilibrium between drudgery of labour and demand satisfaction* [1966, p. 10]. Changes in economic activity of a farm are related, in his opinion, with changes in the farm size or with engaging in off-farm activities. This theory confirms that peasant economy is capable of (active) adjustment to the environment by means of selecting specific operation strategies. It seems that changes currently observed on farms are related with seeking new income sources outside a farm (making use of own workforce) rather than with enlarging the farm size and increasing productivity.

The pluriactivity phenomenon can also be discussed in the context of the theory of migration. Thanks to migration, labour force can be used on the markets on which it is needed. A theory called New Economics of Labour Migration: NELM [Stark 1991] provides that work is a specific production factor because workers have to migrate following work. It points to a complexity of human motivations and to the fact that individuals operate within institutional frames of reference. A decision to migrate does not have an individual character only, but is made within a family circle. For a household to survive in different environmental conditions, certain survival strategies must be worked out, and migration as allocation of labour resources within a given family is such a strategy. It is not only a way to maximize income, but also to minimize risk. This is important especially for agricultural families which cannot achieve an adequate income parity. Pluriactivity and diversification of family income sources are ways to minimize risk.

3. THE ROLE OF PLURIACTIVITY

3.1. Global perspective

Contemporary agriculture features implosion, which is evident especially in economically developed countries. Although the importance of agriculture (in the GDP) decreases, it still remains an important segment of every country's economy. Its role is particularly evident in case of poverty and hunger and the need to feed the world population (according to UN FAO, 925 million people suffer from hunger [*The State Insecurity*...2010].

The role of agriculture have been highlighted in a World Bank report: *Agriculture for Development* [2010]. Three scenarios of fighting rural poverty were suggested there: farming, labour and migration. The first scenario assumes the increase of agricultural productivity or diversification of agricultural activities to suit market demand. The second one assumes seeking job outside agriculture, and the third one includes migration and work away from home, which enables household income to be increased.

In the world scale, agriculture is still the main way of life for people and the basic source of a household income, especially in developing countries. According to FAO estimates, agriculture provides employment for 1,3 billion of the world population

[*Statistical*... 2010], 96,5% of which lives in the developing countries. Rural areas in these countries are an enormous reservoir of labour force and an employment challenge.

In view of inevitable processes of employment reduction in agriculture, the development of agriculture (scenario 1) is not going to satisfy the needs for employment on the rural areas of the world. Freed labour resources in rural areas may be utilised in a non-agricultural domain, i.e. by means of pluriactivity (scenario 2). Since labour is the main resource poor people have, they can make use of it in non-agricultural sectors if there is no demand for work in agriculture. However, a possibility to get engaged in off farm labour depends on a general level of the country's development and central policy on one hand, and on competences and professional qualifications of potential workers on the other hand.

Although agriculture remains the basis of the economy for many developing countries, the global trend is for agricultural sector to shrink, which results in increasing importance of off-farm employment. According to the World Bank figures [*Agriculture for*... 2010], off-farm employment in agricultural families increasis (e.g. in Chile from 25% in 1960 to 49% in 2002). Currently in China 65% of farm households generate income from agricultural as well as non-agricultural sectors. In many countries, off-farm income accounts for more than a half of the total income of farm households, e.g. in Vietnam it is 57% and in Ecuador – 49% [*Agriculture for*... 2010].

3.2. Pluriactivity in the USA

The universal trend of agricultural sector decline and an increase of importance of off-farm work may also be noticed in the United States [Dimitri et al. 2005]. In 1930, 22% of the country's population were employed in agriculture, which produced 7,7% of GDP, and in 2000/2002 the figures declined to 1,9% and 0,7%, respectively. In that time the number of farms declined, and the freed labour force (redundant in agriculture) found off-farm employment. In 1930 approx. 1/3 of farmers were employed outside agriculture, in 1970 half of the farmers worked outside agriculture, and currently the rate is 93%.

Contemporary American agriculture is dominated by family farms (98%). Among them there are small farms and large scale farms (according to annual sales criterion of USD 250 thousand). Small farms are divided according to what is a chief activity of the owner: retirement farms, residential/life style farms and farming occupation farms [Hoppe and Banker 2010]. Owners of retirement farms whose income is generated from non-profit sources (retirement benefits) do only small scale farming. Residential farms are treated as a certain life style, they are small farms whose owners work mainly outside agriculture. Farming occupation farms are farms whose owners are chiefly occupied with agriculture. The two latter categories of farms may be referred to as pluriactive farms, because members of the farm holdings work on the farm as well as off farm, although the extent of time dedicated for such work as well as the amount of income generated from those sources are different for the two types of farms.

The majority of family farms in the USA (88,4%) belong to the group of small farms. They produce only 16,4% of agricultural output (Hoppe and Banker 2010). It turns out that incomes of small farm owners originate mostly from off-farm work. According to Table 1, off-farm income appears in all farm groups, but it is the most important for small farms. The greatest off-farm income is generated by residential farms, followed by retirement farms and low sales farms, the income of which was twice smaller. All the farms recorded a negative income from agriculture, one can thus conclude that off-farm income was the only real income of these farms. Looking at the figures in the Table 1 a conclusion can be made that in small farms it is off-farm income which is the chief source of the farm maintenance rather than income from agriculture.

As far as the share of off-farm income is concerned, the smallest share is recorded in very large scale farms (15,6%) and large ones. In small farms with a medium value of sales the share exceeded a half, and in the remaining cases it was the only income generated. A general trend can be defined as follows: the lower the general family income, the higher the share of off-farm income. The average share of off farm income for an American farm was quite big – 86,8%. The chief role in the off-farm income was that of profit-making sources (except for residential farms) [Hoppe and Banker 2010].

TABLE 1. U.S. farm households' income, 2007
TABELA 1. Dochody rolniczych gospodarstw domowych USA w 2007 r.

Item	Small family farms				Large-scale farms		All farm households
	Retirement	Residential /lifestyle	Farming-occupation		Large	Very large	
			Low-sales	Medium--sales			
Average household income [$]	55 228	101 677	44 488	76 191	109 639	268 227	88 912
Income from farming [$]	-1 990	-5 984	-5 070	29 018	63 027	226 490	11 733
Off – farm income [$]	57 219	107 661	49 559	47 173	46 613	41 736	77 179
Of which: earned [$]	24 367	93 750	30 286	34 015	32 597	28 462	58 680
Share of profit-making sources in off farm income [%]	42,6	87,1	61,1	72,1	69,9	68,2	76,0
Share of off-farm income [%]	103,6*	105,9	111,4	61,9	42,5	15,6	86,8

Source: [Hoppe and Banker 2010].

* Income generated from off-farm sources may exceed 100% of the total income of a farm if agricultural income figure is negative.

According to the figures from Table 1, the level of the total household income is similar in small residential farms and in large-scale producing farms. The former, despite a negative income from agriculture, generate so much off-farm income that after all their economic situation is no worse than that of a large-scale farm. This example shows how important pluriactivity is.

3.3. Pluriactivity in the European Union

Pluriactivity as a universal phenomenon which fits squarely into the world's development trend is visible also in the European Union. According to a European Union report "Other gainful activity" which is based on information collected during

Farm Structure Survey, 36,4% of the EU farmers are engaged in off-farm occupations [*Other gainful*... 2008]. This means that every third EU farmer practises pluriactivity. Obviously the mean does not reflect differentiation among particular Member States. The lowest percentage of pluriactive farmers live in Belgium (17,1%), and the highest in Slovenia – 74,4%. Pluriactivity is also important among farmers in Sweden, Cyprus, Malta and Denmark (over 50% of farmers have off-farm occupations). In principle, this phenomenon is quite frequent in the northern and western EU Member States. Differentiation within each Member State is observed also depending on a region. In general, the highest percentage of pluriactive farmers is recorded in predominantly urban regions.

The trend observed in the USA prevails also in case of the EU; pluriactivity is more important for small farms. On average, the highest percentage of farmers (44%) engaged in off-farm occupations own farms below 1 ESU. This share declined towards the increase of the economic size of the farm so that in the farms over 250 ESU it amounted to 11%.

Pluriactivity depends on a type of farm (its profile). Certain activities require bigger labour input, so e.g. farmers specialized in dairy production or horticulture are on average twice less pluriactive than the farmers in general. The biggest percentage of those engaged in off-farm occupations can be found among farmers specialized in cattle and pig breeding and the production of cereals and oilseeds. A decision to start off-farm activity is also related with the age of farmers. The percentage of pluriactive farmers declines with age (approx. 50% of farmers below 54 and only 20% of farmers aged 65+ conducted off-farm activity) [*Other gainful*... 2008].

According to the European Union report, pluriactivity of farmers is more common than diversification of farms. The average of 12% agricultural holdings in the EU diversify their activity within the holding by introducing new activities related with agriculture, and based on the farm's resources. This share is different among the EU Member States: from 1% in Lithuania to 29% in Finland [*Other gainful*... 2008]. The majority of the EU Member States feature increased share of farms which diversify. As opposed to pluriactivity of farmers, diversification of farms is more common in the Northwestern Europe, chiefly in Finland and the UK.

Diversification of farms is manifested in different forms. At the EU level, the most frequent diversification activity included agricultural products' processing (55,8% of diversified farms).The least important activities included handicraft (0,9%), aquaculture and timber processing. Particular types of activity, although sometimes unimportant in the EU scale, are quite important at the level of particular Member States. For example, timber processing in Estonia (27,1% diversified farms), rural tourism in the UK (46,8%) or production of renewable energy in Luxembourg (52,8%) [*Other gainful*... 2008].

Larger farms are observed to be more diversified than smaller farms. The share of diversified farms grows together with the farm size: in the group of farms exceeding 100 ha, approx. 20% are diversified farms, and in the group not exceeding 10 ha – the rate drops to 10%. This is a reverse trend compared to pluriactivity [*Other gainful*... 2008].

3.4. Pluriactivity in Poland

Let us discuss the role of pluriactivity in Poland. According to the last 2010 agricultural census [PSR 2010], pluriactive farmers account for 36% of the total jobholders working on farms (Table 2). This means that every third farmer in Poland is pluriactive. This percentage is identical with the above mentioned average for the whole EU and it approximates the levels of Austria, Hungary and Latvia. A vast majority of pluriactive people in Poland are those, for whom off-farm job is the main one, i.e. the one that gives the biggest income or which takes more time than farm work.

TABLE 2. . Employment on farms in Poland in 2005, 2007, 2010
TABELA 2. Pracujący w gospodarstwach rolnych w Polsce w latach 2005, 2007, 2010

Year	Jobholders working on their family farm							
	Total		Only on a farm		Pluriactive workers			
					Total*		Working chiefly off-farm and additionally on a farm	
	Number [th.]	Rate [%]	Number [th.]	Rate [%]	Number [th.]	Rate [%]	Number [th.]	Rate [%]
2005	5044,0	100	3316,0	65,7	1728,2	34,3	1448,1	28,7
2007	4964,6	100	3207,0	64,6	1757,6	35,4	1459,8	29,5
2010	4449,9	100	2847,6	64,0	2981,8	36,0	1468,2	33,0

Source: Own calculations based on Main Statistical Office figures – [*Charakterystyka gospodarstw rolnych…* 2006],[*Charakterystyka gospodarstw rolnych…*2008] and [*Charakterystyka gospodarstw rolnych…* 2012]

A rule is proven that the percentage of off-farm workers is inversely proportional to the farm size: the smaller the farm, the bigger percentage of pluriactive workers. For example, on farms not larger than 1 ha of arable land it was 43,5%, and in farms between 30–50 ha – 15,4% [*Charakterystyka gospodarstw rolnych…* 2012].

Also, pluriactive people are relatively younger than those who work only on a farm. In 2007 the percentage of people aged 55 and more was 12,5% in the former group, and 41,5% in the latter group [Frenkel 2012]. Pluriactive people are relatively better educated than those working only on a farm. This may be a result of a younger age structure of off-farm workers, or the other way round – those better educated have more opportunities to find an off-farm job.

The share of farm households which conduct non-agricultural activity has been growing; currently they account for 19,1% of all farms [*Charakterystyka gospodarstw rolnych…* 2012]. This means that every fifth farm household in Poland is involved in non-agricultural operations. Diversification in Poland, as in the EU, is less popular than pluriactivity (farm households featuring pluriactivity account for 85,5% of all farms conducting non-agricultural operations).

It has been observed that the percentage of diversified farms kept growing together with the increase of the arable area of a farm, from 1,4% in the group of farms up to 1 ha to 16,3% in the group of farms 100 ha+ [*Charakterystyka gospodarstw rolnych…*

2012]. This proves that diversification is more popular in relatively larger farms. The most frequent operations in this case include rural tourism, services and aquaculture.

The importance of pluriactivity phenomenon in Poland is reflected in household income structure. Almost half of farm households (47,7%) generates their incomes from hired work and one-fifth (19,7%) from other off-farm work (form example self-employment) [*Charakterystyka gospodarstw rolnych…* 2012]. This means that hired work is the most popular form of off-farm employment.

Only in case of approx. 1/3 of farm households agricultural work accounted for the chief source of maintenance. In case of as much as 31,1% of farms, hired work was the chief source of income for a farm family. In case of every tenth farm, income from other off-farm activity was the chief income [*Charakterystyka gospodarstw rolnych…* 2012]. The percentage of farm households in which chief income originated from hired work was decreasing with the increase of the arable area size of the farm, which proves the rule that pluriactivity is a feature of mainly small farms.

3.4.1. Empirical study

The study was conducted in three areas: L, S and G[2] [Błąd 2011]. Among the pluriactive people surveyed (the total of N=344), a vast majority (the most in L area -96%) included persons working chiefly outside farm, farm work being additional work for them. The results of the study have shown that off-farm work is facilitated by relatively small size of a farm, which does not absorb all the available labour force. The majority of farms in all the study areas included farms of up to 10 ha of arable land (the biggest share in L area – 75%).

The study confirmed that working off farm is a strategy aiming at improving the level of income of a farming family. A vast majority of respondents in all areas under study regarded income from agriculture as inadequate (over 90%). The main reason for working off-farm included insufficient income of family and a desire to improve welfare level (more than half of the answers, the biggest percentage in L area – 68,1%). However, a human being is not only a homo oeconomicus, which is proven by the following answers: *fulfilment of dreams and hobbies* and *a desire to try one's skills in an off-farm job* (several per cent) or *a desire to make use of acquired qualifications* (approx. 18% of responses in L and S areas). In general, respondents pointed out several factors, although the economic factor was the dominating one.

Dissatisfaction with income generated from work in agriculture, resulting in taking off-farm job is translated to value and structure of income of a farming family. In all areas surveyed, the average non-farm income was the chief component of family income (over 50% of total household income). This share was the biggest in L area -70,1%, then in S area – 56,4% and in G area – 50,3%.This proves how much a farming family budget depends on non-farm income.

[2] Sochaczew poviat (S area - N=100) and Lipsk poviat (L area- N= 100) in Mazowieckie Voivodeship as well as in Gródek municipality (G area- N=58) in Bialostocki poviat, Podlaskie Voivodeship. The study was conducted in the total of N=258 farming families. The sub-category included pluriactive people, the total of N=344 in all the areas.

Considering low income from farm work and the resulting need of taking up off-farm jobs, a question arises, what makes the families surveyed stick to farming even though the resulting income is unsatisfying? The reasons for continuing farming are interesting. It turns out that for approx. 1/3 of respondents land has sentimental value. Those respondents explained that they were attached to their land, which was often inherited from parents and despite unsatisfying income from farming they did not want to break ties with the farm. Other major reasons included: *land as the basis of family maintenance* and *getting used to working in agriculture* (approx. 1/5 responses each). For some respondents, farming is a hobby or means subsistence production (1/10 answers), which should be interpreted as a specific life style, the followers of which value the benefits of living in rural areas and running a subsistence farm. One should agree with the opinion of a Noble Prize winner Becker [1990], that it is difficult to formulate assertions about irrationality of human behaviour, as there are always some costs (e.g. psychological ones) of taking or rejecting a given opportunity, the costs which weaken its apparent greatness. Rationality of behaviour might also mean maximizing other values rather than income.

According to the study results, it is financial support from the EU budget, especially direct payments, that is a pull factor which "binds" farmers to farming, to land and which destimulates resignation from farming. With Poland's joining the EU, the condition of farms has been systematically improving. According to EUROSTAT figures, between 2005 and 2010 Poland experienced a real increase of agricultural income per a full-time employer by the average of 53,6% [*Agra facts* 2010]. Almost all the families under study used the possibility of obtaining direct payments. In case of almost half of the number of farms studied, the share of EU subsidies in the total family income ranged between 10–20%. Some respondents openly pointed to the EU subsidies as a reason for continuing farming. This fact may, however, contribute to consolidating the hitherto unfavourable agrarian structure and to maintaining small farms which are unable to develop.

According to the study results, pluriactivity is a permanent feature of the majority of farm families. Orientation to pluriactivity, i.e. having a job in agriculture as well as off farm, was confirmed by 88% families in the S area and 75% of families in the L area, which was the least. It can be concluded that generally pluriactivity is neither a "transitional solution" leading to staying on a farm, nor a way to give up farming as such. Co-existence of both these forms of employment is relatively constant. Pluriactivity turns to be a permanent strategy of work and life.

In order to examine more deeply how much pluriactive people are bound to farming, the analysis included their ability to give up work on a farm. A hypothetical situation was presented: an opportunity of getting an off-farm job for a good pay, far exceeding the current earnings of a respondent. It has turned out that approximately half of respondents would not give up farming even in such case (the biggest number of respondents in G area – 59%). Approximately 3/4 respondents have declared that in such case they would not be willing to sell the land (as much as 94% in the L area). This means that work on a farm has some supra-material value, there is something in the land which makes the owner bound emotionally to it. This is proven by the above presented main reason for continuing farming, namely sentimental value.

Despite yielding scarce profits, farming and land cultivation have a privileged position in the socio-cultural domain, which is also approved by those who are aware of the benefits of off-farm jobs which are often much more profitable. Being bound to the land is related with emotional attachment to the homeland. The majority of pluriactive people (approx. 3/4) have not expressed readiness to change the residence despite possibilities of being better paid while working off farm. One can say that they deliberately choose rural areas as being more attractive for living and they identify with their own rural settlement. These study results show the complexity of pluriactivity phenomenon on one hand, and prove the permanent character of this phenomenon on the other hand.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Pluriactivity of farming families is a response (reaction) to the agrarian question manifested by farmers' income disparity. On the other hand, global declining importance of agriculture in the structure of GDP and number of jobs in agriculture incentivise farmers to look for off-farm jobs. Farmers and farming families strive to maximize profits or income and adjust to changes of the economic environment. By working off farm they not only maximize income, but also minimize the risk thanks to diversifying family income, differentiating its sources and economic roles of the family members. Farming families relatively more often follow a strategy of survival rather than development. Searching income sources outside agricultural sector may be a reaction to an objective need of satisfying economic inadequacies, but also to a subjective increase of needs which is stimulated by consumption pressures of the civilization.

While viewing contemporary pluriactivity from the statistical perspective one can observe that this phenomenon has a universal dimension. It is a common phenomenon which exists in different countries characterised by various levels of economic development, and which manifests itself with different strength. It occurs not only in relatively poorer, developing countries, but also in the developed countries, such as the United States which are the world economic giant, or in the European Union. Pluriactivity is an established strategy of work and life, featuring a relative permanent character, which has been described in the history of economy. In pluriactive farming families a trend is observed to continue both farming and off-farm employment, which indicates the permanent character of pluriactivity.

In light of information concerning significant share of off-farm income in the total budget of farming families, the common perception of off-farm job as additional, supplemental, turns to be false. It turns out that for pluriactive people off-farm job is the chief job, and farming is treated as extra work. Having that in mind and relating it with common inadequacy of agricultural income, one can conclude that it is thanks to off-farm income that farms, especially the smallest subsistance farms, can exist at all. As a consequence, off-farm income makes it possible to preserve farming activities and prevent giving up farming, which is important from both economic and socio-cultural point of view.

Pluriactivity is facilitated by the EU membership. Financial support from the EU budget in the form of direct payments (relatively easy to obtain) allocated based on arable area size, facilitates land preservation and cultivation also by pluriactive farmers. Subsidies become an additional factor which binds farmers to agriculture, apart from supra-material and emotional value of land, so much appreciated by farmers. This is of particular importance in relatively small farms, but on the other hand, the use of small land resources can consolidate unfavourable agrarian structure.

Universality and permanent character of pluriactivity provokes reflections and calls for some practical indications. The perspective of policy actions should change quite essentially considering the fact that in the future, incomes of family farms are going to be generated largely outside agriculture. The creation of off-farm jobs must be included in the mainstream rural development policy, while focusing on the development of local job markets. In view of an evident process of declining importance of agriculture in the structure of economy, one should expect even bigger reductions of employment in agriculture, which requires more political attention to be paid to fostering pluriactivity of farmers and rural inhabitants.

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WIELOZAWODOWOŚĆ W RODZINACH ROLNICZYCH

Streszczenie: Artykuł dotyczy zjawiska podejmowania pracy pozarolniczej przez członków rodzin rolniczych, nazwanego wielozawodowością (*pluriactivity*). Z badań wynika, że wielozawodowość jest zjawiskiem uniwersalnym, powszechnym, dotyczącym krajów na całym świecie, niezależnie od ich poziomu rozwoju gospodarczego. Występuje w rodzinach rolniczych użytkujących zarówno duże, jak i małe gospodarstwa rolne, choć większe znaczenie

dochodowe ma dla tych drugich. Wielozawodowość jest odpowiedzią na globalny problem, tzw. kwestię agrarną, wyrażającą się głównie w dysparytecie dochodowym rolników. Jest zatem sposobem podwyższania poziomu (niewystarczających) dochodów osiąganych z rolnictwa. Wielozawodowość to zjawisko powszechne i względnie trwałe, dotyczące znaczącej grupy rolników. Fakty te stanowią wskazówkę dla decydentów politycznych, aby uwzględniać w programach rozwoju wsi tworzenie pozarolniczych miejsc pracy.

Słowa kluczowe: wielozawodowość rolnika, dywersyfikacja ekonomiczna gospodarstwa rolnego, zatrudnienie poza gospodarstwem rolnym, dochód pozarolniczy