


Žarko Lazarevič*

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4635-4309>

ECONOMIC FOUNDATIONS OF CONFLICTS AND SOLIDARITY WITHIN THE TRADITIONAL RURAL COMMUNITY OF SLOVENIA

Abstract. The following article focuses on the economic conflicts in the local rural communities in Slovenia until World War II and analyses the example of the privatisation of a public good, the relations between labour and capital, and economic solidarity in form of cooperatives as a tool for ensuring social cohesion at the local level. The author presents a viewpoint that the feeling of social justice (moral economy) represented a cohesive element in the analysed local communities. Justice, defined according to the rules of traditional law, provided the relations in the local communities with a status of legitimacy. If the feeling of justice was questioned, then the legitimacy of the social relations and consequently the cohesion of the local communities were uncertain as well.

Keywords: local communities, conflicts, social justice, moral economy, cohesion, Slovenia.

1. Introduction

The article focuses on the economic conflicts in the local rural communities in Slovenia until World War II. As this is an exceedingly extensive topic, the article is restricted to the historiographical presentation of a few examples that attest to the existence of these conflicts and their influence on the cohesion of the local communities. The contents regarding the privatisation of a public good, the relations between labour and capital, and the economic solidarity or cooperatives as a tool for ensuring social cohesion at the local level will be presented as examples of the ongoing processes in the local communities.

* Professor of economic and social history, Institute of Contemporary History, Privoz 11, 1000 Ljubljana and University of Primorska, Titov trg 4, Koper, Slovenia, e-mail: zarko.lazarevic@guest.arnes.si

The discussion builds on the assumption that local communities are a combination of social units and systems which perform the major social functions having local relevance (Kreps, Wenger 1973). Or with other words, local communities are fundamental social organizations of a territorial or other character, where everyday interests and other social practices of various social actors are realized (Fine 2010). In the process of the realization of individual interests, conflicts arise between the general and partial interests. Kreps and Wenger summarized the results of previous sociological research to conceptualize the theory of conflict in local communities. As a starting point, they pointed out that the conditions for the outbreak of the conflict must be established. Relying in part on James Coleman and his book *Community Conflicts* (1957) and from their own research, they propose the following typology of the causes of conflict in the local community.

1. An intervening event occurs which impinges, in some way, upon one or more of the basic community functions.
2. The impact of events must be differential; systemic reactions is differential on the basis of vested interests.
3. Opportunities must be available for response to the event, i.e. the event must not be one in which community is completely overwhelmed and its members are unable to act (Kreps, Wenger 1973: 161).

They go on to say that there is a correlation between conflicts and structural changes in the local community. Changes because of conflicts depend on the relations of social and economic power, stratification, cohesion or internal integration and participation in public sphere of members of the local community (Kreps, Wenger 1973: 173). Bell and Newby (1982: 242–249) agree with this view, also by referring to Coleman's work.

The awareness of conflicts and the path to their resolution is vital for understanding the ongoing processes in the local communities. Furthermore, conflicts set out the conditions for the co-existence and long-term stability of such institutions. Local communities are microcosms of human relations, statuses and positions, ascribed significances, and formalised as well as informal institutions of the societal, social, and economic environment. The article emphasises the issue of social justice, which is underlined as a cohesive element of the local communities. The element of justice, defined according to the rules of traditional law rather than normative legal regulation, provides the relations in the local communities with a status of legitimacy. If the feeling of justice is questioned, then the legitimacy of the current relations and consequently the cohesion of any local community are uncertain as well. Historians as well as experts in other social sciences define such circumstances with the term "moral economy". It involves a social context in which the regulation of social life takes place based on the traditional norms and obligations outside the market mechanisms. The social justice ideals take precedence over the profit of individuals. A modern derivation defines the concept

of moral economy as the production, circulation, and application of values and feelings in a community when discussing particular social issues in various historical periods (Fassin 2012). The analysed examples come from the rural environment, as until World War II, Slovenia was a predominantly rural country. Two thirds of the population lived off agriculture, while the rural population represented the largest economic and social category (Lazarević 2015).

The article is partly based on the historical contextualisation of literary sources. The literature of the second half of the 19th century and the interwar period (especially the realism genre) was, with the necessary critical distance, recognised as an important source for the construction of the historical reality of these periods, as the relevant literature focused on individuals, families, or villages – i.e., on those segments of the society that the historical sources, written by the authorities, only rarely describe (Blum 1982: 122–139; Smith Allen 1983: 233–252). In a way, in the historiography of older periods, literature represents what oral sources mean for sociologists, ethnologists, and anthropologists in modern research.¹

2. Privatisation of a public good

In his novel *Krka umira* (Krka Is Dying), Janez Dular (1992) presented the rural world, economic interests, and social relations at the end of the 19th century with the example of the right to exploiting the economic potentials of the river Krka – a model example of the concept of the moral economy (Arnold

¹ The interest in the local communities is not only evident in historiography, but rather – in the Slovenian case – also clearly present in sociology and ethnology (anthropology). I only refer to two examples, which are – by taking into account the historical dimension – closest to historical epistemology. In the 1960s, a special branch of studying the local communities formed in sociology. Under the leadership of Zdravko Mlinar and with the assistance of American sociologists, the field of study and research called “sociology of local communities” was established. Mlinar later wrote that he decided for the name “sociology of local communities” because he wanted to transcend what had been, for him, an unproductive dichotomy between rural and urban sociology (Mlinar 2005: 40–44). Ethnological efforts started at approximately the same time. The extensive yet unfinished project *Etnološka topografija slovenskega etničnega ozemlja* (Ethnological Topography of the Slovenian Ethnic Territory, 1976), whose goal was to present the cultural, social, and economic changes in the Slovenian territory in the 20th century with the examples of more than 60 studies of the local environments, should be mentioned as well. If sociological studies focused predominantly on the various contemporaneous situations, the ethnological research was based on historical ethnology and attempted to register the processes taking place throughout the entire century. Despite the emphasis on the historical perspective, the ethnological works from this series, however, have been characterised with the circumstances of the times in which they were written. In the case of ethnological works, the studies of the local agricultural environments need to be underlined as well. The economic and social structures, relations, and cultural rituals of the everyday rural world have been analysed using the method of direct participation (Makarovič 1978).

2001: 93). Peasants would exploit the river – the water as well as the river's flora and fauna – as a public good. Everyone had access to this natural resource, and its exploitation was regulated informally. The problems in the local community escalate when a local magnate (Urbih) monopolises the river for his own profit. He purchases a concession and prohibits others from catching crayfish. Previously, the village economy was based mainly on free access to common (municipal) natural resources. When the concession operator restricts and abolishes the access to what used to be a public good, the economic interests in the village clash. An uprising of such magnitude occurs that police intervention is necessary to settle the situation and allow the concessionaire to assert his right to exploit the river's potentials. In the grand finale, the novel concludes with the crayfish dying due to a disease. The reason for the differentiation in the community thus disappears: the cause for greed is gone, and the relations of free access to a public good are re-established.

The local community, as depicted by the author, is a world of the authoritarian assertion of one's own economic and social interests on the one hand and conflicts within the rural community on the other hand. According to Jože Dular, peasants are mistrustful of all institutions (due to poor experience) and suspicious of the Church (the clergy as a part of the authorities), the political authorities and the existing economic system, as well as the judiciary as a tool of the economically and politically powerful. On these bases, Dular presented the rural communities facing the process of the profound economic and social transition in the last decades of the 19th century. The all-embracing commercialisation of life because of the institutionalisation of the capitalist forms of the economy resulted in considerable uncertainty and fear of the future. Agriculture faced a crisis spanning several decades – a true transformation depression that settled down towards the end of the 19th century, after the structure of cultivation and animal production had partially changed (Lazarević 2009: 106–112). Crayfish plague,² which was an actual phenomenon, thus functions as the allegory of the capitalisation of economic relations, which altered the very foundations of the economic and human mutual relations in the Slovenian countryside. The plague functions as an allegory of the conflict between the economic value systems (culture) of the traditional society and society organised on the basis of private capital interests.

Another question that the novel addresses is the relationship between the public and private – between the people's law and codified law. All of this culminates in the right to catch crayfish, which represents the core of the dispute. Is it possible to first monopolise (the state!) and then privatise (through a concession) a public good? Is it possible to privatise something that has previously been common and

² Crayfish plague was an epidemic of a water mould disease that caused the total extinction of the crayfish population in the Slovenian watercourses in the decades before the end of the 19th century. It was a process of European dimensions. Crayfish plague was introduced to the European watercourses with the importation of American crayfish. Unlike the European crayfish, the American varieties were resistant to the plague (Novice 1881: 213–214; Novice 1889: 1–3).

accessible to everyone? Privatisation undermines the traditional symbolic equality of the members of the village community and its cohesion. The work underlines that in the rural areas, wealth disparities and differences in the statuses of villagers were acceptable, as this involved traditional stratification relations. However, the villagers felt the discrimination regarding the access to and exploitation of public natural resources completely differently – with aversion. They were not only economically deprived but also symbolically humiliated, as they could no longer make use of a public good to which they had traditionally enjoyed all the rights. If we replace the crayfish with the various proceedings of dividing common land or settling easement rights, the processes of redefining the ownership relations in the Slovenian countryside after the abolishment of feudalism in the second half of the 19th century reveal themselves to us (Kačičnik Gabrič 2004). The author of the novel expressed the fears and hesitations that these processes had caused in the Slovenian countryside very suggestively:

I think, men and boys, that justice must be the same for all! Krka does not flow because of Urbih, and Urbih does not exist because of it! It belongs to all of us! Let me put it like this, to prevent misunderstandings: if you sow a field, whatever grows is yours; if you take care of grapevines, pruning them in the spring, hoeing them, and watering and protecting them in the summer, then whatever grows on them in the autumn belongs to you! If you have a piglet and you fatten it up over the year, then you yourself or whoever you share them with will eat sausages for Christmas! That is what I think: if you have sowed, you will reap! Crayfish, however, are not sown by anyone, and if they need to be reaped, we will all reap them rather than just Urbih... The crayfish belong to all of us, and we will all catch them! If you drink wine in a tavern, you pay for it, because that's innkeeper's wine; but if you drink water, it's free, because water has since forever belonged to everyone. And since water is common property, whatever swims in it is common as well! [...] Everything in it belongs to everyone, that's as clear as day! Everything, all of it! (Dular 1992: 67–68).

The central issue of the analysed novel *Krka umira* (Krka Is Dying) is the significance and scope of the concept of social and economic justice. The author addressed a crucial issue related to the process of social and economic modernisation. Based on the story of the crayfish, he underlined the redefinition of property rights in the countryside as a social phenomenon. His work thoroughly and forcefully dissects the question of the social legitimacy of privatising a public good and thus altering the very foundations of the established social and economic relations, as the process destroys the cohesion of the local community; breaches the informal rules, the rules of the people's (natural) law; generates a conflict between the local/partial (the village community) and the general (the state) on this basis; and defines adherences and social identities. The author presented the question of the separation between the public and private as well as the social implications of the privatisation of public goods by focusing on the concept of justice. According to Dular, the concept of justice is an ethical category, and the novel condemns the domination of the power of capital in the economic and social relations that ignores the ethical norms. In this context, Dular belonged to the

dominant part of the Slovenian public in the 1930s, which – based on the critique of the existing relations – demanded a reform of the existing system by increasing the social responsibility of capital.

3. Between labour and capital

Field workers represented a pressing issue in the local rural communities. Wage labour was by far the most important category of acquiring additional income at small farms. Many possibilities existed, yet already the contemporaries emphasised that the workforce supply exceeded the demand. On the one hand, farms larger than ten hectares already required additional workforce during the peak of the season, as family members were unable to do everything on their own. On the other hand, however, smaller farms in particular had an excess of workforce at their disposal due to the problem of rural overpopulation. Regarding the employment in agriculture and forestry, we should distinguish between two categories. The first was permanent employment, where people would perform all of the agricultural, forestry, or household jobs. As a rule, the permanently employed individuals were not married. They belonged to the peasant households and lived at the farms where they worked. They were paid in kind – with food, clothes, and accommodation. Only occasionally would they receive modest monetary payments. Their position depended on the economic power of the farms where they were employed. On medium-sized and smaller farms, the permanently employed workers shared the living standard of the farms' owners. The only difference was their accommodation: the lodging assigned to the employees was exceedingly modest and the habit of them simply sleeping in stables was widespread. The living and working conditions were somewhat better in the case of larger, more profitable farms (Vodopivec 1940: 227).

The second type of employment was not permanent but rather temporary, during the time when the seasonal nature of work in the agrarian sectors called for a larger number of workers. In the interwar period, payments were almost exclusively monetary. Such workers, paid by workdays, were mostly hired by the owners of the larger farms – i.e. the ones boasting more than ten hectares of land. According to the calculations, at the farms smaller than five hectares, the hours spent by the farmers and their families working and ensuring the resources for survival at their homesteads represented only 40% of their total available working time. To secure additional resources for survival or for investments in the economic and social modernisation, they had to resort to non-agricultural employment.

Hired work was therefore of crucial importance for a significant percentage of the rural population. According to the research conducted by Filip Uratnik in 1938, towards the end of the 1930s, as much as a third of the rural population allegedly gained additional earnings by working at other farms, most often in the immediate

vicinity. If we take into account these people's dependent family members, the numbers increase dramatically. Due to the predominantly low average income in agriculture, the wages of hired workers were correspondingly modest. Filip Uratnik estimated that the average daily wage of hired workers amounted to half of the daily earnings of industrial workers, which only covered the bare existential minimum (Uratnik 1938: 5–12, 62–76).

The position of permanently employed agricultural workers was especially problematic. Their status was regulated only informally, with oral contracts in line with the principles of the traditional law. In the case of old age, exhaustion, or illness, such workers only had the right to minimal care and modest accommodation as associated family members but were otherwise completely unprotected. In some cases, the care for obsolete workers was shared by the farm owners and the municipality. However, this did not protect the permanently employed agricultural workers from trouble. The obligations of the owners were merely moral rather than stemming from any social security of the workers. Farm owners could dismiss their workers without any reasons, explanations, or sanctions. Their moral reputation might have suffered in the community, which, however, acknowledged their right to dismiss workers – and the farm owners would regularly exercise it. This was the main problem of a vast number of farmhands, who became the burden of their municipalities, forced to live in poverty as beggars once they were no longer able to work. Due to such circumstances, conflicts and doubts abounded in the rural communities. The clash between empathy and the merciless reduction of farm management expenses resulted in uneasy and awkward mutual relations. The problem was far-reaching, exceeding the limits of the traditional law and moral obligations. In the 1930s, demands for the precise regulation of the position of agricultural workers were thus frequent but remained at the level of ideas.

The times when farms were passed on to the heirs were especially problematic. By taking over the farm, an heir needed to establish the relations between the master and the employees anew. This often led to disputes, and cases when some of the employees were simply dismissed – especially those who would soon need to be supported due to their old age – were frequent. The ties established between the late owners and workers as associated family members during their long years of service were thus severed. Meanwhile, the traditional regulation was clear in this regard: “A master is a master, and a farmhand is a farmhand. If the master tells the farmhand to pack up and leave, then the farmhand needs to get up and leave. That is how it has always been and how it will be forever, for otherwise, things would be wrong in the world” (Cankar 1907: 22).

This standpoint was opposed by the rights stemming from years of working at a farm. The rights originating from the traditional concept of social responsibility entailed appropriate and regular payment for the work performed, respect for the workers' dignity, and care or fair compensation for the workers in their old age and in case of other disabilities. Among the farmers who permanently employed

workers, these labour rights were not unconditional. They depended on the economic power, priorities, and dominant social relations in the microenvironment of the farm regardless of the local community's general concept of social justice. Their standpoint left no room for interpretation: the rights of the owners outweighed the rights of the workers. Property rights (formal legislation) were superior to labour rights (traditional law). The workers' welfare in the case of old age, disability, or illness was not an exclusively social "duty", but also or above all a discretionary right of the farmer: they could be observed or not. On the other hand, the workers saw dismissals as a profound injustice, lack of gratitude, and immoral denial of the acquired rights. The concept of social justice asserted itself at the intersection between labour rights and property rights. The debate had broader implications that transcended the agricultural industry. It was a reflection of the global discussions about the social responsibility of capital and the relations between labour and capital in the rural environment.

The conflicting relations and the fundamental dilemmas between labour (farmhand) and capital (farm) are expressed vividly, with obvious political tendencies, by the famous writer Ivan Cankar in a dialogue between the dismissed worker (farmhand Jernej) and a student.

Heirs and masters after their fathers – that is the custom, perhaps even a right, God only knows. But that's one thing. On the other hand: Jernej has laboured and kept on building for forty years, God has blessed his work so that it has come to abundant fruition a hundred and a thousand times. Whose labour is it and whose fruit? – That's what I want you to tell me! What worldly law and which of God's commandments have made it so that I don't have anywhere to lie down after I have made so much hay that to pile it all together would make a mountain taller than the hill in Ljubljana? That I don't even have a crust of bread after I've filled and stuffed Egyptian granaries full of rye, wheat, and buckwheat? That's what I want to know, scholar!

The student realised and understood and chuckled merrily. 'It is simply the law, Jernej: Jernej will build a house, and when he is finished, the master will sleep on the oven, while Jernej will be kicked out; Jernej will plough and sow and reap, yet the master will get the harvest and the bread, while only stones will be left for Jernej; Jernej will mow and thresh, bring in the hay and straw, and when he fills the barn and loft and stable, the master will enjoy a soft bed, while Jernej will face the cold hard road; Jernej and the master will both get old, yet only the master will sit by the fireside, light his pipe and doze off comfortably, while Jernej will hide behind the stable and drop dead on rotten litter. This is the work of worldly laws. Meanwhile, God commands you, Jernej, to suffer the injustice, and when your neighbour slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other also; and if he takes your coat, give him your shirt as well!' (Cankar 1907: 17).

4. Economic solidarity mechanisms

Until World War II, cooperatives were very successful in the Slovenian countryside, as they were based on mutual interests and solidarity. The cooperative movement as a whole exhibited multi-layered characteristics. It involved

a thorough restructuring of the economic and social power, operational models, and social discourse based on self-organisation, self-help, and self-responsible behaviour of the majority of the population within the capitalist economy. By establishing a network of cooperatives, the informal ways of self-organisation and self-help were institutionalised to the level where practically everyone could become a member – naturally, with the duty of being liable for the cooperative with all their property, which was a significant obligation. Among the economically and socially weaker strata, especially among the agricultural population, cooperatives were established as a model of responsible, self-protective economic and social behaviour. They became a tool for managing personal economic and social risks. Obviously, the organisational form that brought together the principles of small communities (associations) and the collective entrepreneurial initiative yielded socially and economically relevant results. Cooperative members usually had a threefold role. They were owners, creditors, and debtors. Cooperatives were owned and managed by its members. Thus, they were based on social capital – i.e., on the tight network of mutual relations in the local communities (Guinnane 2001: 366–389).

With their daily activities, cooperative members in small environments contributed greatly to the affirmation of social trust. This trust was very important, as the members would base some of their economic activities and interests on the cooperative. Without profound trust, it would be impossible for the system to function at all. Trust was based on unlimited solidarity, as all the members guaranteed the fulfillment of the cooperative obligations with all of their property and unpaid work. This had consequences. It was crucial to ensure transparent and prudent business operations, which was achieved by the cooperatives' modest size and with the revisions of business operations through cooperative unions. External revisions contributed decisively to the trust in the cooperatives' operations, as good business practices would thus form. The network of cooperatives had significant economic importance in the countryside. The centralised network of cooperatives allowed the farmers to enter the market and capitalist relations in an organised manner, thus exploiting the economy of scale regarding the sales as well as the purchase of goods for their own benefit. Such an approach contributed to the strengthening of purchasing power in the countryside, which was exceedingly important. Cooperatives established markets or demand in small environments. Farmers could submit their products to the cooperatives in the vicinity – without any special expenses and for the prices that were known in advance. Meanwhile, the processing and sales were taken over by the cooperative union. This resulted in good business practices as well, as due to the market demands, the networks of cooperatives leaned towards standardising the quality of agricultural products and thus contributed to the gradual improvement of quality in agriculture. Credit cooperatives, which simultaneously established the small capital market (microloans) and contributed greatly to alleviating the shortage of liquid assets among the

agricultural population, supported this process. They contributed to the decrease in interest rates, thus allowing numerous farmers and artisans to conduct small yet vital investments in technology or agricultural buildings. Financial services became more accessible in the countryside than ever before. The majority of the agricultural population was creditworthy only in the context of the network of cooperatives.

The cooperative network facilitated the adaptation of the majority of the population to the capitalist economy, thus representing a relatively cheap tool for managing social and economic risks. The benefits significantly outweighed the expenses involved in the membership and work in cooperatives. Cooperatives may have indeed functioned as an economic and social safety net, yet, on the other hand, they restricted their members to the framework of sectoral self-sufficiency and established additional mechanisms for the social (as well as political) control of their membership. They implemented a partial regulation of the consumer and economic practices as well as prioritised the economics of agricultural business operation. Individual cooperative members had to adapt their management norms (effectiveness of loan use, quality of products submitted, etc.) to the demands of the cooperatives (communities) or to the provisions of the contracts they concluded with the cooperatives. In the case of small cooperatives (a village or several settlements), it was important that the members all knew each other's habits, needs, character, and capabilities. Therefore, supervision would take place on a daily basis. When rules were breached, sanctions could be implemented through the mechanisms of social control with very modest expenses. Cooperatives could expel anyone who failed to meet the moral standards or otherwise betrayed the trust of the local environment. As business was restricted to the members of the small communities while cooperatives from elsewhere were exceedingly difficult or practically impossible to join, the members who failed to meet their contractual obligations were expelled, cut off from any cooperative support, and thus socially completely isolated. Economic and non-economic sanctions were therefore implemented. For these reasons, cooperatives represented a prominent means of social control.

In small communities, control was an everyday and automatic occurrence, and whoever betrayed the trust of the cooperative (the community) was sanctioned. They were excluded from the safety net and thus also from the local social network. Only strict mutual fulfillment of obligations ensured the continued existence of the cooperative system and common benefits – for the organisation as a whole as well as for its individual members. Solidarity was only possible if obligations were met. To put it differently, duties and benefits needed to be balanced in the long term (Lazarević 2011: 233–258).

Despite the principles of community and solidarity, cooperatives also provided opportunities for the various aspirations of their members. They were also frequently arenas where the prevailing social relations and existing social and economic power were additionally consolidated. Numerous examples of cooperatives indicate that these organisations would normally be controlled by

small groups of cooperative members – those that took part in general assemblies. Normally, the initial convention of the general assembly lacked a quorum. The rules set out, however, that after a two-hour break, the general assembly met a quorum even if only a minimal number of members were present, which was often abused: relatively small groups were thus allowed to control the cooperatives. These groups would select the members of the leaderships from among themselves as well as set out the membership conditions and credit policy. Their social and economic power in the small environments was thus consolidated. The auditors would regularly underline this fact and urge the bodies of the cooperatives to ensure greater transparency as well as call upon the membership to attend general assemblies in greater numbers (Granda 1992: 147–158).

At the local level, conflicts in the cooperatives were relatively frequent. Many of them originated in the contradictory position of cooperative members as co-owners and/or debtors/business partners. The situation and interests were different in every role. Cooperative members needed to balance their social and economic roles in the small rural cooperatives on a daily basis. Whenever they could not bring them completely in line with the momentary social or economic interests, conflicts arose. These sorts of conflicts would only rarely be publicly known except in the local communities. They would not leave many traces and were, as a rule, solved at the informal level, with informal mechanisms and sanctions, if necessary.

One of the preserved written examples from the beginning of the 20th century involved a conflict between the cooperative members regarding the organisation of a credit cooperative. Credit cooperatives were organised on two foundations. The difference was in the form of the guarantee and the number of shares. The majority of members in the analysed cooperative demanded that the cooperative should be reorganised in accordance with the principle that every member only had a single share and one vote, and that the interest rates of their shares should be higher (the Raiffeisen model). The minority argued in favour of the principle that a single member could possess several shares and thus also multiple decision-making votes, while they wanted the profits to be divided among the members according to their shares (the Schulze-Delitsch model). In the dispute that hampered the operations of the local cooperative for a long time, the issues of social power relations intensified in the concrete environment: at first in the cooperative itself, but later also generally, in the local environment. Credit flow control provided social power. The dispute subsided after the loudest proponent of the cooperative's transformation had been excluded from it. However, the cooperative in question was not destined for long-term peace. In 1909, rumours spread that its liquidity was threatened, as it did not have a sufficient guarantee for its deposits. This probably resulted from the dispute presented earlier. The rumours of insufficient liquidity spread due to the reorganisation of the cooperative. According to the existing rules, the cooperative's obligations were guaranteed by the members up to the

value of their shares. This was therefore a limited guarantee, and the fact resulted in rumours that the cooperative lacked sufficient resources to ensure liquidity. The proponents of the transformation demanded that the obligations should be guaranteed by all members with all of their property (the Raiffeisen model). The rumours had consequences: the people started withdrawing their deposits. The management of the savings bank responded to the increased withdrawals with the decision that apart from the members' shares, the deposits would also be guaranteed by the members of the management with all of their property. This measure was sufficient for a while, as the members of the cooperative's leadership were the wealthiest individuals in the local community (Spominski spis 1928: 22).

5. Conclusion

The purpose of the article was to underline the importance of studying the economic conflicts in the local communities. The presented examples belong to the concept of moral economy, the concept of hierarchical relations between public and private interests that can be based on the opposing interests of the traditional informal and formal legislative regulation. Rural communities represent the article's main focus. The economic conflicts in the local community are sensitive in nature: they entail a deviation from or the search for social balance or communal cohesion. This is an important aspect, as rural communities are based on closely intertwined family and neighbourhood relations with a significant degree of social control mechanisms as well as possibilities for sanctioning. The examples of the presented rural communities attest to the importance of the social justice (moral economy) concept, based on the institutions of the informal (traditional) law. They also attest to a clear relationship between public and private. If the feeling of justice was questioned, then the legitimacy of the current relations and consequently the cohesion of any local community were uncertain as well. The resolution of the oppositions involved exclusion as well as various forms of social sanctions in view of the subject of the dispute.

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EKONOMICZNE PODSTAWY KONFLIKTÓW I SOLIDARNOŚCI WEWNĄTRZ TRADYCYJNYCH WIEJSKICH SPOŁECZNOŚCI W SŁOWENII

Abstrakt. Artykuł skupia się na konfliktach ekonomicznych w wiejskich społecznościach lokalnych w Słowenii do czasu rozpoczęcia II wojny światowej oraz na analizie przykładów prywatyzacji dóbr publicznych, relacjach między światami pracy i kapitału i na solidarności ekonomicznej pod postacią lokalnych kooperatyw jako narzędzia wzmacniającego spójność społeczną na poziomie lokalnym. Autor stawia tezę, że poczucie solidarności społecznej (ekonomia moralna) to element wzmacniający poczucie spójności społecznej w badanych społecznościach lokalnych.

Sprawiedliwość, definiowana z uwzględnieniem zasad tradycyjnego prawa, wpływa na status relacji społecznych na poziomie lokalnym w taki sposób, że stają się one prawomocne. Jeśli poczucie sprawiedliwości staje się dla obywateli problematyczne i kwestionowane, to prawomocność relacji społecznych, a w konsekwencji spójność społeczna lokalnej wspólnoty stają się niepewne.

Słowa kluczowe: społeczności lokalne, konflikty, sprawiedliwość społeczna, ekonomia moralna, spójność, Słowenia.