

Author-Supplied Abstract and Keywords

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Organic farming as a job and a calling.

This is the first sociological study of development of organic farming in Poland, based on interpretative paradigm and methodology of grounded theory. The basis of the study form 27 narrative and unstructured interviews with organic farmers from many regions of Poland, direct observation and content analysis of publications on organic farming. The central question is about the essence of organic farming. Is it a profession like any other or a social movement? What are the distinctive factors that can help in differentiating an organic farmer from the „conventional” one? What factors form the social world of organic farming, what kind of arenas of disputes emerge?

At the beginning of the 1990s there were just some 20 organic farms in Poland and those farmers who practised „ecology” were labeled as strange idealists. The key factor that dynamised the development of ecofarming in Poland was the entrance of this country into European Union. In the years 2003-2005 there was a 3-fold increase in number of farms (from 2286 to 7813) and 4-fold increase in the surface of organically farmed land. From the very beginning the organic farmers through their association „Ekoland” had the power to set the criteria of „organic farming” and held the keys to this world. In the first decade of 21st century they lost this power as the state set a legal framework for organic farming, where private companies became agencies of certification. Nonetheless, they still hold the keys to the informal social world.

During the study, a typology of organic farmers has emerged. Organic farmers with mission (pioneers and disciples) conceive their endeavours as an ethical project („healthy society through healthy plants and animals”), which also has to render some economic profits.

The subvention-oriented farmers focus mainly on economic benefits thanks to the EU subvention with scarce regard to non-economic factors. The „contemplative farmers” focus on the intrinsic value of farming and harmony with nature, not paying attention to economic value of the fruit of their work.

Keywords:

Organic Farming, Ecology, Typology Of Organic Farmers, On Becoming Studies, Social Worlds, Grounded Theory, Calling, Mission, Entrance of Poland to European Union.