

Many researchers argue that the process of industrialization of agriculture has led to a serious global crisis, with a number of dimensions such as ecological, social, cultural or political. The lack of transparency and the complexity of the global food industry have led some consumers and producers to take actions in order to create an alternative food system to the dominant one, based on close relationships between consumers and producers. In this context appears a notion: “quality turn” (Goodman 2003; 2004). It determines the transformation of values, attitudes and behaviors of a part of consumers trying to create deeper social relationships with other consumers and producers, and to create a new model of the social economy. One type of indications of quality turn is the appearance of the Alternative Food Networks. This is a broad term that includes many initiatives of varying scale and character built around producing, distributing, and consuming food in other ways than in the conventional food system. There are many forms of it, for example: consumer cooperatives, Community Supported Agriculture, farmers markets. This is a completely new way of thinking about consumer-producer relationships, which is linked to an increase in civic activity serving to build a new model of the economy. These processes and phenomena can't be perceived only in a positive manner. Some think that this is a new way of introducing social divisions and exclusions. It thus becomes a fascinating area for research into the potentials and threats emerging between society and new forms of economy. Therefore, our project will take into account the multidimensional nature of this phenomenon.

The basic scientific aim of the project is to analyse the scope and nature of the quality turn of the Polish consumers engaged in alternative food networks. Particular importance will be dedicated to verifying the statement on the extent to which consumers, through their activity in initiatives such as those networks, are able to build a counter-balance to the contemporary economy and society.

Our main question is as follow: Is it possible to observe any enduring elements of the quality turn, a new way of thinking about the connections between the economy and society, among the Polish consumers and producers on the alternative food market?

The project will have an interdisciplinary character. In addition to sociologists, economist, consumer anthropologist and psychologist were invited to take part in the project. Thanks to the participation of representatives of various social sciences, we will be able to take into account many dimensions of the qualitative rebound and the various forms of alternative food networks. The project is divided into 4 following parts: Anthropology and psychology of consumer behaviors; Institutionalization and organization of consumer activity; Economy in the alternative network; Legal and political conditionings of alternative food.

During the project implementation, we will reach qualitative methods such as individual interviews - IDI, group interviews - FGI, content analysis, as well as quantitative - telephone surveys on a representative sample of Polish consumers and an internet survey with alternative food network leaders.

This is an innovative project, as there have been no studies in Poland so far linking food production systems and new dimensions of consumer and producer behavior and reaching at this same time to various research perspectives. Our project touches on important issues related to consumption, but also to the issue of the place for small farmers in the economic structure.