

Article

The Role of Knowledge Transferred between Rural Inhabitants and Newcomers in the Development of Rural Areas

Jerzy Bański *

Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization, Polish Academy of Sciences, Twarda 51/55, 00-818 Warsaw, Poland

* Corresponding author. E-mail: jbanski@twarda.pan.pl (J.B.)

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study is to find the answer to the question: What is the role of the transfer of knowledge between the permanent and new residents of the countryside. The results are based on qualitative inquiry, carried out in 18 Polish villages, situated in socially and historically diverse regions and outside of the metropolitan areas. Knowledge, which is transmitted in the contacts between the two groups considered, has a very clearly informative character. This concerns primarily the basic information pieces, meant to ensure satisfaction of the daily needs of the groups of inhabitants considered. Knowledge transfer is relatively little intensive and takes place during sporadic encounters, mainly in public spaces—a street, a central square, a shop. This, presumably, exerts an influence on the nature and quality of knowledge and information exchange. The permanent residents are, first of all, the source of current information and practical knowledge, concerning broadly conceived village life, answering the fundamental questions of what, where, and when. On the other hand, the newcomers, side by side with informative knowledge, provide also knowledge of advisory and non-material character. Knowledge and information provided by permanent rural residents serve the needs of daily life and the satisfaction of current necessities, while newcomers introduce new lifestyles and behaviors, leading to increased social activity in the countryside.

Keywords: Knowledge transfer; Newcomers; Rural inhabitants; Rural areas; Poland



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1. Introduction

Irrespective of the place of residence, the nature of business activity, and the social system, individuals and groups of people make use of accumulated knowledge and information. Two fundamental knowledge categories are distinguished—the explicit and tacit knowledge [1,2]. The first of these is documented, public, and common, while the latter exists in human minds, especially intuition, behaviour, and experience [3,4]. It can be said, more generally, that knowledge as such is the effect of the association of the two types of it [5,6]. Explicit (codified) knowledge is being transformed into symbolic notation, owing to which it can be relatively easily transferred. On the other hand, the transfer of tacit (uncodified) knowledge depends on the social context, including social closeness and cooperation, as well as direct contact of individuals [7].

Knowledge constitutes an important resource within rural areas, but its practical use is sometimes hindered by the lack of formal competencies of the local community [8]. Besides, the dispersion of human resources and significant distance to the sources of knowledge (although the latter factor is nowadays much less significant, due to the pervasion of media) result in rural areas having lower potential for knowledge generation than cities and metropolitan areas [9]. An important role in the use and enhancement of knowledge is played by people migrating from cities, who typically represent specialized professions, are usually better educated, and have diverse life experiences. Hence, a consequence of migration is the accompanying increase in knowledge, which “enriching” the knowledge resources of local communities [10,11].

In recent decades, relations between urban and rural inhabitants have become increasingly intensive and close within the latter [12]. This trend is due to the intensifying tourist traffic and various forms of migration to the countryside. Regarding the inflow of population to the countryside, we can distinguish between permanent and temporary migrations. The former concentrate primarily in the neighborhoods of larger urban centers, which is linked with the possibility of

daily commuting to work. The intensity of this process is clearly lower within the “traditional” rural areas, situated far from the economic centres. The urbanites who migrate there want to escape the urban hustle and lifestyle, seeking their own rural idyll or a better quality of life [13–15]. Sometimes, they form a kind of enclave and undertake atypical business and cultural activities [16]. On the other hand, regarding temporary migrations, we first deal with the inflow to second homes [17]. The charm of the countryside and the access to valuable qualities of natural environment constitute the essential factors in choosing places of their migrations, which concentrate during the spring and summer season and on weekends [18].

Migration to the countryside constitutes a form of ‘enrichment’ of the local communities with the knowledge and information resources. Newcomers from the city, who generally have different life experiences, follow different cultural patterns, and possess different competencies, represent a rich source of knowledge for rural residents [19,20]. As the providers of new knowledge and skills, they furnish a significant stimulus for the local economic development [21]. Migration of population from urban to rural areas is, therefore, equivalent to migration of knowledge, including, first of all, the informal and uncodified knowledge [22]. It will be possible to use this knowledge only when it is understood and adapted to the new environment and the new context of application. However, it should be strongly emphasized that the flow of knowledge and information has, as a rule, a bilateral character, namely, it also takes place from the “oldtimers” to the “newcomers”. This direction of knowledge transfer amplifies the knowledge resources of the newcomers, facilitates their adaptation to new circumstances, and enables them to learn methods of plant cultivation, familiarize themselves with local services, and so on. It is also important for newcomers, who settle for good in the countryside, to acquire the knowledge of the oldtimers, resulting from their long-term experience, often transmitted verbally from generation to generation through informal family or neighborhood interrelations.

A particular role in social activation and local development is played by newcomers from the city, who have decided to live in the countryside and to start a definite activity there. These persons contribute to the generational renewal and introduce innovations into rural areas, exerting positive influence on rural life [23]. Yet, a necessary element for the success of the new undertakings is constituted by the presence of persons or entities, which “introduce” them into the local context by sharing local knowledge. Mutual learning, capacity of entering into interactions, are decisive for the effective adaptation of knowledge, which flows in along with the migrants, into the local context [24].

Side by side with the formal aspects of knowledge transfer in the countryside (accessibility of the places of contact, numbers of the newcomers, frequency of contacts, *etc.*), attention of researchers is directed to the issue of social and cultural conditioning of the respective processes [25–27]. This results from the specific properties of knowledge itself, which require an adequate level of preparation, competence, accepted norms of social behavior, everyday customs, *etc.* In the context of knowledge and information transfer, the relations between the parties to a conversation play an important role, as they often have different cultural capital and lifestyles. This is important insofar as the exchange of knowledge and information usually takes place through interaction and individual conversations [3]. Within rural areas, contacts between the newcomers and the oldtimers have the character of direct encounters, less frequently—of group encounters, associated with some occasional events. Cultural differences, lifestyles, and sometimes different expectations regarding the vision of village development may trigger conflicts, thereby constituting a barrier to the transfer of knowledge [28,29].

Irrespective, though, of the category of migrations, the newcomers constitute an important source of knowledge, which may be valuable for the permanent inhabitants, and whose proper use may exert influence on local development. It should be emphasized that rural residents are also carriers of knowledge and information, which are commonly used by newcomers from the city. The exchange of knowledge and information between the two groups occurs most frequently during direct interactions. The effects thereof depend upon the adequacy of understanding, readiness, and openness to acquire and to share knowledge. It is worthwhile in this context to consider the consequences resulting from the transfer of knowledge and information in the countryside.

The purpose of the present report is to find the answer to the question: What is the role of the transfer of knowledge between the permanent and new residents in the social life and development of the village? It can be proposed that both these groups use the acquired knowledge and information to improve living conditions, develop new activities, and enhance the image of a rural settlement. The results from these studies are based on qualitative inquiry, carried out in close to twenty Polish villages, situated outside of the metropolitan areas. The questionnaire-based study and the in-depth interviews were conducted among the permanent residents of the countryside and the newcomers, who have settled there for good or own second homes. The investigations of urban-rural knowledge transfer constitute an element of broader activities, aimed at stopping of the negative demographic tendencies and stimulation of the local development, regarding, first of all, the peripheral rural areas.

2. Location and Methodology of Inquiry

The fundamental source of data for the study reported here was the outcomes from questionnaires and in-depth interviews conducted in 18 villages across various regions of Poland (Figure 1). The villages are characterized by a wide social and historical-cultural spectrum. They represent the areas that historically belonged to three powers, which had partitioned Poland. These divisions have left an imprint that is still visible today. Then, among the villages mentioned, some were dominated by large state farms during the period of socialism, while others featured pronounced tourist and environmental qualities, characterized by a mosaic of small-acreage family farms, and so on. They are, however, all situated outside the strong influence zones of large urban centers. The aim was to eliminate the rural areas, which are subject to pronounced suburbanization pressure and feature high levels of similarity in socio-professional structures compared to cities.



Figure 1. Surveyed villages against the background of voivodeship borders, Source: own research.

In the first stage of inquiry the diagnosis was elaborated of the state of development of the villages selected (inhabitants, socio-economic situation, environment, *etc.*), based on the literature of the subject and field visits. In the second stage the questionnaire-based study was carried out, addressed both the permanent residents (“oldtimers”) and the newcomers from the city. In the group of newcomers, two categories were distinguished: (1) the new residents of the village, who settled in the village during the preceding couple of years (“new residents”) and (2) the owners of second homes, who stay in the village temporarily, but usually several times in a year. The people who visit the villages only once for a short stay—such as tourists, guests of the residents, or holidaymakers—were not accounted for in the investigations.

The questionnaire used in the study was composed mainly of closed questions. These questions concerned the frequency of mutual contacts, locations of encounters, subjects of conversations, and assessment of the significance of the acquired knowledge or information. In the majority of questions, a couple or even more than ten possible responses were proposed, and, in addition, the respondent could also provide an own, individual response. Altogether 553 questionnaires were filled out, 333 by the permanent residents and 220 by the newcomers, of which 66 by the new residents and 154 by the second home owners. Regarding the structure of the two responding groups, a number of significant differences can be indicated, which most probably exerted an influence on the outcome of the study. Thus, among the responding oldtimers, side by side with the biggest age group of 40–59 years (37% of respondents), there were relatively many, namely as much as 33% of persons, in the age group 60+. On the other hand, among the newcomers, close to half (46%) declared an age of 40–59 years, followed by those in the age bracket of 26–39 years (29%). The group of 60+ years is being represented by only 19% of respondents. Then, among the newcomers, 55%

declared tertiary education, 37%—secondary education, and only 8% primary, or basic trade, or no education at all. Concerning the oldtimers, 31% declared tertiary education, 36%—secondary, and as much as 33%—primary, basic trade, or no education.

During the third stage of investigations, the in-depth interviews were carried out with the representatives of both groups involved. The permanent residents were represented by local leaders (village marshals, employees of local administration, representatives of social organizations) and entrepreneurs (shop owners, operators of tourist facilities, farmers). On the other hand, among the newcomers interviewed there were both new residents and second home owners. In total, 63 interviews were carried out, 30 with the representatives of the local community and 33 with the newcomers from the city. The purpose of the interviews was, first of all, to identify the main categories of knowledge and information transmitted between local residents and newcomers, the directions of transmission, and the effects of its influence on the local community and rural space.

3. Analysis of Results from Inquiry

At the beginning, it is worth answering the questions of who the newcomers from the city are and what brings them to the countryside. The phenomenon of settling new residents in villages, situated far from large urban centers is rather sporadic in Poland, and relatively polarized, as it applies to a much higher degree villages, which are situated in the environmentally or culturally attractive areas. Based on the interviews conducted, it can be concluded that the new residents are individuals who wish to change their way of life and undertake new, non-standard business initiatives primarily associated with leisure and food production. The newcomers are frequently the representatives of professions enabling work at a distance, away from the formal place of employment: artists, software specialists, architects *etc.* They dispose of quite different life experience, professional skills and competences, owing to which they can constitute a rich source of knowledge for the rural inhabitants.

Among the newcomers in the rural areas, situated far from urban centers, the largest group is represented by second home owners, originating from large cities. In this group, some people seek relaxation and calm. Their contacts with the local residents are less intensive and concern to a higher degree acquisition of information on local services, food products and other matters, facilitating the temporary stay in the countryside.

3.1. The Nature and Assessment of Mutual Contacts

The questionnaire-based inquiry allowed for the recognition of the magnitude of groups participating in the exchange of knowledge and information. The majority of respondents confirmed the existence of mutual contacts, but a higher percentage of newcomers confirmed this than of oldtimers (87% and 67%, respectively). This was also confirmed by the interviews, from which it can be concluded that the higher level of activity of the newcomers is linked with the necessity of identifying local conditions and the need of acquiring practical information on the current life of the village. The second factor, which leads to more frequent contacts between newcomers and local residents, is simply statistical. Namely, the newcomers constitute a small group in the village, allowing them to more easily enter into contact with the oldtimers, who account for the majority of the population, rather than the other way around. It should also be stressed that among the newcomers, who declared a lack of contacts with permanent residents, most were second home owners. Their stays concentrate in the spring and summer season, and are connected with recreation and leisure, for which, as indicated by the respondents, the contacts with the “locals” are irrelevant.

In the opinion of both social groups considered, mutual contacts are conducive to the exchange of knowledge and information. A clear majority of respondents to the questionnaire stated that they learned something new from the people they talked to (oldtimers—72%, newcomers—85%). Only a few percent of respondents stated unambiguously that mutual contacts do not contribute to the acquisition of new knowledge (permanent residents—6%, newcomers—3%). The remaining respondents did not have a well-defined opinion on this matter.

One of the questions in the questionnaire concerned the influence of knowledge and information transferred during the contacts with the newcomers from the city on the private life of the respondent (*Assess, on the scale of 1 to 5, how the acquired information and knowledge, resulting from the contacts with the new residents or the temporarily staying inhabitants of the village, influence Your private life?*). The results are not too optimistic in terms of the objective of the study reported. A strong influence (scores of 4 and 5) of the knowledge and information acquired was indicated only by 27% of respondents, while a feeble influence (scores of 1 and 2)—by 38% of the responding rural residents. The low assessment of the influence results is probably due to both the form of contacts between the two groups considered and the very subject matter of the conversations. The results from the questionnaire indicate that encounters

between permanent residents and newcomers take place most often in the street, in the central square, or in a shop. Hence, these are accidental and short-lived encounters, which do not entail deeper thinking and do not lead to solving any problem. It can be concluded from the majority of pronouncements by the representatives of the two groups in the interviews that their conversations primarily concern the exchange of basic information related to private life, less frequently to professional life, and the current situation in the village. This kind of information is obtained by answering simple questions: what? Where? And when? Only in few cases the responses were obtained that imply that the knowledge transfer, besides pure information, concerns also professional knowledge, associated usually with the professional life of the questioned person. We provide here two such exemplary pronouncements:

“These are most often private matters, such as leisure time, lifestyle, or when someone boasts about a recent purchase and where it was made. It sometimes occurs that people also take up subjects related to construction” (permanent resident, Bogłomia).

“Most frequently, we talk about private life, for nothing much is going on in our village. We exchange news on our current affairs, things that concern us directly... I am a lawyer, and neighbors sometimes ask me for various things related to solving their legal problems” (newcomer, Bogłomia).

Different opinions on the influence of knowledge transferred by the newcomers from the city were expressed by the local social leaders who participated in the interviews. They perceive quite some positive outcomes from the contacts with the newcomers. This difference in opinions might result from a broader perspective on the village, considering its social and economic life, rather than just the interest of an individual. The respondents link the transfer of knowledge and information with the need for social activation, bettering of living and financial conditions, enhancement of the aesthetics of the surroundings, changes in behavior patterns, and so on. We provide below some examples of statements in this respect:

“The “newcomers” brought with them a modern style of living and being, culture, and other forms of behavior, which started to be followed by the “locals”” (permanent residents, Kamieńczyk);

“New residents brought in knowledge of the novelties, formulated demands concerning village organization, and, in connection with this, transferred knowledge. ... There was, for instance, a change in the attitude of the locals to animals. Previously, dogs were attached with chains to their kennels, walking a dog on a leash was considered queer. Observation of newcomers and their relations with animals changed the attitude in the village. Today, animals in the farmyard are treated much better. Another example is provided by the Rural Housewives Circle (Rural Housewives Circles are a traditional organization of females in Polish countryside, present in many villages, and often quite important for the local socio-economic climate), in which new cuisine-related ideas appear, brought in by the newcomers...” (permanent resident, Kamieńczyk);

“Educated people from the outside, if they undertake an activity, not only engage in business but also motivate the residents to participate in common activities. It is very frequent that this person from the outside overcomes the idleness and attempts forming a group, which applies for funds, in order to prepare something for the village. I think that these newcomer persons may bring about the renewal of social activity, and also economic renewal...” (permanent resident, Dobków);

“Owing to the knowledge and undertakings, initiated by the newcomers, residents of the village are offered occasional or regular jobs, in gardening assistance, repair and construction service, tourist service, ... Persons who came here from the city, changed this village. Without them, the village would have died out. There would be nothing here. Owing to these people, the village lives on. The village has greatly benefited; old traditions are being maintained, and old houses and farm buildings are being preserved... All this should be attributed to the inflow of newcomers...” (permanent resident, Nowe Kawkowo).

3.2. The Subject Matter of Transferred Knowledge and Information

Transferred knowledge and information may bring advantages to both sides. In a clear majority of the localities, a very important role was played by the transmission of information to newcomers about services, service providers, and local food products offered in the village. In effect, demand for local products and services increased, as did the possibility of getting employment on the local rural labor market. Information flow brought an improvement in the revenues of rural residents. Thus, for instance, during the summer holiday, users of second homes take advantage of paid assistance from local residents for current maintenance of the estate (grass mowing, petty repairs, construction works, *etc.*). This is illustrated by the following statements:

“Holidaymakers often make use of the local construction enterprises, residents of the village are frequently employed to “service” their homes—they look after the estate, turn off water for the winter season, mow grass, and perform various jobs. They also make the keys available to the renting persons” (head of municipality of Uścimów); “Conversations facilitate my life in the village, as I learn, for instance, who can mow my grass (since I have a lot of cows or an appropriate mower) and from whom I can purchase fresh eggs and strawberries” (newcomer, Siedlątków).

Another instant of bilateral benefits is the acquisition of knowledge from the rural residents by the newcomers on history and elements of local culture. Local knowledge and collected old objects served in the case of one of the villages to organize an exhibition, presenting the history of the locality. In another village, knowledge and information, transmitted by the local community were used by the newcomers to establish a website, presenting the history of the village and the information on current events. Such undertakings are advantageous first of all for the village inhabitants and the locality itself, as they popularize unique knowledge and promote the village.

Farming was identified as a subject of knowledge transferred in the majority of interviews. The most common scheme consisted of the transfer of farming knowledge by the permanent residents to the newcomers from the city. It was concerned, first of all, with gardening and was associated with the hobby-based development of small-scale crop cultivation:

“Often, when they come to me, they ask where they can buy ecological food, or how to use a small field and cultivate something healthy, and this is the knowledge that they seek and use in practice...” (permanent resident, Bogolomia);

“My wife sometimes talks with neighbors about the garden she develops. She asks about plants and their cultivation. Sometimes she makes use of their suggestions” (newcomer, Gumieniec).

Yet, alongside the “classical” scheme of exchanging agricultural knowledge, a reverse scheme was also identified, where newcomers from the city bring new agricultural knowledge into the countryside (Table 1). The newcomers would experiment with new sorts of crops or non-standard cultivation techniques, which have not been applied before by the permanent residents of the village. The local residents have, however, mostly been passive observers of these activities. An instance is provided by a new female resident of one of the villages considered, who established a lavender farm despite having no prior experience in lavender cultivation. The experiment succeeded and the lavender plantation, along with the production of ecological cosmetics and food also succeeded and became a tourist attraction. Alas, this has not stirred any interest among the permanent residents of the village.

Table 1. Benefits from the transfer of knowledge and information in local development—examples identified in field studies.

Aspects of Local Development	Type/Topic of Transferred Knowledge and Information	Benefits for the Newcomers from the City	Benefits for the Permanent Rural Residents
Private life of inhabitants	Service providers and their location, local products, practical/technical skills, local events, consulting	Information on local services and persons interested in odd jobs, practical knowledge and experience of local residents, information on local products. Acquisition of practical skills (e.g., gardening, current use of farm buildings and of the plot).	Seasonal and odd jobs, possibility of getting additional revenue. Specialized help (legal, medical, technical) and consulting. Sale of local food products. Improvement of professional skills and new technical knowledge. Motivation to increased activity.
Socio-economic development	Local businesses, shopping, social activation, LGD, local events, traditions and history, agriculture, new business activity	Facilitation of business conduct (knowledge of local labor market, knowledge of business environment organisms and business entities, local business environment, local labor force). Cognition of village history, local culture and traditions.	Activation of local community. Proposals of new behavior patterns and cultural standards as well as leisure habits. Examples of new business activities to follow.
Rural space	Infrastructure, joint activities, new technologies, new economic functions, and aesthetics of the surroundings	Joint action for well-being and life quality, as well as improvement of village aesthetics. Improved technical infrastructure.	Improved village aesthetics. Promotion of the locality. Preservation of cultural heritage. Improved technical infrastructure. New non-agricultural functions (tourism, other services, trade, crafts).

Source: own elaboration.

In a couple of localities, the phenomenon of transmission of specialized knowledge from the newcomers to the oldtimers. This knowledge concerned legal, medical, psychological, and technical matters. These were free of charge legal advice or related to the use of new technologies in the household, as well as help in settling down some matters in the city, offered by the second home owners, who represented specialized professions:

“... persons, having come from the city, help the permanent residents in solving their problems, for instance, connected with their health, or with financial issues” (permanent resident, Uścimów);

“... Newcomers sometimes provide information on where to resolve a given matter or how to find an appropriate physician. Previously, information from people in Warsaw made it easier for us to find a job in the city (based on “I have an acquaintance”) or to learn about interesting secondary schools in Warsaw. Thanks to information from a female acquaintance in Warsaw, I learned where I can organize an exhibition of my paintings” (local female leader, Kamińczyk).

Irrespective of the nature of migration, the newcomers from the city become owners of houses, farm buildings, and land. They handle estates, which they had no experience with in the city, and these become challenging in terms of maintenance, use, and taking advantage of them. Consequently, they look for practical knowledge, which is in disposal of the permanent residents of the countryside:

“... now I know how to build a small cabin on the plot, how to isolate it, what to do in order for water not to freeze during winter in the tubes” (new resident, Kamińczyk).

Conversations also sporadically concern the questions, associated with the organization of public space, state of technical infrastructure or projects, needed in the village. Knowledge exchange takes place during private conversations and during organized village meetings. It sometimes happens that permanent residents, along with newcomers, engage in joint activities to improve spatial organization or limit the impact of disruptive new developments.

“... An instance is provided by the construction of a radio antenna facility in Jedlanka. Residents, along with newcomers, organized meetings and invited specialists and media because they wanted to stop the project. Yet, I would like to underline that only a few newcomers truly integrate; the remaining visitors are interested exclusively in leisure” (municipality head, Uścimów).

4. Discussion of Results

Migration of population from the city to the countryside means, at the same time, migration of knowledge, first of all informal and uncoded knowledge [10,22]. Newcomers from the city, or, more precisely, their active presence in the countryside, constitute a specific resource, which ought to be made use of for the benefit of the local community and the broadly understood rural development [30]. Urban actors bring into rural areas knowledge and practice, enhancing local capacity of social innovation [31]. J. F. Rye [32] indicates that the newcomers make accessible external social networks, bring in new knowledge and skills, and fulfil the function of “ambassadors” of rural localities in urban environments. Yet, the level of involvement in knowledge sharing or knowledge acquisition depends to a high degree upon the objective of moving into the village. Some researchers suggest that second home owners often remain closed up in their private sphere [33], do not enter into interactions with the residents, and do not engage in community building [34]. This was partly confirmed by the here reported study, carried out in Polish villages. It can be, namely, concluded on the basis of results from this study that many second home owners do not care for contacts and getting acquainted with the local people, and hence conditions do not arise for sharing knowledge in a direct manner. Besides, the seasonal visitors are not always considered full-fledged members of the local rural community [35]. This may also be a factor in their “local alienation”.

According to N. Gallent ([34] p. 188), though, “second homes in rural areas have a potential social value, increasing the connectivity of communities to new skills and knowledge, and thereby raising their store of social capital”. The study, carried out in Polish villages, has not confirmed this opinion. The potential of the newcomers, disposing of time and know-how [32,36], was being used in a very limited degree. The identified directions of information flow consisted in great majority of cases in the acquisition by the newcomers, upon their initiative and for their needs, of the local information on services, food products and other matters, associated with everyday necessities.

As a result of the inflow of the new (permanent or temporary) inhabitants, there is a change in the social and cultural image of the countryside, due to the mutual influence of the urban and rural lifestyles. The investigations performed showed, for instance, that the newcomers brought with them to the countryside different norms in dealing with animals or more care regarding the esthetics of the surrounding space, this being accepted and adopted by the

permanent residents. Another example of the cultural influence exerted by the newcomers is the emphasis on preserving rural heritage and image, expressed through gathering local knowledge, popularizing customs, and promoting them in the media. In localities where cultural differences between the groups were significant, a division would occur within the local community: between those with a positive attitude towards the newcomers and those perceiving more negative qualities. Thus, a kind of cultural clash took place [19,21,26]. Yet, these were isolated, single cases, from which broader and deeper conclusions can hardly be drawn.

An essential role in the transfer of knowledge and information is played by the professional status and education level. Persons with higher education levels and representing high professionalism, owing to their initiatives, often innovative and non-standard, may be capable of triggering positive energy and increased level of activity in the local communities. One should not forget, neither, of the financial means they bring with them. Their role in local development is well represented by the notion of “rural changemakers” [23]. Among the newcomers in the countryside, an important group is constituted by the persons disposing of a usually much broader spectrum of knowledge than the rural residents. Hence, the participation of the newcomers in knowledge transfer concerns, as a rule, more complex issues, in contrast to the permanent residents, for whom of higher importance is concrete knowledge and current information. This conclusion is confirmed by the statement from one of newcomers in the village of Kamińczyk, who said that his knowledge, transmitted to the rural residents has a “metaphysical” character, while knowledge that he acquires from the permanent residents has “informative and practical” character.

Robertsson and Marjavaara [37] applied the notion of “seasonal buzz” to the phenomena, which take place in the summer holiday localities, where persons gather in one place, originating from diverse environments, disposing of different knowledge resources, persons, who would otherwise never meet. This “seasonal buzz” is an informal, unorganized, and unstructured sphere of contacts and face-to-face communication, conditioned by geographical closeness. In the Polish villages, included in the investigations, in which the summer holidaymaking function is pronounced, “seasonal buzz” also takes place, albeit in a varying degree: mostly there, where both the appropriate places exist (a shop, a village hall), and there are active social life leaders, who create prerequisites for the meetings and integration of persons from various environments.

The newcomers, when organizing their life in the countryside, initiate contacts with rural residents to acquire information useful for equipping and maintaining their new estate. This local, informal knowledge has definite value for their functioning in their new place of residence. Newcomers are aware of this and conscious that this knowledge can be acquired solely through local contacts. The benefit for the local residents is constituted, first of all, by entering into closer acquaintance with the newcomers and finding of additional job. The study showed, for instance, that the newcomers from the city are interested in purchasing local food products and do ask where they can buy them. This subject of transmission of information was observed in the majority of villages considered. Making use of healthy rural products, obtained from local farmers, constitutes an essential element, forming a “rural idyll”. The urbanites usually move into the countryside with a well-defined image of what the countryside is meant to be and what it ought to offer [38]. The image of idyllic countryside is linked with healthy food [39], and in the case of Poland, this is particularly well pronounced.

Agricultural knowledge, an interesting element transmitted between newcomers and permanent residents, constitutes a significant potential for local development. The newcomers considered were active in searching for agricultural knowledge, primarily associated with gardening activities. However, it should be stressed that they were also providers of new knowledge on this subject, acquired from various sources. These people, even if they have had no previous connection with farming, would bring in knowledge on new crops and technologies not encountered in the given area. Still, as was indicated before in this report, such a kind of knowledge has the character of “potential” or “dormant” knowledge, as the permanent rural residents are not readily absorbing it.

The issues of the broadly understood village organization and development were frequently highlighted in the interviews as subjects of information exchange between social groups. There were cases of collaboration and joining of forces on important issues, as well as the cases of use of knowledge and skills of the newcomers in the enhancement of esthetic qualities of public spaces. E. H. Hujibens [40] applied the notion of “lifestyle locals” with respect to the newcomers from the city, who wish to use their knowledge and competences for the benefit of their new, adopted “homeland”.

5. Conclusions

The questionnaire-based inquiry, along with in-depth interviews, enabled the identification and assessment of the utility of knowledge and information exchanged between newcomers from the city and permanent rural residents. This

exchange occurred in the private lives of the individuals involved and in the spatial development of the rural localities studied. One of the conditions for effectively utilizing the potential offered by people migrating from the city to the countryside is the opening up of their interactions with permanent rural residents. These relations are expressed through personal encounters between the representatives of the two groups, during which the exchange of knowledge and experience becomes possible. The outcome consists of benefits for both newcomers from the city and permanent residents of the countryside, as well as a broadly conceived improvement in the quality of rural life. Yet, the assessment of the influence exerted by the newcomers from the city on rural communities and space is not unambiguous. There are, namely, examples of a distinct social and economic activation of a village, resulting from the interaction of the two groups, but there are, as well, the cases of lack of such activation or of—at most—very feeble results in this domain.

Knowledge, which is transmitted in the contacts between the two groups considered, has a very clearly informative character. This is, first of all, the “know-what” type of knowledge, and decidedly less frequently of the “know-how” type. This primarily concerns the basic information pieces meant to ensure the satisfaction of the daily needs of the considered groups of inhabitants. The subject matter thereof concentrates on the search for services, product sales, odd jobs, and the “grapevine”. The subjects of conversations mentioned include mainly forms of leisure, hobbies, neighborhood assistance, events and festivities, village life, crop cultivation, shopping, *etc.* The cases, involving deeper knowledge and more specialized information, primarily concern construction, food production, and crop cultivation. Knowledge transfer is altogether rather little intensive and takes place during sporadic encounters, mainly in public spaces—a street, a central square, a shop. This, presumably, exerts an influence on the nature and quality of knowledge and information exchange.

Bilateral contacts exert, in the opinion of a vast majority of respondents, a positive influence on the acquisition of new knowledge. It can be concluded on the basis of the interviews conducted that the permanent residents are, first of all, the source of current information and practical knowledge, concerning broadly conceived village life, answering the fundamental questions of what, where, and when? On the other hand, the newcomers, alongside informative knowledge, also provide advisory and non-material knowledge. Knowledge and information provided by permanent rural residents serve the needs of daily life and the satisfaction of current necessities, while newcomers introduce new lifestyles and behaviors, leading to increased social activity in the countryside.

Given the above conclusions, it can be assumed that the knowledge transfer studied in most cases has a positive impact on the social and economic development of rural areas. The social dimension primarily involves the activation of rural population, while the economic dimension involves diversifying household incomes and shaping new or strengthening existing economic functions in rural areas (tourism, services, small-scale production). However, it should be clearly emphasized that the importance of urban-rural knowledge transfer is insufficient, as its low intensity and informational nature have been highlighted. Therefore, it is worthwhile to engage in a debate on the possibilities of strengthening the role of knowledge transfer, which should bring greater benefits to residents and rural spatial development.

Ethics Statement

Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement

Open data, link to data <https://zenodo.org/records/16738388>.

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The author declares that he has no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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