

The title of the project has been purposively formulated in a tricky way. At the first glance its first part, i.e. “think globally, act locally” might suggest the mistake in using this particular statement, used mainly by ecologists trying to reflect the nature and the logic of the contemporary globalized world. That might mean that some global solutions of conserving e.g. energy might be seek and discovered in many local solutions in particular regions and places. In turn, transnational corporations gaining huge profits on global markets seem to be able to do this thanks to tailoring their products to national, regional and local consumer tastes. That means that whatever might be done in a particular place, region and/or community should be treated as a particular mutation of some global problems, characterizing various societies scattered all over the world. It is quite similar to the marketing strategy of selling “global” commodities by “global” retailers in special wrapping related to local tastes and preferences shaped by particular contexts and traditions. Such a state of affairs clearly shows the domination of “global” over the “local”.

In this particular project we want to present the entirely opposite type of thinking about globalized society. Our message might be stated as follows: “think locally, act globally”. The justification of such an argument might require an analysis of the more complex mechanism of global society functioning and development. Such a mechanism clearly shows the need of participation of local people, organizations and resource in extra-local/global networks. Therefore we make an attempt to analyze the functioning of family farms in Poland including their regional diversifications as parts of some extra-local networks.

The idea of such research requires reaching beyond the limits of any particular scientific domain and the compilation of at least two separated scientific domains, namely the social and agricultural ones in this particular case. Following this idea some particular areas of family farms functioning have to be taken into consideration, like: economic achievements, following the requirement of sustainable development, considering food safety as well as food security, not-agricultural farms functions (for example: agritourism), etc.

In this project a few different research methods will be used resulting from different domains (social and agricultural ones) as well as various disciplines inside the social domain: namely: sociology, economy and history. The most important one seems to be a structured interview with the multi-level/layer national sample of family farms operators in Poland. The next one contains some in-depth interviews members of Agricultural Chambers as extra-local institutions binding farms with global markets. The third one has been focused on the analysis of various documents concerning food safety as well as food security from a historical perspective. The fourth one contains in-depth interviews with some selected farm operators concerning their class consciousness and local as well as national and European identity. The fifth one contains in-depth interviews and participant observation in particular farms concerning computer technologies used as sources of information, learning and making by them some extra-local relations.

There are at least six reasons to conduct this project. The most important concern lies in the need to examine mainly extra-local conditions and factors framing the functioning of family farms in Poland that should support our main thesis “think locally, act globally”. Moreover, this project enables to consider rural and agricultural changes in Poland mostly from the farm operators perspective, which seems to be quite contrary to the dominant tendencies in social sciences literature often minimizing and even neglecting the role and significance of farmers in contemporary rural areas. In addition, one might observe in social sciences a relative lack of analysis concerning relations between farms and some parameters of sustainable development, supporting resilience in the context of crisis observed in the global economy. In turn, such a national study seems to be the first step towards a comparative multi-national project based on some national cases. And the last but not least, the project seems to be an opportunity to the involvement of a foreign researchers with a particular experience of studies in rural and agricultural issues, which might form an additional opportunity for external evaluation of the whole initiative and its research results.