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YOUTH OUTSIDE THE *MAINSTREAM*. BEEKEEPING AS
A PROFESSION AND LIFESTYLE

There is nothing more beautiful than the beekeeper's life (Austrian proverb)

*Where are you? Where are you, my friend?
My old beekeeper,
My first teacher,
The godly hermit.*

...
*He was so kind old man,
so mild as a sun,
so tender as a child,
And gracious as the earth!
(...)*

*He was like a hard-working and praying
hermit or saint, who is
always diligent and busy,
caring but silent.*

(Wincenty Pol, *Beekeeper*, in: Gnerowicz 2009, p. 137)

Introduction

The article is devoted to beekeeping, and shows it as an “area” remaining on the sidelines of the mainstream social life and differing from the so-called mass culture and statistically most popular activities. Beekeeping may be described as a rare occupation, divergent from typical and most frequent activities, not corresponding with the spirit of modern times.

The topic of this article is not only beekeeping itself, however, considering the generally little knowledge about the activity, it is necessary to

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familiarize the reader with its basic features, scales and conditions. The author aims also to reflect over the lifestyle of young beekeepers in the context of their position in the apiculture community and in the wider community.

For the past few years, the author has been conducting research on beekeeping as a socio-cultural phenomenon. The studies performed so far (surveys, in-depth interviews, and participant observation), the analysis of existing materials (including magazines and beekeeping guides), and statistical data show that Polish beekeeping is outside the *mainstream* of modern social life, it lives its own life (mainly dependent on the honeybee biology), it rarely appears on the front pages of newspapers, and frequently remains on the periphery of foreground events. The topic of this article and the studies conducted among beekeepers are treated as an “exotic” subject, lying outside the scope of popular research. In fact, besides a number of works on the history and ethnography of traditional beekeeping (some of them are included in the bibliography), there are no scientific studies devoted to the contemporary beekeeping subculture. This very interesting world gives a different perspective on the problems and phenomena occurring on a wider scale.

In 2015 the author conducted research on the beekeeping profession among school students from Vocational Secondary School of Beekeeping (Technikum Pszczelarskie) in Pszczela Wola near Lublin. The school has been teaching beekeeping to young people¹ since 1944. Students from Poland (mainly from the Lublin region, and from all over Poland during the first years of school functioning – source: Główna Księga Ewidencyjna ...) as well as Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine come to learn there. Students from abroad have appeared in the school in recent years.

The 2015 questionnaire concerned ideas and beliefs about the beekeeping profession, attitudes towards the bee (assigning a number value to the bee), the source of interest in beekeeping, life values, and students’ career plans. The questionnaire included open-ended, closed-ended, and semi-open-ended questions (in total 22 questions and sociodemographic questions).

A total of 62 students from the Vocational Secondary School of Beekeeping in Pszczela Wola were surveyed (73% of all the students from the School at the time of the study being carried out): 39 boys and 20 girls (three respondents did not indicate sex). The vast majority of students come from rural areas (42 persons). Eight students live in towns with more than 100,000 inhabitants, six in towns with up to 20,000 people, and three in big towns with over 20,000 up to 100,000 inhabitants. The survey inclu-

¹The school also runs specialist courses for adults.

ded 15 foreign students (7 from Belarus, 4 from Kazakhstan, 2 from Russia, and 2 from Ukraine). The detailed results of the research were published in a separate article (Pokrzyńska 2016).

Different aspects of beekeeping as a profession (described below in the article) are indicative of its different character, particularly those positioning teenage beekeepers off the most popular paths followed in the contemporary world. The apiculture is neither typical nor the most popular path in the modern world focusing on modern technologies, predictability, and freedom. In vain did the author look for beekeeping on the ranking list of professions most popular among youth. Peers of the students from the Vocational Secondary School in Pszczela Wola see their future careers in nutrition and gastronomy, hotel industry, IT, car mechanics, law, or medicine (<http://www.gp24.pl/wiadomosci/slupsk/art/4853395,gimnazjalisci-wybieraja-zawod,id,t.html--access2017-12-30>). Nevertheless, the young students of beekeeping decided on a profession which is timeless and universal. Students from Pszczela Wola stand out for the choice of a unique school, and graduates work as beekeepers on all continents except for Antarctica. It is, however, a rare choice as, due to their specialized field and a specific character of their training, graduates have fewer employment possibilities. Students' age (youth) further contributes to their uniqueness. Teenagers dealing with bees are unusual among the general Polish community of beekeepers.

Polish beekeeping – historical and cultural context

Bees have always been part of the human world (Crane 1999, according to: Wilde 2008, p. 187), and people have assigned cultural significance to them for centuries. These animals have gained not only economic importance, but also acquired a rich symbolic value showing how highly they are appreciated. A universal (supra-cultural), exceptionally high status is attributed to bees and bee products, compared to the entire animal world. In various cultures, the bee was a symbol of “(social) diligence, instinctive order, solicitude, altruism, wisdom, purity, abstinence, obedience, good luck, sylphlikeness, blue, immortality, resurrection, death, punishment, sexual purity, monastic life, prophecy, bureaucracy, eloquence, flattery, temptation, love, fertility, (biting) sweetness” (Kopaliński 1990, p. 340). This symbolism is strongly associated with honey, which is the most well-known bee product and also a universal symbol present in various cultures (Kopaliński 1990, p. 226). People have been frequently inspired by how the bee colonies organize their life (e.g. Maeterlinck 1901; Temple 1919). J. Niewińska quotes from Seneca: “Let’s be like bees” in her analysis devoted to the value of work in human

life (2013, p. 81).

Connecting bees with the afterlife and sacrum is a characteristic feature of traditional beliefs about bees in different spatial and temporal cultures. According to the ideas deeply rooted in Polish culture, the bee was created by the Lord God (for example, the legend that the bee flew out of a wound of Jesus – Bystroń 1917, pp. 27-28). They are useful, beautiful, and pure creatures, unlike flies and wasps which, according to folk myths, were created by the devil. The people in the Slavic lands believed that bees, like humans, have a soul, can distinguish good from evil, and understand human speech (Wilczyńska 2013; Wróblewski 1997; p. 86, p. 132). The prestigious status of the bee is emphasized in the Polish language with the help of the verb that defines the act of dying, and which is normally reserved for humans. According to the traditional linguistic norm, the bee passes away (Gloger 1876; p. 552, Sobisiak 1964, p. 259). This demonstrates that Polish society has a great respect for bees.

Bee products also have a special cultural meaning. Honey and wax appear as elements of rituals and traditional magic acts (Kowalski 2007, pp. 319-322).

The “pacing up near bees” (this was the name for beekeeping in Poland in the past) was considered an exceptional activity. Beekeepers enjoyed a high, elite social status. They interacted with the creatures regarded as sacred. They helped obtain important products for religious and magical purposes (wax was used to illuminate the altar and for magical activities; honey was added to ritual dishes, etc.). Beekeepers had knowledge, and their lifestyle differed from the standard norm (for example, the keepers of wild bees were spending a significant part of their time in the forest, not being involved in a local community’s life). Honesty, piety, goodness, courage, and self-control characterized this profession (Polish beekeepers still say that in the past Poland’s beekeepers were the only “occupational group” who were exempt from taking the oath at court). Beekeeping and winemaking were considered agricultural activities of noble origin. The beekeeping occupation was frequently a domain of the representatives of higher social classes (such as priests, noblemen, and teachers). In traditional culture, beekeeping was an exclusive, prestigious occupation which distinguished apiarists from other people. Thanks to the contact with bees, they entered “rarely frequented paths”, going beyond the main socio-cultural dimensions.

In Polish tradition, this occupation was inherited, but some great beekeepers of the 19th and 20th centuries moved away from this rule. Traditionally, beekeeping knowledge was transmitted within a family through demonstration and participation. However, with gradual social modernization,

alternative ways of transmitting knowledge and beekeeping skills appeared. These include books and guidebooks promoting “progressive beekeeping” (for example, the first Polish book devoted to this topic: *Kaçki*, Ostroróg 1614; and later works: *Kluk* 1780; *Lelewel* 1856), as well as institutions specializing in the development of knowledge and professional education (the first beekeeping school in Poland was founded in Lviv in 1804, modelled on the school founded by Empress Maria Theresa in Vienna in 1768). Today, the Internet plays a main role in beekeepers’ training.

Even today, schools specializing in preparing young people to perform beekeeping are exceptions. Lack of such institutions, for example, in neighboring Ukraine, is very significant in view of the fact that Ukraine is among the world’s top honey producers. Beekeeping is usually a one-semester course or a few-hour subject provided as part of agricultural or zootechnical education at various levels of agricultural vocational education (basic vocational school, technical secondary school, and higher education). It must be said, however, that there are also unique institutions (chairs and departments at universities, independent institutes) which strongly prioritize beekeeping. That is where the apiculture, i.e. the science of beekeeping, bee biology, knowledge about bee diseases, analysis of the importance of bees for human life and the whole ecosystem, develops.

Beekeeping is little-known to the “wider audience”. Apiaries are located off the main routes, protected from intruders, and far enough to not affect people’s feeling of safety. Life of a bee colony takes place inside the hive, in the darkness, remaining inaccessible to a random observer. The knowledge of bee biology and the art of beekeeping remain a secret to the majority of society members (despite the fact that this knowledge is available to anyone wishing to obtain it).

In recent years, one has witnessed an increasing popularity of the idea of a return to nature, to rustic style, healthy lifestyle, ecology, of moving from the city to the countryside, etc. The contemporary man is tired of mass culture and crowds, and is looking for authenticity (Golka 2016). Interest in bees is consistent with these trends. People taking vocational training for adults, to become a technician, farmer, or beekeeper, have sometimes never had contact with rural areas or agriculture. Many people of different ages and with different education want to try their hand at beekeeping. Apiculture courses are popular not so much amongst the farmers who want to expand and improve their farm activity, but mostly amongst the representatives of professions completely different from beekeeping and from agriculture in general. They are frequently residents of big cities, are well educated (and often graduates of universities), already experienced and suc-

cessful in their professions (Pokrzyńska 2017). This confirms the thesis about the non-mainstream character of beekeeping. Beekeeping seems to them to be an enclave of peace and respite, a place of escape and refuge from the modern world, an alternative, the “land of honey”. This understanding is rooted in culture.

Apiculture is a kind of niche that attracts attention only in certain situations. Today, the issue of beekeeping appears in the main news media in two basic contexts. Firstly, in the context of CCD (Colony Collapse Disorder). When the information about CCD became public, it gave rise to the discussion about the importance of bees and other pollinators for the natural environment and human food security. Popular media are alarmed about cases of destruction of apiaries in recent years, caused by irresponsible farmers spraying their fields in the wrong way or by “unknown perpetrators” deliberately poisoning bees in hives. Public opinion is concerned about such incidents. They are considered to be acts of vandalism and highly criticized by society. It must be added that such cases are not common and are thus presented as something unusual (as a violation of norm).

Young professionals in the apiary are “background” characters

Beekeeping is classified under the Regulation of the Minister of Economy and Labor (Rozporządzenie Ministra Gospodarki i Pracy) from 8 December 2004 on the list of occupations and specializations. It is defined as owning and breeding bees for practical purposes and classified as a special sector of agricultural production, being not only an economic sector but also a factor affecting the environmental situation and yields. Over 80% of arable crops and wild plants require pollination by insects. According to estimates, pollinating insects (honeybees, bumblebees, wild bees) generate EUR 22 billion of the annual revenue in the European Union. In addition to pollination, which is the main economic value of apiaries, beekeeping brings benefits in the form of bee products, such as honey, bee pollen, wax, propolis, and royal jelly (http://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/live/_animals/bees_en – last access on 11 Feb. 2016). Due to its economic importance, apiculture is included in the formal framework of economics, education, etc.

Poland, as well as the majority of Western European countries, is a country with a relatively high number of bees per square kilometer. There were on average 4.6 bee colonies per square kilometer in Poland in 2015 (the highest numbers of bees were found in Małopolskie Voivodeship (8.3 beehives) and the lowest in Podlaskie Voivodeship (1.8 beehives per square kilometer) (Semkiw 2016, p. 3). In the EU, the highest numbers of bees are in Greece (11.4) and in Hungary (10.7); and the lowest in Norway (0.1),

Finland (0.1), Sweden (0.3) and Ireland (0.3) (Chauzat 2013, p. 3). Thus, Poland ranks average compared to the rest of the EU, which means that apiaries are present in the Polish landscape, and the presence of beehives in gardens, orchards, or in the fields is not surprising. It is worth mentioning that apiculture has also a long tradition in the Slavic lands.

At the end of the 20th century, beekeeping was one of the “dying professions” (e.g., Skuza 2008). This profession has a very long history and some apiculture knowledge is lost (f.e., how to keep wild bees), so apiarists are now trying to recreate it. In the 1980s and 1990s, bee loss rates increased significantly (resulting in the drop in the number of apiaries) in Poland. This factor in combination with the stereotype of the beekeeper being an elderly person and with the global, free circulation of goods and services (honey import) may have given the impression that beekeeping is becoming history. Statistics on the number of beekeepers and bee colonies in Poland in selected years of the 20th and 21st centuries are presented in Table 1. These data show a significant drop in the number of bee colonies at the turn of the centuries, but a slight increase in this number in recent years. A huge disproportion in the number of beekeepers between the mid-20th century and the recent decades is also noteworthy. It shows that there is only one beekeeper per approximately 940 inhabitants of Poland. For comparison, in neighboring Ukraine (according to the UN, Ukraine is the fourth honey producer in the world, after China, Turkey, and Iran) there is 1 beekeeper per 107 inhabitants. The USA is one of the leading countries in highly modern forms of agriculture, including modern apiculture; at the same time, one of the countries most affected by CCD: it has 1 beekeeper per 1500 inhabitants.

Table 1

The number of beekeepers and bee colonies in Poland in selected years

| | 1950 | 1960 | 1980 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2014 |
|---|--------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| The total number of apiaries ² | 141000 | 181600 | 176000 | 40381 | 36636 | 36453 | 40216 |
| The total number of bee colonies | 884700 | 1204400 | 2227000 | 838344 | 827419 | 876294 | 969241 |

Source: *Rocznik statystyczny 1945-1965; Rocznik statystyczny rolnictwa i gospodarki żywnościowej 1982; Rocznik statystyczny rolnictwa 2010, 2014, 2015.*

It should be noted, however, that the above data present the sum of all beekeepers (registered by veterinary units), regardless of the size of the apiary. To understand the specificity of beekeeping, it is necessary to pay attention to the diversity of apiaries, which also implies a diversity of the ways in which bees are kept. There are four types of apiaries classified by the owner's economic involvement: the amateur apiary, the apiary that is an additional source of income, the professional apiary, and the apiary of special importance (training, breeding, experimental) (Wilde 2008, pp. 208-211). Small- and medium-sized amateur apiaries made up of between 6 and 50 hives dominate in Poland. The percentage of bee colonies in professional apiaries (with more than 80 hives), whose maintenance and servicing require a lot of work and equipment, has remained relatively stable in the recent years. Table 2 presents the data on the size of Polish apiaries in the recent decades.

Table 2

Structure of apiaries in Poland over the period 2000-2014 (as a percentage)

| | | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2014 | 2015 |
|--|---------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Structure of apiaries (number of hives in an apiary) as a percentage | Up to 5 | 13.2 | 9.6 | 10.5 | 10.1 | 10.0 |
| | 6-10 | 24.7 | 23.4 | 20.2 | 16.9 | 16.3 |
| | 11-20 | 27.2 | 24.9 | 25.4 | 30.4 | 30.4 |
| | 21-50 | 24.0 | 28.2 | 30.7 | 29.4 | 31.0 |
| | 51-80 | 8.1 | 10.5 | 10.0 | 10.3 | 9.7 |
| | 81-150 | 2.3 | 2.7 | 2.6 | 2.2 | 2.0 |
| | more than 150 | 0.5 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.6 |

Source: *Rocznik statystyczny rolnictwa 2010, 2014, 2015, 2016.*

It turns out that there are few professional apiaries in Poland (2.6%), the vast majority of beekeepers run an apiary additionally to their main occupation. The Association of Professional Beekeepers (Stowarzyszenie Pszczelarzy Zawodowych) has around 150 members who earn their livelihood from beekeeping (or mainly beekeeping). There are about 80 to 3000 bee colonies on their farms. These apiaries have the highest efficiency of the production of honey and other bee products. More than half of Polish queen bees live in them.

²The data available for the years 1950, 1960, and 1980 show the number of apiaries and the number of bee colonies. For the purposes of the text, the author assumed that the number of apiaries is the approximate number of beekeepers.

The vast majority of Polish beekeepers (97.4%) are not professionals, usually, they do not have specialized education in apiculture (however, they take additional training courses, participate in lectures, read magazines for beekeepers³, etc., and some of them have professional qualifications attested by a state diploma). Their apiaries are usually registered and have a veterinary approval number (however, a number of apiaries remain completely outside the system and are “invisible” in statistical data). From a formal point of view, apiarists are not farmers (even though they practice farming). Their bee-farming is extensive, but it does not generate big (if any) profits (in any case, in the opinion of apiarists themselves, economic profit is not the main goal in bee-keeping (see: Pokrzyńska 2017), and registering apiaries and membership in the trade association has, in the recent years, resulted from the desire to obtain EU funds). It can be said that bee-farming among Polish apiarists fits into modern trends in agriculture, such as specialization, professionalization, farm and market character of a household enterprise, but only to some extent (see: Bukraba-Rylska 2008, p. 371). These apiaries are not honey bee farms and apiarists do not invest in professionalization and specialization: frequently, traditional equipment inherited from previous generations, such as beehives built by their fathers/grandfathers, is still being used alongside with advanced breeding solutions, like the replacement of queen bees. Also, bee-keeping is still performed by family members. In the 1980s, locally produced or handmade equipment was used, including wooden hives, straw mats, frames, hive tool chisels, handmade wax melting devices, honey extractors, etc. Due to this locally ‘produced’ equipment, an “average” Polish apiary seems old-fashioned and out of date. After all, self-supply was a feature typical of the traditional, preindustrial world. Still, these apiaries, so different from modern American beekeeping farms, focus on achieving the best possible efficiency, as the owner is managing a business modeled on a factory rather than on working with bees (this difference is illustrated in the film “Not only honey”). Certainly, this world is mysterious and hardly accessible to unauthorized persons, not only physically (the fear of being stung, apiaries being located in secluded places and protected against possible intruders), but also in the cognitive sense.

This raises the question: who are beekeepers? Who is an average Polish beekeeper? The beekeeping community is dominated by men. According to the statistics of the Polish Beekeeping Association (Polski Związek Pszcze-

³In Poland, there are three magazines that target beekeepers: *Beekeeping*, *Polish Beekeeper* and *Apiary*. Today, they are not available bookstores among other magazines for horse, cat, dog lovers or for fishing or hunting enthusiasts. They are available only in specialized stores for beekeepers and online.

larski), only 6% of 32650 affiliated beekeepers were women (in 2015, source: <http://związek-pszczelarski.pl/statystyki/> – access 2017-01-04). In Poland, people of all ages work as beekeepers, but the largest age group is made up of people aged 51-65 (33.89%). The second largest group consists of people over 65 (29.47%). Following that is the group of people between 36 and 50 years (23.88%). The smallest and the youngest group consists of people under 35. This last group represents 12.76% of the total number of the apiculture community (however, their number has been rising slowly though unevenly in recent years; for comparison: in 1999, it was 8.7%) (Semkiw 2016, p. 7). This means that the vast majority of Polish beekeepers (63.36%) are mature adults, which certainly has an influence on the features and the character of this community, as well as its image. As studies show, a stereotypical beekeeper is an elderly man (Pokrzyńska 2016). Bee-farming means working irregular hours, and the intensity of work in the busiest months interferes with the standard hours of full-time employment. This is one of the reasons why retired people dominate in the community of apiarists.

Taking into consideration professional competence, young beekeepers from Pszczela Wola differ from the world presented above not only when it comes their age and sex (there are many girls in beekeeping classes and their average rate at school is higher than that of all women in the whole Polish apiculture community). Students from Pszczela Wola have knowledge of the latest scientific discoveries in honey bee biology, they have skills and experience in modern apiculture when compared to the whole beekeeping community. Teachers share theoretical and practical knowledge with their students. In addition to traditional classes, students gain job experience in the school apiary. They also participate in multi-week internships in large professional apiaries (commercial bee farms specializing in acquiring bee products, like honey, wax etc., or/and farms specializing in the breeding and sale of queens and replacement stock) in Poland, Austria, Germany, and the Benelux countries. Their views on beekeeping are to some extent avant-garde in comparison to the views of the majority of their fellow apiarist colleagues in Poland. They know how large bee apiaries, also breeding ones, function, and can work with them. They also have experience in using very modern, up to date equipment.

Paradoxically, however, it is easy to discover in the teenage beekeepers' attitudes towards bees and beekeeping traditional elements that coincide with the attitudes prevailing in the whole beekeeping community. They perceive this profession mainly through the prism of moral values and feelings that normally apiarists have for bees. Youth mostly associates beekeeping

and the image of the beekeeper with such traits as patience, persistence and diligence. Other characteristics traditionally attributed to apiarists, such as honesty, respect for social norms, thrift, and diligence are also important. Students' statements show that beekeeping is not just a matter of money to them, but of passion. In their opinion, nobody can be a beekeeper without being passionate about this occupation. Taking care of bees is a goal in itself for them, it gives a sense of pride and evokes intense emotions. Youth's statements about bees are generally similar to the opinions of their older colleagues. Here are some examples:

"It is not enough to be just interested in beekeeping; in my opinion, true beekeepers are those who do the job with passion and love, and get pleasure from it" (4th year). *"Beekeepers are generally responsible people, but they must be a little crazy"* (4th year). *"They perceive the world differently. Bees teach respect for the smallest creatures, and no plant is any longer ordinary for us"* (1st year). *"Beekeepers are always crazy about bees"* (2nd year). *"Apiarists stand out from other people with being passionate about their occupation, a person who does not like bees will not work well or will not work at all with them"* (2nd year). *"Beekeepers are positive people and may cope better with everyday life"* (3^d year). *"Beekeepers are people with passion. Conscientious work brings success"* (4th year). *"These are people who love bees and who can take care not only of themselves"* (2nd year).

The majority of students emphasized their emotional commitment and planned to stay in the chosen profession. Below are some exemplifications:

"I am particularly interested in beekeeping. I am constantly increasing my knowledge of bees. After graduating from the Vocational Secondary School of Beekeeping I want to enlarge / start up an apiary and continue studying" (2nd year). *"For me, the most important thing is to love what I'm doing. Therefore, I think that beekeeping will always be a part of my life and I'm seriously thinking about setting up an apiary"* (4th year). *"I like the beekeeper's job, I will certainly bind my life with it"* (2nd year). *"Bees inspire me and I cannot imagine having no contact with them. I can say that I am addicted to this job"* (4th year). *"I love bees and working with them, and I will definitely continue doing that"* (4th year). *"Working with bees gives me pleasure and will give me an opportunity to achieve my dreams"* (4th year). *"I love working with bees and working outdoors, this is my dream"* (4th year).

Their statements concerning a bee's death (three-quarters of students demonstrate attachment to the traditional Polish language norm, choosing the expression "bee passed away") confirm that young beekeepers have

strong feelings for this animal. There are no signs of an instrumental approach to bees, and, more broadly, to nature itself. The conclusions of the research process revealed that the apiarists' attitude has a strong affective aspect. For a vast majority of the surveyed beekeepers, the contact with nature and the opportunity of internal development, and functioning close to an 'ideal society' of bees are the most attractive sides of apiculture (this means, among other things, that their personal plans are secondary to how an apiary works: professional beekeepers go on holiday at the turn of December and January, between the two seasons). Profitability of this activity is of minor significance. Both young and old apiarists were asked whether, if there were no benefits from beekeeping, they would continue the job. The vast majority of them stated that they would not give up on beekeeping (Pokrzyńska 2016, Pokrzyńska 2017).

Apiculture is one of the most complex branches of agricultural production. Many different factors such as a beekeeper's knowledge and experience, available equipment, management methods, environmental and also climatic factors (how bees work largely depends on them) influence its efficiency. One of the particular characteristics of this occupation is the fact that beekeepers need to adapt to the specific rhythm of the bee colony's life. *Finally, people developed a system of beekeeping, but they could not "remodel" the bee itself as they did with poultry, cattle or pigs. The bee still remained a free insect* – notes the researcher of the history of Polish beekeeping Romuald Wróblewski (1997, p. 137). It is impossible to close an apiary within a farm or "free range" space and keep it under strict control as it is with the majority of farm animals today.

Beekeeping is one of those few professions that keep their natural rhythm. Being an apiarist means implementing elements of the traditional work ethos (Fedyszak-Radziejowska 1992, p. 35, Zawistowicz-Adamska 1951, p. 50, see also: Laskowska-Otwinowska 2008, p. 118), according to which, work is a fundamental and autotelic value around which the whole value system is built. People living in rural areas considered traditional work to be the highest life value. Work was also part of social and cultural life organized around an irregular weekday schedule. According to the agrarian ideology of the interwar period, the farmer's work and profession were associated with very important values, such as independence, creativity, freedom, independence, a versatility of skills, conscientiousness, responsibility, and attachment to the land, and were considered basic features of patriotism. A man working in the field was perceived as a "child of nature"; his work not as a profession, but a lifestyle: the farmer interacts with nature, remaining "in some kind of a mystical, holy relationship with it" (Łapińska-

Tyszka 1992, p. 98). This mystical union with bees, the feeling of being a part of nature, and being attached to the land (the need of knowing the local flow possibilities, activities aiming to improve it, where the effects are postponed in time and in many cases will be profitable only to the next generations) are visible also in beekeepers' statements (regardless of age). Today, like in the past, this profession is usually inherited. It is perceived mainly from the perspective of its moral characteristics, such as patience, persistence, and diligence (it is noteworthy that the characteristics mentioned by the youth are the same attributes that were required of traditional beekeepers and are associated with the traditional image of the beekeeper). Students from Pszczela Wola consider apiarists to be caretakers and friends of such exceptional animals as bees. Therefore, keeping an apiary is a passion, a lifestyle, a time-consuming and difficult occupation that requires multifaceted knowledge and a good physical condition. It may or may not return or bring tangible profits. All these aspects of beekeeping make this profession an alternative to the trends of the modern world.

Conclusions

It is important to note that young beekeepers are a small and little-known community of contemporary adolescents. They are not typical representatives of teenagers, but they are not representatives of a typical apiculture community, either. It must be also emphasized that today, like centuries ago, beekeeping stands out from the mainstream social life. Apiculture, both literally and figuratively, remains at the periphery of social life (in the "background"). In the case of beekeeping, time flows differently, activities are subordinated to the values that are rarely implemented in the big world (such as autotelicity and the non-anthropocentric way of thinking). The Polish beekeepers' community retains many elements classifiable as the so-called structures of long duration. Many solutions and values implemented in Polish apiaries do not keep up with the times. In this sense, beekeeping is an alternative to the standard way of living.

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Magdalena Pokrzyńska

YOUTH OUTSIDE THE MAINSTREAM. BEEKEEPING AS A PROFESSION AND LIFESTYLE

Keywords: lifestyle, youth, dying professions, beekeeping.

This text presents different faces of modern beekeeping, with particular reference to the characteristics of Polish beekeeping and personality traits of young apiarists. An important factor shaping this face is the history of beekeeping, and that is why the author recalls traditional features and facts from the history of this activity, while simultaneously referring to the globally noticeable trends.

The aim of the article is to reflect over the young beekeepers in the context of their position in the wider community. The empirical material (surveys, in-depth interviews and participant observation) comes from the authors' studies performed in the beekeeping community, the analysis of existing materials (also beekeeping literature), and the statistical data. The data from the research (class survey) conducted among the youth studying at the Vocational Secondary School of Beekeeping (Liceum Pszczelarskie) in Pszczela Wola near Lublin are an important part of the article.

Magdalena Pokrzyńska

MŁODZI POZA MAINSTREAMEM. PSZCZELARSTWO JAKO ZAWÓD I STYL ŻYCIA

Słowa kluczowe: styl życia, młodzież, znikający zawód, pszczelarstwo.

Tekst prezentuje różne oblicza współczesnego pszczelarstwa, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem cech pszczelarstwa polskiego oraz młodych ludzi zajmujących się tą profesją. Ważnym czynnikiem kształtującym to oblicze są dzieje pszczelarstwa, dlatego też autorka przywołuje tradycyjne cechy i fakty z historii tego zajęcia, odwołując się także do trendów, jakie można dostrzec w skali globalnej. Celem artykułu jest namysł nad młodymi pszczelarzami w kontekście ich ulokowania w szerszym społeczeństwie. Materiał empiryczny pochodzi z autorskich badań prowadzonych w środowisku społeczności pszczelarzy (ankiety, wywiady pogłębione i obserwacja uczestnicząca). Przeprowadzono również analizy istniejących materiałów (także literatury pszczelarskiej) oraz danych statystycznych. Dane z badania (ankiety klasowe) przeprowadzonego wśród młodzieży studiującej w Liceum Pszczelarskim w Pszczeli Woli pod Lublinem stanowią istotny element artykułu.