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How Russian Rural Teachers Work: Market Trends in the Common Education

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Author investigates market trends in Russian common education in the contest of functioning of profession of rural teacher. He chose neo-Weberian approach in sociology of professions focused on the conflict and the negative aspects of the relationship between the state, the market, professions and citizens. He used biographical method as a kind of ethnographic approach to the case study in two different districts of Saratov region. Author conducted narrative interview with the principal and opened interviews using the methodology of free association with the students of the school (N=20) in the village Prokudino of Atkarsk district in November 2012. Author conducted narrative interviews with teacher and principal; opened interviews with schoolchildren (N=8) of school number 10 in the village of Kamensky in Krasnoarmeisk district in September 2012.

Author described two market trends in the context of theory of Bourdieu's capital. He showed the different effects on the functioning of the profession of Russian rural teachers. The optimization of schools led to the conversion of the cultural capital of teachers and social capital of pupils into the economic capital. The economic capital as a way to overcome the financial barrier and social capital of young professional environment converted in the cultural capital needed for the labor market demanded specialist in the rural school.

Keywords: Rural teacher, Bourdieu, capitals, sociology of professions.

The optimization of the school network is the market trend of Russia and several transition countries, such as Armenia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Romania and Ukraine (Coupe 2011). This very situation is characterized by a multitude of very small schools and very small classes. Many governments try to reduce costs and would like to merge small schools as the cost of one big school with many students is typically smaller than the cost of having a network of many small schools with few students in each. The place of their residence

is the zone of territorial availability for 92 % of Russian schoolchildren (Konstantinovskiy 2008). Children tend to learn where they live. Russian parents and teachers took the real actions in response to the threat of closure of schools in different regions of the country: Moscow, Ulyanovsk, Transbaikalia etc. (Chilikova 2010). Declining quality of education in some rural schools is due to the fact that the teaching staff in them is not staffed. Russian Ministry of Education held a competition for graduates in 2010 to fix this problem. 8 winners in the

Saratov region received grants in the amount of 500,000 rubles.

Basic theoretical and methodological orientations of sociology of professions include functionalist, critical and neo-Weberian approaches (Romanov 2009). Some sociologists carry out searching for the ideal model of the profession in the context of the paradigm of structural functionalism. Others examine the inequalities in the mosaic of professions and occupations, the positions and specializations within the critical approach. The conflict and the negative aspects of the relationship between the state, the market, professions and citizens are in the focus the neo-Weberianism. Began to study the profession of rural teachers in general education we chose neo-Weberian approach.

Biographical method as a kind of ethnographic approach to the case study has become a tool of our study (Romanov 2008). Trying to understand how optimization of the school network affected on the functioning of the profession of rural teachers, we identified the adoption of children from orphanages by the staff of the rural schools. Such manifestations of activity took place in Chuvashia, Penza and Saratov regions (Kuzin 2012, Kulikov 2009). We focused on the study the experience of the teachers of the village Prokudino of Atkarsk district in Saratov region. We conducted narrative interview with the principal Svetlana Zonova and opened interviews using the methodology of free association with the students of the school (N=20) in November 2012. Studying the results of the financial support for rural teachers, we turned to the analysis of personal experience of Elena Samarina. She is the winner of the special contest of Russian Ministry of Education. She graduated from the Pedagogical Institute of Saratov State University in 2010 and began to work as a teacher of the secondary school number 10 in the village Kamensky (Krasnoarmeisk

district, Saratov region). In September 2012 we studied the characteristics of participation in the contest during the narrative interview with Elena Samarina and principal of school Valentina Soina. We used opened interviews with schoolchildren (N=8) to analyze the interaction of teacher and kids.

Pedagogical Poem of Prokudino

Village Prokudino is located about 30 km from the district center, the city of Atkarsk. Regular buses to the village for a long time do not go, though Prokudino is a pretty big and strong village. Local school is new, spacious and well-kept grounds. Local media and federal channels informed about the teachers who have taken in orphans. The response of teachers to the content of publications and reports was a hurt: *«Why not just write about us and did not speak. They said we took the kids for money. They decided it was the step of desperation to save work. They discussed all the details from the past of kids, although we shared the secrets. Imagine what it was like to read to our children... We would save not only themselves, but the whole village. Village with no school is doomed»* (Svetlana Zonova, principal).

Teachers took the decision to foster children 10 years ago. Svetlana Zonova had three of their children and one adopted daughter. Some of her colleagues were involved in the program of family educational groups of local orphanage «Dobrota». Orphans temporarily staged in the family of teachers in this program. Seven teachers and three school officials took the children from the orphanage. 30 former orphans were enrolled in the school for all the years of work with foster children. Orphanage «Dobrota» has ceased to exist as unnecessary due to teachers from Prokudino.

Turning to the study of the structure of everyday thinking of children, we proceeded from the fact that the world appears to the individual in

his own experience and interpretation. We used the association experiment to understand the mood of children. We conducted a study anonymously so as not to highlight orphans among guys. We asked children to compare their current internal state to the season. Children spoke positively in their associations. They talked about the spring, because «*my heart warm, fun. I am surrounded by people who love me. It's heyday, energy, power, prosperity*». They compared themselves to the summer, when the «*beautiful, interesting life. Every day in the summer is a holiday*». We identified one case of negative associations, when the soul of a child is autumn: «*Journalists come to the school and ask the question, how do you in the family. Or even worse, shoot us and shown on TV that we foster children*».

We used the theory of capital Bourdieu to interpret the data (Bourdieu 2002). Accumulation of cultural capital in incorporated state manifested in the form of improving teachers' personalities. They let orphans in the world of their families. They overcame the difficulties of mutual adaptation. They took responsibility for the lives of orphans. The school as a cultural symbol in objected state of the village has been preserved. Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev have visited the school in the village of Engels district of Saratov region and noted: «School is modern, good. There is a school – there is a village. Therefore, educational institutions must be preserved; their optimization can lead to mindless mechanical reduction of the so-called small schools» (Gorevaia 2012). He made this conclusion after 10 years of the application of optimization in the educational policy of the state. Children were in families. They were able to accumulate social capital by forming a network of connections required for material and symbolic profits. Cultural capital of teachers and social capital of pupils were converted into economic capital. Professional employment of teachers has

been saved. They prevented the negative effects of reducing the number of students at the school. School could lose the status of a secondary. Teachers would have lost work because of job cuts.

The winner of the contest in the village of Kamensky

Kamensky village is located in the southern part of the Saratov region, bordering with the Volgograd region. It has existed since 1765, was founded by German colonists and until 1943 known as Grimm. The village preserved German artifacts: primary school, a shop with a warehouse complex, residential stone houses with typical northern German attributes facade. We found that Elena Samarina learned from the director of the school in the village of Kamensky on existing vacancy of teacher of German language and ability to obtain a grant. She decided to participate in the contest.

Young teacher in the countryside, begins its new stage of life “from scratch”, has a serious financial problem. Their salary is less than 8, 000 rubles a month (including allowances for working in rural areas), and the value of the house about 1 million rubles. Elena Samarina received 500, 000 rubles as the winner of contest. This money is not enough to buy a house in the village. Moreover, she could not use them immediately. She could do it only after a year of work in the school and the positive evaluation of the grant project. She had parents in the village of Kamensky. She could live in the family home. Without parental home, she would not take part in contest.

We have studied the process of joining Elena Samarina in the teaching profession. We have systematized answers of pupils. We asked them to continue the two phrases. Firstly, «Elena Alexandrovna is a teacher who taught me...». Secondly, «She is the person with whom I take the example in the ...». We revealed knowledge

and skills, developed with the participation of Elena, which go beyond the study of the German language. She contributes to the socialization of pupils, teaching them «*to respect for others*», «*to talk to older people, especially teachers*», «*to listen to what they say, which give advice*». She teaches them responsibility: «*If you take the job, then finish it to the end*». She develops their self-control: «*Thanks to her in our sometimes «furious» class appeared necessary discipline*». She teaches them how to behave: «*I want to walk like her, she walks beautifully*».

We have applied the theory of Bourdieu's capital for the interpretation of the data. We concluded that the rural school teacher acquired cultural capital in the institutionalized state, having the opportunity to work in a specialty and professional recognition. Economic capital in the form of a grant state support and social capital contributed to this result. After graduation she returned to her old school, but as a colleague of

his former teachers. She began her professional activities in the team, who knew her and appreciated all the previous years. The school has gained highly skilled with the financial support of the government of the Russia.

Two market trends in the context of their analysis using the theory of Bourdieu's capital have different effects on the functioning of the profession of Russian rural teachers. The optimization of schools led to the conversion of the cultural capital of teachers and social capital of pupils into the economic capital. Financial support for young rural teachers through the organization of professional contest was not widely supported by university graduates for a number of reasons identified earlier (Leliukhin 2012). The economic capital as a way to overcome the financial barrier and social capital of young professional environment converted in the cultural capital needed for the labor market demanded specialist in the rural school.

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Работа сельского учителя в России: тенденции на рынке общего образования

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В данной статье автор анализирует тенденции на рынке российского общего образования в контексте работы сельского учителя. Для анализа был выбран неовеберинский подход в социологии профессий фокусирующий на конфликте и негативных аспектах взаимоотношений между государством, рынком, профессионалами и гражданами. В качестве этнографического подхода автор использовал биографический метод для изучения ситуаций в двух различных районах Саратовской области. Автором были проведены индивидуальные интервью с директорами школ, а также открытые интервью с использованием методологии свободной ассоциации с учениками школы (N=20) в деревне Прокудино Аткарского района в ноябре 2012 г. Также были проведены индивидуальные интервью с учителями и директором, и открытые интервью с учениками школы (N=8) в посёлке Каменском Красноармейского района Саратовской области в сентябре 2012 года.

Автором описываются два тенденции на рынке общего образования в контексте теории капиталов Бурдьё. Он показывает, как профессия российского сельского учителя подвергается влиянию различных аспектов. Оптимизация школьного образования привела к конверсии культурного капитала учителей и социального капитала школьников в экономический капитал. Специалистам в сельской школе требуется экономический капитал как способ преодоления финансового барьера и социальный капитал молодых профессионалов, конвертируемый в культурный капитал, необходимые для рынка труда.

Ключевые слова: сельский учитель, Бурдьё, капитал, социология профессий.
