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Values and professional and ethical norms in rural tourism in Poland

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Abstract: With development of the market economy, the views concerning the importance of ethical norms in business activity are developing. Ethical orientation in economics, has been popularized for several decades by e.g. French centre “Economie et Humanisme”¹, established by a renowned Dominican, L.J. Lebreton. Tourism, including rural tourism, represents an economic activity which has its specific ethical dimension. The goals of this paper are to characterize the basic values that are voluntarily accepted and used in tourism in rural areas in Poland and to identify the ethical norms that guarantee the realization of these values. The authors adopted the basic values-goals that should be recommended in rural tourism. They also formulated specific professional and ethical norms that support realization of the values, which include: humanity and standards for realizing the principle of humanity; the cultural and material conditions of living in rural areas; economic activity, including tourist activity that improves rural living conditions; innovative attitudes towards modernization and improving the quality of rural tourist services; and values that support the development of sustainable tourism in rural areas. The theoretical investigations concerning axiological problems were supplemented with the results obtained from a national-level empirical survey that was conducted in rural areas in Poland.

Key words: continuous education, rural tourist services, sustainable tourism, values-goals

In social relations and in any individual or collective activities, the humans respect different values that either connect or divide them. If people participate in social activities together, the values they respect connect them and become goals to be achieved. In this study, the concept of social activities is understood in Weber’s terms, which means that the concrete human entities are the subjects who determine and achieve goals together; all social and individual activities are oriented towards other people. Therefore, concrete individuals represent “the entities of reasonably oriented activities” based on material interests, which are regarded as values, or based on the autotelic values (moral, religious and aesthetic), which do not relate to the concrete material entities but project certain states of people’s lives and behaviour, such as ethical values and their respective moral norms (Weber 1976). Autotelic values include the principles of humanity and aesthetic life. They will be characterized in the next part of our investigations. As assumed in axiology, these values do not require the empirical and

theoretical justification because their “worth” is obvious in the European culture (Krawczyk et al. 2012).

These values are abstract and describe certain states. To realize the values, the particular standards for individual and group behaviours are formulated. If specific values are respected by social groups and public and private institutions (as in business) and by society at large, these social values represent the goals of social activities. However, considering the views presented by Weber, social values must be “primarily” respected by the individual entities who create the particular social communities. It should be noted that social values are inherent in human social, economic and political activity (Weber 1917, 1995).

Because of the varied, individual internalizations of values, one should adopt the view of the ontological pluralism. The ontological pluralism with regard to values promotes the acceptance of the axiological pluralism that assumes the cognition and adoption of the values created in different cultures and the natural values throughout the continents (Thomas and

¹Manifeste d’Economie et Humanisme. Paris 1942.

Znaniecki 1918–1920; Rickert 1926). The ontological and axiological pluralism are tacitly accepted in any human activity, including tourism. This phenomenon occurs tacitly because the owners and managers of tourist business entities and tourists consider humans to be a subject and also consider human values and the general and ecological values of cultural heritage. Therefore, based on the above pluralism, one can distinguish between the three most important values-goals for a tourist business, which must be realized according to the particular standards. These values are: human values and dignity; the aesthetic and recreational value of tourism for humans; and the value of respect for cultural goods (Przeclawski 1996). The above values are subject to the individual internalization in human awareness, and therefore, they meet the need for familiarization with the values of cultural and natural goods and of humans.

The above values-goals are accepted by managers in the tourism sector and used in many aspects of managers' activities, and they represent the basis for recognising the value of earning profits (Kaczocha and Sikora 2008). Profits, and the methods for gaining them, help to enhance the tourist enterprises' prestige and stimulate their success in the tourist market. However, earning profits as the main goal in a tourist economy cannot be realized without the consideration of the basic values and ethical norms oriented towards humans and their needs, i.e., both the tourists and employees of tourist businesses (Lane 1994).

This paper will not focus on the analysis of profits as an economic value in rural tourism. The goal of the paper is rather to characterize the values and goals connected with the subject-oriented rural tourism concerning humans as organizers of tourism and tourists as consumers of tourist services. The paper is aimed at emphasizing the ethical relationships that occur between the above parties, created based on human values, which are regulated by the ethical norms contained in the Manifesto for a Global Economic Ethic and the World Code of Ethics for Tourism. In particular, our investigations are based on the analysis of and reference to the values-goals and the existing ethical norms of tourism in rural areas. The focus was also on the need for education in terms of values-goals and ethical norms, the knowledge exchange in this field and the importance of these issues to rural tourism. Achieving the study's research goals has three scopes: theoretical (formulating the axiological standpoint using the literature review); cognitive (verifying the goals and hypotheses through

empirical studies); and phraseological (developing conclusions in the form of recommendations that can be adopted for the tourist activity in rural areas).

ETHICAL VALUES AND STANDARDS AND THEIR REALIZATION IN RURAL TOURISM

The pluralism of values and the varied humanistic, cultural and ecological preferences that are accepted by the institutions of democratic society must be contained within the tourist education programs in secondary schools and universities. The goal of tourist education is, among other things, to teach the cognitive competencies that help people to discover the cultural and natural values and to promote the positive cognitive and emotional attitudes among tourists with respect to these values. MacCannell argues that familiarization with tourist landscapes occurs before the tourists are in actual contact with the landscapes because they have opportunities to see them in brochures and photographs, on the Internet and during the family and school education. Therefore, tourists first learn about natural landscapes through internalizing the views from postcards or guidebooks (MacCannell 1976).

J. Ritter notes that familiarization with landscapes entails "motiveless contemplation", which highlights the tourists' aesthetic attitudes (Ritter 1996). Humanistic and ecological values regarding landscapes were also formulated by G. Simmel, who wrote that the human perception divides and combines the separate elements of landscapes and incorporates nature into the individuality of these landscapes (Simmel 2002). Using the previous description of values, it can be argued that if tourists process and combine the landscape's separate elements into a particular wholeness, they create a subjective value of the landscape in their minds and imaginations (Adorno 1970).

People's adopted values-goals motivate them to formulate the phraseological and moral standards regarding the individual and group activities (behaviours) and allow people to assess their actions and their results in terms of effectively realizing their adopted values. In theory and in the scientific studies focused on tourism, ethical aspects and those concerning the corporate social responsibility are typically neglected. However, the belief is being established that many pathologies in the contemporary society are caused by the lack of respect for the fundamental ethical

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norms. This issue also concerns tourism and its organizers, tourists and potential tourists (Przeclawski 1997; Fennel 2009).

The values contained in the two abovementioned codes of ethics are the essential ethical values in tourism. The first code was passed by the United Nations on 6th October 2009 and concerned values and standards that were recommended to all business entities, regardless of the sector. This code is termed the Manifesto for a Global Economic Ethic². Some of the values-goals and the standards for their realization, if properly interpreted, relate to the whole global economy, including rural tourism. The Manifesto for a Global Economic Ethic adopted an overriding value, recommended to countries, business entities, institutions, politicians and media, termed the “principle of humanity”. This principle emphasizes that each human being, regardless of age, gender, race, physical and mental abilities, language, religion, political views, nationality or social origins, has a permanent and inviolable dignity. People must always be regarded as subjects of the laws and be the goals rather than means. They cannot be treated as the objects of commercialization in economics, politics, the media, scientific institutions or industrial corporations. Additionally, the above principle means that humanity is a fundamental principle of the global economic ethics. Being a human should represent an ethical measure of all economic activities. The adopted overriding value contains two norms: negative, which prevents treating people in social life as subjects and positive, which emphasizes that people should be treated as subjects, i.e., co-creators, of the law.

The other code, the World Code of Ethics for Tourism, passed in 1999 by the World Tourism Organization (WTO), contains detailed values and standards that relate to the activities of the entities that create tourist economies in the individual countries. This code contains an extended set of ethical norms and extended rules for professional and ethical conduct in tourism, including rural tourism.

These norms, derived from the two codes, relate not only to enterprises and their owners who operate in rural areas but also to tourists. Some of them, discussed later in the paper, are:

- the norm that obliges enterprises to run tourist activities “in harmony with the specific nature and tradition of the region” (World Code of Ethics for Tourism, Manifesto for a Global Economic Ethic);

- the norm that regulates the respect for local laws, behaviours and customs (World Code of Ethics for Tourism, Manifesto for a Global Economic Ethic);
- the norm that obliges enterprises and tourists to protect a culture’s physical values (World Code of Ethics for Tourism, Manifesto for a Global Economic Ethic);
- the norm that obliges planning and organizing tourism as the means of the individual and collective self-realization (World Code of Ethics for Tourism, Manifesto for a Global Economic Ethic);
- the norm that recommends that owners and employees in tourist enterprises and tourists themselves protect the natural environment (World Code of Ethics for Tourism, Manifesto for a Global Economic Ethic);
- the norm that recommends developing tourist economies in poorer rural and mountain regions, where tourism is often one of the few opportunities for economic development (World Code of Ethics for Tourism);
- the norm that obliges enterprises to ensure the safety of tourists, visitors and their property (World Code of Ethics for Tourism, Manifesto for a Global Economic Ethic);
- and the norm that obliges tourist enterprises to provide the tourists with reliable and objective information and offers fair prices for the tourist services provided (World Code of Ethics for Tourism).

The above, briefly presented, ethical norms that support the realization of the values-goals in tourist economies, which are contained in both codes, represent the axiological bases for developing these economies in rural areas. Additionally, we recommend five norms for owners of tourist businesses, including those in rural areas. The norms proposed specify the general normative indications of the World Code of Ethics for Tourism and the Manifesto for a Global Economic Ethic.

(1) The norm of prudence. This norm refers to Aristotle’s virtue ethic, which values such traits as moderation and rationality (Barnes 1984). It is recommended that any thinking (rational) person, before making a decision on any action, cautiously considers whether the initiative planned will harm their health, family or society. If these negative effects occur, it is one’s ethical obligation to stop the planned activities or to change them. The norm of prudence recommends that the owners and managers of tourist businesses,

²The Manifesto for a Global Economic Ethic. Available at www.globaleconomicethic.org/02-manifesto-02-ong.php

as thinking people who influence the behaviour of other people, think carefully about whether the actions they plan are harmful to tourists or to cultural or natural values. The content of this norm can be compared with the Weber's concept of purposive-rational action as an ideal that relates to protecting resources and to actions that avoid all professional and occupational errors (Weber 1976).

- (2) The norm that recommends that the owners of tourist enterprises and their employees perform the role of a "submissive carer" with respect to tourists. This norm recommends providing selfless help in any situation: protecting health, ensuring safety and offering full assistance. Customers pay for tourist services, but the care must be selfless. If the care is provided clearly and even excessively, tourists reward the carers in different forms of ethical praise (Kotarbiński 1985).
- (3) The norm that recommends respecting people's values and their dignity. This norm obliges using the subject-oriented approach towards any tourist, that is, accepting their freedom to choose their values and recognizing their needs and expectations if the values do not conflict with the recommended values and norms (Maritain 1954; Wojtyła 1982).
- (4) The norm that recommends the recognition that maintaining tourists' health is a professional and ethical obligation of the enterprise. This norm obliges providing tourist services that support health as a value demanded by any human (Manifesto for a Global Economic Ethic, World Code of Ethics for Tourism).
- (5) The norm that recommends the respect for cultural values, civilization and natural goods. With regard to the norm of prudence, this standard obliges refraining from any activities that would be harmful to these values and goods. If any cultural values are oriented against the value of human beings, there should be a discussion with the promoters of these values in order to reveal their anti-humanist contents, but one should not strive to destroy or censor this value (Rokeach 1973; Thompson 1979; Heidegger 1994; Pizam and Mansfeld 2006).

According to the above norms, the realization of the values adopted in rural tourism does not face challenges because the rural tourist activity is mainly performed by family enterprises (e.g., agri-tourist

households). Values in tourism and their realization are more strongly embodied in the personalities, attitudes, and personal cultures of the members of families who work in tourism. The culture of providing services in rural tourism is based on the principal norms of social relations; deep respect for the values of human dignity, tourists' rights and traditional norms (not formalized by regulations); and polite behaviours free from tensions and misunderstandings. An essential place in the culture of tourist services is held by the knowledge of family members who provide services to guests about the cultural heritage of a particular location and its surroundings (Sikora 2012). Family rural tourism enterprises aim to earn the respect and recognition from tourists, enjoy their favour and feel satisfaction from their work. It can be accepted that the more values are presented to tourists based on the ethical norms, the greater the chances that the fundamental goal of bringing tourists to rural areas will be achieved and the higher the likelihood that tourists will return to rural areas (Sikora and Wartecka-Wazynska 2013). Tourists experience not only the landscapes but also sounds, smells, and tastes through the visual perception because eyesight is the sense that orders the wholeness of the tourist experience. When explaining the idea of "the tourist's view", Urry wrote: "My thesis is that tourist's experience represents principally a visual experience. It is looking that establishes an order in meetings of "guests with hosts" and causes their experiences to be mature, pleasant and structured. Looking determines a number of pleasant experiences connected with being at a particular time and place. This phenomenon establishes an order and regulates the relationship between the different sensual experiences of travelling, while it seeks singularity and separates distinctness among the comprehensible differences. With this understanding, looking means that both the looking entity and the elements that are looked at should be understood as a continuous and ordered set of social and physical relations" (Urry 2002).

In rural tourism, owing to the small geographical (local) space, direct ties and relationships are established between tourists and the local community, and these relationships facilitate dialogue, mutual understanding and acceptance of cultural differences. These relationships are not observed in the mass tourism. They stimulate tolerance, eliminate prejudice, and correct the stereotypes produced by mass media concerning the image of the rural landscape. They help to break through the social, cultural and

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religious barriers and are likely to become an essential factor in changes in both tourists and the rural communities they visit.

Rural tourists want to understand the local culture, speak the local language, to raise trust and to be liked by the rural inhabitants, who often let them enter places that are unavailable to others. These tourists soon cease to be “the others” and become members of rural communities. Furthermore, rural tourists begin to follow the values and norms that show respect for the local population and its traditions, such as honesty, courage, the ability to adapt to new situations and the ease of initiating contacts. The problem with these behaviours was explained by I.C. Brown, who argued that humans who “enter” another culture see what is unusual in this culture but they focus mainly on searching for certain regularities and methods that are used to solve the basic problems. They not only watch the obvious behaviours of local residents but also attempt to familiarize themselves with the motivations for these behaviours to better understand them (Brown 1963).

Tourism, including rural tourism, is subject to a broad competition because, as argued by J. Urry, nearly any place in the world is a potential tourist object. Therefore, the tourism development cannot be reduced to mere economic effects because tourist economies should not be considered detached from the cultural, ethical and political changes (Urry 2002). The question arises whether rural tourism is actually rural or the civilization of the 20th century had a destructive effect on the ontologically traditional picture of the countryside and caused that rural tourism adopted specific characteristics of mass tourism (Hájek 2002). This problem needs a further scientific research. Rural tourism is therefore a specific social phenomenon. Furthermore, based on the assumptions of social constructivism as emphasized by C.M. Paris, rural tourism not only is important to education but also contributes to the familiarization with and understanding of tourism activity in local environments, which in our case refers to rural environments (Paris 2011).

METHODOLOGY

Changes that are occurring based on the strategy of the multifunctional development of rural areas inspire broad empirical studies. One example of such a study is a national-level survey that has been con-

ducted since 2004 by the centres for public opinion and market research and ordered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in Warsaw. This survey, with a national-level scope in Poland, concerns the awareness of farmers and rural inhabitants of the socioeconomic problems where they live and work (e.g., assessment of rural life quality, conditions of agricultural farms, rural entrepreneurship, prospects for the countryside and agriculture, assessment of Poland’s membership in the European Union). The survey was conducted using personal interviews and a survey questionnaire. The interviews were conducted by qualified interviewers among the two separate samples: the representative quota-purposive sample of farmers who run agricultural farms ($N = 867$) and the representative random-selected sample of inhabitants of rural areas ($N = 633$). There were 1500 interviews in total. The sample of farmers exclusively comprises persons who were professionally involved in agricultural production and who made production-related decisions on their farms.

This sample is distributed according to the actual distribution of farms based on the surface area of agricultural land and on Poland’s territorial divisions, with the largest administrative unit being voivodeship. The maximum statistical error in the sample of $N = 867$ farmers was $\pm 3.4\%$. Inhabitants of rural areas refers to people with the permanent residence in rural areas, regardless of their income sources or whether they owned an agricultural farm. The maximum statistical error in the sample of $N = 633$ inhabitants of rural areas was $\pm 3.8\%$. Methodologically, the survey procedure highlights the representativeness of the results from using a national-level approach and dividing the populace into farmers and non-farmers, as well as dividing the country into voivodeships.

This paper presents the selected empirical survey results that concerned the discussed problems and that are contained in the final report Polish Countryside and Agriculture, Spring 2011 (Polska wieś ... 2011). The survey was conducted by the Taylor Nelson Sofres Public Opinion Research Centre (TNS OBOB) and ordered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Agency for the Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture, the Agency for Agricultural Property and the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund (Polska wieś i rolnictwo. Wiosna 2011). Furthermore, the paper employed the critical analysis of the literature and secondary source materials, specifically the World Code of Global Economic Ethics and the Code of Ethics for Tourism.

The research methodology adopted a theoretical and research assumption termed the sociological conceptualism (Popper 1977; Ziółkowski 2000). This approach assumes that based on their own experiences and knowledge, rational-thinking individuals formulate denoting concepts i.e., the concepts and statements that relate to social ties between humans and that inspire the collective activities or encourage abandoning the individual or social initiatives. The denoting concepts include the ethical, social and religious values or visions for the future. They represent subjective factors that not only constitute social bonds but also determine the concrete goals of group and social development. Sociological conceptualism assumes that there cannot be a social method of familiarizing with the problems of society nor universal social theories. This concept assumes that the cognition and creation of theories and concepts has always an individual character. It also assumes that the problems to be solved, the concepts and theories formulated start from the observation, experiencing, collecting data, information and then generalization of them through induction (Ziółkowski 2000). The position of sociological conceptualism was expressed the most generally by K.R. Popper, who argued that the development of knowledge consists in the transition from old problems to new ones through hypotheses (Popper 1977).

Therefore, in social science, the sociological conceptualism relates to an intellectual process of determining and specifying the concepts and ideas that add concrete values, importance and a sense of existence to specific statuses quo and problems. More specifically, it determines what some people mean by certain terms and explains what should be understood by the use of these terms (Babbie 2001). Sociological conceptualism is manifested in the humanistic method of analytical induction used in sociological studies (Znaniński 1934). It consists in the examination of the problems of social life through experiences of the researcher, understood among other things as realization, perception, imagining and presentation of the interesting social problems. With this understanding of the concept of the researcher's experiences, the focus is on the acquisition of knowledge and information about the problem of interest. The method to acquire knowledge is direct the personal experience expressed in the author's own empirical studies (primary sources) and indirect experience expressed in analyses of the previous materials collected by other researchers (secondary sources). The

knowledge collected, supplemented with other sources of information (observation, interviews, analysis of documents) is subject to further scientific analysis using the analytical induction (from description of the facts studied towards generalization, conclusions and theories). Therefore, it is essential in the humanistic method of analytical induction that the general hypotheses and conclusions are obtained based on specific examples of the research results. It is also necessary to compare the results with those obtained by other researchers (Znaniński 1934). The method of the humanist analytical induction supported by the theoretical research orientation termed analytical conceptualism was adopted by the authors of this study. In the methodology of social research, the conceptualism relates to the primary and secondary research. The researchers interested in the results of the primary and secondary studies, their analysis, interpretation and conclusions are often unaware or do not know that they actually adopt the assumptions of sociological conceptualism.

More and more contemporary researchers are using secondary data collected by other researchers to achieve other scientific goals. Therefore, the secondary data analysis relates to the unprocessed results obtained by others. For example, the data collected by the Gallup Institute or other institutions that conduct the national-level surveys are used in the studies of many social problems, such as social attitudes or the determinants of voting (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1996). The secondary analysis of empirical data is now an intellectual tradition in the social sciences. E. Durkheim analysed official statistical data concerning suicides. M. Weber studied the official ideological assumptions of early Protestant churches and also analysed other historical documents to justify the thesis that it is religion rather than economic determinism that represents the source of social and political behaviours (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1996).

Currently, in social science, more and more data collected by different researchers or institutions are being used, and the research goals they attempt to achieve are different from the primary motivations for collecting the data. There are three basic reasons for why interest in using secondary data is increasing: general (a researcher uses a broad range of materials concerning different areas and ages, which is conducive to a more comprehensive and deeper analysis and would be impossible using solely the primary data from an individual research project),

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methodological (rather than a researcher's producing a number of studies, the researcher's data collected from observations or interviews can be combined with the data collected by others); and economic (collecting primary data is very expensive). Using existing data is much less expensive than collecting new ones (Goodman 1992).

Similar theoretical and research approaches have also been used in investigations of the socioeconomic problems of other countries' rural areas. For instance, in the paper "Scientific Knowledge and Rural Policy: A Long-distance Relationship", the authors (B. Reimer and M. Brett) used secondary documents including data from the Internet and newspaper articles based on interviews with rural community leaders to compare two Canadian rural provinces in terms of opportunities to support meeting the communities' needs with the participation of rural leaders (Reimer and Brett 2013).

The assumption of sociological conceptualism is the basis for interpreting the results of comprehensive secondary sociological surveys, such as the survey discussed in the present paper. A particular focus should be on demonstrating that the values and ethical norms adopted in tourism business activities are also used in rural tourism. Therefore, the results of the secondary empirical research conducted in rural areas also contain values that relate to rural tourism.

In the light of the adopted research assumption, the personal interview technique employed in the abovementioned survey allows for the recognition and subsequent interpretation of the individually accepted denoting concepts; interviews allow, in the case of similarities or overlapping of the respondents' views, for the formulation of general statements in terms of certain social aspects of rural tourism development. Furthermore, it is assumed that the statements that relate to the problems under study are formulated in the views of the respondents selected for the studies, and, based on the principle of sample representativeness among the analysed populations, also relate to the views expressed by all of the inhabitants of rural areas.

RESULTS

Considering the previously presented characterization of the values and ethical norms contained in the World Code of Ethics for Tourism and the Manifesto for a Global Economic Ethic, which are also present

in rural tourism, the next stage of this study is to illustrate these codes' place in the awareness of the inhabitants of rural areas.

Below are the results of a national-level empirical survey that was conducted regularly for a number of years by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in Poland among the inhabitants of rural areas. From these results, it is possible to choose only certain data that highlight the values-goals, and the ethical norms contained in the above codes that regulate these values-goals and that are related to the rural tourism activity. We propose that these values-goals, in both the subject-oriented and object-oriented approaches, and the norms that support their implementation, include:

- (1) Humans as the highest value (the principle of humanity, specifically of the inhabitants of rural areas), reflecting the norm that recommends respecting the humanity's value and human dignity;
- (2) Living conditions of those who live in rural areas (the status of the technical and social infrastructure that determines the development of rural tourism). This value is supported by the norm of prudence, which emphasizes rational planning of economic and social activities that harm no one and improve the conditions of living in rural areas;
- (3) Economic activity that improves the rural living conditions (interest of rural inhabitants in tourist activity as an opportunity to earn additional income). This value is oriented as the norm of a "submissive carer" and respect for the tourists' health;
- (4) Sources of knowledge necessary for modernizing agricultural farms with tourism as an additional activity (including the role of formal and informal education as a norm of the purposive and rational activity and of the professional and vocational activity that excludes mistakes and harm in decision-making);
- (5) The importance of rural areas in Poland (natural, economic, and sociocultural values that respect the sustainable development norms that are conducive to rural tourism).

Below, we discuss the values and ethical norms that determine the rural tourism development.

In tourism in general, including tourism in rural areas, the highest value contained in the Manifesto for a Global Economic Ethic should be used, i.e., the principle of humanity. Unfortunately, the owners

and employees in the rural tourism sector are still treated instrumentally by the “urban” tourists³. The attitude of superiority and even disregard for “small” tourist businesses and the lack of respect for people and their dignity has formed, in one aspect, owing to a many-century tradition of considering rural inhabitants and folk culture as axiologically and materially inferior. This view was supported by N. Swain who studied the collectivization of agriculture in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Swain 1998, 2007). Under the previous system of real socialism and the centrally planned economy in Poland, this unfair approach to the peasant layer in society, compared with the exaggerated role of the working class and the intelligentsia, has been emphasized by some sociologists and economists (Galeski 1962; Szczepanski 1976; Wojtas 1988). From a different perspective, the attitude of superiority and disregard for rural inhabitants developed because of the views reinforced by the media that suggest the passivity of these people and the backwardness of

rural civilizations. Based on the studies cited, one example of this backwardness is the poor development of technological, functional and sociocultural infrastructures, which is not conducive in physical terms to realizing the principle of humanity because it contributes to the subjective discomfort of owners of tourist facilities in rural areas (Kocik 2001).

Low levels of technological, functional and social infrastructure in rural areas were suggested by the results of the national-level empirical survey. The inhabitants of rural areas typically complained about the lack of access to gas networks (49%), the lack of access to sewage systems (42%), the lack of opportunities for improving professional competencies and the adults’ education levels (41%), the lack of access to culture, art and other types of entertainment (49%) and to sport and recreation facilities (46%) (Rural Areas and Agriculture in Poland ... 2011: 24).

It seems obvious that the reported insufficient technological, functional, social and cultural infrastructures are not materially conducive (the lack of

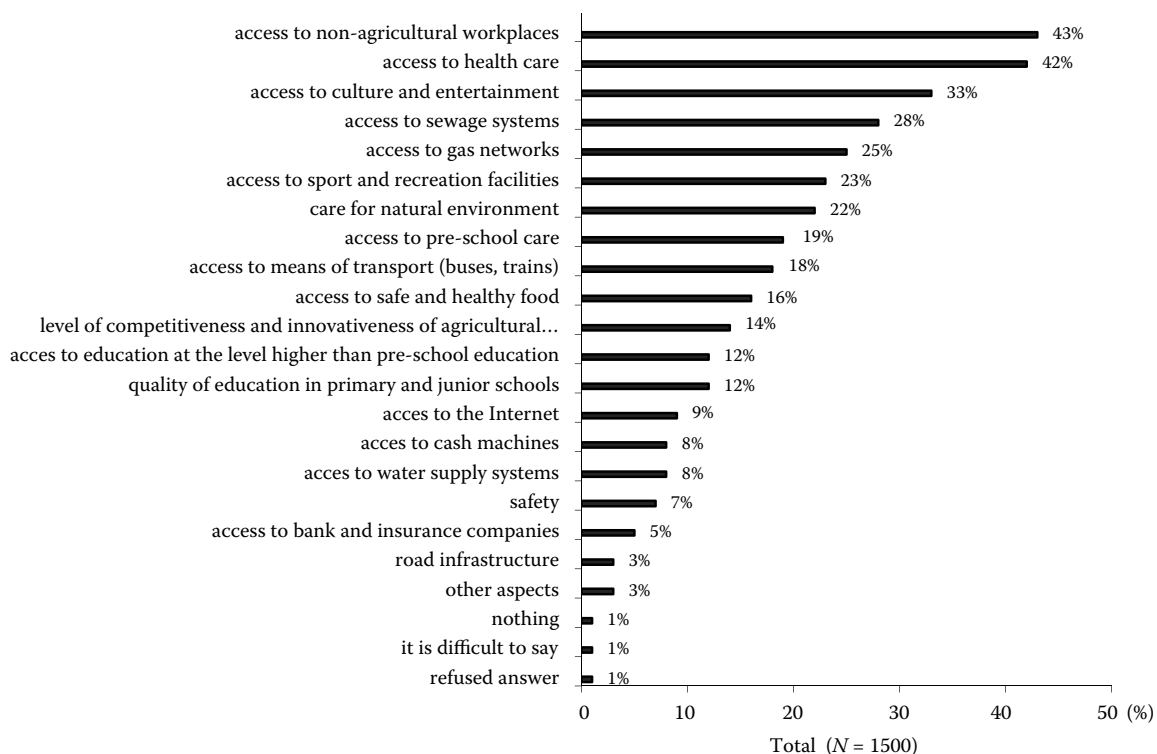


Figure 1. The most important problems to be improved in rural areas

Percentages do not total 100% since the respondents were allowed to choose up to 4 answers.

Source: Polish countryside and agriculture. Spring 2011: 27

³This approach is based on the authors’ own observations and experienced during stays on agricultural farm. These experiences form the basis for creating new research methodologies in social science, termed the methods of the economy of experiences. See, e.g., Pine and Gilmore (1999).

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technological equipment) to growth in social terms (difficulties in the access to education, sport, etc.) or in the relation to its stimulation (intensification). The inhabitants of rural areas in the sociological surveys discussed indicated what should be improved in rural areas based on the norm of prudence (Figure 1). The comprehensive structure of the respondents' statements shows that they had both the cognitive and empirical understanding of both the material and the social conditions of living in the countryside.

Among the problems that should be improved in rural areas, the respondents complained the most often about the access to non-agricultural workplaces, including the tourist sector (43%), the access to health care (42%); the access to culture and entertainment (33%); the access to sewage (28%) and gas (25%) networks and the access to sport and recreation facilities (23%) (Figure 1). Investment in the indicated tasks should contribute to intensifying the development of tourism in rural areas and to improving the rural living conditions.

In the ethical sense, the adopted principle of humanity is radically opposed to the above-mentioned negative tradition and the false picture presented in

the media that emphasizes the view of the economic passivity of rural inhabitants. A survey conducted by Sikora highlighted the tourism development and other forms of entrepreneurship from the time of Poland's accession to the European Union and contradicts the views of passivity and the lack of economic innovativeness among the inhabitants of rural areas (Sikora 2012).

The examples of business activity, including the non-agricultural activity, presented in Figure 2 were obtained from the answers to the question: "What were the sources of income in your household within the past six months?" The most frequent sources of income reported by the farmers included the income from the farms (92.3%); the income from the direct EU subsidies (37.0%); the income from the additional full-time hired work (29.1%); and the income from the old-age or agricultural pensions (24.5%). The income from the non-agricultural work connected with farming and the income from tourism, i.e., room rentals, sales of household meals, and providing services connected with tourists staying in rural households, was reported in total by 0.6% of the rural inhabitants. The sources of incomes of

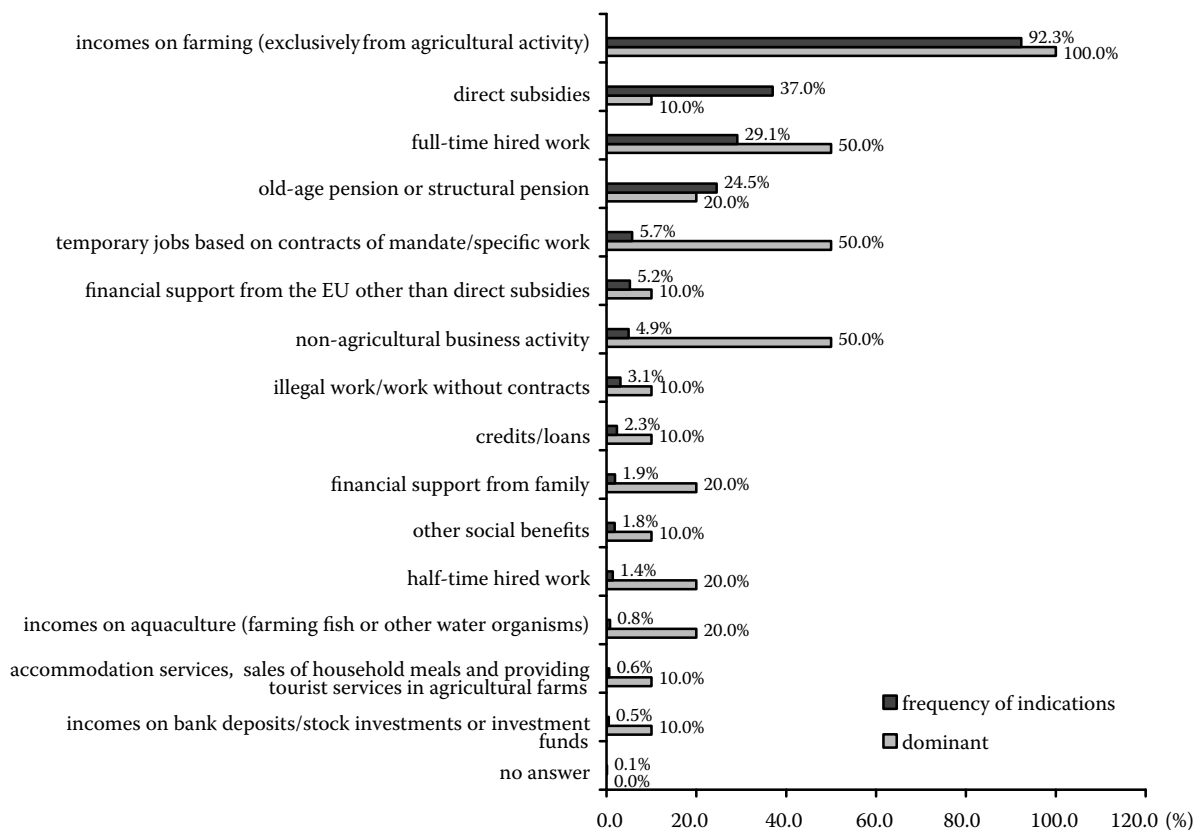


Figure 2. Sources of income in households in the country

Source: Polish countryside and agriculture. Spring 2011: 16

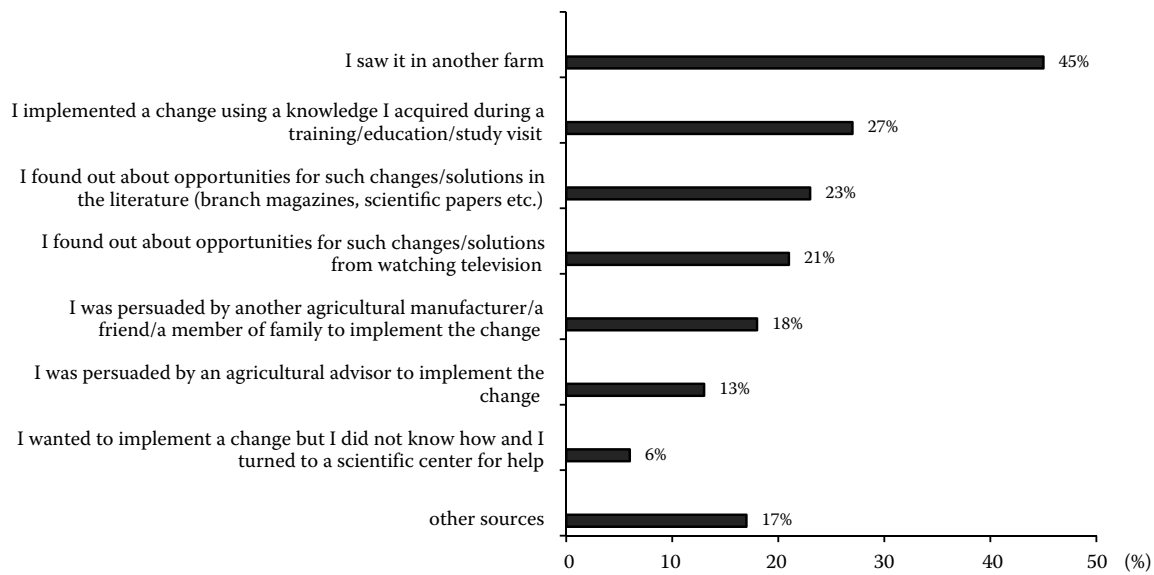


Figure 3. Sources of ideas for changes that modernize running agricultural farms (farmers in general)

Source: Polish countryside and agriculture. Spring 2011: 27.

rural inhabitants and, consequently, the respective attitude of tourist entrepreneurship is performed according to the norm of offering the selfless help to tourists in the form of ensuring their safety and health and respecting their dignity.

Sources of the ideas for changes that modernized the rural households, including operating tourism businesses, are presented in Figure 3.

Among the farmers studied, the main source of the ideas for changes that modernized running their farms and of the ideas for tourist services was copying the neighbours (45%), followed by education in the form of trainings (27%) and self-education (23%) (Figure 3). The results express the value of the knowledge that is necessary for modernizing agricultural farms, which are also connected with tourism. This knowledge is

derived from following and watching neighbours, which might represent the example of such values as the cooperation in improving living conditions or the trust among neighbours. In terms of acquiring knowledge, rural inhabitants also highlighted the importance of education and self-education. Realization of these values is conducive to respecting the norm of prudence, the norm of the submissive carer with respect to tourists and the norm that recommends respect for the values of culture and nature.

The values of sustainable rural tourism were clearly demonstrated in the empirical survey. Among the views expressed by the rural inhabitants concerning the role of rural areas, their most important role was food production (71% of responses), which is an economic value. The second most important role

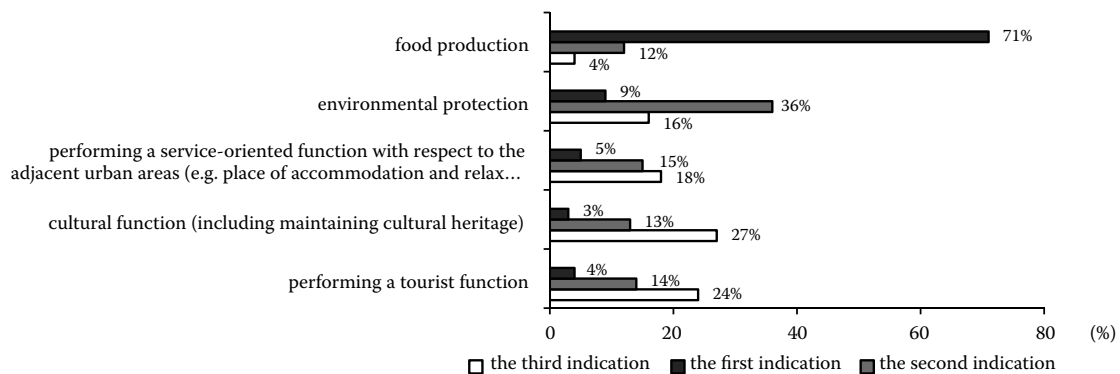


Figure 4. Views of the inhabitants of the countryside about the role of rural areas

Source: Polish countryside and agriculture. Spring 2011: 74

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was environmental protection (9%) (natural value), followed by the cultural function and preserving the cultural heritage of the countryside (3%), i.e., a social value (Figure 4).

The values-goals identified in the study, which, according to the inhabitants of rural areas, express the importance of these areas, are an example of a highly developed awareness concerning realizing the norm of sustainable development, which recommends respecting the goods of nature, culture and rural civilization's heritage and caring for the financial status of its inhabitants.

We believe that the results of the empirical survey relate to the five adopted values-goals and the five norms that support the ethical aspects of rural tourism. Therefore, a broader discussion concerning the values and norms in rural tourism with regard to the sustainable development of rural tourism and rural areas is essential.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Before we proceed to discuss the research findings and formulate our conclusions, we wish to present some statistics on the Poland's family farms and justify the need to address the proposed research problem. Poland's rural areas are inhabited by ca. 38% of the country's population. In 2012, Poland was home to 1 474 000 family farms having an area in excess of 1 ha of arable land. Holdings smaller than 1 ha are classified as house yards. The average size of a farm is 9.1 ha. Small farms ranging from 1 to 5 ha in area account for 52%, while the larger, having more than 15 ha of arable land, for ca. 13% of the total number of agricultural holdings (Rocznik Statystyczny Rolnictwa 2013, 2014). Rural tourism services are offered by 8342 farms or roughly 0.6% of the total number of holdings (a comparable statistic has been arrived at in the research at hand). The farms are small, up to 10 ha in size, which is insufficient to sustain the families on farming alone. Furthermore, rural areas are the site of 10 078 other tourist accommodation establishments. These account for some 0.7% of all businesses classified as non-agricultural (GUS 2012). Rural tourism farms offer accommodations for a total of about 92 000 persons compared to some 272 000 beds available in other rural tourist establishments (GUS 2012). Rural tourism farms employ estimated 24 000 persons or 1.1% of the total number of workers employed on farms. Other tourist accommodation

establishments in rural areas employ approximately 28 000 workers in permanent jobs (that is 0.8% of the overall hired workforce in rural areas). Poland's rural tourist industry employs ca. 52 000 people (excluding the informal market) (Rocznik Statystyczny Rolnictwa 2013; Narodowy Spis ... 2012). In view of the above statistics and based on the other publications cited herein, the authors feel justified addressing the matter of ethical values and norms in rural tourism. Persons in the industry require a special vocational training in the quality of tourist services provided to the domestic and international tourists. Such training must not ignore the ethical issues which form a core component of soft skills and are essential in the service industry. Such skills are also a key part of the human capital in rural areas. All in all, therefore, there is a clear need to hold debates on the related issues.

Theoretical investigations of the ethical values and norms in rural tourism and the results of a general empirical survey conducted in rural areas in Poland encourage the discussion about the topic supported with the interpretation and the views of other authors.

Based on the principle of humanity as an overriding value, in the practice of tourism management in the global economy (tourism being an example of the global economy), one should not neglect the ethical aspects of the local and supra-local social environments. According to Macbeth, the current investigations demonstrate that understanding ethical values and their role in social environments is an important aspect of the "maturing" of tourism knowledge (Macbeth 2005). This approach cannot be neglected during the professional training for rural tourist business entities.

The formation of the entrepreneurial attitudes should be supported by a specific education in the form of professional coaching or self-learning and knowledge exchange, with the emphasis on the material and axiological cultural values that are accepted and developed in the rural environment and that differ from the mass culture's values, which are predominant in the cities, particularly among young people. All organizers of rural tourism are repositories of these values, and they pass these values on to tourists (Grefe 1994).

Ethical values and norms of behaviour are not only reflected in educational programs that prepare, e.g., farmers, to develop agri-tourism; they are also popularized through following and watching, knowledge exchange, and sharing experiences with agri-tourism activities within the framework of agri-

tourist associations. The initiatives of rural leaders who are educated mainly through EU support are also essential. Therefore, we adopted a legitimate proposal formulated by R.T. George, who, following his investigations, noted that discussion about ethics and ethical tourism activities must be widely adopted first and foremost in university education curricula (George 2008).

In practice, the rural tourism development does not always occur perfectly and according to the ethical norms. It is emphasized that rural tourism, including the “greenest” tourism, i.e., ecotourism, extends local interests and determines the conditions of global economy and political ideology. On the one hand, it is possible to adopt and understand the ethics of sustainable development, but on the other hand, realizing and achieving this ethics could potentially be unethical because the benefits are derived by the few, who are often rich, and the costs are incurred by the most numerous social groups, typically those with lower incomes, that is, the poorer (Hunter 1997; Stobler 1997; Duffy 2002; Macbeth 2005). In rural tourism in Poland, the above situations, which highlight the conflict of interest between the rich minority and the poor majority, are very rare (Kaczocha and Sikora 2008).

In rural tourism, apart from the overriding value of the principle of humanity, the “lower-order” values should also be respected and realized. This is also contained in both of the above-discussed codes. Among the object-oriented values understood as the goals of tourist business activities, the values of sustainable development and sustainable rural tourism are more accepted and practiced; they protect the values of the natural environment and the material cultural values created and popularized by the local communities of caring for the social and economic growth of the countryside and its inhabitants (Macbeth 2005).

A very good example of a sustainable approach to rural tourism, whose essential role in the rural development is played through economic, natural and sociocultural factors, are the views presented by Macbeth. This researcher rightly argues that the holistic approach to the problem of sustainable tourism and sustainable development (of rural areas) will contribute to developing local and supra-local communities while meeting the following conditions: first, maintaining the ecological balance that necessitates ecological processes, the biological diversity and biological resources that are consistent with their self-maintenance and self-direction; second, the social

balance and its development requires an increased people’s control over their lives, maintaining and strengthening their identities and social integration; third, the cultural sustainability requires maintaining and promoting the local cultural development, including the culture’s values and importance in society; and fourth, the sustainable economic development necessitates rational and effective economic initiatives, with benefits and costs that must be shared justly (Macbeth 2005).

We also add, to the set of the subject-oriented values that are regarded as the axiological fundamentals of a rural tourist economy, the values of high-quality services and rational management.

The decisions concerning providing high-quality tourist services in the countryside have both the economic and ethical status. The management of tourist enterprises, oriented at providing high-quality services, contains an ethical aspect that is approved by the tourists. The ethical aspect of managing tourist enterprises is connected not only with providing high-quality services but also with their approval by the tourists. Furthermore, the economic dimension of managing enterprises to achieve high-quality service manifests itself in the fact that satisfied tourists return to the enterprise and promote it, and thus they contribute to the increased sales of tourist services (Pratley 1995).

Our opinion, based on frequent personal experiences of using rural tourist services and observations of the services provided by rural tourism entities, is that the services offered by these entities are very often of poor quality. This concerns the quality of services in terms of foods, sanitary conditions and the aesthetic look of the households as well as the interior design (Sikora and Wartecka-Wazynska 2013). It should be emphasized that high-quality tourist services can be achieved first and foremost by acquiring the necessary qualifications and through the Socratic virtue of hard work.

The problem of quality in tourism in general, including rural tourism, is very sensitive and relates to the responsibility in the field of tourist services. It concerns not only the local but also the global scale. The International Institute for Quality and Ethics in Service and Tourism developed ethical principles that support the quality of services provided in the hotel and catering sectors. This institution motivates the introduction of ethical problems in the curricula of high schools and universities that focus on the tourism sector (Hall 1992).

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Therefore, this attitude might prevent unethical tourist business behaviours in which ethics is less important and the interests of local societies are disregarded (Hultsman 1995).

Using the virtue of prudence in tourist businesses and in the whole economy (understood as presented previously) is necessary, especially when planning and making decisions on investments. It is during these moments when one should consider whether the decision will have any negative effects that contradict the values and standards discussed in this paper. If a calculation demonstrates that these negative consequences are certain, the investment project should be modified or the plans should be abandoned (Kaczocha and Sikora 2008).

We would like to emphasize a legitimate and always topical scientific directive formulated by J. Jafari, who almost twenty years ago warned of a too-narrow approach to tourism (treating it as a chiefly economic phenomenon) in scientific research. To benefit from tourism, including rural tourism, one should use a comprehensive approach, bearing in mind the socio-cultural aspects, including ethics (Jafari 1990). The problem is also present in the scientific interests of Macbeth, who emphasized the need for cooperation between the practice and science on the different tourism planes (economic, natural and social) that takes into consideration the idea of ethics in sustainable development (Macbeth 2005). To conclude our investigations, we present the problem, discussed in the literature – i.e., the rural tourism settings in the post-modernist culture – of how tourism in general, considered a “tourist industry”, forms post-cultural individual and mass attitudes (Eco 1986; Barret 1989; Lash 1990; Urry 2002; Sikora 2012 and other studies). The authors expressed the view that the concept of post-modernism relates to the domain of a comprehensive contemporary culture, where the division into high and low cultures has long disappeared. The values of both cultures are in the state of reproduced homogenization, i.e., people do not experience aesthetic sensations towards authentic values; they see mixed reproductions; the tourist experience has a kaleidoscope-like character that is established in reproduced forms (photographs, films and guides). The homogenization of cultural values, which are being constantly reproduced, and the variability of brief experiences create the above post-tourist attitude (Urry 2002). For a post-tourist, the entire culture refers to the “game” of different values, both original and reproduced; post-tourists sometimes participate and

sometimes play the role of observers (Urry 2002). We agree with the opinion that the tourists’ contemporary perceptions of the countryside begins to resemble “a spectacle”, i.e., a “play of values”, and represents a manifestation of the post-modernist culture and the expression of post-tourist attitudes (Urry 2002).

However, we believe that rural areas in Poland are, contrary to most Western European countries, at the initial stage of modernization. Therefore, the authentic folk culture is still present in the field of values, which in most of the villages are consciously fostered, in either the folk customs or the celebrations, and thus are considered to be a specific *sacrum*. The values of folk culture have not been invalidated yet by the phenomena of the post-modernist culture, which is just beginning to be present in rural communities. It can be concluded that the phenomenon of the post-modernist representation of folk culture as a spectacle has been adapted in rural tourism but that it is used only to present the folk cultural values, which are not mixed (homogenized) with the values of low culture (Kneafsey 2001; MacDonald and Jolliffe 2003).

With respect to this reflection, we formulate the view that in most rural areas in Poland, which are distant from most of the cities, the folk culture’s values and the contemporary values of rural culture prevail over the phenomena and characteristics of the post-modernist culture. They prevail in the sense that they are accepted and practiced by most farmers, rural inhabitants and tourists. In these areas, tourism develops in a varied, individualized, controlled and sustainable manner, in full harmony with nature and with the cultures of the rural environments visited by the tourists. Rural tourism helps to meet the tourists’ need for self-realization and reflects the shift towards the post-material values such as happiness, well-being, quality of life, health and physical fitness (Inglehart 1997). In rural tourism, the tourists must be familiar with the local culture; they are guests who remain in one place, even for entire seasons, interacting with the farmer’s family and with the local society. Tourists decide, on their own, whether to contemplate the climate of the locations (in the countryside) where they stay, including their values and ethical norms, and how long to stay (Adler 1998). This contradicts the attitudes of a post-tourist.

In the context of the problems presented, the need arises for broader empirical studies and scientific discussions in the field of ethics in rural tourism as well as the opportunities to apply ethics in practice.

CONCLUSION

The basis for tourism in general, including rural tourism, is adopting and nurturing social values such as: the value of humans and their dignity, the values of cultural goods and respect for them, and the values of nature and its protection. These values are internalized in human awareness, and they stimulate the cognitive, aesthetic and recreational needs.

With regard to the subject-related values of rural tourism that relate to the owners of tourist entities, their employees and tourists, we emphasize the respect for and the realization of additional values such as the respect and tolerance in workplaces and towards tourists, justness in terms of applying laws, prices for tourist services and fair salaries for employees.

Realization of these values by the rural tourism entities and tourists occurs based on the norms presented here, e.g., the norms of prudence and of respecting each person's value and dignity, the norm that obliges maintaining tourists' health, the norm that recommends performing the role of a "submissive carer" with respect to tourists, and the norm that recommends respecting cultural and natural goods (more specifically, the Manifesto for a Global Economic Ethic and the World Code of Ethics for Tourism).

Realization of social values according to the ethical norms in rural tourism occurs more comprehensively and efficiently, without the obstacles that are typical of mass tourism. This situation results first of all from the more favourable attitudes and increased respect of the tourist enterprise owners and employees towards tourists. Rural tourists attempt to understand the local culture and to gain the trust and sympathy of the inhabitants of rural areas.

Rural tourism might be a good example of the complementarity of business and ethics. Business ethics in rural tourism based on the values of mutual trust contributes to the tourists' satisfaction and their returning to the countryside, thus increasing the sales of the tourist services.

It is essential in rural tourism to offer high-quality products, which can be achieved by acquiring the necessary qualifications and through the professional and ethical norms of hard work and prudence.

The ethical dimension of tourism development in rural areas is mutually determined by creating the basis for the holistic concept of sustainable development, which was demonstrated by the results of empirical studies. The perception of the need for sustainable rural development and rural tourism in the awareness

of rural inhabitants is reflected in the opinions about the role and importance of these areas (economic, natural and social value).

The aspect of rural tourism that relates to its organizers and consumers necessitates realizing the need for continuous education in terms of values and ethical norms. This education can be conducted in institutionalized (formal) and self-learning (informal) forms. The need for education in rural tourism is met by the EU's programs for rural development.

Because of the need for the educational support for and the popularization of values and norms in rural tourism, the tone must be guided by the two professional and ethical norms: (1) the obligation to provide the rural tourists with at least sufficient information on the local cultural resources and (2) the realization of this obligation should be connected with a good knowledge of the cultural values in the rural environment where the tourist economy is being developed.

Rural tourism necessitates a broader synergy with science that presents the values and ethical norms in economic practice in order to understand and respect them.

Rural areas in Poland, particularly those at greater distances from larger cities, maintain the folk culture as a value that is nurtured for tourism. Therefore, the countryside, with its cultural, social and natural richness, contradicts the homogenization of cultural values that is typical of the postmodernism and the post-tourist attitudes, which inspires a further scientific work.

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