

RESISTANCE FROM THE MARGINS:

A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST YEAR OF A COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE PILOT GROUP IN POLAND.

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Abstract:

The idea of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) has been spreading around the globe since the inception of the first *teikei* in Japan in the 1960s. Through connecting consumers with local food producers, it secures farmers with stable incomes and consumers with safe, seasonal and fresh food. Additionally, CSAs offer solutions to the problems of the dominant food system, which proves to be wasteful in its use of natural resources and reinforces certain socio-economic inequalities. This paper sets to examine the first known CSA pilot group in Poland, Świerże-Panki, which ended its first contracting season in October 2012. The article gives an overview of Poland's agricultural and societal particularities in order to provide a background to discuss the experience of the group after its first season, as well as the reflections by the farmers involved in the scheme. Such examination aims to open a conversation as to whether a CSA model is a viable alternative for the creation of a more sustainable food system in Poland.

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Introduction

The current global food system has been widely criticized from various angles for its inability to properly feed the world's population and to use resources needed for producing food in a sustainable way. Increasing negative ecological impacts are clearly represented by a global loss of soil, a drastic decrease in cultivated biodiversity and an overall increase in agricultural pollution (IAASD 2009). Many solutions are proposed when envisioning an alternative food system. One of them requires the development of localized, socially embedded food networks. This paper aims to investigate the role and potential development of the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model in Poland based on the case study of a pilot CSA group, Rolnictwo Wspierane przez Społeczność (RWS, Eng. agriculture supported by the community) Świerże-Panki.

Theoretical Framework: Food Regime Theory

One way of examining the question of sustainable food provisioning is through the lens of Food Regime Theory. This analytical framework explores how the global relationships between food production, distribution and consumption are vital to understanding the development, reproduction and crises of global capitalism. The scholars that developed and used this framework distinguished phases of relatively stable periods of specific food arrangement concentrated around politics of economic hegemonic power: Great Britain (1870-1930's), the US (1950's-1970's) (Friedmann 1987, Friedmann & McMichael 1989) and the so-called corporate food regime (around 1990's – present) (McMichael 2005). The current dominant food regime becomes problematic due to the necessary distancing and durability of the traded goods which allows the obscuration of the negative social and environmental impacts of food production, thereby reinforcing global social inequalities, disrupting local communities and often leading to ecological destruction.

What is put under investigation is the “potential to change some of the constituent ecological dynamics of food regimes” (Campbell 2009:309). Friedmann (1993) investigates possible positive ways to change some of the dynamics underpinning the dominant food regime through re-embedding food in its local context. Her later work examines examples of “local experiments in embedding agricultural markets in local ecosystems within a global context” (Friedmann and McNair 2008: 409).

One such response is the grassroots movement of civic agriculture, which aims to support local food production systems through various forms of civic engagement (Lyson 2004). It can be expressed through Community Supported Agriculture cooperation model, in which a group of households enters into a partnership agreement with the local farmer(s). The duration of the contract can vary, it can be established for the whole growing season or only specific part of the year. A certain up-front payment is made at the beginning of the season, which allows the farmer to make the needed initial investment. In turn, members are delivered a box of fresh seasonal produce, usually on a weekly basis. Such partnership agreement should be based on personal contact between the farmer and the members, and commitment to sharing risk between the two parties throughout the season. In this way, both unfavorable weather conditions and unexpected abundance should be shared among the members¹.

Such specific approach of cooperation between food consumers and farmers draws from the tradition of cooperative movement, which aimed to fund ecologically sane and local food production. Literature describing historical roots of Community Supported Agriculture points at examples of 1960s cooperative initiatives in Switzerland and Japan² (DeMuth 1993). Throughout the years this original model has been adapted in various countries across the globe and has finally

1 There many variations of such cooperation, I tried to use as broad description as possible. To explore various forms of cooperation please refer to URGENCI, network of International Network of Community Supported Agriculture: <http://www.urgenci.net/index.php?lang=en>

2 The Japanese initiatives known as *teikei*, which in loose translation means 'the face of the peasant on the plate', indicate the relation one develops with the food grower.

made it to Poland, where local activists decided to try out this specific form of cooperation. A CSA's ability to rebuild foundations on which a food system is based by focusing on shortening social and physical distance between food consumers and producers and a reliance on fresh, low-processed, locally-embedded - as McMichael phrases it, 'food from somewhere' - might be seen as a promising alternative to the corporate 'food from nowhere' regime (2009).

A case study of the CSA group, RWS Świerże-Panki, ignites following research questions: What is the newly established CSA group's role in transforming the current food system into a more sustainable one? To use Campbell's words, is this a "crucial experiment in local food systems" and an expression of the "resistance from the margins" (2009:311)? What obstacles and barriers do the farmers involved in the project see?

Research methods

The research method consists both of primary and secondary data analysis. Primary data collection was conducted through qualitative informal interviews with the members of the group, an in-depth interview with one of the farmers, Sonia, and my participation during the final evaluation 2 hour long meeting in Warsaw (23rd January 2013), when I made a full transcript. I also sent out an online survey with 10 questions about basic demographics of the group and motivations for joining the project (questions in Appendix 2). To complement the data collected during the research period of November 2012 and March 2013, I conducted a series of inquiries between two food cooperative members and several consumers from the angle of viability of a CSA model in Poland. Secondary data analysis involves a literature review of documents and articles on Polish agriculture and forms of social-consumer engagement, as well as the internal

documents of the group; self-evaluation questionnaires, delivery lists, blog content³ available to me thanks to the courtesy of the group members.

Agriculture, Community and Support: The Polish Perspective

Poland is a country with over 1000 years of unique history and its own political, social, geographic, cultural and historical particularities. I would like to break down the relevant components of the CSA model - agriculture, community and support - and discuss each of them individually to give a brief overview of what these terms could represent in the Polish context.

Agriculture

Poland, a Central Eastern-European country with about 38 million inhabitants, ranks as the ninth biggest in Europe in terms of surface area. Over half of its 312,000 sq. km (120,000 sq. miles) of surface area is used for agricultural production. Polish agriculture is characterized by a large number of small farms, a relatively large number of people working in this sector and an overall steady decline of these numbers over the past decades. In 2011 out of all professionally active people, 12.7% worked in agriculture (CSO 2012) compared to 26% at the end of 1980s (GUS 1994). Today there are about 2.3 million farms - which is 20% less than in 2002 – and translates to an average size of 6.82 hectares per farm. 70% of all farms are smaller than 5 ha, which, in the European context, is considered a very small holding (GUS 2011). This size is about two times smaller than the average farm in the EU and 30 times smaller than the average farm in the US⁴.

Family farms, as form of organizing agricultural production, are enshrined in the Polish Constitution as the backbone of Polish agriculture. The official governmental development strategy deploys the terms 'sustainable development' and 'multi-functionality of the agricultural landscape'

3 <http://www.rws.waw.pl/>

4 <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/faq/>

as development paths of the Polish countryside at the same time acknowledging the need - or inevitability - to decrease the number of people who depend on agriculture as a source of monetary income (MriRW 2009). There are voices in the public debate demanding a drastic and immediate decrease in the number of farmers, seeing them as a clear obstacle for the development of the country (Solska 2007, Janicki, Władyka & Zagner 2006, Łazarkiewicz 2008). This is in contrast to scholars who often view small farms as safeguards of the cultural and ecological landscapes and advocate for the need of their existence among large and specialized farms (Zegar 2012).

The future of heavily industrialized agriculture is becoming more realistic due to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). This European Union agricultural policy⁵ was introduced in Poland in 2004 - with its accession in the EU – and steers the path of development of Polish agriculture through, among other policy instruments, a system of direct payments to farmers. The system of direct payments by definition does not recognize or support farms smaller than 1 ha (about 30% of all farms in Poland). As Chmielewska notices, the most significant income benefit is among the top 10% of the biggest farms (2008).

Community

In sociological literature, the term 'community' has been used after Ferdinand Toennis's introduction of the dichotomy between *Gemeinschaft* ('community') and *Gesellschaft* ('society')⁶ as a response to the erosion of traditional communities in the wake of industrialization and urbanization (Bauman 2007). In Bauman's view community is as old as human history but the idea of describing what community is, was born at the crisis and decline of communal forms of

5 Common Agriculture Policy "main objectives are to ensure a fair standard of living for farmers and to provide a stable and safe food supply at affordable prices for consumers" <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/faq/>

6 Term "community" in *Concise Oxford dictionary of sociology*, ed. Gordon Marshall, Polish edition: *Słownik socjologii i nauk społecznych* / Polish ed. Marek Tabin. Warszawa : Wydaw. Naukowe PWN, 2005. page 428.

organizing life (2007:72). What kind of community are we referring to in the context of CSA? First of all a community of people who have to eat but must buy their food - the so called "waged consumers" (McMichael 2009: 284).

To understand the contemporary Polish consumer we need to look at the social transitions of the past decades. The People's Republic of Poland (1952-1989)⁷ was characterised by a centrally planned and steered market, with state-run and state-owned factories and retail outlets. However, the majority of agricultural land and food production was in the hands of individual farmers and their families (Jeziński, Leszczyńska 2001). The centrally planned supply of goods resulted in shortages of basic products which forced consumers to adjust their provisioning to what was available in the market and also developed special skills and social bonds to hunt for products or rely on direct contacts with farmers to complement their diets. "In a sense this model does not suggest anything new", a biology and ecology teacher in her 40s told me when I presented her the idea of CSA. "This is how things used to be done in the past. My family in the city knew a group of women from the countryside who arrived to the city once a week and sold their produce directly to us".

The reorganization of market rules and newfound connection to international markets resulted from the political system changing to a plural-party democratic Republic of Poland. The first foreign supermarket opened in 1995 and by the year 2000 there were already 100, not super, but *hypermarkets*⁸. This total tripled by 2010 when half of the retail market was in the hands of hypermarkets, supermarkets and discount chains (Dziennik Gazeta Prawna 2010). This coincided with the introduction of shopping malls - windowless, city-imitating cathedrals of shopping and leisure - which anthropologist Roch Sulima describes as a shift from the "society of the bazaar" to the "society of the supermarket" (Sulima 2000: 147-149).

7 Commonly used time frame is 1945-1989. But the name People's Republic of Poland itself was adopted only in 1952. During the period 1945-1952 the same state organism was functioning under the name Republic of Poland

8 Definition of Central Bureau of Statistics: Hypermarkets surface is at least 2500m², supermarkets are between 400m² and 2499m² big. http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/definicje_PLK_HTML.htm?id=POJ-3295.htm

Today, 60% of the Polish population lives in urban areas⁹. The relation between the Polish countryside and the cities is rather complicated, ranging from the romanticizing of peasant life (so called 'chłopomania', Eng. Peasant-mania) to visible hostility, mockery and distrust. Traits of peasantry might be viewed as undesirable, something shameful (Rakowski 2012), an embarrassing burden, an obstacle to keep up with modernity (Zych 2012). However, despite these prejudices, there are people who seek to breach this gap. One way is to re-build, often urban, communities away from the major trends in internationalization and concentration of the food market, reaching out to the farmers themselves.

Support

The cooperative food movement is one such example of consumers 'taking power into their own hands'. During my investigation I came across several food co-op models in Poland: groups of people who shop together for food by establishing direct contacts with food producers or buying in bulk at wholesale markets¹⁰. One of the co-op members in Łódź, Gabriela Jarzębowska, claims that shopping together is a shared activity that bonds people from the same city. Through group bulk-buying, this specific co-op hopes to establish a closer relationship with local food producers. Another co-op, Koopeartywa Krakowska, states on their website¹¹ that such engagement is a form of building a socially-responsible economy. This co-op was created, as reported by the its founder, to support local organic agriculture and to increase the quality of life of small holder farmers and their families. Currently the group cooperates with 8 Polish farms on the basis of weekly veggie-box deliveries.

9 Definition of a town by National Bureau of Statistics of Poland (GUS): "A settlement having mostly concentrated housing and non-agricultural functions, possessing town rights or the status of a town pursuant to provisions of separate laws." http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/definicje_ENG_HTML.htm?id=ANG-4689.htm

10 Internet research that I conducted at the beginning of 2013 helped me identify at least 9 of them: Warszawska, Mokotowska, Łódzka, Opolska, Gdańska, Lubelska, Wawelska, Krakowska, Poznańska.

11 <http://kooperatywakrak.pl/>

A social action entitled “Save the farmer”, was covered by the media and started by a group of people concerned with the low prices paid to the farmers by the middlemen. In September 2012, farmers from a neighboring province (in Polish 'województwo') came by boat to Warsaw¹² to sell their produce directly to the consumers¹³. Since then, there is possibility of ordering the produce online and paying in advance. There are other initiatives which aim to strengthen direct links between farmers and city dwellers, such as 'Paczka od Rolnika' (eng. 'box from the farmer'), 'Stowarzyszenie Krótka Droga' (eng. 'Short Way Association'), open farm gates organized by association of organic farmers Ekoland, The Slow Food movement, organic grocers which incorporate such socially-responsible component (Food Connect in Warsaw, Vegpack) and other unaccounted for personal initiatives.

Case study of the CSA project Świerze-Panki

The idea of trying a CSA-based model in Poland was the result of talks between members of Warsaw Food Cooperative (Piotr Trzaskowski and Wojciech Mejr) who had come across the model in the process of learning about alternative food systems. One of them presented the CSA concept to several farmers who already were partners with the Warsaw Food Cooperative, but they didn't seem interested in switching to a new model of cooperation. In April 2012 Piotr met Sonia Priwieziencew who, along with her partner, Tomasz Włoszczowski had been managing the AgriNatura¹⁴ foundation since 2007 to support agricultural biodiversity and sustainable development of the countryside. Although they lived and worked in Warsaw before, eventually they decided to move to the countryside and settle in a little village called Świerze-Panki, county Zaręby Kościelne, about 120 km north-east from the capital. They started experimenting with growing food themselves and their surplus was sold to their family and friends. Wanting to expand

12 Warsaw is the capital city of Poland, 1,8 mln inhabitants (GUS 2012)

13 <http://rolnikwnet.pl/>

14 <http://Agrinatura.pl>

their agricultural activity, they were looking for more ideas of how to sell their organic produce. Piotr and his CSA model arrived just in time. Sonia and Tomasz decided to give it a try.

Piotr committed himself to organizing a group of 15 households. For the first time Sonia and Tomasz had to figure out how to plan for a steady supply of vegetables throughout the whole summer and autumn season. According to Piotr there was no problem of finding eager people to join the group. Through contact with Warsaw Food Cooperative they sent out e-mails about organizational meetings and announced the idea through Facebook. In the end more than 20 households were ready to participate in the project so they had to draw the final group of 15 households. In the meantime, Sonia and Tomasz were trying to estimate how much and in what time intervals to plant vegetables, and how to manage the space on their 4 acre plot. Before signing the contracts, farmers presented the group with an estimated schedule of the planned 20 deliveries, from the end of June until the end of October. The contracts stipulated commitment of mutual risk sharing during the time of deliveries. The aim of RWS Świerże-Panki was to support and develop small-scale and family organic food producers through direct sale to the consumers (full contract in Appendix 1). As part of the contract, group members pledged to visit the farm twice to help out with the farm work. Participants pre-paid 700 Polish Złoty (about US\$ 230) for the whole season. Divided by 20 deliveries it came to 35 Polish Złoty (US\$ 12) per delivery. To put these numbers in context, the value of 4 deliveries per month equals 45% of the average monthly food budget in Poland (CSO 2012).

Weekly Thursday deliveries took place in a basement of a hostel in the city centre. Somebody from the group had to contact the farmers in the morning and help out with unloading the car at about 10 am. During the day people could collect vegetables, which they had to weigh themselves. There was always somebody between 6pm and 7pm to act as a receptionist making sure the space was left clean after the closing.

The group - a brief overview

An important aspect of analyzing this project is to understand who the consumer-members of the group were. This study does not aim to provide an in-depth analysis of the group but aims to provide some basic information about people participating in such project. I got to know 4 members of the group in person and had a chance to talk to them about their impressions about the project. I needed a better picture about the group therefore I sent out a 10 question long survey about basic demographics of the group: age, place of residency, education and income level and motivations for joining the group (Survey questions in Appendix2). Because of the small number of response (15) no statistical significance can be given to the results of the survey.

First of all, the vast majority of the respondents were no older than 34 years old, only 3 people were older than 35. Only one responded held less than a Bachelor's degree, 10 respondents reported Master's Degree, 3 a Bachelor's degree, one a PhD. 6 respondents were male, 8 female, one person reported beyond the male/female dichotomy. On average there were about 2 people in each household, and 2 families with children. A clear majority declared themselves as vegetarians, or at least close to following a vegetarian diet.

None of the respondents declared to live outside of Warsaw, the respondents places of residence are spread quite evenly between 2 sides of the river Vistula, which divides the city in half. At the same time only one person declared to live in the city centre, which could be considered a walking distance from the hostel where the deliveries were taking place.

Status of employment turned out to be quite varied. There was a combination of 5 full time workers and also 5 part-time workers, 4 free-lancers, 2 students and 1 business owner (more answers possible). Only 2 people reported a monthly net household income lower than 2000 PLN. The rest was sharing at least a total 3 000 PLN income with their household members, which

makes it already more than the national average monthly expenditures per household (2872,24 PLN) for the year 2011 (GUS 2012).

11 respondents claimed to have heard about the project from friends, some also indicated e-mail and Facebook. For the majority of the respondents the most important motivation for joining the project was close cooperation with farmers, and other frequent responses were: searching alternatives to big supermarket chains, local consumption and too expensive food at the organic grocer.

Such responses provide us with an indication that this was not a neighbourhood-based initiative, but a project taken up by mainly acquainted, rather young, educated and not very poor people. The group also accommodated people with rather modest income.

Reflections

After the completed season a whole list of successes and obstacles emerged. A short summary can be presented in following form:

Main Successes:

- The project was financially viable.
- A majority of households (13 out of 15) expressed their interest in continuing the project for the next year, out of which 10 households wanted to continue with the same farm.
- 19 out of 20 deliveries were completed, not all of them solely by the one farm (details in the next section).
- Only 1 household chose to discontinue their involvement during the season, whose place was filled straight away from the waiting list.
- A spreading of the CSA idea took place: during those 6 months, farmers received dozens of

questions, e-mail and phone calls about RWS Świerze Panki.

- A learning process occurred: producers said that for the first time they stepped into the shoes of real farmers and learned a lot about the CSA-specific production process, consumers stated that they learned more about food production and realities of farming.

Main Obstacles:

- Physical distance (120 km) from Warsaw significantly increased the cost of transportation and put the ecological impact under question.

- There was an inability of farmers to devote their full time to the growing of vegetables due to other AgriNatura foundation related commitments. RWS project is one of many projects they are engaged in.

- Overall there was a poorer than expected quality of vegetables. As stated by few participants during evaluation meeting, they would be afraid to recommend their friends to join the group in case they become discouraged with the service.

- An overestimation of the harvest resulted in an inability for the CSA to be the sole/main source for vegetables for the members.

- The farm was unable to supply all the vegetables throughout the agreed season – part of the produce from the last deliveries was bought from a fellow organic farmer.

- The growing season was short (late June – end of October), this was due to the late decision on pursuing the project.

- Communication problems have emerged on few occasions; visits at the farm or information about what's in the box. One of the farmer's most prominent concerns was deciding to purchase missing produce from a different organic farmer without consulting with all of the members first (which defies the purpose of risk-sharing part of a CSA).

During the evaluation meeting, the most important question arose: how do they continue with the project? The first conclusion was that they needed to expand the scale. From the perspective of the farmers they needed to hire somebody to help them grow the vegetables and possibly recruit another farm to join the project. These conclusions were due to the limited time the couple could devote to farming and the lack of proper equipment (ex. tractor) to grow many of the staple vegetables: such as carrots, potatoes, beetroot etc. The group was asked to find 5 additional households, to which members stated clearly that it should not be a problem.

Learning from the CSA: Mapping Challenges from a Farmer's Perspective

In the beginning of 2013, I conducted an in-depth interview with Sonia - one of the farmers involved in the project - to outline the main challenges to the development of a CSA model in Poland in the future. Throughout our conversation three main challenges to introducing such a model in Poland became clear:

- Trust issues
- Acquiring new skills: new mode of production and communication skills
- CSA as a career: profitability ceiling

I was advised not to treat these findings as definite indicators because Sonia stressed how much change can occur during one year. Accordingly, I chose to treat these areas as snapshots from a certain experience, and not exact obstacles.

Trust issue

“We Poles in general have issues with trust. I don't know how to describe it - it is generally a national trait. And it is not only a problem of lack of trust between consumers and producers but

also between farmers themselves” Confessed Sonia. “ There is a 'My farm is my castle' syndrome” and it is not very usual that somebody would come to the farmer and look around his farm. Such visits are rather associated with control and are not welcome. There are also quarrels and fights between farmers. There is not much cooperation between the producers themselves. It is a very complex world”.

In this context Sonia has stressed how big of a role consumer engagement plays when trying to promote the CSA model. The participants have to reassure the farmer of their engagement and willingness to pay and also demonstrate an understanding of the risks and challenges. She pointed to the role of an informal group leader who takes the initial burden of organizing a group and facilitating communication during the first season. Such a “facilitator” helped them in the communication process when it was impossible for them to get to know the whole group right away.

Acquiring New Skills

In recent decades farmers in Poland have been encouraged to specialize - rather than diversify - their production. CSA farming requires a new approach of what Sonia called, *micro-scale farming*. Throughout the planning process much effort was put into calculating the precise amount of vegetables to grow, analyzing how much produce they would get from each bush and therefore how many plants of each variety to plant. Sonia admitted that she does not know anybody in her neighborhood who would have such diversified crops. She expressed uncertainty about willingness to radically experiment among certain groups of farmers. She also doubted that small farmers would be willing to experiment with more diversified crops and alternative production methods. “You see, the ones who are inclined to experiment have already switched to a different, more modern way of production. Maybe they don't need support, - they might have already specialized

and modernized. The ones who stayed behind might potentially be the ones to work with. Which makes it more difficult to convince the small farmers to switch their production in such radical way". Therefore she discouraged the idea of radical shifts, opting for a more step-by-step approach of introducing farms to a CSA model - especially an example-based approach that avoids preaching. When such farmers notice that alternative models are working for their neighbors, they may be more inclined to try.

Another issue is the way in which individuals communicate with each other. "Some farmers can be very knowledgeable about growing vegetables and farming but they just express themselves differently, it might be almost like a language barrier." The example that Tomasz gave during the evaluation meeting with the group was that sometimes it is very difficult to find out what the farmer has for sale. CSAs on the other hand, require a direct and clear communication of quantities and when a farmer can deliver.

The final aspect deals with reliance on the internet during the communication process. Although it is not a prerequisite, computer literacy helps in communicating with the group, especially at the beginning. Doubt has been raised about farmers' computer skills and although speaking only from Sonia and Tomasz' experience they indicated that it could be an obstacle for the farms they know.

"Profitability Ceiling"

"From my standpoint, a CSA is about supporting specific types of agriculture: the one that promotes biodiversity and is environmentally sane, and not necessarily specific farms" - Sonia confessed. Given such viewpoint she believed that CSAs can be vehicles for establishing new ways of farming, especially by young people. It has the potential to challenge the notion of 'farmer from

generations¹⁵, which indicates that the agricultural profession of a farmer is something you are born into, not something a young person chooses as a career. “But it is not that you can make millions from running a CSA-based farm”, in this sense Sonia expressed her doubt about the possibility for future development of such a model because of its ability of generating only a modest income for the farmers involved.

Another financial obstacle is, at least occasionally, the need to hire additional help at the farm. According to Sonia it is quite difficult to hire seasonal workers in the neighbourhood because people tend to choose one of the following three alternatives. The first is to devote time to work their own land rather than going to the “stranger”. The second option is to go to the city and do some casual work for better pay. And the last one is to just stay at home and do nothing instead, because it is not worth it for them to do this kind of demanding manual work (such as weeding, digging, watering plants, harvesting) for such modest pay. The question arises whether a CSA-based farm is able to generate enough income to hire helping hands, especially needed in the organic, more labor intensive agriculture. Some group members expressed their fear of Sonia and Tomasz' overreliance on voluntary work of the CSA group members during the season. Such help, although highly encouraged, cannot be a decisive factor in the financial viability of the project. Also, Sonia and Tomasz admitted openly during the evaluation meeting that they could not afford to switch 100% to farming because it does not provide them with enough income to support their lifestyle, especially given the mortgage they have on their farm.

Conclusions

It is quite challenging to give final conclusions at the moment when the project has really only began. This experiment has shown that in Poland there are people who wish act differently in

15 I am referring here to Polish expression 'z dziada pradziada' which in English literally means 'from great- great father'.

the realm of food production and distribution. In the world where the global food supply chains get more and more consolidated and the intra-national policies are being written in favor of large industrialized farms it would be naïve to state that a CSA model can overturn fundamentals of the current global food system. However, it has the capacity of designing a roadmap for the future, in which food provisioning is not a mere destructive act of consumption but a simultaneous act of creating healthy soils, natural and cultivated biodiversity and vibrant social relations of production and exchange. Poland with its still relatively vast rural population has a chance of reinventing these relations. However, we need to ask ourselves how to overcome barriers to build trust among growers and food consumers. Are the farmers ready to experiment with such radically different way of food production? In few years' time will the next generations be willing to continue a CSA based farming? Will the model be able to reach out to the varied social groups of people to become an inclusive "community supported by agriculture" model? Or could it fall into the trap of becoming fashionable elite group, a sort of a life-style choice? Time will tell.

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Appendix 1 Contract

RWS Principles

We, the members of an informal group of 'Rolnictwo wspierane przez Społeczność' (the RWS) which brings together consumers and farmers, have decided to support each other and share the risks associated with food production.

RWS' aim is to support and develop small and family producers of organic food and sell it directly to consumers.

A farmer or a consumer can become a member of RWS who confirm with the signature that they read, understood and agree to the terms and objectives of the RWS and agree to act in accordance with these principles. The principles read as follows:

Consumers:

1. Agree to be honest and willing to work with other members and members the RWS.
2. Are willing to pay in advance the amount of 700 zł before 12 June 2012 for the delivery of one packet every week throughout the season (approximately 20 weeks). By mutual consent of the consumer and farmers, the payments can be divided in two installments, and the due date can be changed.
3. Agree to collect their delivery in person (or by an agreed person) at the appointed time and place, and agree that in the event of failure to collect the delivery time is lost.
4. Understand that the content delivery, although it has to be close to the size described in the Appendix, depends not only on the work of farmers, but also on external factors such as weather and other causes random.
5. Agree to participate in the organization of delivery as agreed.
6. Pay for products grown on the farm, and their delivery and collection is a matter of personal agreement between the members and the members the RWS.
7. Commit to work on the farm for two days during the season, according to the conditions stated by the producers.

Producers:

8. Agree to be honest and willing to work with other RWS members.
9. Undertake to provide high quality food produced in an environmentally friendly manner without the use of chemicals and comply with good agricultural practices.

10. Agree to provide accurate and truthful information about the system of production, the cultivation and processing of raw materials for RWS and operating costs.

11. Undertake to provide food in quantity and quality as close as possible to the amount listed in the Appendix to this Agreement.

12. Deliver products on time and on terms to be agreed in advance with the person coordinating the delivery. If you change the time, place and terms of delivery you are obliged to inform the coordinator in advance.

13. Undertake to produce, package and distribute their products as much as possible with as little negative impact on the environment and comply with hygiene standards acceptable to both parties.

14. Agree to a visit of the farm by the members of the RWS on the dates agreed in advance.

GENERAL STIPULATIONS OF RWS:

15. At least once a year there will be the General Meeting, to which all the members of the RWS will be invited. The purpose of these meetings is to exchange experiences and opinions on the RWS action. There will be possibility of a change in RWS rules through consensus decision taking process during the General Meeting.

16. RWS Group will seek to disseminate ideas and information about the RWS system and support the establishment and operation of such communities.

17. The Agreement shall enter into force upon receipt of 700 zł (or a set of the first installment) to the subsequent account the producer.

Warsaw, June 5 2012.

PRODUCER (signature)

Thomas Włoszczowski

ul. XXXXXXXXXX

XX-XX Warsaw

account: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

CONSUMER (name, signature, address)

Appendix

Approximate values of each of the packages, depending on the week. Fields filled in green indicate the week in which they are expected to harvest the vegetables. White box located between the green indicates time of reseeded vegetables.

		June		July			August			September			October											
Vegetable		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	measur ement	average in a box	
1	lettuces																						4	
2	radish																						pcs	15
3	beans violet, yellow and green																						pcs	1
4	courgette																						kg	2
5	tomatoes																						kg	2
6	cucumbers																						kg	3
7	celery																						pcs	1
8	leek																						pcs	1
9	carrot																						kg	0,75
10	onion																						kg	0,5
11	parley/pars hnip																						kg	0,75
12	rocket																						bunch	2
13	lamb's lettuce																						bunch	1
14	beet																						kg	0,7
15	pumpkin																						pcs	1
16	cabbage																						pcs	1
17	kale																						bunch	1
18	beet leaves																						bunch	1

Appendix 2 Survey

RWS Świerze Panki - household profiling
On-line survey sent out to members of RWS Świerze-Panki
through Survey Monkey Internet service

1. Are you?

Male

Female

Not easily defined gender status

2. What district in Warsaw do you live in? If you live outside Warsaw, please write your 'gmina'.

3. What is your age

18 to 24 55 to 64

25 to 34 65 to 74

35 to 44 75 or

45 to 54 older

4. Your educational background:

Less than high school Bachelor's

Graduated from high school degree

Professional training Master's degree

Doctoral degree

Other (please specify)

5. Number of your household members:

Adults

Children

6. Do you have any significant dietary restrictions or do you follow a specific diet?

If yes, what kind of?

7. Your professional situation (more options possible)

farmer

free-lancer / professional

self-employed / business owner

services

craftsman, merchant

household keeper

factory worker

not professionally active

part-time employed

top management position

full-time employed

student

retired

Other (please specify)

8. Indicate your net monthly household income:

less than 1 000 PLN

6 000 – 7 000 PLN

1 000 – 2 000 PLN

7 000 – 8 000 PLN

2 000 – 3 000 PLN

8 000 – 9 000 PLN

3 000 – 4 000 PLN

9000 – 10 000

4 000 – 5 000 PLN

10 000 PLN +

5 000 – 6 000 PLN

9. How did you find out about RWS Świerze Panki?

E-mail

Facebook

Friends

Family member
Other (please specify)

10. How important were these issues when you decided to join RWS?

Not important at all Quite important Important Very important

**not satisfied with
the quality of the
food on the
market**

**wanted to try
something new**

**searching for
alternative to big
supermarket
chains**

**direct contact
with the
producers**

**local
consumption**

**food at the
organic grocer
too expensive**

**not satisfied with
the quality of the
food on the
market**

