

New urban food initiatives: a step towards the recognition of diversity

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Abstract

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Cities have witnessed unprecedented growth during the last half of the century. This growth has resulted in several social, economic, ecological and other problems the global society faces today. The growing interest among urban and peri-urban inhabitants of food related problems and willingness to participate in the search for new ways of how to both interpret and organize food chains, seems to be an answer to some of these problems. At least, as such it has caught researchers' eyes who for the last decades have tried to find theoretical explanations on how to interpret greater food awareness in cities and how to analytically approach this phenomenon. This article suggests that in order to understand the emergence of alternative food chains one must ensure that the diversity of initiatives is not lost in the processes of analysis. To ensure that the diversity is not lost we have introduced a new term – New Urban Food Initiatives (NUFI) that includes all new modes of food provisioning in urban and peri-urban settings. In order empirically to illustrate the diversity of initiatives we continue with the analysis of 15 NUFI from Latvia. We conclude by suggesting that the use of NUFI can be a valuable approach in order to grasp the peculiarities of food chains.

Keywords: Urban food, short food supply chains, alternative food networks

1. Introduction

During the last decades new food system interpretations have embraced the aspects of sustainable production and consumption, public health, environmental protection, social justice, food and nutrition security, resilience and others. This interpretation has become an opposition to the historically dominant modernisation/intensification discourse of conventional agriculture. Supported and promoted by the largest farmers' organisations, the agri-food industry and the retail sector, the modernisation discourse has dictated the 'common sense' knowledge in agriculture and food production. The new food system interpretation (or post-modern food discourse) mobilises a line of new actors legitimising alternative ways of food interpretation, production, distribution and consumption. The post-modern discourse has

created a space where new food initiatives can emerge. However, despite the fact that in post-modern discourse we can identify common ideas of alternativeness, the interpretative space the discourse has created is not filled by similarly shaped initiatives. It would be more precise to suggest that the space created by post-modern discourse consists of a diverse body of initiatives that either oppose modernisation discourse or have chosen to move away from the dominating food system. Both options (clear opposition or movement away from dominating system) hold various ways for initiatives to materialize. This is how we interpret New Food Initiatives – these are initiatives filling alternative food market, yet often without clear similarities and linkages - to each other (more elaborated explanations will be given later). We perceive the looseness of these initiatives as neither good, nor bad – it is just an

important characteristic that is common in post-modern discourse.

Most significantly the food system interpretation transformations can be felt in urban areas. Share of population living in urban areas is growing faster than ever before during the last century (UNFPA, 2007; UN, 2013) and, therefore, cities have become a location of various problems we face today (UNFPA, 2007). Meanwhile, cities are also places where the main opposition to intensive food systems is concentrating. Cities' specific characteristics - like detachment from agriculture, lack of space, concentration of various social groups, etc. have become an aspect that promotes diversity of initiatives representing post-modern discourse. Recently conducted projects (see Foodlinks (Moragues *et al.*, 2013), Supurbfood (Reed *et al.*, 2013)) illustrate increasing support for alternative food systems within cities and serve as an evidence of researchers interest in urban food systems. In this context – where researchers' interest is high and a body of empirical evidence is growing fast, there is a need to constantly search for new links and reaffirm already known linkages between theoretical food system explanations and real food system structures. Our paper elaborates new theoretical concepts that could be helpful for a better understanding of urban food systems.

In this article we analyse New Urban Food Initiatives in Riga, Latvia. We have two goals for our analysis: firstly, with our analysis we will illustrate the diversity of initiatives that shape the alternativeness (opposition) to the intensification discourse; secondly, we will illustrate how NUFI can be an instrument of analysis that gives a possibility to analyse the initiatives representing post-modern discourse without losing the diversity initiatives have. Therefore, through the analysis we will search for an analytical approach (classification) that: on the one hand, would allow to use common interpretative framework for all the approached NUFI; yet, on the other hand, would ensure that diversity and case specific characteristics are not lost in the process of analysis. For the analysis we use qualitative interviews gathered in SUPURBFOOD and GLAMUR projects. We are basing our analysis on 15 initiatives (cases).

2. Conceptual framework: alternative food networks, civic food networks and post-modern discourse

It has become popular to recognize that food and food-related processes can be interpreted in a light of broad range of aspects representing various fields of interest (there are economic, environmental, health, social and other fields that can be taken into account). The shift to more elaborated food interpretation is well documented by Lang *et al.* (2009) as a move to a more modern

food system policy. However, despite the rising interest and recognition of the need to rethink food systems interpretation in national level, sub-national and local authorities have only recently been involved in elaborated and systematic food policy making (Forster and Escudero, 2014). Yet, from 1950s we have witnessed unprecedented urban expansion. Growing urban population has contributed to many problems that the world faces today (climate change, supply chain breakdowns, unequal food distribution, etc.) (Cole *et al.*, 2008; FAO, 2011). Recent publications and research projects analysing urban food systems illustrate that a growing number of cities as well as their inhabitants associate conventional food systems with ecological, social, economic, and other problems and claim that there is a need to search for more proactive/ elaborated involvement in food system restructuring (Morgan, 2009; Morgan and Sonnino, 2010; FAO, 2011).

Furthermore, urban context brings forth other important aspects that can be taken into account. For example, the urban context limits access to land (Reed *et al.*, 2013) and raises questions about soil quality, it is associated with additional governance levels that add difficulties to implement systematic changes (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 1999; Reed *et al.*, 2013; Forster and Escudero, 2014), it often loses its connections to surrounding rural territories (Ackerman-Leist, 2013), and people living in urban conditions have lost the knowledge about food, food systems (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 1999) food waste and other aspects. These aspects are also associated with food systems in general. However, cities have moved to the centre of researchers' attention because of the urbanisation process and the growing number of people living in urban areas (characteristics of the modern world that in the future are likely to become even more pronounced).

In most cases researchers have tried to put this diversity that suddenly is associated with food systems in theoretical concepts that stress some common overall characteristics of food system reinterpretation. However, it could be that the explanatory power of aspects these theoretical explanations put forward is overestimated. Under the explanations, which stress similarities mutually unrelated initiatives are located that only superficially hold connections to given theoretical explanations (and if asked would not identify themselves with ideas forming these theories). These initiatives can emerge independently. However, more often emergence (as well as transformation) of these initiatives can be described as a side effect of greater food recognition (of the space defined by post-modern discourse) – some of people representing these initiatives feel the need to stress the values

underlying food recognition, while others realize that these processes can be capitalized, yet even others are caught in the change and just carry on. Diversity as significant characteristic of post-modern discourse ensures that it is connected to various target groups, market sectors, values, etc. It should not be lost in the theorization process.

We title initiatives emerging under the post-modern discourse food system interpretation “new urban food initiatives” (NUFI). NUFI include activities of consumers, producers, urban residents, civic associations, SMEs, etc. that introduce new modes of food provisioning in urban and peri-urban settings. NUFI is a bottom up movement which forms significant basis that can facilitate overall changes in conventional urban food systems (however, only few of these initiatives might hold such goal). Meanwhile, NUFI structure varies and while some of them are unstructured, others are highly structured. However, this does not mean that initiatives will have mutual structural connections. Also, these initiatives do not necessarily hold more permanent goals that would reach further than its success in business. This means that it would be naive to assume that permanent food system changes are always an aspect of NUFI curricula. Of course, for some it is. However, for some other occurring changes could be just a by-product.

There are several theoretical approaches that can be used to explain the existence and functioning of NUFI. Yet, most of these approaches have some limitations. Conceptually NUFI can be addressed from the perspectives of alternative food networks (AFN), civic food networks (CFN) and post-modern discourses. Each concept and analytical approach helps to examine specific aspects, components and dynamics of NUFI. However, most of these approaches lack the central questions that could be related to NUFI – to explain diversity that is in the basis of NUFI.

2.1. Alternative and Civic food networks

AFN is a useful concept to describe the field in which NUFI operate. Alternative food network literature (Venn *et al.*, 2006; Goodman, 2004) develops a critique of conventional food chains and refers to consumer and producer relationship in production, distribution and consumption processes and the ways how this relationship could be reconfigured. However, the AFN conception is dispersed when it comes to the explanation of what alternative stands for. In the last decade AFN were recognised as a coherent and significant phenomenon. It is a term that is frequently positioned (and interpreted) as an opposition to conventional food system describing ‘re-linked’ behaviours (creating and connecting new behaviours in all levels of food chains) (Spaargaren *et al.*, 2012; Kneafsey *et al.*, 2013).

Renting *et al.* (2003) suggest that the main aspect to consider in AFN is locality and, therefore, short food supply chains (SFSC) (or closeness of relationship between producers and consumers) is appropriate term to emphasise. Renting *et al.* offer three types of SFSC: *face-to-face*, *proximate*, and *extended*. Brunori (2007) elaborates an explanation that relies on the assumption that consumer interpretation should be taken into account when core terms and practices of food production and distribution are defined and explained (he proposes three levels of local – *local*, *locality*, *localist*). Brunori (2007) focuses on communication of food quality and locality thus illustrating that alternative is as much about tangible characteristics as about intangible practices.

The pursuit of constructed meanings of local has been followed by other authors as well (Dunne *et al.*, 2010; Bean and Sharp, 2011). Jarosz (2008), while searching for ways to define AFN, introduces following criteria: short distances between producers and consumers; small farm size and scale and organic or holistic farming methods; the existence of food purchasing venues such as food cooperatives, farmers markets, local food-to-school linkages, etc.; commitment to the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable food production, distribution and consumption. The explanations offered illustrate that authors, when referring to AFN, are searching for a unique aspect that would allow drawing clear borders – they are searching for clear line of designation that would improve researchers’ interpretation of the phenomena at hand. No matter how we perceive the AFN – as a strict definition of as an interpretation that helps to improve researchers understanding, it still searches for aspects that would allow distinct circle of initiatives. The field circumscribed by the aspects identified then could be described as alternative. To do this researchers rely on the pool of aspects that have long been at the centre of food related discussions. NUFI offers an approach that would put greater emphasis on the diversity that would allow use more fuzzy interpretations of which initiatives should be considered as important for post-modern food discourse.

Also, the interpretation that actors representing AFN form networks can be critically examined – despite the fact that for many initiatives this might be the case, some initiatives do not have to be in a network (and some initiatives are not alternative) in order to introduce new ways of how to organize food system. Several authors have recently claimed that current meanings of AFN and their relation to social structures surrounding food systems should be re-examined (Goodman 2004; Venn *et al.*, 2006). AFN has transformed into all-encompassing term applied to a vast array of

emerging food schemes and initiatives that in a multiple, and often very diverse way, are seeking to reconfigure producer-consumer relations (Venn *et al.*, 2006; Renting *et al.*, 2012). Because of this transformation the term has lost its critical edge.

The term 'civic food networks' has been proposed to describe AFN initiatives "*in which citizens play an active role in the initiation and operation of new forms of consumer-producer relations*" (Renting *et al.*, 2012). Renting, Schemer and Rossi (2012) view CFN as manifestation of food democracy and food citizenship – CFN stress the role of the consumer - producer relations. Examples include consumer cooperatives, solidarity buying groups of local and organic food, community-supported agriculture and collective urban gardening initiatives. CFN has been proposed as an overarching concept to explore contemporary dynamics and sources of innovation within agri-food networks, especially focusing on the role of civil society as a governance mechanism (Renting *et al.*, 2012). No doubt CFN can be a useful theoretical framework for analyzing value based food system development. However, the approach can be problematic if we take into account the market's willingness to capitalize on newly identified consumer segments. For example, for CFN it is hard to explain the enterprises that comes up with produce replicating post-modern food interpretation, yet exploits the resources (production, marketing, retail channels) typical for initiatives representing intensification discourse.

2.2. Food system discourses

Elsewhere we develop theoretical explanations that refer to two knowledge systems that could be used to explain processes in food systems (Grivins *et al.*, 2013). Somewhat similar ideas have been promoted by several food theorists: Lang *et al.* (2009) refer to two chronological modes of food policy interpretation, Dryzek has identified several environmental discourses (1997). Latvia's case, however, allows us to make a distinction between two discourses that could be used to explain the ideas represented by food system actors – the *modernisation discourse* and the *post-modern discourse*. In the modernisation discourse state is an important actor. Its food interpretation is that food is an economic priority – this interpretation is always present. The modern food regime is constituted as an agreement between the state and markets - this has been the case throughout the the 20th century in which Latvia has lived through several political regimes promoting various ideologies. Thus through the 20th century, despite changing political regimes Latvia has pursued modernisation discourse in agriculture (Tisenkopfs *et al.*, 2011; Grivins *et al.*, 2013).

Also - land, agriculture as well as access to food have been used to ensure legitimacy of political regimes (partly because agriculture has always been considered to be one of the major national economic spheres). This has led to shifting policies, yet there have been overarching common goals – to produce more and cheaper food, promote exports, to certain extent – deliver social functions of agriculture, and provide employment and well-being for rural population. Statements supporting these ideas can be found in policy documents of the first independent republic (Bērziņš 2003); agricultural programmes of the Communist Party of Soviet Latvia (Clairmonte, 1989; Krūmiņš, 2009; Šūmane 2010); and recent agricultural policy documents of Latvia as an EU member state (Grivins *et al.*, 2013).

Currently, the modernisation discourse and the policies for food that it generates are challenged by the *post-modern discourse*. Despite a strong intensification orientation and support for economies of scale, some aspects of agricultural policies have taken the shape that looks at supporting alternatives to the mainstream tendencies in Latvia in the last decade. For example, the school fruit programme has been introduced, local procurement policy has been discussed, agri-environmental measures and support to farm diversification have been approved, organic farming has become more developed, support for the restructuring of semi-subsistence farms, etc. the same tendencies can be observed in activities of urban actors – in their activities they start to broaden food interpretation introducing aspects relating to ecology, fairness, healthiness, security, etc. As mostly unstructured networks of ideas this discourse is still in its development. However, it indicates a transition to new, much more elaborated food perceptions. Post-modern food discourse increasingly involves urban actors in policy formulation and what is even more important – in appropriation of new food relationships and distribution mechanisms beyond mainstream market. Post-modern discourse is a source of new and diverse interpretations, ideologies and relations centred around food. As such it is the background that ensures that NUFI can emerge. Post-modern discourse is characterised by diversity, fragmentation and claims for re-integration, hybrid forms and unexpected connections between actors (Grivins *et al.*, 2013). It puts an emphasis on post-materialist and post-modern values like taste, healthiness, food safety, wellbeing, environment, locality, etc.

The distinction between these two modes of thinking (discourses) allows the development of a deeper understanding of Latvia food systems. No doubt that we can link NUFI with post-modern food interpretation. However, this approach still

leaves us questioning how to use these ideas to analyse NUFI. First of all, in this case discourses allow describing macro flows, yet they do not help to understand specific characteristics of every actor. Second, our initial analysis of NUFI suggests, that in the case of micro analysis, distinctions between modernization and post-modernism could be an oversimplification: in micro level initiatives tend to be connected to both discourses simultaneously. In order to grasp these differences we need to conduct an analysis that addresses the characteristics of NUFI.

3. Research method

We are basing our analysis of 15 initiatives on 34 interviews gathered in two projects: SUPURBFOOD (21 interviews) and GLAMUR project (13 interviews). Guidelines for both interviews differed: interviews conducted for SUPURBFOOD were addressing peri-urban food provisioning and characteristics of urban food system; GLAMUR interviews were addressing the differences between local and global food chains. The interviews comprise a diverse body of actors involved in food systems: actors representing governing sector (representatives of ministries, state services, municipalities, etc.), market actors (representatives of retail chains, small and large scale agricultural producers, processing companies, etc.), civic sector (representatives of NGOs) and science sector (researchers from various academic fields and institutions). Also we are using analysis of secondary data (statistics, media analysis, analysis of former research papers).

From a larger pool of initiatives identified from the interviews we have selected 15 NUFI for in-depth analysis (geographically the NUFI represent urban areas of greater Riga region). As it has been mentioned beforehand, NUFI are initiatives that are introducing new modes of food provisioning in urban and peri-urban setting. Initiatives selected did not had to be *new* to be included in the sample. Interpretations have to be related to *new* interpretations (at least partly connected to post-modern food discourse). The conducted interviews were oriented towards gathering data about the food system in general. Therefore in most of interviews more than one initiative was described. For every initiative we used all the material that was given in the interviews or which we identified from the analysis of secondary data. In several cases our respondents were representing analysed cases (were representatives of the NUFI analysed in this paper).

Aim of this paper is to explore how to analyse NUFI without losing the diversity these initiatives have. To do this we had to select diverse NUFI for analysis. In order to secure the diversity of analysed NUFI, we applied wide criteria for initial

NUFI selection. However, selection of NUFI cases requires more elaborated criteria. For the selection we used the following criteria:

- In the selection process we avoided singular events and activities that did not have clear regularity of occurrence.
- We selected initiatives engaged with food production, distribution and consumption;
- The selected initiatives at some point have declared that they either shorten food chains or increase sustainability in other ways, for example, by reinforcing food communities, healthy diets, food education, improving access to food, preserving biodiversity etc. These initiatives were broadening the perspective on how we think about food.
- In the selection process we did not pay attention to the models of participation (how an initiative is involved in the market) or to scale of their operations (selected initiatives are located in urban areas of greater Riga region (Riga's peri-urban area) and they are operating mainly in Riga (or nearby urban areas)); initiatives selected may have diverse body of participants - participants may include consumers, NGOs, producers and their associations, retail organisations, processors, catering enterprises and other kinds of actors;

And finally – we deliberately were trying to ensure that the selected cases represented various relations to market. From the selected 15 initiatives (further on we will use words 'initiative' and 'case' as synonyms) we compiled two tables that serve as a backbone for our analysis. In Table 1 (Characteristics of NUFI) we provide a short overview of the initiatives characterising their focus, legal status, actors involved, objectives, and problems faced. The material represented in this table was gathered through coding the interviews. The descriptors we have used in this table allow the observation of structural differences between the cases. Yet, the selected criteria also correspond to aspects identified by theories described earlier.

Table 2 (Classification of NUFI) represents further in-depth analysis of the cases. From table we are creating an analytical approach (classification) that allows classify NUFI without losing its diversity. The table holds three main addressed aspects – values presented by NUFI, values NUFI are oriented towards and a cell illustrating differences in how "local" and "organic" is represented. In order to fill the table we coded the interviews and came up with a list of values that the selected

NUFI represents. Our list may be criticized because it lacks some important values; however, the aim was not to compile the absolute list of unique values but to identify values the selected NUFIs recognize as important. Value orientation represents a combination of coded overall statements obtained in interviews and identified represented values. Finally, differences in the ways in which terminology is interpreted (by the selected cases) are identified during overall analysis.

4. Findings: Characteristics, diversity, typology and values of NUFIs

We have selected 15 cases that represent diversity of NUFIs: selected cases can be small NGOs (local branch of Friends of the Earth (globally it is a large NGO, however, local branch is a small group of people) and social movements (Ikšķile Transition town); farmers cooperatives (Beverina co-op) and consumers solidarity purchasing groups (Miera iela direct buying); a network around small catering company (Ecocatering) and a major open market and food hub in the city (Riga Central market); a farm based shop and distribution (Liberts) and multifunctional urban farmers market (Kalnciema Quarter). Some of these initiatives are maintained by producers, others by consumers or intermediaries. Initiatives have chosen the legal form and they have attracted partners that suit best for more effective functioning. Therefore, diversity is formed by NUFIs goals, their knowledge as well as specific context limitations. Despite the similarities, there are still large differences between the analysed cases. Table 1 summarizes diversity of cases. Here we will present additional aspects that underline the identified diversity. Reader has to remember that for this study we have chosen to select NUFIs that are diverse. We have done this to ensure that we have the possibility to analyse aspects that accounts for observed diversity.

Legal form. One of the points, from where we can start the analysis on NUFIs is by approaching legal structures these cases have taken. It is easy to observe that cases represent a variety of legal forms: an informal civic group, an NGO, a cooperative, an enterprise (private or municipal). There are also cases when NUFIs lack legal status at all (for example, Direct buying). The material analysed suggests that organisational forms of NUFIs depend on perceived goals, projects at hand, connections to legal markets and knowledge accessible. Some initiatives exist as networks supporting irregular activities: they materialize as an impossible to institutionalise network that surrounds organizational leaders – it is an ever-changing structure that once officially registered may lose its effectiveness. The organizational diversity of NUFIs also illustrates that cases

represent several organizational spheres due to the fact that they represent variety of goals.

Still, to approach the selected legal form only as a resource – an organizational element ensuring possibility to reach the goals – might be an oversimplification. For example, enterprises that lack legal status avoid embracing legal form because of difficulties to put their form of action in terms defined by legislation. However, the lack of the legal status may also be a limitation for the case – it may hamper possibilities to realize their targets and for cases that want to be involved in policy making lack of legal status may become an aspect that impedes to do so: for example, some groups without legal status find it difficult to find a permanent physical space to locate themselves; others find it difficult to communicate with government; etc. However, for other cases (that are registered) the legal status does not seem to be a source of any kind of limitations. They choose the legal status as any enterprises would do – they select optimal solution for their goals.

Goals of the cases. The comment above suggesting that legal form derives from goals forces us to draw more attention to the goals of the selected cases. Some of the cases selected would clearly fit the theoretical explanations given at the beginning of this paper (for example, Transition town, Direct buying, Friends of Earth): these are civic initiatives that try to redefine food systems. These initiatives search for a way how to shorten the food chains, secure flow of organic food and associate food with wide range of social, ecological, economic and other issues. However, in other cases these values are either present in weaker form or are totally absent.

One group of cases can be described as small family enterprises with extended market and civic connections (“Liberts birch sap”, “Austra Tree”, and Farm “Vizbulī”). In all the three cases the goal for founding the family enterprise was willingness to start their own business and deep personal interest in food quality. Owners of these enterprises are highly educated and are well aware of profits that could be made with NUFIs. These actors appreciate possibilities that they gain from operating in niche market, yet they are constantly searching for higher profits. It seems that currently, according to their calculation, being a part of AFN (being a NUFIs) is more profitable option than possibility to intensify production process. Additional aspect that characterises these enterprises is their openness to new ideas. We can conclude that these enterprises have certain orientation towards reshaping food systems – namely, willingness to improve food quality. However, this does not automatically support SFSC. Their interest in the AFN rather could be described as willingness to change private diet and

possibility to introduce wider social changes is of secondary importance. Also – without built product niche these enterprises would have chosen other businesses.

One more group of enterprises that have similar goals is formed by two co-ops –“Household table” and “Beverina”. Both co-ops help smaller home-producers and farmers to access markets; both were initiated by a powerful actor whose goal was to capitalize the presence of local producers. For other co-op members participation is a possibility to reach consumers. So far both enterprises could be easily associated with ideas described incorporated in AFN literature – co-ops created new links between consumers and local producers. Yet, closer examination of both cases reveals that original goals of co-ops are not oriented towards shortening the food chains and – that both cases hold significant differences.

The first co-op – “Household table” unites retail chain and producers gathered from all the territory of Latvia. Retail chain (partner who initiated co-op) hopes that local produce (in this case local means national) coming directly from farms or small home-producers will help them to maintain the interest of certain customer groups. Meanwhile, other partners in this co-op are searching for stable access to markets. All the produce gathered in this co-op is sold in limited numbers of retail chain shops all of which are located in the capital of Latvia. The co-op Beverina unites municipality and farmers / home producers (a less regulated group of producers who are allowed to sell only directly to customers) working in the territory of the municipality. Municipality (the initiator of the co-op) considered the co-op to be a good way to improve local economic performance: the municipality through the co-op can help local farmers to reach the market. In contrast with the previous case Beverina co-op collects its produce in one small territory, yet it does not have any territorial limitations where the produce can be sold. Both cases are similar to the extent that they were initiated by a powerful central actor (retailer, municipality).

Finally, there are two markets selected for our analysis. Huge differences can be found if we compare both markets selected for this analysis (Riga Central Market and the Farmers Market). The first mentioned is municipality founded, has started to promote local produce just recently (searching for a way how to compete with ever growing competition coming from retail chains), resembles a classical market and is not involved in other activities. The Farmers’ market is a much smaller private enterprise; it organizes and is well known for its cultural events, and it constantly holds a high level of product prices. For both

markets, the goal for selling the local produce is to attract consumers and to secure the positioning that would show clear difference between the market and retail chains.

Despite the fact that the objectives pursued by initiatives are diverse, we still can make simple classification of these goals: there are those cases which are in a search for profit. It is highly likely that without possibilities to make profits these cases would change their current direction of development and consequently leave AFN. Then there are cases that could be classified as problem solvers – technical solutions to ensure greater AFN diversity (for example described co-ops). Also we could suggest that there are cases that pursue greater changes – changes in systems ideological interpretation. Some cases are improving the world while some others are created to ensure customers (who most often are also founders) possibilities to choose. These goals overlap with NUFI represented values described in Table 2. Overall, we can conclude, that niche that can be associated with post-modern discourse and consumers’ interest in this niche is a lot more important promoter of development than the values enclosed in the discourse.

Problems cases face. Finally, one would expect that initiatives that could be associated with the same discursive position (all these initiatives at least partly can be associated to opposition of *modernisation discourse*) would face similar problems. However, as the goals and legal forms differ, the faced problems differ as well. We can draw two central conclusions that are oppositional to each other (see Table 1). On the one hand, NUFI have at least some clearly articulated common problems – lack of partners, funds and consumers, experience. These problems are mentioned again and again. However, it is hard to believe that these are unique problems of NUFI. It would seem more logical to suggest that these may be the problems of emerging markets – Vorley reports somewhat similar problems faced by formal sector when it is introduced in markets dominated by informal sector (Vorley, 2013); also somewhat similar list of problems is mentioned in Latvia’s Rural Development Programme (LAP, 2014) when small farmer problems are analysed. On the other hand, there are more specific problems as well (as dump stigma for waste re-users, activists burn-out for several civic initiatives, and lack of sufficient open market space, etc.). Diversity of these more specific problems allows us to conclude that behind the common surface we can observe case specific elements.

5. Discussion

Our initial classification presented in Table 1 illustrates the diversity of NUFI. Aspects

identified in Table 1 are important to describe the diverse characteristics of NUFI. The table represents a matrix that could be used to characterise specific initiatives. However, each row of the table holds significant differences from most other rows. Because of this it might be hard to compare various initiatives. We could conclude that the table works well when one needs to describe the initiatives. However, it is less useful if we want to develop some overall interpretation. Therefore, we introduce one more perspective how to approach NUFI analysis. Our second approach is based on values initiatives hold. To create this analytical approach we have coded the ways in which analysed cases have been represented in interviews (see Table 2). The analysis draws a conclusion that some of the values identified are represented by cases more often (for example 'local', 'organic', 'development', 'new markets', 'social innovation') while others seem to be more marginal ('sustainability', 'ethnicity', 'technological advancement (of production)', 'seasonality'). Since this is a qualitative and exploratory study we cannot state the absolute importance of these values. However, no matter how often the values have been mentioned, all of them can be associated with either support to market development (as support to 'new markets', 'social innovation' and 'technological advancement') or to extended food interpretation (as support to 'local', 'organic', 'ethnicity', etc.). Because of this observation we would like to propose a new approach of how to classify NUFI. Our classification of NUFI includes four groups:

(1) NUFI with strong ideological orientation (for these cases solving of some value related issues is of primary importance. These cases put transition in the centre of their practices and will continue operating the way they do even within the limited market). We can relate to this group both of analysed NGOs, Baltic Apiary, Direct buying and Eko virtue).

(2) NUFI with weak ideological orientation (here are located the cases that serve as a mediators for NUFI representing first group). This group incorporates the cases, where transition and introduction of new values in food system are of a high importance yet, importance of profitmaking is appreciated as well. In these cases, although profitmaking is of secondary importance, it influences decisions organisation makes. One of the oldest shops offering local and organic produce serves as an example of this group. The owners of the shop during the interview stated that they could close their shop. They argued that after all their invested work they still cannot raise the profits to the level that would allow them to satisfy their needs. Economic performance in this group can eventually lead to moving away from

AFN. To this group belongs: Dabas Bode; Eco Catering.

(3) NUFI with weak market orientation (cases solve some problems in order to secure profit making. Therefore, the cases might not make clear profits at the moment, yet they have the hope to do so in the future. Profitmaking is a major motivation. However, values supporting food system diversification are also present. Therefore, when decisions are made ideological orientation can play a role. Both co-ops, Kalnciema Quarter, Liberts birch sap as well as Austras tree represent this group).

(4) NUFI with strong market orientation (profit making is a primary goal. This means that these initiatives have been attracted by emerging market. These enterprises will most probably leave AFN when profits will fall. Examples of such initiatives are Riga Central Market, Getlini Eko and farm "Vizbuli". These cases are part of AFN just because of the opportunities emerging market offers).

Introduced classification allows to explain the diversity of the cases selected. It illustrates the diverse motivation NUFI have. Both – analysis of the selected cases and logics suggests that categories of the introduced classification are mutually exclusive.

6. Conclusion

In our study we have examined the possibilities to classify new food initiatives emerging in urban and peri-urban environment. In particular 15 NUFI operating in greater Riga region of Latvia were explored. NUFI are activities of consumers, producers, urban residents, civic associations, SMEs and other actors who aim to introduce new modes of food provisioning in urban and peri-urban settings. NUFI are diverse and can take various forms. Meanwhile, these initiatives have one strong aspect in common – they try to introduce much wider food interpretation and by doing so they strengthen the post-modern food discourse. Yet, this fact does not reduce the differences we have indicated and does not bring them closer to each other – as was shown earlier, there are significant differences between the various NUFI. NUFI similarities allow us to link these initiatives as opposition to conventional food system. Yet, their differences remind us, that such opposition is unorganized and heterogenic and that actors forming opposition may not recognize mutual similarities. The fact that these initiatives emerge from and strengthen the oppositional (post-modern) food interpretation for some may seem - an argument enough to consider them as mutually related. However, such simplified interpretation will work only for as long as these

initiatives are interpreted as an opposition and/or represent a marginal phenomenon.

However, discourses are not the only theoretical approach that fails to illustrate the diversity lying behind NUFI. The same problems are faced by several other approaches as well. Only by combining several explanations we can come closer to the interpretation of how to approach a variety of institutions that can be found in the city and can be classified as NUFI. Yet, even the most elaborated theoretical explanations will not be able to grasp the diversity of new urban food initiatives. First, this is because the diversity we have identified here is too large to be captured by simple overarching theoretical concepts. Second, this is also because of huge variety of interpretations involved actors have: cases illustrate variations in AFN. And finally – theoretical explanations fail because of constant changes these actors and food systems are going through. Our selected cases illustrate that these changes can be associated with actors involved in order to build more sophisticated food recognition.

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Table 1. Characteristics of NUFI

NUFI	Description and focus of the case	Organisational form	Actors involved	Objective	Problems faced
House-hold table (Saimes galds)	A co-op founded by bunch of farmers and one of the major retail chains. Idea was first introduced in Lithuania.	Co-op	Retail chain, farmers, and home-producers. Indirectly: Ministry of Agriculture	To create a way how small home producers could sell their produce in biggest shopping malls of the retail chain.	Difficulties to overcome legal barriers and to attract partners.
Eko virtuve	A catering enterprise operating both as restaurant and enterprise that supply food for schools.	Enterprise	Owners. Indirectly: farmers, various civic groups	To ensure possibility to choose healthy and traceable food.	Frequent change of premises, low purchasing level of potential customers
Direct buying	Active group of customers trying to avoid middle man and buying directly from farmers.	None	Group of activists, farmers	To ensure customers access to local, traceable produce and to create markets for local farmers	Problems to attract farmers, to recruit new group leaders, to secure premises.
Baltic apiary (Baltu drava)	Public apiary in the Centre of the city.	Enterprise	Owners. Indirectly: municipality and Bee keeper association.	To educate people and to make practical use of urban space rich with linden.	Difficulties to attract initial funding. Art project stigma.
Friends of Earth (Zemes draugi)	NGO involved in line of diverse activities.	NGO	Civic activists	To promote anti GMO policy and organic agriculture.	Difficulties to attract funding. Burning out of leading activists.
Getliņi Eko	Enterprise ensuring ecological management of Riga central dump.	Enterprise	Owners. Indirectly: municipality	To efficiently use waste resources. Also to create positive image for local dump.	Low purchasing power of customers. Dump stigma.
Beverina co-op	Municipalities help local farmers to access market.	Co-op; also policy	Local producers, municipality	To ensure producers access to market.	Difficulties to attract partners. Lack of experience.
Riga Central Market	Main Riga open space whole sale market.	Municipality enterprise	Municipality, various tenants	To ensure that there is a place where Riga inhabitants can access fresh produce.	Accusations in corruption. Accusations of selling produce of unknown origins.

Table 1. Conitined

NUFI	Description and focus of the case	Organisational form	Actors involved	Objective	Problems faced
Dabas Bode	Oldest from the shops specializing in selling organic products in Riga.	Enterprise	Owners	To sell organic produce.	Low customer interest and purchasing power.
Eco Catering	A restaurant selling seasonal food in Riga. Also a catering enterprise supplying kindergartens with daily meals.	Enterprise	Owners. Indirectly: kindergartens	According to the owner restaurants main goal is to secure that kindergartens have a possibility to choose healthy food.	Difficulties to attract farmers who are growing organically.
Farmers market (Kalciema Quarter)	A farmers market that sells local produce. Also market serves as a starting point for new AFN initiatives.	Enterprise	Owners, farmers	Enterprise is mainly oriented to secure its income. However, group is also motivated by possibility to promote lifestyle and ideologies they believe in.	Difficulties to communicate with farmers, to attract new partners. Difficulties to secure customer interest. Lack of territory to grow.
Farm "Vizbuli"	A family farm that supplies organic products to groups of direct buying, organic shops and restaurants.	Enterprise	Owner and her family. Indirectly: unofficial distribution groups	To sell organic vegetables. To remain competitive.	Need to introduce new products and to maintain customer interest.
Liberts birch sap	An initiative producing various drinks and syrup from birch sap. Case has become highly popular.	Enterprise	Owner and his family	To sell organic products produced from birch sap.	Limited amounts of production. Need to discover everything by themselves.
Austra tree (Austras koks)	An enterprise producing pasta.	Enterprise	Owner and his family	To sell organic pasta.	Difficulties to reach the customer. Customers' unwillingness to pay.
Transition town (Ikšķiles pārmaiņu iniciatīva)	A group of activists operating mainly in Ikšķile city. Group is involved in numerous food initiatives.	NGO	Group of activists, strong links to other initiatives.	Overarching goal is to promote sustainable lifestyles. In smaller scale they are promoting permaculture, SFSC.	Problems to attract resources, to keep activists motivated and interested, to find a way how to communicate with surrounding governing actors.

Table 2. Classification of NUFI

	VALUES presented									ORIENTATION towards				
	local	organic	sustainability	ethnicity	development*	technological advancement (of production)*	seasonality	new markets*	social innovation	strong ideological	weak ideological	weak profit	strong profit	
NUFI														The meaning of "local" and "organic"
Household table (Saimes galds)	+				+							+		Product origins matter (only products from Latvia can join). Channels of distribution do not matter. Organic does not matter.
Eko virtuve	+	+	+	+						+				Organic is most important characteristic (recognizes quality schemes). Localness is of secondary importance. However, representatives of the enterprise are also involved in permaculture movement. This is mainly interpreted as a way to secure ethnical culture.
Direct Buying	+	+	+				+			+				Organic aspects are of major importance (recognizes quality schemes). Local is associated with small farmers within territory of Latvia.
Riga Central Market					+								+	Neither local nor organic is of importance.
Dabas Bode	+	+	+		+						+	+		Organic is most important characteristic (recognizes quality schemes). Localness is of secondary importance.
Eco Catering	+					+	+		+		+			Localness and seasonality is of major importance.
Farmers market (Kalnciema Quarter)					+			+	+		+			Neither local nor organic is of major importance. Still these aspects are mentioned once in a while.

Table 2. Continued

	VALUES presented									ORIENTATION towards				
	local	organic	sustainability	ethnicity	development*	technological advancement (of production)*	seasonality	new markets*	social innovation	strong	weak ideological	weak profit	strong profit	
NUFI														The meaning of "local" and "organic"
Farm "Vizbuļi"					+				+	+			+	Both local and organic are important aspects that allow securing market. They ensure that farmer can work with profit.
Baltic apiary (Baltu drava)	+			+					+	+	+			Self-grown is more important than local. Does not support abstract idea of local.
Getliņi Eko			+		+	+			+	+			+	Organic aspects are unimportant. Localness is only used to market the produce.
Beverina co-op					+							+		Organic aspects are unimportant. Local farmers are those from municipality. There are no restrictions how this initiative can relate to market.
Liberts birch sap	+	+		+		+	+	+	+		+			Both local and organic are important. Recently obtained eco certificate. Share of the produce is exported.
Austras Tree (Austras koks)	+	+		+					+	+		+		Enterprise claims to be using only organic products. Localness is of secondary importance. The enterprise has chosen ethnical symbols to market it-self.
Friends of Earth (Zemes draugi)		+	+							+				Organic aspects are of major importance. Local characteristics are absent.
Ikšķiles pārmaiņu iniciatīva	+	+	+	+						+				It is important that product is organic. Localness can be important, however, there are several cases it is not. Supports self-grown products.