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**Доверие потребителя к органическим продуктам питания на  
рынках России и Германии**  
**Consumer trust in organic food on the German and Russian markets**

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## Introduction

It is evident that nowadays a market for organic food in Europe, and especially in Germany, is constantly growing (European Commission). The same trend can be also observed in Russia (Bruschi et.al. 2015). Despite numerous differences between German and Russian organic food markets, there is one common problem which is typical for both. This is the problem of information asymmetries. Organic products are often even called credence goods because information about the nature of the product is asymmetric: while producers know whether the product is really organic or not, in most cases the presence or absence of the organic characteristics are not detectable by consumers even after purchase and use of the product (Giannakas, 2002). It means that consumers generally cannot distinguish organic products from conventional ones by their appearance or taste. More than that, it is hardly possible to say if the product is organic or not even after the consumption (Schneider et.al. 2009). In other words, buyers do not really sure if the product is organic unless they are told so. Surely, this issue is relevant for any market in general, whether it is the automobile, insurance, credit or labor markets (Akerlof, 1970), and for the food market in particular (Nestorowicz, 2014). This is explained by the fact that producers, in comparison to consumers, from the very beginning possess more information about goods they offer. However, at the same time, this problem becomes even more important for the organic food market due to the peculiarity of traded goods.

From the one hand, reasons for purchasing organic food are seemed to be very altruistic. Thus, originally organic farming has been emerged as an alternative production system to help preserve the environment, and reduce the negative impact on natural resources such as soil, air, and water (Vega-Zamora et.al. 2013). This goes along with the striving for rural economic development (Ibid.). On the other hand, motifs for buying such products are also rather egoistic. Individual health and food safety together with the quality and flavor are in the spotlight for many people (Ibid.). However, in both cases commodities, which are purchased by people who claim themselves as organic food consumers, are endowed with a bigger value. It is difficult to argue that a person would choose organic product instead if it's conventional counterpart without having a strong reason. And this very strong reason makes organic food and organic food market unique. In order to satisfy their particular needs, it is important for consumers to be sure that money is invested in a truly organic product. For this reason, information provision can affect consumers' willingness-to-pay for environmental goods (Rousseau & Vranken, 2013). And this confidence cannot be totally complete until the problem of information asymmetries is solved.

Actually, one of the possible solutions for this problem is the formation of consumer trust toward organic food. Moreover, there is a general agreement on the importance of trust in decisions on organic food (Schneider et.al. 2009). Nevertheless, the question arises: how customers could trust in the truly organic origin of a product under the conditions of information shortage? Because the necessity for trust is argued to be usually caused by uncertainty what is actually the lack of important knowledge (Sztompka, 1999). In this case, the main problem is where consumers obtain necessary information and how does it influence their trust in organic food at the end.

Generally, there is an opinion that “social institutions and arrangements <...> are better viewed as the efficient solution to certain economic problems” (Granovetter, 1985). In this case, quality uncertainty and trust formation could be attributed to these problems as well. It is possible to mention that there are studies that prove the importance of institutions in regard to the food safety and trust in food in general (Kjærnes et. al. 2007). Thus, G. Akerlof (1970) identifies four basic types of such institutions: guarantees, brand-name, chains and licensing practices or certifications. What is more, literature review in the field of organic food consumption gives an evidence that the most common way to enhance consumer trust especially in this kind of commodities is the establishing of various institutions, like labels, brands, laws, regulations (Giannakas, 2002; Schneider et.al. 2009; Zagata, Lostak, 2012; Janssen, Hamm, 2012; Brcic-Stipcevic, Petljak, 2012; Smed et. al. 2013; Hamzaoui-Essoussi et. al. 2013; Anisimova, Sultan, 2014; Vittersø, Tangeland, 2015).

However, the occurrence of these institutions does not lead to absolute protection against a fraud. It could be explained by the fact that introduction of these activities sometimes creates incentives for such manipulations as, for instance, mislabeling of conventional food as organic (Giannakas, 2002, Müller, Gaus, 2015). It means that consumers sometimes are provided with false information. In other words, it shows that certification and labeling are necessary but insufficient for winning the trust of consumers. In this perspective, we agree with G. Akerlof (1970, 500), who writes that “informal unwritten guarantees are preconditions for trade and production”. Consequently, there should be some other ways to enhance consumer trust in organic food except mentioned formal institutions. Thus, one of the possible solutions could be an interaction between market agents, especially communication between consumers. It is a common knowledge that people tend to ask advice or recommendations from other buyers in order to clarify some issues about future purchasing. In other words, other consumers are the

most reliable source of information about organic food which enhances their level of trust in it. M. Granovetter (1985) also argues that market is not an impersonal mechanism because people tend to turn it into the network of social relations, which are, in turn, a reliable and trustful source of cheap and detailed information. Despite the fact that German organic food market is known as better regulated than the Russian one, there are a number of laws and controlling bodies, it could be assumed that personal interaction still plays a great role in the process of trust formation on the both of these markets. Hence, the major research question could be formulated as follows: how consumer's trust in organic food is constructed on the market? Consequently, the main aim of the thesis is to reveal common and specific factors that influence the process of consumer trust formation on Russian and German organic food markets. The following hypotheses are tested in the study: 1) personal communication among consumers related to organic food consumption positively affect consumer's trust in these products both in Russia and Germany; 2) institutions regulating Russian and German organic food market influence consumer's trust in these products; 3) personal communication plays more important role than institutional arrangements in the process of consumer's trust formation both in Russia and Germany.

In order to address the research question and hypotheses, the following tasks have been fulfilled:

1. Giving the basic definition of organic food based on the analysis of literature related to the organic food concept and current legislative base for organic food production;
2. Defining trust in organic food and the possible ways of its measurement;
3. Providing the explanation of trust formation on the market through network and neo-institutional approaches;
4. Comparison of Russian and German consumers' motivation for purchasing organic food and estimation of their trust level in these products;
5. Detection of the factors that influence consumer trust in organic food among Russian and German consumers the most;
6. Finding differences and similarities in Russian and German Mass Media coverage of organic food topic;

7. Comparison of governmental laws and private standards for organic production in Russia and Germany.

The object of the study is organic food market in Russia and Germany. The subject of research is the formation of consumer trust in organic food on the Russian and German market. The study is based on case study approach. Organic food systems (Kjærnes et.al. 2007) in Russia and Germany are investigated as the cases in the research. The spheres of production, distribution, consumption, and regulation are covered by the organic food system. The latter both in Russia and Germany includes manufacturers, retailers, consumers, government, mass media, expert organizations and controlled bodies. Two specialized organic food stores in Russia and two in Germany together with a private controlling authority from each country are considered as objects of comparison along with media sources which are nationwide newspapers and news websites, and current national legislation on organic food. Empirical data for the hypothesis testing is obtained by following methods: the qualitative analysis of documents; the qualitative analysis of Mass Media content; the online survey among organic food consumers; semi-structured interviews with organic products purchasers.

This paper consists of a theoretical chapter, the outline of research design and methodology, description and analysis of empirical findings in a comparative perspective, a conclusion containing some ideas for further research, and several appendices. The chapter represents the theoretical framework the research is built on. The framework is organized around basic concepts: organic food and trust in organic food on the market. Consumer trust is analyzed on the basis of classical sociological theories of trust, produced by a range of outstanding scientists (Sztompka, 1999; Luhmann, 1979; Giddens, 1990; Simmel, 1978; Fukuyama, 1995; Seligman, 1997; Coleman, 1990; Granovetter, 1985; Akerlof, 1970); along with the analysis of current studies on consumer trust on the food market (Kjærnes et.al. 2007; Gracia & De-Magistris, 2016; Rampl et al. 2012). Analysis of organic food markets was done on the basis of secondary sources (Giannakas, 2002; Schneider et.al. 2009; Zagata & Lostak, 2012; Janssen & Hamm, 2012; Brcic-Stipcevic & Petljak, 2012; Smed et. al. 2013; Hamzaoui-Essoussi et. al. 2013; Anisimova & Sultan, 2014; Vittersø & Tangeland, 2015) along with some investigation into the question of prices for organic food made in Germany and Russia. Empirical part represents the results of an online survey and analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted by the author in a comparative way together with the comparative analysis of documents and media content. The paper concludes with the final chapter where the empirical findings are

summarized and connected to the theoretical concepts discussed in the first chapter. This section also includes discussion on limitations of the research and provides some ideas for further investigation.

## **Chapter 1 Trust on the organic food market in Russia and Germany: theoretical framework**

This chapter describes the general theoretical and methodological background of the paper. It begins with the discussion of the general understanding of organic food, which could be found in a current literature considered the topic. This covers the description of the organic food production process, including such stages as growing, processing, and distribution. On the base of comparison between conventional and organic food, special features of the latter are eliminated. It proceeds further to the analysis of basic principles of organic production defined on the international level and common both for Russia and Germany. Moreover, basic sociological concepts of trust are considered due to the fact that trust is a complex phenomenon and could be interpreted in different ways, especially speaking about trust on the market. Definition of trust and trust relations in connection to organic food is given. What is more, the question of trust measurement is addressed. Key factors which allow measuring the level of trust in organic food are discussed. And, finally, network and institutional approaches to market analysis are introduced in terms of trust formation process explanations.

### **1. The general concept of organic food: basic ideas and explanations**

#### *Process-oriented approach to defining organic food*

Organic food is a complex phenomenon, which could be analysed and interpreted in different ways. The understanding of what organic food really is depends on the range of factors, which influence the final item – organic product. Thus, it could be stated that there are two basic approaches to the definition of organic food: process-oriented approach, which looks exactly at the process of food production; and quality-oriented approach, which considers mostly the question of the effect that organic food has on consumer health and their perceptions of these items (Kahl et.al. 2012). Moreover, the process-oriented approach usually goes along with agro-ecology approach – underlying paradigm for organic agriculture, where processing plays a major role (Ibid.). For this reason, the description of organic processing is given below.

O. Schmid and A. Beck (2004) have traced the historical development of organic food processing on the basis of official regulations, starting from the 1970s, when some private standards for organic food processing have been already established. This was the document of the Demeter association in Germany, which made manufacturer the main responsible actor in the process of organic production and is mostly concentrated on the process of growing. A little bit later, in 1980 and 1982, the first international standards were developed by the International



Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (IFOAM), which slightly touched upon the processing stage. Since the 1990s a number of national regulations were approved regarding the process of organic food processing. What is special in food processing, based on organic principles, is that it is connected with such categories as freshness, minimal processing, careful treatment and sustainability (Gallmann, 2000; Nielsen, 2004; Beck, 2014). The latter, in turn, connects organic processing with decentralization, simplicity, environment and social values (Schumacher, 1973). Schmid and Beck (2004, 17) conclude that organic processing methods should be “suitable to guarantee genuineness, authenticity and conserve natural properties of the raw materials and follow the three principles <...>, which are freshness, minimal processing, and careful treatment”.

When speaking about processing, it is important to define what it is exactly, what procedures are included in this stage and how it is different from all other stages of food production. Processing is defined in various sources differently, we will refer to the definitions made by already mentioned here J.Kahl et.al. According to these authors, generally, processing is “the phase of transformation, of change of the food ingredients, by means of some active principles; processing is a method including technology, additives, aids, a recipe and packaging” (Kahl et al. 2014, 2584). Regarding organic production, all the components of processing should be regulated and controlled with the main goal of production, which is in this particular case to increase safety and quality of a product. Active principles, mentioned in the definition, could include mechanical, chemical, physical, thermal cooking, preservation, cleaning, protection or any combinations of them (Ibid.). Generally, three broad groups of processing methods could be distinguished. Those are physical processing (thermal, mechanical, electric, etc.), chemical (oxidization, polymerisation, etc.) and biological (fermentation, biotechnological, etc.) (Ibid.)

What is important to mention in this regard is that processing is not connected to the process of product growing, it includes the following process of product or raw material preparation for the final use. It is of great significance because rather often processing doesn't deserve a special attention in the literature and either combined with the process of growing or is just missed. It seems to be a big fault due to the fact, that the processing stage takes even bigger part of the whole production chain. Consequently, the neglecting of organic principles at this stage of manufacturing could have a negative impact on the ultimate outcome of the production.

It would lead to the loss of important organic characteristics of a product, what is inappropriate if the main goal of production is to produce bioproduct.

As it was mentioned before organic food processing has some specific characteristics, which mark it out from other types of production. First of all, organic food processing is associated with freshness or naturalness. It means that natural properties of the raw material are maintained through the processing process (Schmid & Beck, 2004). To put it more simply, at the end product should contain as many nutritional substances as possible; the biggest part should be saved and not be lost in the process of product preparation for further sale. Organic food processing takes raw material from nature rather than from synthetic origin. That is what is commonly known as “field-to-fork” approach. One of the possible ways to achieve this goal is by means of minimal processing. The main distinction of this method is that it aims to reduce any impact of processing on such product qualities as nutrient density and taste, but at the same time trying to prolong the “shelf life” of a fresh product (Kahl et al. 2014). Thus, the microbiological, sensory and nutritional “shelf life” of minimally processed vegetables should be at least 4-7 days, but preferably even longer (Ahvenainen et al. 1994). Moreover, minimal processing guarantees a product to be fresh, but convenient for people to consume (Ibid.). In other words, a minimally processed product has the same characteristics as the original one, for example, fruit or vegetable, but usually do not need any additional preparations before eating (Gil & Allende, 2012). Ahvenainen et al. (2014) also make clear that minimal processing could be described as the mildest possible preservation adapted to a particular food.

Nevertheless, minimal processing could not be totally equated with organic processing, due to the fact that minimal processing is used not only for the production of organic food. It could be implied within the production of conventional food as well, for example, ready-to-eat salads. Therefore, minimally processed fruits or vegetables are not necessarily organic, just because of the way they were prepared for the sale. As J. Kahl et al. (2013) highlight, minimal processing focusses on the saving of fresh-like properties during the post-harvest stage, while the growing itself could be the very ground for claiming a product organic. However, it could be an important part of the organic production chain, when preservation in this way is considered to be one of the main goals for producers. To put it in other words, minimal processing is important, but not sufficient to claim a product organic. And, what is more, under these circumstances, safety of a product is still questioned, because there could be found a wide range of documented cases of

contaminated vegetables and fruits, as well as other items, which brought about large eruptions of microbial infections (Gil & Allende, 2012), what, in turn, has nothing to do with organic food.

One more characteristic of organic food processing is careful processing. It takes into consideration not only a product itself but also another actor, involved in the production chain. It refers to care, undertaken while preparing raw material in such a way that maintain their purity as far as possible, that all known nutrients are saved, while they are believed to be beneficial to human health. What is more, it takes into account the importance of careful handling of animals, as well as concerning about environment. In other words, any biotic and abiotic factors, both directly and also indirectly involved in the process of production (Kahl et al., 2013). Besides, careful processing is undertaken in such a way that it cares for and takes care of people involved in the processing (Ibid.). Nevertheless, careful processing is again a significant part of organic processing, but they could not be understood as equal. And, finally, organic processing is also based on the sustainable processing. Sustainability is based on three main pillars, which are environment, society, and economy (Kristensen & Beck, 2004). It means that organic processing should enhance the preservation of the environment, support economic growth and maintain the population health. However, sustainable processing still remains one of the most underexplored concepts in regard to organic processing as literature review does not allow making any confirmed statements.

Overall, organic processing, considering as an important part of the whole production chain, is based on those principles that were listed above: naturalness and freshness; minimal, careful, and sustainable processing. Still, they are not the only and sufficient basis for claiming a product organic. Let us give an example. J. Kahl and A. Beck (2014) have drawn a special attention to apple wax-covering usage. Despite the fact that utilization of particular types of bee-wax in order to prevent apple's decay is not prohibited by organic regulations, it is not commonly used practice among organic apple manufacturers in Europe. However, some alternatives ways could be taken, such as hot water (Ibid.). Nevertheless, this does not give any guarantee of ecological purity of apple, until they are grown according to organic rules. That is why we are now proceeding to other very important part of the organic production process, which is organic agriculture.

#### *Agro-ecological approach to defining organic food*

Organic agriculture is the very beginning of a production chain because it is exactly during this stage a raw material for further processing is obtained. Organic agriculture is defined as a

“holistic production management system” (Codex Alimentarius) which takes into account soil, plant and animal health by applying natural methods and working in natural cycles (IFOAM). To put it more simply, it is the cultivation of vegetables, fruits, crops, etc., as well as livestock handling. It is a common fact that a range of agricultural practices can put more pressure on the environment and cause such problems as a destruction of biodiversity and natural habitats, air pollution, water shortages, soil degradation, etc. The reason for these risks, which negatively affect both environment and people’s health, are basically widespread usage of nitrates of such concentrations and by such methods which could hardly be compatible with biological cycles of environmental units. There are numerous studies, which prove that some pesticides are even more harmful than it was known before (Mercati, 2016). Consequently, “heavy agricultural reliance on synthetic chemical fertilizers and pesticides is having serious impacts on public health and the environment” (Pimentel et al, 2005, 573).

In contrast, sophisticated agricultural systems, which are based on environmentally- and animal-friendly techniques, could be able not only to restrain climate change and hydrogeological degradation but also allow preserving plant and animal biodiversity with the consequent respect for public health. Process measurements, for instance, indicate less impact on environmental issues measured by life-cycle-assessment (Mandelaers et al. 2009; Gomiero et al. 2008; Wood et al. 2006). It is possible to say that organic agriculture can be considered as one of the ways to achieve the sustainable development goal, which is a rather hot topic today and is listed as one of the main world development goals. V. Mercati (2016) highlights that organic agriculture not only maintains ecological processes that foster plant nutrition, save soil and water resources, but rather increase these processes. The positive effect of organic agriculture was proved by the research, conducted by D. Pimentel et al. (2016). It includes such consequences as issues as higher soil organic matter and nitrogen; better conservation of soil and water resources due to the high levels of soil organic matter; up to 30% lower fossil energy inputs; reduction of soil erosion, pest problems and pesticide use by means of crop rotations and cover cropping; reduction of pollution by recycling of livestock wastes (Pimentel et al. 2016). On the whole, organic farming serves to increase sustainability and biodiversity, to maintain good soil and air quality. In practice it could be achieved by means of natural growing practices, the avoidance of harmful chemicals added by the continued practice of crop rotation and other natural farming methods (Ibid.).

In order to understand better, why the organic way of growing is regarded as a special way of production, it might be useful to analyze the difference between organic, conventional, and, not of the least importance, production affected by GMO. One of the many practices of growing conventional crops both for human's consumption and livestock feed goes hand in hand with the mixture of synthetic fertilizers with added chemicals, what helps to accelerate the process of crops growing (Barroilhet, 2012; Pimentel, 2005). Farmers usually use such pesticides as fungicides, herbicides, and insecticides to spray their sowing (Ibid.). In contrast, it is known that organic farming follows the goal of optimizing the health of land, crops, animals and consumers in order to enhance biodiversity, restore and maintain the environment. This goal is incompatible with techniques allowed by conventional farming. Farmers, who claim their production organic, are often controlled and do not use the conventional farming practices of using synthetic chemicals, pesticides, and antibiotics to grow crops or raise livestock. Obviously, they also want to keep up with consumer's demand and for this purpose, they use more sophisticated traditional practices, such as crop rotation, natural fertilizers, manure or hand weeding (Bernacchia, 2016).

It is necessary to highlight the special interest in livestock breeding when speaking about organic agriculture. It is for a long time was considering that ecological way of production takes into consideration solely the rules for plant cultivation, for example, fruits, vegetables or cereals. Nevertheless, meat, poultry, fish, as well as milk and milk products together with eggs are an essential part of a human daily diet. Thus, conventional or non-organic breeding of animals is known as confined animal feeding operations (CAFO) or, to put it more simply, factory farming (Barroilhet, 2012). It is usually accompanied by the practices of overloading livestock and holding them in a closed cage environment with little or no sunlight, depriving animals of fresh air, space and freedom to graze the fields. In order to reduce costs and gain more profit, while satisfy constantly increasing demand, producers get used inject animals with growth hormones. They make livestock to gain their maximal weight as quickly as possible (Ibid.).

What is even more intimidating, animals are kept in the same space where they excrete the feces. In this way, the ground is becoming fertile ground for infections and viruses (Ibid.). These dangerous conditions force farmers to use antibiotics on a daily basis so that prevent contamination and subsequent doom of the stock. Furthermore, the majority of animal waste is untreated and badly regulated, what in turn leads to rivers and other water sources pollution. In contrast, when livestock is raised by an organic regime, it is treated much differently. The organic farm is constructed in a way to provide animals with leaving conditions and feeds close

to the idea, namely natural (Barroilhet, 2012). Animals are raised in a space where they are free to roam the land and receive a sufficient amount of fresh air and sunshine. They utilization of any antibiotics is prohibited and if an animal gets sick, the only allowed way to cure them is by means of homeopathy and other treatments that have no side effect (Pimentel, 2005; Bernacchia, 2016). The evidence provided by the results of comparison between the nutritional quality of conventional and organic dairy products, achieved by Palupi et al (2012), demonstrates that such factors as feeding regime, which is regulated in organic animal husbandry, change milk composition towards healthy parameters.

Turning to the question of production connected with GMO, it is important to mention, that pretty often organic food is opposed to GMO food (Organic trade association). Thus, according to “The codex Alimentarius” any product produced from genetically engineered or genetically modified organisms are not compliant with organic way of production (CAC/GL 32-1999, 3). In this case, only these two ways are analyzed, avoiding a comparison between conventional and organic farming. However, GMO production could be named as an extreme case of non-organic farming. What is special about this way of farming is that farmers use genetically modified seeds that are unnaturally resistant to weeds and insects (Barroilhet, 2012). This technology enables farmers to avoid crop rotation, what in turn leads to great savings in time and labor costs, providing cheaper food in a bigger amount in a less amount of time. It is extremely profitable for producers in an economic sense, but, actually, seems to be accompanied by a lack of social responsibility, due to the fact that there is a scientific substantiation of GMO food harmful influence on human’s health. To summarize, the way agricultural products, such as fruits, vegetables, grains, and animals are grown and processed determines whether or not a producer has the right to claim a product as organic. If one of these stages breaks the rules of organic production, the product could not be introduced on the market as ecological or organic.

#### *Product quality-oriented approach to defining organic food*

In contrast to process-oriented approach, quality-oriented perspective focuses rather on the benefits that a product gives to consumers in the process of consumption. It deals with nutritional value, bioactive compounds, health impact, taste, etc. The process-oriented approach is connected with the pre-consumption stage, it means that organic product is analyzed from the position of producers, how their manufacturing process is organized. At the same time, quality-oriented perspective is called in such way, because it is considered to be the point of view, coming from consumers themselves, how they judge the quality of a particular commodity. In

this way, organic food production could be also described as consumer-oriented because it aims to satisfy their egoistic motifs, such as individual health benefits and food safety together with the quality and flavor (Vega-Zamora M., et.al. 2013). It is reasonable to mention that organic processing as an important part of production chain also takes into account consumer as a target, but still it refers more to the environmental issues. Moreover, the process-oriented approach focuses on the external factors, which derive from the production, while quality-based perspective focuses its attention on internal characteristics of food.

It is worth saying that most of the studies evaluating organic food quality are based on the measurement of selected food compounds, comparing food from organic versus non-organic origin (Palupi et al. 2012; Średnicka-Tober et.al. 2016; Baranski et al. 2014; Griffiths et al. 2011; Bernacchia, 2016; Kahl et al. 2010; Bigot et al. 2014; Van Overbeke et al. 2006). Usually, quality of the product identified by the impact of primary production on the food attributes copes with parameters related to nutrition and health criteria. In parallel to the process-related quality criteria such as animal welfare, environmental issues, special processing methods, product criteria, such as taste, nutrition and health move to the forefront, what might be suggested to make this approach more subjective. It could be difficult to judge the taste of a product or its impact on one's health because criteria could hardly be developed in these terms.

Surely, evaluation of nutritive qualities seems to be possible. Thus, a number of experiments have been done to show that organically produced food contain more bioactive compounds, while there is a lack of steady proofs of positive effects on human health in a result of keeping an organic diet in comparison with a conventional one (Norwegian scientific committee for food safety). Thus, research conducted by a group of scientists (Smith-Spangler et al. 2012) suggests that there is a limited evidence for the superiority of organic food because the evidence doesn't suggest marked health benefits from consumption organic versus conventional foods, even though organic produce may reduce exposure to pesticide residues and organic chicken and pork may reduce exposure to antibiotic-resistant bacteria. German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture also support this fact and report that up to now no scientific studies to figure out whether the regular consumption of organic food is more health-promoting than the consumption of conventional products have been done. Just one principle is important: this food may not jeopardize health in general (Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture). What is more, it could be assumed that not just consumption of organic food makes people healthier, but their lifestyle in general, accompanied by organic food, has a positive effect on their health. Thus one

of the studies reports that there is a connection between the purchase of organic foods and the dietary habits and lifestyle. Buyers of organic food eat healthier food, are frequently non-smokers and are actively engaged in sports (Hoffman & Eisinger-Watzl, 2015).

However, one of the best ways to understand what is organic food from the quality-oriented perspective is to make a distinction between organic and other types of food as we have already done in regards to organic agriculture. It is justified by the fact that only by comparison it is possible to eliminate specific features of organic food which make it unique, and why the notion of organic food is conceptual could figure as one of the basic categories in this work. It is reasonable to mention that conventional could hardly be defined, at least, in the process of literature reviewing rather a few article were dedicated to this question; and those found are based on the opposition between conventional and organic with a strong accent on the latter. It means that authors do not define conventional food, while immediately shift to the definition of organic products (Palupi et al. 2012; Baranski et al. 2014; Bernacchia, 2016; Kahl et al. 2010).

What is more interesting, organic food is sometimes even confused with functional food, which is actually totally different phenomenon (Kahl et al. 2012). Functional food is known to be modified in order to have more health benefits, for example, fortified with calcium orange juice to support bone's health (Cencic & Chingwaru, 2010). It means that some additional components are added to the product to ensure more usefulness for health. Obviously, both organic and functional are foods, but organic food is further regulated by the European standards for organic agriculture and food production, as well as Russian is also on the way of establishing those standards. The main difference between these two types of nutrition is that functional food aimed at human health as a target, while organic food intends to combine consumer's health with the health of animals, environment, and society (Ibid.). Some examples of functional food are oatmeal; bread with additional content of Omega-3 and iodine; juices with more vitamins A, C or E, etc. In this way, we can speak of organic food not as food which contains more useful compounds, but food that contains less harmful substances. Nevertheless, this proves one more time, that organic food is a complex concept which depends on a combination of important issues that influence the final product.

There can be found some results of scientific investigations on the quality of food which is aimed at the comparison between organic and non-organic goods. Comparison based on constituents show the lower level of residues in organic food (Lainon, 2010; Baker, et al. 2002; Kouba, 2003), but nevertheless, have no hard evidence to of better nutrients and health related



compounds (Dangour et al. 2010). As it was mentioned earlier, one of the main goals of organic food production is the high quality of the products as well as maintenance of their “true nature” during the production period. A number of studies were conducted in order to find the differences between organic and conventional food on the base of different aspects or features. Thus, a research on composition differences between organic and conventional meat conducted by D. Średnicka-Tober et al. (2016) reports that organic products typically characterized by the higher concentration of nutritionally desirable compounds, thereby, making them healthier for consumption. Results, obtained by the same group of researchers, indicate that “there are significant and nutritionally meaningful composition differences between organic and non-organic meat” (Średnicka-Tober et al. 2016, 995).

The idea is also supported by the results of other investigation made on the difference between organic and conventional crops (Baranski et al. 2014). Authors conclude that “a switch to eating organic fruits, vegetables, and cereals would provide additional antioxidants equivalent to eating between 1-2 extra portions of fruits and vegetables a day” (<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/press/news/2015/10/organicvsnon-organicfood>). Moreover, the study published in British Journal of nutrition also provides evidence for significantly lower levels of heavy metals in organic crops (Baranski et al. 2014). One more comparison between potatoes grown by conventional and organic methods demonstrates that organically produced potatoes contain more useful minerals than the conventional one (Griffiths et al. 2011). What these studies show is that making choice in favor of organic food consumption can lead to increased intake of nutritionally desirable antioxidants and reduce exposure to toxic heavy metals due to the contain of lower amount of pesticides in organic food in comparison to conventional products, as well as higher levels of antioxidants compounds and lower cadmium levels in organic products is demonstrated (Bernacchia et al. 2016).

As we have touched upon the nutritive quality of organic food, it is now the time to investigate the question of taste. Is organic food really perceived as tastier than conventional products? It is claimed that taste serves as one of the most important, if not the decisive, motif for consumer choice process (Hemmerling & Spiller, 2016). Thus, people’s perceptions of and preferences for such food properties as texture, smell, appearance, and taste are stated to determine the latter’s food preferences and subsequently food choices (Conner, 1993; Rozin, 1996; Shepherd, 1990; Shepherd & Raats, 1996). Moreover, some studies (Hemmerling, 2016; Bratanova et al. 2015) were conducted specifically to analyze if consumers have some taste

preferences toward organic food. Consequently, the evidence was shown that organic products attract people foremost with their good taste (Hemmerling, 2016). It allows saying that sensory attributes lead to positioning organic food as a special type of commodities and differentiate it from conventional food.

However, the matter of taste is known to be a rather subjective parameter, as it is influenced not only by internal characteristics of a product but also by a range of external factors. The way product is growing has an inevitable effect on its final taste. Thus, A. Fulton et al. (2014) report, an organically grown plant without any additives has more enhanced taste. A number of studies prove that higher antioxidant levels have positive influence on such food's organoleptic qualities as taste, aroma, and mouth feel and in doing so also enhance human's sensorial detection of food's unique flavor (Ibid.) It could be the truth as long as the way of growing directly influence a number of different substances, such as a level of sugar, salt, and some others, which are found in food.

Nevertheless, a couple of papers confounding these assumptions were published (Bratanova et al. 2015; Poulter, 2015), which show that the perception of taste is influenced by the product positioning as organic. A very interesting experiment was conducted by a research group: people were proposed to taste some food samples, such as biscuits, apples, and juice, which were absolutely identical; the only thing is that one of them was labeled as organic; and then judges their taste (Poulter, 2015). What came to light is that the products named organic received higher evaluation of taste (Ibid.). The one reason explaining this phenomenon is the higher expectation that consumers have towards organic food on the basis of information they receive about these items (Bratanova, 2015). Moreover, "labeling food as of ethical origin can result in subjectively enhanced taste experience to the extent that consumers feel a sense of moral satisfaction from buying or consuming the food. The experience of moral satisfaction may further lead consumers to attribute more positive characteristics onto the food, including forming expectations for its superior taste. As outlined above, expecting to consume tastier food is likely to enhance the gustatory experience when the food is actually consumed" (Ibid. 138). Nonetheless, taste is the one particular feature that distinguishes organic food from conventional one either it has real or perceived better taste.

To summarize we can say that the term, describing the non-organic origin is conventional. Conventional is everything that is not organic but covers a whole range of different agricultural practices, as well as processing technologies. That is why J. Kahl et al. in their work

(2012) rightly point out that conventional is non-defined term on the contrast to organic, and from this point of view organic turns out to be even more understandable for consumers. It could be explained by the fact that organic food is characterized by additional value, both money and symbolic, and people want to invest their money properly in order to gain a true benefit. At the same time while individuals do not get used to dwell on conventional food because it is not conventional food that stands out on the market, but organic one, which represents a special type of conventional food.

To conclude, it is necessary to state that the whole understanding of organic food concept, either it is based on process-oriented, agro-ecological or product quality-oriented approach, builds on the opposition between conventional and organic product. Under these circumstances, organic food, in general, could be understood as products produced by environmentally- and animal-friendly techniques, which allow to preserve natural resources and biodiversity; as consequence associated with naturalness and freshness; which are undergone minimal, careful, and sustainable processing what in turn guarantee their higher nutritional value, positive effect on consumer's health and characterized by better sensory attributes.

## 2. Legislative base for organic production

In the previous part, the general understanding of organic food on the base of different approaches was presented. As it is possible to say, organic products could be understood differently as long as consumers pay attention to the diverse range of their characteristics. However, the way one and the same phenomenon is understood in two countries depends on a range of factors ([www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)). Thus, legislation could be considered as one of the most important of these factors. In other words, the way consumers perceive organic food, the level of their trust and choices they made on organic food market are inevitably influenced by norms and standards concerning organic food production. If there are controlling bodies, which are responsible for checking and evaluation of organic farms, people seem to be sure about the ecological purity of the product. In order to demonstrate the reasons for different perceptions and thereby various basis and motifs for buying organic products both in among German and Russian adherents of an organic diet, we found and analysed current laws and standards, which control the production of organic food in both countries.

It is a common knowledge that Russia and Germany are very different in terms of organic food production, distribution, and labelling regulations. Russia is known for a lack of articulate laws controlling bodies and checking systems. At the same time, the German market is highly institutionalized, what means that there is a range of approved regulations, both on European Union's and local national level; there are officially established institutions, which are responsible for evaluating organic production; strict rules regarding ecological marking. Moreover, the absence of firmly defined notion of organic food, which would be explicitly prescribed in the statute, makes Russian consumers more confused about organic products in terms of understanding the concept. They tend to perceive them more subjectively, on the base of personal feelings and attitudes, while German consumers are ensured with clearly defined notion and just free to choose which of the mentioned characteristics are more crucial for them.

It is interesting that despite these differences, Russia and Germany actually have the common legislative guidelines for organic production and, specifically, for organic food definition. Even though these standards are not in any way mandatory, they still serve to ensure the same understanding of organic among membership countries. These guidelines could be found in two documents: "The Codex Alimentarius" or "The food code" (<http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/en/>) and "The IFOAM norms for organic production and processing" ([http://www.ifoam.bio/sites/default/files/ifoam\\_norms\\_july\\_2014\\_t.pdf](http://www.ifoam.bio/sites/default/files/ifoam_norms_july_2014_t.pdf)). The first was

developed by Codex Alimentarius Commission, which is an intergovernmental body consist of 180 members, functioning within the framework of the Joint Food Standards Program founded by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) with the purpose of protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade (GL 32–1999). “The Codex Alimentarius” (Latin, meaning Food Law or Code) is the result of the Commission’s work: a collection of internationally adopted food standards, guidelines, codes of practice and other recommendations, introduced for voluntary application by members, but at the same time serve as a basis for national legislation in the sphere of food provision (Ibid.). This document is rather extensive and covers the diverse range of questions connected with alimentation.

However, it includes a special edition about organic food production – “Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods” (CAC/GL 32-1999). The document is intended to facilitate the process of finding common ground for organic products requirements at the international level, and may also contribute to the governmental establishment of national regulations in this field (Ibid.). Notably, the document emphasizes that locally adapted systems are needed to match specific regional conditions (Ibid.). It means that every country is able to modify somehow the rules, even make them stricter, and in order them not to be inconsistent with local conditions. The guidelines consist of sections devoted to the organic production concept description and definitions; rules for production and processing methods; appropriate labelling and claims; certification and inspection bodies and import rules.

To begin with, it is necessary to say that “The Codex” highlights that organic production is based on three main pillars, which are social, ecological and economical sustainability (Ibid.). As it is highlighted, “the primary goal of organic agriculture is to optimize the health and productivity of interdependent communities of soil life, plants, animals and people” (Ibid. 1). It means that organic food production could not be narrowed just to one aspect of understanding, for example, production process or useful qualities. It is a complex phenomenon, which should be perceived as an integral conception and consumers should not perceive organic food just from one particular side but should understand it in a whole, including its influence on all components of the process from people to soil. As a rule, such notions as “organic”, “biodynamic”, “biological”, “ecological” on a product signal consumers that they were produced according to organic rules, while products from that production, which is only on the way to become organic

and do not meet all the necessary requirements, could be labelled only as “transition to organic” (Ibid.). However, the unified name for these products is absent. For instance, in Germany, mostly, such products are labelled as “bio”, while in Russia full range of names is used: bio, organic, eco, natural, etc.

Interestingly, the goals of the guidelines are not only to protect consumers against decision and fraud on the market; to facilitate import in a sense that national systems of organic production have the same basis and could be accepted in international trade system; and to preserve natural resources and environment by maintaining and enhancing biological agriculture systems in member countries (CAC/GL 32-1999). But it also takes into consideration producers, who are avoiding misinterpretations and confusing other ways of production as being organic (Ibid.). That is why labelling could be applied only to those products, which were manufactured by producers under the supervision of an authority or certification body. It is explained by the fact that under the conditions of growing market, where just a tiny part of products is delivered directly from producer to consumer, it is hardly possible for them to stay in close contact and be mutually controlled (Ibid.).

Nevertheless, those controlling bodies “should be independent of economic interests with regard to the certification of operators” (Ibid. 2). It is a rather disputable question, because some cases of private certification, for instance, LavkaLavka in Russia or Bioland in Germany as cooperatives could hardly be considered as independent as long as they both are umbrella organizations for farmers and, surely, they have some economic interests. However, labels could help producers to signal consumers about the ecological purity of their product and make them recognizable in a way to be distinguished from other range of food products. The only possible problem is that, for instance, in Russia products that have been labelled as “organic” do not always really organic (Kolchevnikova, 2013), while there is a lack of such cases evidence in Germany. Thus, the most important thing about these guidelines is its statement that “organic” is a label that could be assigned only to those products, which “have been produced in accordance with organic production standards and certified by a duly constituted certification body or authority” (CAC/GL 32-1999, 1).

Generally, the guidelines contain information on each stage of production starting from growing and ending with import regulations. It contains detailed information about plants and plant growing including the questions of soil treatment and additives acceptable for usage against different kinds of pests; issue concerning livestock and livestock products referring to the

way every type of cattle is handled, including its origin, feeding, health care, housing, free-range conditions, and slaughter; proceed with handling, storage, transportation, processing and packaging (Ibid. 10-18). Annex 2 (Ibid. 19-29) contains the list of substances allowed to be used in organic production separately for soil fertilizing and conditioning; for plant pest and disease control; ingredients of non-agricultural origin, e.g. chemical, which could be used in a certain cases of production; processing aids to prepare food for further delivery to a consumer. What it shows is that every step is clearly defined; every part of production should meet special requirements. It lets consumers know how organic product must be produced.

“The IFOAM norms for organic production and processing” was in turn developed by International Federation of Organic agriculture and Movements (IFOAM) located in Bonn, Germany, which is the only international umbrella organization of the organic world, uniting an enormous diversity of about 800 members in 117 countries and contributing to the organic vision worldwide (<http://www.ifoam.bio/en/about-us>). However, the basis for this document is not only IFOAM basic standards but also Codex Alimentarius itself as the first international set of rules for organic production (IFOAM norms). Russia and Germany are both members of this organization what allows to state that they should have a common base for organic food concept. Interestingly that many German organic food agents, such as Alnatura (organic food store); Demeter, Rapunzel, BOWL (labels); Bioland (organic food association) are affiliates of this organization ([http://www.ifoam.bio/sites/default/files/directory\\_2015updated\\_highres.pdf](http://www.ifoam.bio/sites/default/files/directory_2015updated_highres.pdf)). As well as some Russia companies working in the field of organic food production, such as Association for organic & biodynamic agriculture “Agrosophia”; Eco-control; Non-commercial partnership “Ecological Union”; Organic Market LLC, also work in cooperation with IFOAM (Ibid.). In general, it shows that organic food market agents both in Russian and Germany in their activity should seem to follow the same rules and standards.

When analysing IFOAM norms it becomes clear that it contains all the same parts as Codex Alimentarius regarding objectives and requirements of organic standards; standards for organic production and processing referring the every part of the process and type of food produced (crops, animal husbandry, agriculture); accreditation requirements for bodies certifying organic production and processing; labelling regulations. However, throughout the text, it is possible to find quite many references to the Codex Alimentarius, what shows that still the latter could be named as the real basic set of rules for organic production. Nevertheless. IFOAM norms are even more extended and detailed. This document represents strict instructions regarding every step of

production. It also provides a list of additives that can be used in the production chain, but still many of them could be further considered by local controlling bodies like the Codex does.

Despite extensive and detailed information, IFOAM norms don't require a product to be labelled organic to be claimed as such. Thus, it is written that an organic product is "a product that has been produced, processed, and/or handled in compliance with organic standards" (IFOAM norms, 31). And then the description of these standards is given, including the packaging norms which are even more precise than those mentioned in the Codex. But what is especially notable about this particular document is that in comparison with the Codex it for the first time touches upon the questions of Social Justice (IFOAM norms, 9) and claims social rights as an integral part of organic agriculture and processing (Ibid.) "The fairness principle of organic agriculture emphasizes that those involved in organic agriculture should conduct human relationships in a manner that ensures fairness at all levels and to all parties involved" (Ibid.). It is a clearly new step in defining organic food notion.

In brief, organic product, according to the guidelines, could be claimed organic, only if it meets all the requirements listed there and labelled as organic (GL 32–1999, IFOAM norms). To be more precise, "organic is a labelling term that denotes products that have been produced in accordance with organic production standards and certified by a duly constituted certification body or authority" (GL 32–1999, 1). As we can see, the question of farm's conformance to the rules, in most cases, is delegated to special certification and controlling authorities. Special recommendations are given for them, regarding such issues as how and when to conduct expecting; and even the question about allowed amount of substantives is also a responsibility for these controlling bodies. That basically means that controlling bodies are those who have the whole responsibility to give consumers full and accurate information about organic food by the means of labels. It, in turn, indicates that existence or absence of national, local controlling parties and labels define consumer's understanding of organic food concept.



### 3. Understanding and estimating trust in organic food

#### *The basic definition of trust and trust relations*

It is a common knowledge that various researchers from different fields of studies, including sociology, anthropology, philosophy, psychology, political science, and economy, emphasized the importance of trust relations, however, hardly anyone of them tried to define what the trust is (Misztal, 1996). Nevertheless, there is a common view that trust is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, which is an inherent part of people's lives, ranging from everyday routine to truly landmark decisions. As long ago as J.S. Mill (1891, 68) it was admitted that "the advantage to mankind of being able to trust one another penetrates into every crevice and cranny of human life". Thus, any society could hardly exist without at least some level of trust among people and none of the decision could be made without trust. That is why, as the trust is considered to be the basis of any social relations (Ibid.), the sociological theory of trust moves to the forefront. Thus, this part is aimed at revealing the very notion of trust as it is explained by a range of outstanding representatives of sociology. Two major concepts – trust as a sensitive phenomenon and trust as rational term – will be discussed and the possibility of their combination will be justified.

As it has already been mentioned before, sociologists in their vision of the problem of trust split up into two big groups. One we could be named "rationalists" as long as they consider trust as the product of rationalization and calculation (Sztompka 1992; Luhmann 1979, 1988; Coleman, 1990) and the second could be named "fatalists" due to the fact that they think of trust as rather a sensual phenomenon based on people's feelings and beliefs (Giddens, 1990; Fukuyama, 1995).

Surely, when discussing trust, the question arises: what is the very trust? How the term could be defined and what sense do sociologists give to this notion? It goes without saying that when interacting with other people we expect some actions from their side. "All social interaction is an endless process of acting upon expectations, which are part cognitive, part emotional, and part moral" (Barber, 1983, 9). Obviously, we can't predict the outcomes of other's people actions. And it is true, because "if we had such full possibility of prediction, and strong, certain expectations trust would be irrelevant" (Sztompka, 1999, 22). In this case, we would be aware of all possible outcomes, so we are prepared for any situation and there is no place for trust. But, obviously, it is impossible to know everything. It is justified by the fact that people can intentionally hide some kind of information they think to be unimportant and

irrelevant for others, or unprofitable to disclose for themselves. Moreover, in some cases, information could be concealed unpremeditatedly. What is more, it could be hardly possible to be fully aware of people's reasons, intentions or motives in everyday life which cause this or those actions. That is why Sztopka says that we remain in the situation of uncertainty because we miss important knowledge (Ibid.).

The most general definition of trust is given by P. Sztopka in his famous work "Trust: a sociological theory" (1992, 25): "Trust is a bet about the future contingent actions of others". It is reasonable to say that he represents the position of those authors who tend to consider trust as the product of rationalization or calculation. One can try to predict which outcomes will follow this or that action according to various features of other people he communicates with. In other words, «trust is based on an individual's theory as to how another person will perform on some future occasion» (Good, 1988, 33). Surely, it is expected from people, to be honest, and fulfill other's expectations during the process of interacting regardless the sphere of relations. Despite the fact that it is still very hard to predict the outcomes, Sztopka (1992, 26) argues that in this case «we behave «as if» we knew the future».

Along with such authors as N. Luhmann and J.C. Coleman he insists that trust is not something which is groundless, just what is enough to feel, but rather something that can be, at least, partly calculated, basing on some expectations. Supporting ideas of P. Sztopka, N. Luhmann highlights that trust is a social mechanism which is called to mitigate risks. In his point of view "to show trust is to anticipate the future; it is to behave as though the future were certain" (Luhmann, 1979, 10). He also emphasizes that trust is a required condition for the social development due to the fact that modern societies are getting more complicated and less clear what, in turn, causes people's uncertainty in their own future (Ibid). J.C. Coleman continues this argumentation in regard to the rational choice theory and says that trust is connected to the rational choice and presupposes active human actions and his own futurism (Coleman, 1990). The essential assumption of the rational approach is that both parties - a truster and a trustee - are rational actors, whose aim is mostly to maximize their utilities by rational calculations taking into account the available information (Sztopka 1992, 60). F. Tönnies (1998) supports this idea by stating that trust as a rational relation is based on the maximization of common benefit what means that both parties should gain some profit from an interaction committed and not just that trust is an essentially rational expectations about the – mostly – self-interested behavior of the trusted (Hardin, 1991, 187).

Consequently, some common characteristics prescribed by “rationalists” to the phenomena of trust could be listed. The first is that it necessarily needs human actions, both from the trustee and trusted; the second is that it occurs in situations of uncertainty, in other words, when there are some risks and a lack of knowledge; and, finally, it includes some calculations about future actions from all actors involved. By this, representatives of rational approach are moving from a psychological understanding of trust to the one related more to economics, as long as rationality is known to be the product of the economic activity of an individual. What is more, it is justifiable to name this approach also as relational as long as relations between people and their interactions are crucial for the existence of trust. As P. Sztompka (1992, 26) emphasizes, “trust is more than just contemplative consideration of future possibilities; we must also face the future actively, by committing ourselves to action”.

As it was mentioned earlier, there is also the other group of scientists who claim that trust is a sensual phenomenon and it evades any kind of computation. It even was highlighted earlier by famous economist Adam Smith, who stated long ago that trust is a natural human feeling because people are naturally prone to trustfulness; the need to trust override doubt and suspicion even concerning the most incredulous people (Smith, 2002 [1759]). He highlights that the disposition of trust is the fundamental and prevailing one (Ibid.). Following this reasoning, A. Giddens (1990, 34) defines trust as “confidence in the reliability of a person or system regarding a given set of outcomes or events, where that confidence expresses a faith in the probity or love of another, or in the correctness of abstract principles (technical knowledge)”, but, however, underlines that trust is “a link between faith and confidence” (Ibid. 33). As it is possible to see he interprets trust using the notion of confidence which, however, turns to be different category in Sztompka’s theory. The latter argues that confidence, along with the hope; refer to something that happens without our active participation (Sztompka, 1999, 25).

In this case, confidence is more connected to the faith; it doesn’t require some actions from the person who renders trust. We trust our parents without any calculations because we believe in them, we are confident in them, we know that they will never deceive us. It gives the reason to claim that confidence is based on more or less taken-for-granted attitude that familiar things will remain stable. It basically means that “trust presupposes awareness of circumstances of risk, whereas confidence does not” (Giddens 1990, 31). If there is a possibility of risk, trust would be necessary but not the confidence. When having a risk a person should know at least partly

possible outcomes of his actions, it is hardly possible to blindly follow feelings or beliefs, especially when speaking about actions undertaken in the market.

Fukuyama goes along with Giddens in his reflections about trust. He states that law, contract, and economic rationality provide necessary but insufficient base both for the postindustrial societies stable coexistence and for their prosperity; they should be complimented by reciprocity, moral obligations, responsibilities in front of a society, and with trust, which is based more on habit rather than rational calculations (Fukuyama, 1995, 11). In his opinion, economic prosperity and business success cannot be fully explained by abundance of natural resources, brilliance of intellect, or the presence of good laws and institutions; nor is capitalist success attributable solely to the operations of rational, self-interest in free market environments (Gill, 1995). Instead, economic development requires a culture of trust and capacity for what in Fukuyama's theory is called "spontaneous sociability" (Ibid.) Thus, he emphasizes that trust, in turn, depends on a culture of shared values, a shared language of good and evil and writes that "trust is the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest and cooperative behavior, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of other members of that community" (Ibid. 26). Fukuyama gives an example of family enterprises which are hardly able to develop further because it is difficult to establish trust relations beyond family, what shows that trust is based on the belief in family relations.

However, based on these ideas, it is fair enough to say that understanding of trust which is based only on feeling and beliefs could be replaced by the notion of confidence. When talking about uncertainty trust is important and it couldn't be based on one's faith. Thus, in modern society, two types of trust – rational and sensual – could coexist (Veselov, 2011, 30). It is known that consensual models, based on implicit, non-participatory and non-contingent forms of trust are no longer working. That is why the notion of "critical trust" has appeared, indicating trust and skepticism may coexist (Poortinga and Pidgeon, 2004). When considering trust on the market exactly this notion could be used to describe market agent's behavior and could be reasonably used to combine rational and sensual approaches to the definition of trust. Now it is possible to define trust as a bet about future fulfillment of one's expectations in a situation of uncertainty, caused by other human's actions and underpinned by a lack of important information, based both on rational calculations and people's beliefs. And in this case "the grounds for trust <...> come down to certain knowledge, information obtained by the truster about trustee" (Sztompka, 1999, 60, 70).

In regard to the structure of trust relations, it is important to say that the presence of two parties is always necessary: one who gives trust named a trustor and one to whom trust is given is called a trustee (Coleman, 1990, 91). Basically, the decision about trust is made by a trustor because only he can decide whether to give trust or withdraw it. However, there is an opinion that a trustee also has a choice, mainly, to honor the trust given to him or not. If both of the parties deliberately make these commitments – to give and to justify trust - then the situation of trust occurs (Ibid.). However, when considering market relations, third parties also sometimes are becoming involved in trust relations. As Coleman highlights, in that case, it turns into tripartite relations (Ibid.).

It is often the case that people on markets deal with actors, which they don't know directly or continuously. In this situation, some intermediaries are needed to ensure that both parties will fulfill their responsibilities. When market agents decide make a deal, they expect from each other to behave according to their particular expectations. To be sure that these expectations will be met they necessarily need to receive information about a partner they want to make a deal with. It is not always the case that necessary information can be received from the actor himself as long as market is usually characterized by opportunistic behavior (Veselov, 2011). In turn, it is closely connected with the problem of unequal distribution of information, when market agents possess different amount of knowledge. Therefore each of the actors seeks to find the source which is able to fill this gap in information provision which is considered to be urgent for the deal to be made. Thus each of the parties refers to those who seem to be the most trustworthy in terms of this particular information. Following these argumentation we can define trust on the market as a bet about future fulfillment of one's expectations in a situation of market exchange under conditions of uncertainty caused by other market agents and reinforced by asymmetric distribution of important information, based on knowledge provided by actors which are believed to be the most reliable.

However, when considering the problem of trust in food, it is important to say that there is no such notion as direct trust in food (Kjærnes, et.al, 2007), as it can be stated in regards to the immediate interaction between market agents; it is hardly possible to trust a product itself. Because trust is a social phenomenon and takes place only when the situations of uncertainty are “of human and not purely natural provenance” (Sztompka, 1999, 20), one trusts food as long as it is humanly created. Surely, food plays a big role in human's lives and at the very least they expect it not to harm their health. For example, they could expect that the food purchased is

produced according to the basic sanitary rules. What is more, food could also bear some additional characteristics important for consumers, which are good sensorial qualities, esthetic value, economic benefit, etc. (Kjærnes, et.al, 2007). However, it is rarely the case, when consumers are able to check the production themselves in order to be sure that the products they purchase are produced by other people in a way they expect it to be. In this way a consumer knows less about food he or she buys in comparison, for instance, to the very producer. That's why the situation of uncertainty acquires and causes the necessity for trust.

Under the described circumstances, the role of information and especially those who provides this information being an intermediary between a consumer and food is getting one of the most important. To put it in other words, consumers do not trust in food directly but they tend to trust either those who provide food for them or those who provide necessary information about it (Ibid.). On the food market different agents are able to give this information starts with a producer itself to advertisement. In this case consumers are able to decide, which one from all the sources seems to be the most trustworthy in terms of filling the information gap. Thus, we can define trust on the food market as a bet about future fulfillment of consumer expectations regarding particular food qualities under the conditions of uncertainty caused by other food market agents and unequal distribution of information about food production, processing and sale process, based on information received from the sources which are considered to be the most reliable in terms of necessary knowledge.

According to the literature describing food markets in general and organic food market in particular (Kjærnes, et.al, 2007; Bruschi et al. 2015; Hemmerling, 2014; Hoffmann & Eisinger-Watzl, 2015) following actors are mainly involved in the process and could be considered as the key players on the market: consumers, producers, retailers, private certification bodies, official controlling authorities, mass media. Thus, based on who of them provide necessary information about food three basic types of trust could be eliminated: thick interpersonal trust (trust in relatives, friends and other close surrounding); thin interpersonal trust (trust in other consumers and producers), and institutional trust (trust in labels, mass media and advertisement). Thereby trust in food is substituted with the trust in those actors or, in other words, trust in these actors based on information they give about food transit to food itself. Or, as Sztompka (1992, 46) states in his theory, food could be considered as a secondary object "which become the targets only derivatively, in the process of placing and justifying trust toward primary objects". It means

that food becomes a target of trust only when consumers hear or read some information regarding this topic.

Regarding organic food market it is necessary to keep in mind that in comparison to conventional food this kind of provision is usually connected with rather specific expectations. It is often purchased not just to satisfy the need for alimentation but it is also connected with some additional values. As it was mentioned earlier motives for buying organic food can be divided in two groups: egoistic and altruistic. Nevertheless, 5 key characteristics were distinguished in order to describe the specificity of organic products. They are nutrition, quality, safety, ethics and value for money. If a product possesses these qualities then it could be considered as organic. Following this logic we can finally define trust on the organic food market as a bet about future fulfilment of consumer's expectation concerning product to be organic under the conditions of uncertainty caused by other market agents and asymmetrical distribution of information, based on knowledge about organic origin of a product provided by those actors who are believed to give the truthful and reliable information in these terms.

*The problem of defining and measurement of trust in organic food*

The problem of trust in food arises then and only then when there is a problem of consumer's choice, which precedes the action of purchasing. If a person grows all necessary food by himself there is no place for trust: he can control all the way food travels from vegetable patch to the plate. Nowadays it is hardly possible to check where a product was really grown; how it was processed; how long did it spend on the road to the shop, etc. Consequently, "trust is intimately linked with the uncertainty of the future, as long as that uncertainty is of human and not purely natural provenance" (Sztompka 1992, 20). Thus, it goes without saying that food supply is the process which is largely dependent on human actions. These are people who make the whole process of food production and distribution possible.

Hence, consumers cannot take it for granted that the food supplier will confirm to their expectations; there should be something to rely on (Kjærnes, et.al, 2007). Consumers actually can influence, at some point, only the process of food acquiring. For instance, one could choose where, when and what kind of food to buy, but it is still hardly possible to be absolutely sure about the outcomes of these actions. "The consumer, as an individual, has no control over the qualities of the food offered for sale, beyond a capacity to select among goods available in the market-place" (Ibid. 30). People can't have full control over others, especially those whom they don't know personally. They can't control the process of production: how and a kettle is a feed,

where it is kept, how it is treated; or how fruits and vegetables are grown. Neither one can control the workers on the place of production: how faithfully do they fulfil their responsibilities. When buying product consumers should rely on something to be sure that the milk he or she is purchasing won't at the very least harm the health. In the same way, a consumer couldn't trust tomatoes to grow organic or cow to give organic milk. Instead, he bases his trust according to information received about the ecological origin of a product.

As we have underlined earlier trust could be defined as a bet about the future fulfilment of one's expectations in a situation of uncertainty, caused by other human's actions and underpinned by a lack of important information, based both on rational calculations and people's beliefs. However, the problem of trust measurement still remains unsolved. When talking about people relationships, how could it possible to understand at which extent one trust another? Moreover, it was defined that there is no such phenomenon as complete trust, which was expressed in a famous model "A trust B in terms of X", what basically means that one can trust a person in one sphere and be no willing to give trust in some other (Sztompka, 1999). That is why trust always connected to some particular kind of interactions. Speaking of food it could be suggested that one can trust food in terms of its safety, nutrition quality, etc. (Kjærnes, et.al, 2007). In these terms trust in organic food could be regarded as more complicated, because it combines a range of important for consumer qualities. Thus, it could be understood as consumer's confidence that the product he purchases will fulfil his expectation about it. More general it is a consumer trust in the truly organic origin of a product.

Turning to the question of trust measurement it is necessary to mention that pretty many attempts have been made to develop the algorithms of trust measurement but no appropriate and accurate indicators found. One can, for example, estimate the level of trust in society by posing the question: "Can you trust most of people?" (Veselov, 2011). However, the answer to this question does not depict the real situation regarding the level of trust among people (Ibid.). The question of trust measuring turns out to become even more complicated regarding the problem of trust in food. How can one measure if a consumer trusts the food he purchases or not when the very process of buying already presupposes some level of trust? Without some level of trust, the act of purchasing could be hardly done at all. Nevertheless, a group of researchers (Kjærnes, et.al, 2007) have made an attempt to measure trust in food based on 5 key food issues, which are nutrition, quality, safety, ethics and value for money. The same methodology was applied by a



group of Russian scientists who investigated trust in food with an example of beef (Ganskau et al. 2004).

These issues could be reasonably applied when analysing trust in organic food as long as according to different studies (Kolchevnikova, 2013; Rehder & Le, 2014; Kriwy & Mecking, 2011; Mercati, 2016; Buder et.al, 2010; Vega-Zamora M., et.al. 2013; Bruschi et al. 2015; Hemmerling, 2014; Hoffmann & Eisinger-Watzl, 2015; <http://gain.fas.usda.gov>, <http://www.agr.gc.ca>) these exact characteristics tend to be the most important for consumers when deciding to follow organic diet. Nutrition is connected with the belief that organic food contains more nutrients in comparison to its conventional counterparts. Quality refers to the statement that organic food is known as better controlled and produced in a way that makes product possess better sensorial characteristics, such as taste, smell, etc. Safety based on the idea that organic food is produced in a way that it does not contain any harmful elements which can have a bad influence on consumer's health. Ethics is connected to the notion of environmentally and animal-friendly techniques of productions applied when doing it organically. And, finally, value for money measures consumer's willingness to pay the additional price for organic food which is known to be usually more expensive in comparison to conventional food. What is more organic food is believed to be more beneficial for consumers and benefit could be considered as an additional measurement of trust. Consequently, by estimating the level of consumer's agreement or disagreement with these statements it is possible to estimate the level of their trust in organic food as long as it demonstrates their confidence in their expectations will be fulfilled.

Nevertheless, this list could be also complimented by one more criterion which is the time. Some authors state that trust is much influenced by the time an actor is familiar with one whom he trusts. Thus, Sztompka (1992, 72) writes that "the better and longer we are acquainted with somebody <...> the greater our readiness to trust". V. Buskens (2002, 13) supports his argumentation and states that the continuity of relations is an indicator of trust. It is connected with the statement that "the more people know about the other actors, the longer they interact with the same partner, the more likely they are to establish trustworthy relations" (Khodyakov, 2007, 122). In the case of organic food consumption, it could be suggested that the longer person purchases the products of this kind the more trust he gives to these items. In this regard, time could be considered as one more measurement of consumer trust in organic food due to the fact that the longer one purchase organic food the more confident he becomes.

*Trust on the organic food market: institutional and network approaches*

In the previous sections, the general understanding of trust and the structure of trust relations were considered. Moreover, the definition and the ways of trust in organic food on the basis of general interpretation of trust in food were defined. However, the object of our research is the market for organic food and that is why it is necessary to look at how trust is formatted under the conditions of market interactions and how it could be applied to the problems of organic food market. It goes without saying that under the conditions of uncertainty which accompany any market transactions there is a strong need in possible risks calculations. Once the problem of choice becomes the core element of interaction, the rules and mechanisms of trusting have to be worked out (Veselov et. al, 2016, 79). It is a common knowledge that markets in the real world are not perfect, as was claimed by neoclassical economic theory and there is no such notion as perfect information (Furlong, 1996). The information among market actors is distributed unequally and that is why modern markets are abundant on possibilities for dishonest behavior. However, it is hardly possible for any market to exist without a certain level of trust among its actors. In this case, trust moves to the forefront as the possible way of solving the information asymmetry problem. However, the way trust is formatted on markets depends on how market is understood. In this regards, different sociological approaches to market analysis were developed and presented by representatives, mostly, of economic sociology. It seems possible to apply these approaches to the organic food market.

First of all, it is necessary to say that as N. Luhmann (1988, 98) writes: “trust is only required if a bad outcome would make you regret your action”. Under these circumstances the crucial problem which arises on the food market and especially on the organic food market, where goods are usually given more value in comparison with conventional food, is the lack of sufficient information concerning all relevant aspects of the situation, which include the process of production, processing, delivering and selling a product. And “this requires the individual, at the very minimum, to engage in various processes of information acquisition and integration” (Earle and Cvetkovich, 1995, 28). Other authors (U. Kjærnes, 2007) also highlight the importance of information and communication regarding food issues. “Food consumption involves a much greater variety of aspects in our dealings with food as individuals and households, not only from acquisition through cooking to eating and clearing the way but also in exchange of information and knowledge” (Ibid. 26). Thus, before buying different food items a consumer should possess at least some information about what he is going to purchase. Speaking about organic food it turns out that a consumer could never know if a product is really

organic or not unless he is told so. That is why the way market is organized influences where and how consumers can receive this information.

To begin with, it is necessary to say that for a long time new institutional approach based on the new institutional economic theory was one of the most influential in market studies. The core idea of this theory is that market relations do not come down only to direct interactions but also include some supra-individual constructions, which go with any market transaction (Radaev, 2008). Specifically, these constructions are in the focus of attention for the adherents of neo-institutionalism, for whom market appears as a complex of various institutions (Ibid.). It appears that market is not an institution-free beginning (Hodgson, 1998, 182). In its initial understanding institutions are construed as the rules of behavior in everyday life and the ways of their maintaining, or as D. North describes them “institutions are the rules of the game in a society; more formally, they are the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction” (North, 1990, 5). The rules themselves are understood as regulatory principles backed by legal or social norms, which either allow some type of market exchange as possible and preferable or forbid it as undesirable (Radaev, 2008). In this way, institutes save costs for searching an option needed, propose ready schemes of actions, allow to make a choice and predict actions of other actors (Ibid.). In the light of this approach market is an institution itself due to the fact that it involves social norms, customs, instituted exchange relations, and information networks (Hodgson, 1998).

Notably, this approach, in comparison to neoclassical theory, makes an assumption of incomplete and asymmetric distribution of information impeding a commitment of various deals (Radaev, 2008). The common problem in this concept is the one of uncertainty, which arises as a result of that very information incompleteness and its asymmetric distribution. To put it in simple words, actors in a situation of market interactions do not rush to provide counterparties with all available information. Usually, people do not see the point to permanently and intentionally deceive others, but at the same time, they often tend to ration carefully and precisely the amount of information which they give to them. There is no need to cheat; it's enough to give information in a way that is profitable for a speaker and to set accents correctly (Veselov, 2011, 51).

This phenomenon is commonly understood as opportunism and describes a situation when actors in market interactions tend to use information which is not known by others for their own purposes (Ibid.). This is the crucial factor when taking into account the problem of trust as long trust becomes the only way to solve this problem of uncertainty and make interactions

happen. According to new institutional approach, institutions tend to provide necessary information for individuals and thereby enable individuals to act (Hodgson, 1998). Institutional arrangements consider being a mechanism of filling the information gap between actors on the market. Moreover, it is argued that institutional arrangements make it too costly to be engaged in malfeasance (Veselov et.al, 2016). However, there is an opinion that in this case trust is not required for market functioning due to the fact that institutions themselves functionally substitute trust relations; there is no need for trust because institutes almost fully reduce uncertainty (Ibid.).

Thus, some authors provide examples of institutions which appeared on different markets to solve the problem of information inequality. More general illustration of this phenomenon was proposed by John Keynes (1978) who writes that even if trust is necessary in the economic world, it is trust of economic actors toward government and not to each other. Coleman (1990) goes along with his argumentations and emphasizes that, for example, in the process of money exchange between the actors, while money is one of the basic instruments on the market, there is also a government who legitimize money as a payment means. One could hardly argue that government is not an institution in this case, who set the rules for money transferring. However, the most famous example is the one from G. Akerlof (1970), who states that 4 basic institutions arose to counteract the effects of quality uncertainty on the market, which are guarantees, brand-name, chains and licensing. Each of them gives actors some information which allows them to decide whether to give trust and make an exchange or refrain from it.

A number of studies were conducted to prove the importance of institutions in the reduction of information asymmetry and trust formation in food and in organic food in particular. Thus U. Kjærnes, et.al (2007) who also underlines the importance of institutional arrangements when having problems of food safety and quality; they specifically emphasize the role of public authorities, politicians, and experts in this regard. Supporting this view, Lassoued and Hobbs (2014) determine food systems (i.e. government and media) and brands as the major institutions which consumers rely on in the food market in the situation of food quality uncertainty, with special attention to the role of certification and labeling concerning environmentally friendly food items. Some studies (Anisimova, 2014; Temperini et. al, 2017) also highlight that brand communication could enhance consumer trust in organic food, while other researchers (Mueller & Gaus, 2015) underline the role of media as an influential factor concerning consumer trust in organic. At the same time, a number of studies (Petljak, 2012; Janssen & Hamm, 2011; Janssen

& Hamm, 2010; Rong-Da, 2016) revealed that labeling systems and logos are major instruments of consumer's protection from fraud on the market.

Nevertheless, in this case, it is assumed that there should be some degree of trust because institutional arrangements alone cannot keep down fraud and force (Akerlof, 1970; Arrow, 1969), moreover institutions do not always provide all the necessary information for a consumer to be totally confident in a specific product characteristics (Daugbjerg et. al, 2014). The brightest example of such insecurity is the cases of mislabeling (Giannakas, 2002, Müller & Gaus, 2015, Zanoli, 2004) or production rules violations by big and famous companies ([http://www.dp.ru/a/2016/02/24/Pishha\\_dlja\\_ubitkov](http://www.dp.ru/a/2016/02/24/Pishha_dlja_ubitkov)). As a result, institutions provide necessary but not sufficient reason for granting trust in market relations. And it is exactly the time where network approach moves to the forefront.

Network approach sees markets not as a complex of various institutions, what Granovetter (1992) calls “undersocialized” concept, but rather as a plexus of social networks when the latter are understood as a set of stable relations between market actors (Radaev, 2008). However, it doesn't deny the existence of institutions on the market but networks turn to be the key element, defining the market structure. M. Granovetter is known to be the progenitor of this approach, as well as his teacher H. White. Nevertheless, such scientist as R.Burt, W. Baker, and others also contributed significantly to the development of the theory. Along with such authors as G. Krippner (2001) and J. Lie (1992) M. Granovetter (1992) formulates the main assumption of the approach which is as follows: market actors, being engaged in a voluntary market exchanges, are more likely to establish relations with those with whom they have already dealt earlier and ensured in their reliability (Ibid. 32). It basically means that market participant orients towards personal reciprocal trust, when ensured counterparties are prioritized for casual one (Ibid.). It shows that following this approach market do not consist of atomized independent actors, striving for their profit maximization, but rather penetrated with social networks consist of different market agents.

It is known that regarding a trust problem a special concept was developed by representatives of this approach (Granovetter, 1992). Instead of “undersocialized” and “oversocialized” understanding of trust, he proposes to understand trust in terms of “embeddedness” (Veselov et.al, 2016). He argues that under the conditions of information asymmetry, market agents seek to look for trusted sources to get information or to give recommendations about how to implement transactions (Ibid.). It means that to overcome

uncertainty and reduce risks, market participants try to transform market in a network of social relations. Thus, Granovetter (1992, 61) states that personal information is much more effective than general information, firstly, because it is cheaper and, secondly, it is more detailed. Moreover, it is more significant as a sort of information to be trusted, different from one overlaid with social context (Ibid.). It is especially highlighted that social networks may also come to have more importance when institutional trust fails (Guseva and Rona-Tas, 2001; Völker and Flap, 2001); when people are generally distrustful of institutional regulations the only option remains is to search for much more accurate and personal forms of interactions, with fewer imbalances in power and information and more emphasis on mutual dependency (Kjærnes, 1999). Thus, referring to the issues of trust in food, U. Kjærnes and her co-authors (2007, 34) provide an example of local food shop, where “relationship between shopkeeper and customer are built on a range of mutual obligations based on personal knowledge, experience, and local knowledge”. However, it also can take plays when considering long-distance traditional distribution systems in the case of fish supply (Dulsrud, 2002).

It is possible to conclude that a social network of personalized economic relations carries strong expectations of trust and abstention from opportunism (Ibid.). It basically means that the lack of important information on the market is compensated by personal interaction which could be considered as trustworthy sources of necessary information. According to V. Buskens (1999, 5) “trust can emerge and can be stabilized in interdependent relations through the social context of the relationships; this social context of trustors provides them with information through which they can learn, whether a trustor is expected to be trustworthy”.

Thus, it goes without saying that consumers also get information from those people who make the same choices concerning food consumption or, in other words, other organic food consumers. It could be stated that these actions are explained by the fact that people are more likely to trust each other if they have a lot in common (Khodyakov, 2007). In our case, other organic food consumers are the more reliable source of information because they have the same interest. It is possible to say these ties fill the gap in information shortages and could be considered as the base for consumer’s trust formation. However, it is necessary to make a clarification here and point that if other consumer gave a recommendation to another consumer, it is his subjective opinion (Jøsang et. al, 2006). To put it in other words “if somebody, or some institution, is known to be trusted by others – and especially “significant others”, the people

whose judgment I treat seriously – I am ready to imitate trust and consider the target trustworthy without considering any other cues” (Sztompka, 1999, 73).

Generally, it might be that under the conditions of previous relationships absence, as for example, when a person commit the first act of buying organic product, the trustworthiness of potential trustee depends on two factors, which are the image of intermediaries that the trustor relies on for obtaining information about trustees (Coleman, 1990; Levi, 1998) or the trustworthiness of institutions that back up trustees (Hardin, 1996). As Khodyakov (2007) puts it the creation of trust is significantly facilitated when the trustor refers to a well-known and trustworthy intermediary about trustee. In our case intermediaries that connect consumers with organic food are other consumers and producers themselves, while institutions that support organic food production are labeling, brand name, mass media, and advertisement. However, it is not always the case that intermediaries, who were mentioned before, are well-known to a consumer. And that is why it could be named as “thin interpersonal trust”, which is formed by interacting with people whom we do not know well (Khodyakov, 2007).

Considering food market, it is possible to say that except for already mentioned before institutions it also comprises a range of actors who permanently interact with each other. Thus as the key players in the organic food market, for example, consumers, producers, and retailers could be mentioned. However, network interactions that occur here are rather diversified. Thus, it could be interactions among producers only, among producers and retailers, retailers and other distributors, and so on. Thus, some studies demonstrate that communication between consumers and retailers along with their direct communication with producers plays a significant role in the process of trust formation (Zanoli, 2004; Hunt, 2007; U. Kjærnes, 2007; Schneider, 2009; Lassoued & Hobbs, 2014). At the same time, the problem of consumer-consumer interactions on the market and especially in the organic food market still remains underexplored. There are some studies about influence of consumer networks on food consumption, which show that consumers also depend on relational trust in person networks when provisioning food on daily basis (Halkier, 2001; Woolley & Fishbach, 2016; Sawka et. al, 2015; Hughey, 2016; Pachucki et. al, 2011; U. Kjærnes, 2007). Nevertheless, when it comes to organic food, a lack of studies concerning consumer interactions in the market should be mentioned. The only research demonstrates the importance of personal information when dealing with uncertainty problem in the food market is the one conducted by Rim Lassoued and Jill E. Hobbs (2014), who eliminated that consumers tend to trust other consumers, especially those from their social circle, in terms of

food credence qualities. Moreover, they highlight the increasing role of social networking media as a source of information and means of communication about food (Ibid.). That is why this paper aims to fill current gap about the influence of consumer communication in the process of trust formation in the organic food market.

Thus, as it was defined earlier organic food is food produced by environmentally - and animal friendly techniques, which allow to preserve natural resources and biodiversity; as consequence associated with naturalness and freshness; which are undergone minimal, careful, and sustainable processing what in turn guarantee its higher nutritional value, positive affect on consumer's health and characterized by better sensory attributes. According to this definition and on the base of the most common reasons for buying organic food it could be stated that for a product to be called organic it should correspond 5 basic requirements connected with safety, nutrition, quality, ethics and value for money. Moreover, preferably but not necessary it can carry ecological label. That is why it is possible to state that consumer trust is based on their expectation about a product to correspond these criteria. And to be aware of the fact that a product possesses these qualities consumers need to refer to different sources of information whether it is their personal contacts or some institutions.

To sum up it is possible to say that according to those views, prevailing in sociological thought regarding trust, the latter could be understood both as sensual and rational phenomenon, which combines both elements of calculation and belief and which is necessary for the situations of uncertainty caused by human actions. People can't trust food directly, but instead trust those who provide them information about products that they buy. To be more precise, trust on the organic food market is a bet about future fulfillment of consumer's expectation concerning product to be organic under the conditions of uncertainty caused by other market agents and asymmetrical distribution of information, based on knowledge about organic origin of a product provided by those actors who are believed to give the truthful and reliable information in these terms.

That is why talking about trust on the market it is important to take into account how market is organized in order to understand how the process of information distribution is going on and in this regards neo-institutional and network approach could be reasonably implied to the organic food market, where both institutional arrangements and personal communication could be considered as the base for consumer trust formation as they are known to be the sources of information about organic origin of food. More than that the question of how could the level of



consumer trust in organic food measured was investigated and following criteria distinguished: nutrition, quality, safety, ethics, value for money and the duration of consumption. This is due to the fact that exactly these parameters are could show if consumers are sure that products correspond the main qualities prescribed to them as being organic, what means that they are of truly organic origin.

To conclude, it is necessary to say that this part of the work was to reveal theoretical and methodological foundations of the research. First of all, the general concept of organic food based on three major approaches found in current literature on the topic was made. It was stated that definition of organic food, either it is based on process-oriented, agro-ecological or product quality-oriented approach, builds on the opposition between conventional and organic product. Under these circumstances, organic food, in general, could be understood as products produced by environmentally- and animal-friendly techniques, which allow to preserve natural resources and biodiversity; as consequence associated with naturalness and freshness; which are undergone minimal, careful, and sustainable processing what in turn guarantee their higher nutritional value, positive effect on consumer's health and characterized by better sensory attributes. Secondly, analysis of organic production, processing, distribution and labeling in Russia and Germany as well as media coverage of the topic were analyzed to investigate the question of national peculiarities of this concept understanding among Russian and German consumers. It was revealed that understanding of the organic food concept varies significantly within Russian and German consumers mostly due to the differences in legislative regulations and unlike media coverage of the topic. Thus, Russian consumers perceive organic food mostly as beneficial for themselves, while German buyers connect organic food with a sustainable development and preservation of environment. And finally, general definition of trust was done and later specified with the example of organic food. We define trust in organic food as a consumer's bet that a product will fulfill expectations they have on it as being truly organic. Moreover, basic criteria for trust in organic food measurement, such as time of consumption, quality, safety, nutrition, ethics and value for money, were distinguished. And finally, as trust within market for organic food is considered, two basic approaches to defining grounds for trust on the market – institutional and network – were described. The first one stated that information from various market institutions provide necessary information and fill the gap in the lack of important knowledge for consumer, while the second one explains the process of consumer trust formation as based on information received from personal interactions. In other words, consumers tend to

receive information about organic origin of a product either by means of ecological labeling, certification; brand name; advertisement and Mass Media or by means of their communication with other organic food consumers. All in all, the basis for further empirical research, which results are presented in Chapter 2, was laid in this part.

## **Chapter 2. Building trust on the organic food market: comparative analysis of Russian and German cases**

The aim of this part is to discuss the choice of data type as well as the methods of data collection, interpretation and analysis; to outline the challenges of the research; and provide the clear overview of the research findings. Thus, first of all, the logic of sampling for online survey and semi-structures interviews is explained; the choice of media sources for qualitative analysis is justified; the current legislative base is briefly discusses; methods of data analysis are reasoned and problems of gaining access to the field and limitations of the study are presented. Then, the analysis of results obtained from Russian and German cases are analysed in comparative perspective with their connection to theoretical concepts discussed in the previous chapter. Finally, general conclusions and suggestions for further investigation are proposed.

### **1. Methods and data collection**

The aim of this paragraph is to discuss the choice of data as well as methods of data collection, interpretation and analysis; to outline challenges that were faced in the implementation of the methodology; and to provide a clear overview the research aims and outcomes. In order to describe the reasons lying behind the choice of the methodology, it is necessary to specify the tasks of the empirical research as it was stated in the research program provided in the Appendix I. The first task was to define how the concept of organic food is understood by Russian and German consumers as well as to know their reason for buying these products. The second task was to find out what is the initial source of information consumers get to receive the very first knowledge about organic food. The third task was to understand what the decisive factor is for consumers when making the decision about purchasing an organic item. The next task was to detect what are the major sources of information consumers used to pay attention the most when buying an organic item and to test if there are dependencies between these sources and consumer's level of trust. Along with the tasks mentioned it was necessary to distinguish the main differences in national legislation on organic food in Russian and Germany; and to analyse the differences in media coverage of the topic in both countries mentioned.

According to the aims of the study, it was decided to stick to the mixed methodology of data collection and analysis, which includes both qualitative and quantitative methods. It allows giving the full picture of the analysed object. While quantitative techniques allow providing the clear measurement of chosen categories, which are the level of trust and the importance of information sources, it is hardly possible to know what the real grounds behind these numbers

are, and in this case, qualitative techniques were used as an explanatory and sustaining tool. Thus, the data collection was performed by means of an online survey and semi-structured interviews. It is possible to familiarize with the questionnaire and the interview guide in Appendixes II and III correspondingly. It was important for the aim of the study to collect strictly defined information to support the results obtained from the online survey; however, and at the same time it was necessary to collect some in-depth knowledge about the topic and that's why semi-structured interviews were chosen as the supportive tool in the research. It could be mentioned that in some cases respondents went beyond the posed questions and provided additional information, which turned out to be also valuable for the aims of the research and was extremely useful when interpreting the results of the survey. In addition to these methods, qualitative analysis of texts was also implemented during the research when laws and regulations along with media content were examined.

Apparently, Russian and German cases, analysed in this paper, have substantial differences ranging from the understanding of what organic food is and motives for purchasing this kind of commodities to the whole process of organic food market development and the general process of trust formation in modern society. At the same time, two cases have significant similarities. These days organic food is constantly becoming increasingly popular both among Russian and German consumers despite a range of difficulties markets for organic food face in both countries. At the same time, consumer trust has a great role in the process of market development as long as the problem of asymmetric information accompanies both of the cases considered here. Moreover, organic food both is commonly accepted as a credence good due to the fact that it is hardly possible to identify if a product really organic or not even after the process of consumption. It means that both in Russian and Germany consumers could found themselves in rather vulnerable positions because they are not able to recognize that a product is organic unless they are told so. They need to base their trust on the information received about the environmental purity of food. This information could be transmitted in different ways, both through institutional arrangements (labelling, brand name, mass media, advertisement, etc.) and personal interactions (communication between consumers).

Due to the fact that it is rather hard for a single researcher to make an investigation analysing two national markets as a whole and cover all organic food consumers in both countries, which number is even difficult to estimate, the decision was made to focus attention on Russian and German organic food systems, which include two specialized organic food stores

and private controlling bodies from each side. Denn's in Bielefeld, Alnatura in Dusseldorf and Organica and Biogarmonica in St. Petersburg were taken as the objects. All of them specialize in organic food sales, offering a quite similar assortment of goods with eco-labels such as Demeter, EU Organic Bio, Bio-Siegel, Bioland. Organica and national Russian logo called Vitality Leaf. All the shops mentioned are considered to be nationwide suppliers, which are rather active on the Internet. They run official websites and also have web pages in Facebook and Vkontakte (only for Russian case). This, in turn, facilitates the access to the target population of our online survey and provides the possibility for the analysis of information circulated within the customers of these stores. At the same time, Bioland in Germany and the Ecological Union in Russia are both private controlling bodies which provide services for organic certification and possess their own eco-label. They implement their own standards which are based on the national legislation. They also have their own web pages in social networks what significantly facilitates access to the target audience. What is more, the research was oriented toward ecologically conscious consumers and analysing these particular object allowing cover those people who consume organic food intentionally and to avoid occasional buyers. As for investigation institutional basis, both governmental and private rules for organic food were analysed. As well as nationwide newspapers and news portals available online in the English language were considered to show how Mass Media influence consumer's perception of organic food.

The research was conducted from the 1st of February till the 31st of March. The pure random sample for online survey was composed of 81 consumers in Russia and 85 in Germany. The link to the questionnaire was published on the pages of earlier mentioned shops and organizations on Facebook and Vkontakte; and those who were willing to participate filled it in. The sample for structured interviews was formatted by snowball technique and include participant of those groups as well with some exceptions. Interviews were conducted both face to face and distantly. Face to face interviews were recorded using a mobile phone voice recorder. Some respondents filled in the list of open questions that was sent by e-mail and then were communicated via messages to make necessary clarifications. In general 6 consumers from Germany and Russia correspondingly were interviewed. Information about respondents is presented in Appendix IV; as well as examples of interview transcripts are shows in Appendixes V and VI.

Furthermore, for the aims of the research following regulations were analysed: European Union law on organic production (Council Regulation No 834/2007/EC of 28 June 2007 on

organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation № 2092/91/EEC; Commission regulation (EC) №889/2008 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation № 834/2007; Commission regulation № 271/2010); German law on organic production (The Organic Farming Act - ÖLG); Bioland Standards; Demeter Standards; GOST P 56104-2014 on organic food products: terms and definitions; GOST P- 56508-2015 on organic products: rules of production, storage and transportation; GOST P 57022-2016 on organic production and the procedure of voluntary certification of organic production; and Vitality Leaf standards. Concerning mass media content the following resources were considered: The Local DE, Bild, Taz.archiv, Spiegel и Deutsche Welle in Germany; Gazeta.ru, Arguments and Facts, Komsomolskaya Pravda, Izvestia, RIA news and Rossiya 24 in Russia. Articles regarding organic food in these publications were analyzed for different techniques, rhetoric, and instruments which are used to cover the topic.

Analysis of the collected data was made by means of Excel and Atlas software packages. Excel Analysis ToolPak was used to make a statistical analysis of data obtained from the online survey. This choice was made due to the familiarity with the principles of its working from the course on information technologies and methods in sociology at the University, and in general, it is handier and more convenient to use this particular software. It allows making necessary calculations, conducting correlation and regression analysis, and graphically presenting the results of the analysis. In the course of data analysis acquired from interviews, the ATLAS software package was used as long as it meets the requirements of the research and is highly recommended by numerous researchers who were also able to give advice and instructions on its usage. The process of coding which is required for Atlas analysis was rather demanding and time-consuming. The codes were created on the basis of the theoretical basis used also for the questionnaire. After that, the frequency of their appearance as well as their co-appearance were investigated and used for the description and interpretation of results.

## **2. Trust in organic food among Russian and German consumers: comparative analysis of empirical data**

### *The portrait of a typical consumer: socio-economic characteristics*

The first step in the process of analyzing the results of the survey was to understand who the typical organic food consumers in modern Russia and Germany are. It is important to say that the research was oriented toward regular organic food consumers and didn't include occasional buyers. The respondents are ecologically conscious and purchase organic food intentionally. Thus, the data on socio-economic characteristics of respondents who took part in the survey suggests that German and Russian consumers are quite similar with some slight differences. The sample is mostly composed of women (79% in Germany and 89% in Russia) at the age from 21 to 39 years (from 61% in Russia up to 84% in Germany) full time employed with higher education, and more than 50% from surveyed in both countries are married but have no children. Concerning the financial situation, the data shows that usually organic food is bought by rather wealthy people. Most respondents are from those social groups who in general have enough money but need to borrow money to buy expensive items and from those who can afford almost everything but the purchase of flat or a country house are difficult. This is surely explained by the fact that organic products are usually more expensive in comparison with conventional food and require more financial investments. The main difference between German and Russian consumers is in their places of residence. While Russian consumers are mostly concentrated in Moscow and St. Petersburg regions, German consumers are distributed significantly across the country. It could be justified by the fact that German market is more mature and people from all over the country have an access to this kind of commodities; when, at the same time, Russian market is characterized by Central and Nord-West regions as the focal for the development.

It is interesting to mention the significant difference in the time of the organic food consumption in Russia and Germany. As it is possible to see the results German consumers could be named as more mature as mostly the buy organic items for 5 and more years (51%), while for Russia this figure remains much lower and is estimated up to 3 years (63%). In fact, it is rather expectable and closely connected to the history of emergence and further development of the market which differ in both countries. It is known that Russian market for organic food is much younger than German one; Russian consumers had the opportunity to buy organic food quite recently in comparison to German consumers. It is also explained by the fact that Russian people just didn't have a need to buy these products earlier because they used to grow food in their own

gardens and special places in the countryside. However, nowadays urban citizens can hardly be able to have such places and that's why the demand for organic food is constantly growing.

Specialized organic food stores are the most popular place for buying organic food both for Germans (52%) and Russians (36%). However, the second place belongs to different options. In Germany, it is quite common to sell organic food in normal, non-specialized supermarkets and that's why 15% of consumers answered that usually buy organic food there. At the same time, Russian retail chains are not eager to offer organic food for their customers, due to their high prices, and it explains the fact that 15% of surveyed use Internet-shops to order organic products. It is also very helpful because specialized stores can be mostly found in St. Petersburg and Moscow, while other Russian cities have the lack of such shops. And the Internet remains the only available option for them to purchase organic food they want, which after that will be delivered directly to their homes. Surprisingly, sales directly from the farm are not very popular both in Germany and Russia, as well as markets. It is interesting that no single respondent from Germany chose market as the place for purchasing organic food and only 7% of Russian consumers marked this option.

It is interesting to mention that the choice of products available to consumers in Russia and Germany is different. The results of the survey allow stating that the most popular organic items in both countries are fresh vegetables and fruits, milk, cereals, meat, and eggs. However, Germans tend to choose eggs more often (65%) than Russians (33%), while tend to buy fewer cereals and fish. Nevertheless, interviewees from Russia have more complaints about the choice. It is seen from such statements as: *'I buy organic food there where it could be found, due to the limited choice of the products themselves and also shops'*; *'The choice is limited due to the prices and the lack of sufficient offers'* (R1). However, many respondents connect the problem of choice with price issues. It is known that organic food is sold with higher prices in comparison to its conventional counterparts. And this fact could be considered as the main obstacle for those people who want to follow organic diet, especially in Russia. People often refer to the fact that they would like to buy more organic but can hardly afford to because of their current financial situation: *'Organic food is much more expensive and at this stage of my life I can't afford it'* (AR); *'There are not so many people in my surroundings who but organic food purposefully because, people save money in general, they try to'* (O). Nevertheless, German consumers also mention that prices for organic food can be higher, but due to the different socio-economic situation for German consumers it's not a big problem. It could be seen from such statements as:



*'Yes, many of my co-workers and friends started buying organic, since they realized it's not really that much pricier' (N); 'the price is at least ok' (S); 'the market was cleaned up in one week, it was over and because people had to choose and it was not very more price, price was not so...much higher' (HI).* Moreover, it is possible to buy organic food not only at specialized stores but also in discounter shops what make these good even more affordable.

#### *Motives for buying organic food among Russian and German consumers*

It is a common knowledge that expectations, which organic food consumers have upon these commodities, largely depend on the motives for purchasing them. Depending on why the consumer decided to buy the product determines what he or she would finally expect from the process of its consumption. As it was defined in the first chapter trust is a bet about the future fulfillment of one's expectations in a situation of uncertainty, caused by other human's actions and underpinned by a lack of important information, based both on rational calculations and people's beliefs. Consequently, the fulfillment of these expectations upon organic food would define consumer trust in the future. If generally, these products meet consumer's expectations it could be assumed that they would be more confident in them and would more likely continue to buy them. It is also necessary to say that based on particular expectations the sources of information people tend to pay more attention could be different. Thus, for example, some sources can provide more trustworthy information about the content of a product, while some of them could better inform about the conditions of production. That's why in order to trace the grounds for consumer trust in is of crucial importance to know, why they decide to buy organic.

However, when talking about organic food, it is important to say that it is usually conferred with more value than conventional food (Vega-Zamora M., et.al. 2013). Surely, organic food differs from its usual counterparts in terms of benefits it brings not only for the consumers but also for other parties of the organic food system. Different reasons for purchasing organic food were distinguished in the literature, starting with good taste and health benefits, and ending up with rural economic development (Kolchevnikova, 2013; Gorbato, 2011; Rehder, 2015; Kilcher et al. 2011). Nevertheless, in general, they could be divided into two groups: egoistic and altruistic (Vega-Zamora M., et.al. 2013). The first one oriented to the personal benefits, the second one is more about third parties. It is reasonable to say that the results obtained from the survey support these assumptions and at the same time provide rather interesting results.

Thus, Russian and German consumers vary significantly in terms of reasons to stick to the organic diet. The data demonstrates that Russian consumers follow their personal gain when

buying organic food as long as when asking to finish the statement “I buy organic food, because...” the most popular answers were “it is healthy” (70%), “it is safe” (61%), and “it tastes good” (43%). Environmental issues are important only for 42% of respondents what could seem quite a big number. However, in comparison to the data collected from German consumers it could hardly be considered as one of the main motivation factors for Russian consumers because Germans to the same question mostly answered “I want to support local producers” (79%); “animals are treated better” (76%) and “it is produced in environmentally friendly way” (71%).

In these regards, the issues of local production deserve a special attention. For Russian consumers to buy organic food doesn't mean to support local companies, only 23% of surveyed pointed this as the reason why they buy organic food. At the same time, local production moves to the forefront in Germany. Some interviewees reported that for them organic food is mainly locally produced, and this is the way to support small, developing production, and to confront the mass production system which is not always fair and beneficial for consumers and other market agents: *‘Yes, I think that in the beginning it was that people who try to produce biological stuff, it was very difficult for them because everybody was laughing at the them, hahaha, what are they doing, and products are a little bit more expensive, though, sure, I think it was also to support these people so they can grow up’* (HI); *‘But the main reason for me to buy organic is a political one. I like the idea to support small companies and farmers. And I think by buying organic products I support fair trade and sustainable agriculture’* (S).

Nevertheless, the information obtained from interviewees makes it evident that the environmental and animal welfare not of the least importance in both countries, and not only in Germany; organic food still remains the way to preserve national resources and provide animals better treatment. This is reflected in such statements as *‘I buy organic food because I take care about my health and the health of people around me, animals, plants, and about the ecology in general’* (AR); *‘Consumption of organic food have a great role both people and for the environment. It determines the health and the quality of people's life, the existence of animals, flora, and also clean environment’* (AR); *‘It is important for me to eat safe food, which production furthermore harms the environment less’* (AP). It is also confirmed by such utterances as *‘The main reason for me in buying organic animal products are the living conditions for the animals; living conditions of the animals have always been important for me’* (A); *‘I think with the normal way we in Germany and also in other countries they are producing, for example, meat or vegetable is in a way where they destroy bios, and for me also to buy healthy food is*

*something against this way of producing things. Like, for example, with the animals, I stop eating chicken because when I saw once, many years ago, how chickens are gathered and treated and they are in big houses and one close to the other and it's a way...With antibacterial, it's not for me human way to treat animals and therefore it's this way is a political way, when I am eating healthy food'* (HI); *'It's not only for our health, I think it's also for to look what is with our environment'* (BH).

However, both Russian and German consumers appreciate the taste of organic food and its health benefits. Even if these ideas are not expressed explicitly, they still could be found in combination with some other factors that influence consumer reasons to buy organic. It is reflected in such statements as: *'They're also tastier since it's not about the price of a product, but about the quality; this is how you get watery strawberries in winter! My best friend also works in an organic store and I was surprised how tasty a boiled egg could be if it was actually organic!'* (N); *'Often, but not always organic products differ from normal products in taste and quality. Especially organic vegetables taste better than cheap vegetables which you can buy in the supermarket'* (S); *'Some friends in Germany gave me to try organic cucumbers and radish and were really much tastier and much more flavored than conventional ones'* (E); *'I buy organic food, primarily, because of its taste; it's more natural and differs to the better from the taste of conventional food, especially, meat, fish, and dairy products; and, for example, oat flakes with European label are tastier'* (O). The fact that consumers connect organic consumption with health issues is also supported by such expressions as *'I stick to the concept of healthy food and that's how my interest in organic food was born'* (E); *'I don't want harmful medicines and pesticides in big amounts to come in my body and potentially influence my health'* (O); *'For other organic products it is more important that they are more healthy as no chemical pesticides are used. As more and more people in my surroundings have serious illnesses I become more alert about that and I think there might be a connection between pesticides used and certain illnesses. Especially for my little son, I try to buy only organic food'* (A); *'My body has issues handling conventional stuff. They're healthier to me since they help my skin diseases and my digestive system'* (N).

So, as it is possible to observe, Russian and German consumers in their motivation for buying organic food are not as different as the results of the survey shows. However, some differences still can be found what allows saying that German consumers are more ecologically consciousness as long as they strive to get benefits from organic consumption not only for

themselves but for the environment, animals, and economy. Sensorial characteristics are also important but they could be named as an additional advantage. At the same time, for Russian consumers, it's vice versa. They start to buy organic food due to its better taste and health benefits, but as the times go they also understand that it could help not only them but the whole environment. One significant difference is only in economical aspect: for Russians, organic food seems to help economic development neither local nor nationwide, while Germans usually connect the development of organic productions with economic benefits.

Motivation is closely related to the way consumers understand the concept of organic food in general. It goes without saying that before starting to buy such items people tend to know something about what organic food is and why is it better to make the choice in favor of this exact foodstuff. It is interesting to mention that from the interviews it is noticeable that Russian consumers tend to use different names for organic food, including ecological, environmental, natural, farmer, etc. what in turn demonstrates that their understanding of the concept is rather vague in comparison to Germans who usually stick to the call such commodities only organic. Generally, the results of the online survey suggest that understanding of the concept do not vary significantly among Russians and Germans. Thus, consumers in both countries keep more to agro-ecological and product quality-oriented approach, because organic food is defined as produced without any chemical additives (94% in Germany and 91% in Russia). However, German consumers give the second place for the definition as produced with environmentally and animal-friendly techniques (82%), while for Russian it is more important that products do not contain any artificial additives (70%). Nevertheless for 74% of German respondents also mentioned that organic food should have natural content and 57% of Russian people marked that expect organic food to be produced in order to preserve the environment and with better treatment with animals. All in all process oriented approach doesn't seem to be popular in terms of defining organic food because not many respondents connect organic qualities of the food with its processing. Moreover, only 37% of Russian and 27% of German consumers reported that organic food is the one labeled as "organic". Consequently, it contradicts the definition of organic food given by Codex Alimentarius and IFOAM who state that organic food is the one which has the proper label.

To conclude this part it is necessary to say that one and the same understanding of the organic food concept among German and Russian consumers, based on agro-ecological and product quality-oriented approaches, leads to different motivation, which is more altruistic

among Germans and more egoistic among Russians, and consequently their expectations about the products. German consumers have more external expectations, while Russian consumers could be named as more self-oriented. That is why in order to be sure that these expectations will be fulfilled consumers could rely on different sources of information which in turn will increase or decrease their level of trust in organic food.

*The level of trust and its interrelation with the sources of information about organic food*

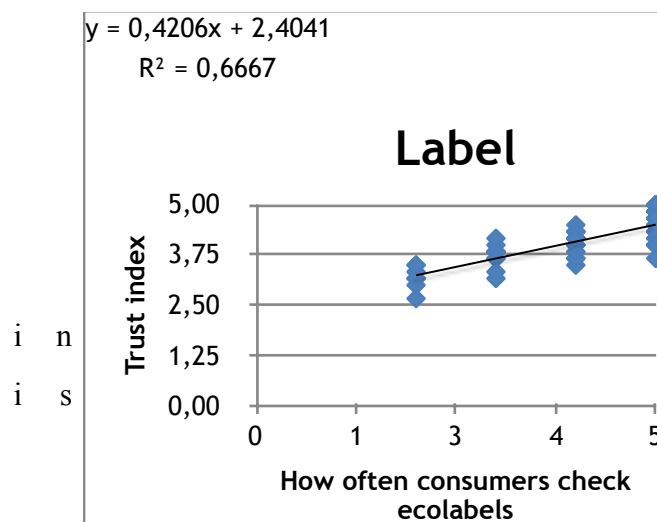
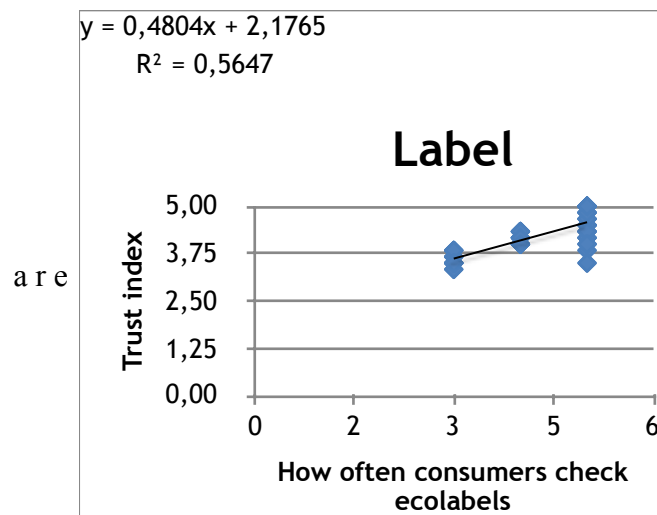
As it was stated earlier trust is the phenomenon that could hardly be measured by quantitative techniques. However, an attempt to measure the level of trust in organic food following the scheme proposed by a range of Nordic scientists (Kjærnes et. al. 2007) and which is expressed in the form of trust in organic food index was undertaken in this research. On the base of consumer's degree of agreement with the statements which reflect the difference between conventional and organic food, the general level of their trust was calculated. Depending on whether a consumer agrees that organic food is safer, tastier, contains more nutrients, healthier, less harmful for the environment and deserve to be paid more it is possible to understand to which extent expectations were met and consequently how strong is the trust. Thus the average trust in organic food among Russian and German consumers is rather high and do not differ as much as it was expected. Trust index in Russia as estimated is 4, 10, while in Germany it is 4, 29. In general, it could be defined for both as 4 and called as trust on the scale from total distrust to absolute trust. It allows to state that generally, the level of trust on the German and Russian organic food market is high. However, it is interesting to know what the grounds for trust in both countries under the conditions of a rather different market development are. Why people tend to believe that the products they buy are really organic.

As it was defined in the first chapter, on the market people tend to search for trustful sources of information on which they could rely on in terms of organic food. Nevertheless, every act of purchasing is preceded by the process of choice and the decision-making process as well. Before starting to buy organic food it is necessary to find out some initial information about these commodities which can make a future consumer interested in those products and decide to start buying it. As it turned out personal contacts, as it is highlighted in network approach, and not institutional formations are more significant to make a choice in favor of organic food. It also could be called as the premise for trust or initial trust impulse in words of P. Sztompka (1992). This is what makes peoples start to buy organic food. Thus, the data suggests that 48% of

German and 57% of Russian consumers got information about organic food for the first time by the means of so-called “World of mouth” or by means of recommendations from family members, friends, acquaintances, etc.

People often refer to the fact that started to follow organic diet because someone in their surroundings also was buying such things or they heard some discussions on this topic: *‘For the first time I decided to order organic food on the Internet after I participated in the discussion on its usefulness/harmlessness for children on one of the Internet-forums’* (O); *‘People start to think about it and when you have people in your surroundings, when you see that people are buying this, it’s also one thing; I think, when we started, we lived in the community and then somebody bought this and the other one bought this and we tried together’* (HI); *‘Musli it was also one step in the beginning, I ate it when I stayed with my family and my mother, for example, she said oh it’s tasty, and I would also eat it. So, I bought it and then she also sometimes ate it’* (HI); *‘But my parents are buying organic from time to time. My flat mates in my first flat were also open-minded about organic food’* (S); *‘It is the everlasting word of mouth: someone bought, someone liked and so on and so forth’* (L). What is interesting is that Germans refer to the family as the initial source of information much more often in comparison to Russian consumers. Some of the respondents told that they buy organic food because their family members stick to buy or even produce organic food. However, social networks also play an important part in the decision-making process and a pretty big number of respondents chose exactly this source as an initial for getting information about organic with the slight preponderance on the Russian side with 37% against 16% in Germany. On this stage, thin and thick interpersonal trust moves to the forefront.

After the decision to start buying organic food is made the process of choosing begins. To considering what product to buy in order it can satisfy particular needs it is necessary to be sure that these products possess some characteristics responsible for that. As organic food is known as a credence good (Giannakas K., 2002), as long as it is not possible to define its organic characteristics before purchasing, consumers are not able to understand that a product is organic unless they are told so. There are different ways to notify that some item is organic. One can understand it on the base of labels, content, advertisement, personal pieces of advice, etc. But the most important is what sources consumers believe to be trustworthy in these terms. Thus, non-commercial partnership “Ecological Union” conducted a survey among ecologically oriented consumers during the international exhibitions “Wellness Expo” which took place in September 2015 in Moscow concerning the problem of trust in information about organic food. The results



show that specialized mass media, information about content, ecolabels, and information from friends and acquaintances the most reliable sources of information during the choosing process.

It is also supported by the results obtained from our survey. Correlation and regression analysis was carried out between two variables: trust in organic food index as the dependent variable and the frequency of paying attention to particular sources of information about organic food as independent one. The results show that both Russian and in Germany high level of trust positively correlated with the label as the information source consumers tend to pay attention more often when choosing a

product. The rank correlation coefficient R for Russian data is 0, 82 and for Germans, it is 0, 75 what shows really strong dependencies between the analyzed variables. Moreover, it could be stated that the more often consumers check the presence of a label the higher level of trust they have. It is possible to observe this on the figure 1 “The dependencies between ecological labels and trust in Russia” and the figure 2 “The dependencies between ecological label and trust in Germany”. In this case, labels could be reasonably considered as a trustworthy source of information about organic qualities of a product.

*Figure 1. The dependencies between ecological labels and trust in*

#### ecological labels and trust in

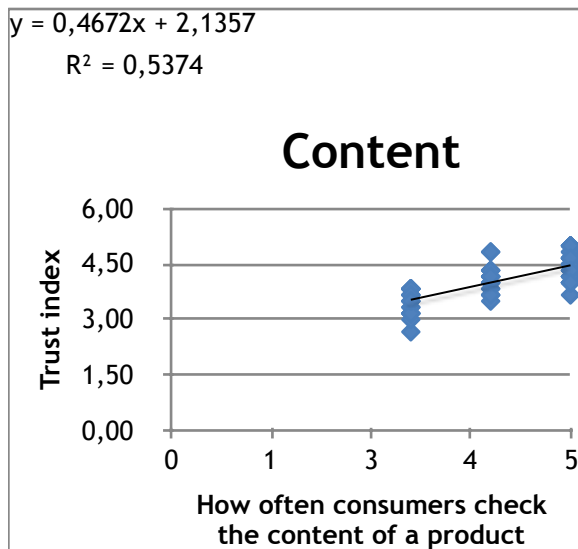
These results are also supported by the following statements of interviewees who quite often recall labels as the base for their trust in organic food: *'I know that there is a lot of forgeries and that fair and organic products have different standards, but it is very time-consuming to compare everything and so I mostly rely on the labels'* (A); *'It is very important that they have labels, if it's controlled, it force produce to respect some laws'* (HI); *'I can't remember I bought food I considered organic without an organic label. That is because even on the weekend markets organic food is labeled'* (S); *'I do trust only labeled production. I monitor ecolabels and pay attention to the green washing'* (R1); *'It is possible to identify whether a product is organic or not on the base of appropriate ecolabeling from verified certification bodies; I can be confident that the product is really organic only in case it has a confirming ecolabel and better several of them'* (AR); *'If there is a certificate or label it is easier to trust than there is not'* (O). However, it is interesting to mention that Russian consumers name the same labels; they usually pay attention to, as German consumers and they are mostly European labels, for example, Demeter, Bioland, and EU organic label (Euroleaf). However, they also refer to Nordic Swan from Finland, what German consumers never do, because they mostly stick to their own national labels, like BIO-Siegel, for example. Similarly, Russian consumers also recalled the only internationally recognized Russian organic label "Vitality Leaf" as a trustworthy one.



However, as it was revealed from interviews not only the presence or the absence of label matters but what stays behind these signs. It means that those products that are marked with these labels are controlled according to the rules of organic production and consequently are able to meet consumer expectations. It is reflected in such statements as: *'It is very important that they have labels, if it's controlled, it force produce to respect some laws'* (BH); *'But there are organizations, like Demeter or Bioland that strictly regulate it, those products. They do test them so that consumer does have some level of assurance that at least what one is buying has been tested according to those specific standards'* (HI); *'I can suppose though that they have to meet some requirements to have the right to put the label on'* (S); *'If there is no ecolabel, one can't state that the product is organic because control is needed on all the stages of production'* (AR). Basically, it means, that under the conditions of inability to check the production process by them, consumers ground their trust in organic food on a label and thereby trust certification bodies who issue these labels, because they guarantee that the product was produced in accordance with particular organic requirements. It is also interesting to mention that German respondents mentioned private standards as even more strict than national one and tend to rely on private ecological labels, which are Demeter and Bioland, more than on governmental ones. In contrast, for Russian consumers, this characteristic of a label doesn't play such a big role due to the absence of official national labels.

What is more, in terms of foreign labels, they do not distinguish whether it is a private or governmental one. It's just important to have any internationally recognized label. To conclude, it is also necessary to say that respondents were also asked about the level of their agreement with the statement that the products they usually buy are of a truly organic origin. Further, the correlation between this variable as the dependent one and label as information source were analyzed. Coefficient of correlation both for Russian and Germany is pretty high 0, 37 and 0, 39 correspondingly. This allows to state that labels could be considered to be relied on by consumers.

Surprisingly, strong positive correlation between the level of trust in organic food among Russian consumers and information about the content was revealed during the analysis. The rank correlation coefficient  $R$  for these variables is 0, 73 and regression analysis proves that respondents who more often tend to look at information about the content. This can be observed in the figure 3 "The dependencies between information about content and trust in Russia".



*Figure 3. The dependencies between information about content and trust in*

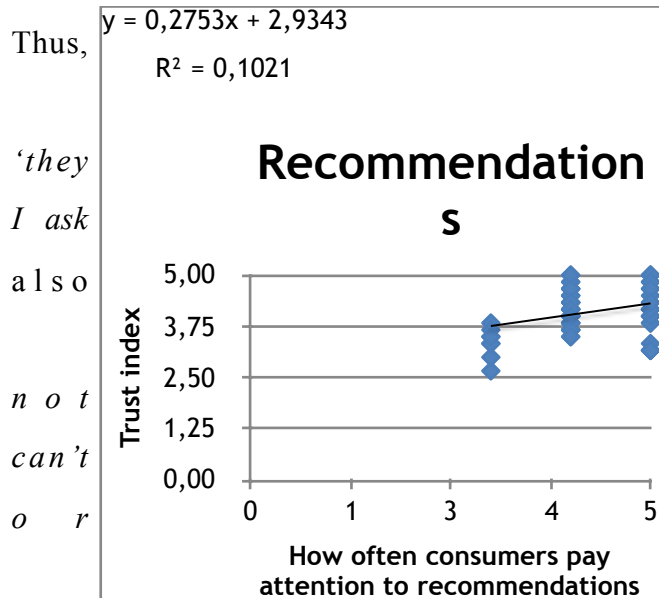
On the contrary, information about the content does not play such a significant role for German consumers as hardly any correlation between two variables could be found. The correlation coefficient value is 0, 05 what means that these variable are not interdependent. Moreover, during the interviews, no one referred to the content of a product as something that influences the decisions about buying organic food. At the same time, many of Russian consumers report that content is one of the few guarantees they can rely on in terms of a product being organic: *'In case if there is no equivalent item with ecolabel, I make my choice based upon the content; I read the content and choose the most natural'* (R1); *'It is possible to distinguish organic products by the presence of ecological labels issued by verified certification bodies, and it is necessary to read the content on a product's packaging'* (AR); *'Carefully read the content'* (M); *'It is also possible to look at the expiry date, content, and the region of production'* (O).

It could be the case that Russian consumers tend to rely on the content because they usually define organic products as those which do not contain any harmful additives in them and to look at the content is the simplest way to check if a product is pure with no chemicals inside. At the same time Germans understand the concept of organic food slightly different as it is important that during the process of its production and processing no harm is done to nature or animals; more than that buying organic food is the way to support local producers and develop nation economy in general. That is why other sources on information instead of the content are used by German consumers to check whether a product is really organic.

The same difference appears to be regarding recommendation as the information source about organic food during the process of choosing. As it turned out, people in Russia tend to rely on recommendations more than German consumers in the processing of choosing organic

products. Additionally, it could be stated that the level of their trust is positively related to getting these recommendations. It is based on the fact that the correlation coefficient on the Russian data is 0,32. This could be observed in the figure 4 “The dependencies between recommendations and trust index in Russia”. It shows weak correlation but it still takes place in comparison to

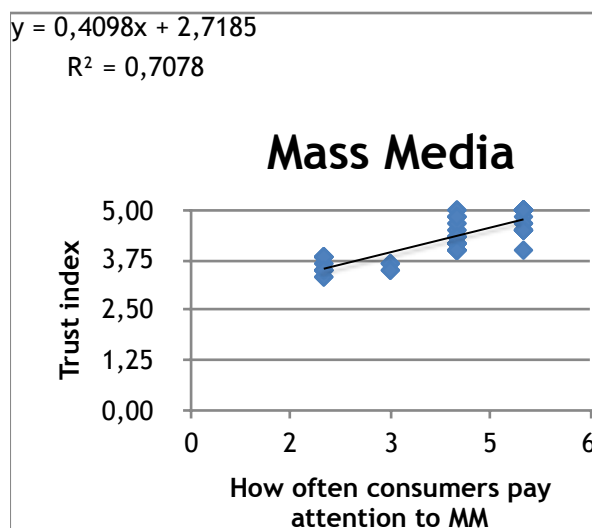
Germany where this indicator is just 0,01.



*certain standards' (A); 'I have some friends, one friend particularly, who is really into organic stuff. Doing a lot of shopping at organic markets. Something like that pays a lot of value' (S); 'It depends on whom I receive information. There are some people I know, which have read a lot about these topics, that is why I trust them' (S); 'There are such people in my surroundings, Basically they are my friends – doctors' (L); 'I trust my friends because exactly they work at "Ecological Union". I have educational background in ecology and communicate with the right people, that's why I trust them more' (R1); 'Luckily, I have a friend who works at the Ecological Union, she gave me a lot of information in this field' (AR); 'In my surrounding it's me to whom people usually ask for advice, because of my professional activity' (M).*

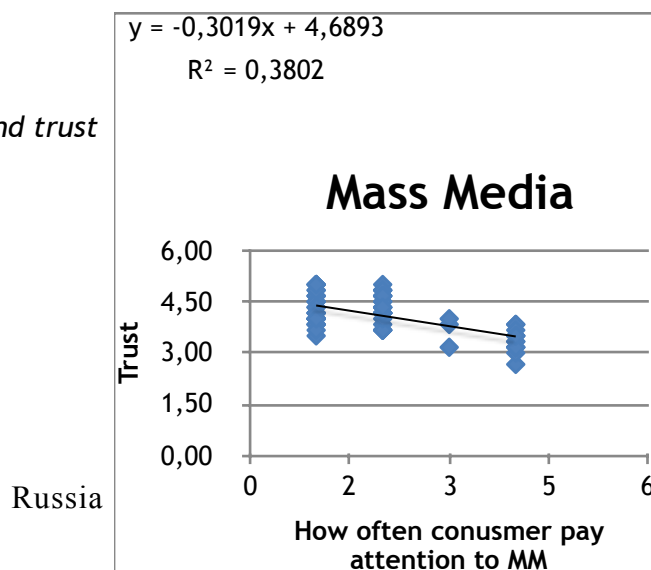
Orientation towards recommendations among Russian consumers is also supported by the fact that 66% of respondents reported about their participation in some communities in social networks, while only 22% of Germans say so. However, it is important to mention that these communities are also rather specialized in the topic. Following communities were announced by interviewees: the official group of the "Ecological Union", eco blog ImOrganic, Ecolavka in Vkontakte, and Lookbio in Instagram. Also, pages of particular producers and shops were also mentioned by some respondents. Nevertheless, a big role of online communication for Russian consumers could be based on the fact that 36% of respondents when facing some problems with or questions about organic food would ask for advice from other consumers online, while only 25% of German consumers would do so. However, the most popular answer to this question in both countries was to ask other consumers personally: 40% in both countries would do so. At the same time, German people tend to contact directly producers more often than Russian consumers: 35% and 21% correspondingly.

Talking about recommendations as the factor that influences consumer trusts in organic food it is also necessary to keep in mind the motives for buying such commodities. As it was revealed Russian consumer usually purchase organic food follow egoistic motives, including better sensorial characteristics and the influence it has on health. In this case it is rather justified to seek for advice from other consumer when they can report about their experiences connected with organic food consumption. However, German consumers could hardly obtain some valuable information about organic food from other consumers because they have the same access to the production and processing process and do not possess more information about how these processes are going on: whether it corresponds to the rules for organic production or not.



What is more remarkable, Mass Media turned out to have quite a big influence on consumer's level of trust but in a different way in Russia and Germany. When talking about German consumers it is necessary to say that information they obtain from Mass Media has a strong positive correlation with their level of trust. Thus the correlation

coefficient between these two variables is 0, 84 what could be considered as a strong dependence. Particularly consumers who pay attention to the information from Mass Media have a higher level of trust in organic food what could be observed on the figure 5 "The dependencies between Mass Media and trust in Germany".



Conversely, information from Mass Media in has a strong negative correlation with consumer's trust. People who tend to pay

attention to Mass Media more often have lower trust in organic food. It could be seen on the figure 6 "The dependence between Mass Media and trust in Russia". The correlation coefficient is negative and it is -0, 62 what is still could be interpreted as a strong connection. It is important to mention that interviews refer to Mass Media and its coverage of the organic food topic very rare. Only one or two respondents mentioned these issues in their speeches.

Finally, when it comes to the very process of purchasing people both in Germany and in Russia based their choice on the content of a product. 52% of German respondents and 54% of Russian respondents named information about the content on the packaging of the product as the decisive factor in the choice of organic products.

To conclude, it is necessary to say that if consider consumption of organic food as a process the following stages can be distinguished in terms of trust formation: 1) inducement to start buying organic food; 2) choosing of an organic product; and 3) the very purchasing of an organic item. As it was stated at the beginning different factors (which are recommendations from other consumers, information about the content, labels, brands, mass media, and advertisement) influence consumer trust in organic products. However, as it was revealed during the research, their influence strongly depends on the stage of the consumption process. Thus, recommendations of other people serve as the initial trust impulse both in Germany and Russia on the first stage and in this sense thick and thin interpersonal trust take place at the very beginning; labels play the most important role during the process of choosing in both countries what makes institutional trust crucial at this stage, and, finally, the last step is determined by information about content on the packaging what, in turn, could be also considered as institutional trust. Thus, the process of consumer trust formation on the Russian and German market in general is similar: from an interpersonal trust, it is late transforming into institutional trust. In this way trust in other consumers and institutions transit into trust in organic food.

However, some differences could be still observed between Russian and German cases. Thus, it possible to see that during the stage of choosing a product Russian consumers tend to base their trust on the information about the content of a product more in comparison to German consumers. Moreover, during this stage Russian consumers still pay attention to recommendations from other consumers, while for German consumers this factor is important only at the very first stage. It was also figured out that labels play a big role during the process of choosing, but it is interesting that European labels with no regards to the issuing country are the

most popular among Russian consumers, while German buyers usually take into consideration mostly their own national German organic food signs. What is more mass media as one of the most influential factors during the first two stages plays opposite role in Germany and Russia. If in Germany it underpins the process of organic food production and increase the level of trust, in Russian it vice versa makes consumers more suspicious and decrease their trust level. However, due to the fact that labels and mass media have the strongest influence on consumer trust it was decided to make further analysis of organic production legislation and mass media coverage of the topic in Germany and Russia. The results are presented in the next paragraphs.

### **3. Organic food issues in Russian and German mass media**

As it is possible to observe from the results of the survey and interviews mass media has a significant influence on the trust consumers give to organic food in both countries. However, while in Germany it is positively correlated with the level of trust, conversely in Russian these variables are negatively connected. Mass media decrease the level of trust in organic food among Russian consumers, while at the same time increase it among German consumers. In order to understand why it is so, the investigation into the media coverage of the organic food topic was made. The main aim of this analysis was to understand what are the main rhetoric, techniques, and instruments that are used by media to cover the issues connected with the organic production and what in general these issues are. As the object of analysis, the range of federal nationwide non-specialized sources was taken from both sides. As well as some specialized editions as well.

Usually, mass media is used by different market actors for different purposes: manufacturers and retailers use these sources to inform consumers about organic food in general and products they supply in particular; representatives of ecological movements may use it to attract attention to some certain ecological problems; and the media itself might use this topic to attract bigger target audiences and rating upgrade if they see that those issues are interesting for the spectators or readers. That is why it is important to say that mass media plays a significant role in the process of consumer trust formation; it overall has an influence on their perceptions and decisions about environmental food. In fact, media can play into hands, both producer and consumer by covering different aspects of the same issue. It is reasonable to state that buyers could receive missing knowledge about organic food by means of media, while producers use it to provide favorable for them information. But, generally, the information distributed via newspapers, magazines or TV, especially connected with some scandals, could be evaluated as shaping consumer's perceptions of organic products (McCluskey & Swinnen, 2011; Kendall, 2011).

In these regards the mass media could be considered as one of the communication channels whereby interaction between producers, consumers and other stakeholders is going on. Moreover, the way this topic is reported highly depends on the country. In order to investigate the question of how organic food is presented in Russian and German mass media various sources, such as newspapers, news portals, and specialized websites were analyzed. As it was revealed at the beginning of the analysis, the topic of organic food is not covered by lots of periodicals and they are mostly federal nationwide sources, and quite rare it is a local media.



That is why the decision was made to compare how this issue is presented in nationwide Russian and German mass media sources which are available online. The choice was made on the base of articles that could be found in following sources by using key words related to the topic of organic food, such as “organic food”; “organic productions”; “ecological products”; “organic standards”; “sustainable development”; “green economy”, etc. To be more precise the following sources were considered: The Local DE, Bild, Taz.archiv, Spiegel newspapers, and news portal Deutsche Welle in Germany; and Gazeta.ru, Arguments and Facts, Komsomolskaya Pravda, Izvestia newspapers, news portals RIA news and Rossiya 24 in Russia were analyzed. As the situation regarding organic production and selling regulations is slightly different in the two countries, it is necessary to examine what are instruments, techniques, and rhetoric that used to cover the topic and who are the major actors of this particular discourse in both countries. So, we are going to show how German and Russian media does frame organic food as an issue and what instruments do they use for this purpose.

It could be easily noticed that agenda-setting theory which emphasizes that mass media have a strong influence on public discourse by selecting and promoting certain topics as worth discussing is widely used both by Russian and German media. Clearly, stimulating the public’s emotional response, concern and awareness is the main goal for the majority of media agents (Mc. Combs, 2003). One of the founding fathers of this approach M.E. Mc. Combs (2003, 41) highlights: “The power of the news media to set a nation’s agenda, to focus public attention on a few key public issues, is an immense and well-documented influence”. Agenda setting refers to the idea that there is a strong correlation between the emphasis that mass media place on certain issues and the importance attributed to these issues by mass audiences (Mc. Combs & Shaw, 1972). According to this theory, it is possible to state that the mass media is not just a passive transmitter of current issues. It rather produces social reality; create pictures in the minds of spectators. The news media are a primary source of those pictures in our heads about the larger world of public affairs, the world that for most citizens is “out of reach, out of sight, out of mind” (Mc. Combs, 2003). This is why it is possible to state the mass media coverage create some kind of a picture of organic production in minds of the audience it brings this topic to the public discussions.

Actually, it means that quite a lot of information people know about the current state of affairs is what the media provide for them. It is especially true about organic food production. The news could be reasonably named as a powerful tool in setting certain issues about organic

because an average consumer has a little possibility to have an inside view in the process of organic farming. Thus media are free in choosing those themes which could attract more attention from the public in order to gain personal benefits. But in the circumstances of scarce information mass media remains one of the few possible ways to obtain data about ecologically clean food. In this regard, it is especially important for it to stay impartial. But in fact, it is rarely the case, because it is always desirable to draw the attention of the public by focusing on sensational issues and dramatic events where equity is hardly possible. In fact, we have to do with the public agenda setting, when mass media decides which topics would be further become a topic for discussions.

However, environmental food has a different level of popularity within German and Russian mass media, agenda-setting volumes are much higher in Germany than in Russia. This conclusion is justified by the evidence that a number of articles devoted to the topic of organic food are considerably bigger if searching in German media sources than when reading Russian ones. It could be estimated that the difference in the number of articles in all analyzed sources is about 2 times bigger for Germany in comparison to Russia. Overall, around 15 articles from Russian sources, and around 25 were found in German media. All articles were published from 2015 to 2017 year.

So, it could be mentioned that the topic appears in different Russian sources just occasionally, while in German media organic food is discussed on more or less regular base. It could be explained by the level of organic food market development, which is the way better in Germany. Due to the fact that Germany represents one of the biggest markets for organic food in Europe (<https://germanfoods.org/german-food-facts/german-organic-foods/>), the number of consumers is reasonably bigger here; that is why German media could expect more responses from the audience and, consequently, could make more profit. On the contrary, in Russia, the market share for organic food remains rather small ([http://sozrf.ru/rost\\_2013/](http://sozrf.ru/rost_2013/)) and the number of organic diet followers is also not very big, that is why the potential target audience is comparatively small. However, the issues of organic production in both countries are covered mostly by rather influential nationwide media sources, as for example, national newspapers Spiegel or Izvestia.

Nevertheless, except for agenda-setting techniques, mass media is known for using framing as a significantly different approach. If the former just brings the issues of organic food into the public arena as such, framing is used to emphasize some specific features of the subject.

That is why, the way issue is covered could influence on how it is understood by audiences (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). As it is known, frames are cultural structures that serve for better understanding of social reality. They are commonly used to determine what content is more relevant to a discussion; to define the roles of stakeholders, to outline relevant beliefs, actions, and values; to determine the language used to discuss the topic; and to outline the values and goals of the content area (Meyers & Chodil, 2011). It could be considered as a form of second-level agenda-setting – mass media not only tell the audience what to think about (agenda-setting theory) but also how to think about that issue.

In that case, the results of analysis demonstrate that the debates around organic food in both countries usually concentrated on a range of topics, which could be categorized as follows: comparison between conventional and organic food in terms of production specifics and impact they have on consumers; the question of organic food identification by consumers on the shelves among conventional products; economic benefits caused by organic production and organic market development; issues connected with organic food import from other countries; regulations and laws about organic food production. Surely, within these broad categories, different aspects are highlighted. However, one common feature for both types of media coverage is that this kind of food is described in the whole range of names, which are “organic”, “bio”, “ecological”, and “natural”. There is no one strictly defined term for organic products. But one distinctive feature of German media is that they usually assimilate all these terms to the notion of “local”, while in Russia it is usually opposed to the notion of “natural” food.

As for the comparison between conventional and organic food production both Russian and German media base their articles mostly on the rhetoric of health, taste, nutrition, environmental and animal friendliness. Nevertheless, articles which unveil organic food as beneficial for people (Tihmeneva, 2015; Timashova, 2013; Korobitsina, 2014; Bild, 2017; Berger, 2017 ) stay equally with those which introduce it like a myth and consequently try to demolish it (The local DE, 2010; Bild, 2016; Vesti.ru, 2013; Insider.pro, 2016). Usually, in the first case, articles reproduce organic food and its production as one that helps people stay healthier and satisfy their demands for good taste; have a good impact on the environment, treat animals better. Thus it could be named “justification” framing. The second approach could be named as “revelation” framing because it is used to present organic products as not possessing these unique traits; it emphasizes that all the benefits are just formed by concerned bodies and in reality do not exist. Interestingly the main actors of such a discourse are scientists. Intensive

referencing to multifarious studies of organic food demonstrates skeptical about the advantages of such food both for health and for the land.

This implies that the rhetoric of regulation and control is one of the commonly used topics by media as well. However, this kind of rhetoric is used totally different by German and Russia media services. Thus, in Russia, the lack of official regulations is usually in the focus of attention with some articles devoted to the upcoming approval of official laws and normative standards. Absence of certification, rules, and regulations makes people feel unsure about the trustworthiness of organic food producers, what prevents them from active buying; but still some media agents look in the future by highlighting the process of regulations development to make market continue developing (Vesti.ru, 2013; Mishina, 2012; Falyahov, 2012). At the same time, in Germany, the subject of discussions not the absence of regulations, because they already exist, but their tightening; and sometimes comparison between governmental and private regulations as the latter are usually stricter (Maurin, 2016; Bild, 2017). It, on the contrary, leads to people's confidence in the organic food market, it makes them feel sure that the products they buy are controlled and really have those qualities they should possess. What is closely connected to this issue is the problem of ecological food identification on the supermarket's shelves what is discussed in quite a few articles. It is interesting to say that Russian media highlight external characteristics of a product, such as not long time of a storage and information about the ingredients as the best way to understand if the product is really organic, or in other words, it is self-checking (Plotnikova, 2016; Timashova, 2013; Kukartseva, 2012). On the contrary, German media usually writes about labels as the most trustworthy source of information about the organic origin of a product (Berger, 2017; Bild, 2017).

Economic benefits caused by organic food market development are the common topic that could be found in both countries. If German media constantly report about current goods and cash turnover increasing on the organic food market, what definitely make local economy stronger (Bild, 2017), than Russian media stresses attention more on the future benefits that could be achieved by the fast development of the market, what will allow Russian producers to enter global market and ensure better competition along with the real monetary gain (Falyahov, 2012; RIA news, 2012). However, import is still an exhilarating question for both. As can be expected the problem of third parties import invading local German market is widely discussed both in terms of the unfair competition, and the lack of necessary regulations corresponding (The Bild, 2017; taz.archiv, 2017). Conversely, in Russia import is more presented as the threat from

Europe: the lack of local labels and lack of consumer trust make distributors sell imported goods from Europe, which are known to be well-checked and have organic logos (Korobitsina, 2014; Lalakina, 2014).

And finally, the rhetoric of reasoning is used to describe the most popular reasons to buy organic food. It becomes clear that in Russia egoistic motives are prevailing; people buy organic because of its better taste, health benefits, nutritive qualities and even sometimes because it is fashionable (Kukartseva, 2012; Vesti.ru, 2013). German consumers, in contrast, often buy this kind of commodities to help preserve resources and the environment in general, to protect animals and to support the local economy (The Bild, 2017). However, speaking about economic issues, Russian mass media pretty often uses, so called, the framing of “pricing” as long as it tries to justify higher prices for organic food, while German media do not pay so much attention to the issue of prices. However notable is that the actors of this particular discourse are farmers themselves, especially those with economic education. Obviously, it is explained by the fact that in Russian the price level for organic food in comparison to the conventional one is a way higher than in Germany (Korobitsina, 2014). In general, Russian media coverage of organic food is built on permanent comparison with European countries, including Germany, as the role model. Their organic food markets are usually represented as better controlled and trustful.

Thus the next type of popular framing is a “fraud” framing. This type is common both for Russian and German media agents. It is necessary to mention that focus is made mainly on sensational issues of low complexity and high possibility for dramatic events. So, when an incident of deceit occurs, it could be a good chance for newsmakers. A very famous incident has happened in 2011 when a handful of Italian firms sold conventionally produced food products under an organic label (Deutsche Welle, 2011). Although the fraud took place outside Germany it was a hot-button issue for a period of time. But relatively soon it was forgotten till the new scandal emerged. This time the problem was related to the local production and appeared when German farmers were accused of selling their eggs as organic while crowding their chickens at illegal levels (Ibid.). It entailed a big public response, but after a while focus of attention was shifted to other topics. It is important to illustrate the fact that an issue of organic food is not a long-term but rather timeliness and attract more attention when something unusual happens. In Russia “the framing of fraud” is commonly used regarding ecolabels. As there is no official body for certification a number of producers resort to the private labeling and controlling systems. In fact, this issue is currently discussed on the Internet because these private firms work in their

own way and nobody can guarantee their honesty and valid estimate (<http://lavkagazeta.com/otvetstvennost/podderzhi-mestnogo-fermera-0>; Vesti.ru, 2013).

Up to now, we have only considered non-specializing mass media resources. But it is impossible to come by the existence of organic product-oriented sources. Thus, in Russia, there is a specializing printed media “LavkaLavka newspaper” which is fully devoted to the topic of organic farming. It was established by a farmer cooperative LavkaLavka in order to provide trustful and truthful information about the current state of affairs in Eco production. It surely could be rather impartial because the main stakeholders are farmers themselves and it is important for them to make organic food popular and highly sought. Sometimes in their article “revealing framing” could be seen, but it is used positively, authors say that in spite of those myths organic food could have a really good impact on people’s health, environment and so on (<http://lavkagazeta.com/ekologiya/organicheskaya-eda-mify-i-realnost>). The main emphasis is made on the lack of true knowledge among consumers, but not on the organic food itself.

Besides this, producers of organic food are also the actors of the discourse. Communication between them and consumers is going on the base of the websites which belong to the particular producers. Commonly used framing, in this case, is a “utility” framing. Producers tend to aggrandize their commodities in order to gain more profit. These sources should be treated cautiously because authors use to conceal unacceptable information and bring to the forefront only positive issues (<http://econet.ru/articles/2913-organicheskie-produkty-pitaniya>; <http://gyrlyanda.ru/news.php>). Another example of specialized mass media source is LookBio magazine (<http://lookbio.ru/>) which main aim is ecological enlightenment. They provide people with useful information which would help them to distinguish truly organic products from forgery: how internationally accepted ecological labels look like, how can one differentiate greenwashing from official declarations, and so on.

Germany is not an exception in this regard. Thus, some specializing websites concentrate on organic food could be found (<http://www.organic-europe.net/country-info/germany/news.html>). However, what was mentioned by a number of interviewees, German consumers tend to pay attention to the very local specialized media, such as magazines and leaflets which are possible to be taken at the shops. It could be the case that these sources emphasize only good qualities of organic food as long as they are not impartial. And, moreover, they are aimed at ecological education of consumers; they usually provide information about labels, places of purchasing, etc.

To conclude, it is evident that Russian and German media usually follow the same rhetoric to represent the topics of organic food. However, framing differs in some aspects. Thus, according to the results of analysis, we could say that in both countries organic food could be presented simultaneously both as possessing unique features and as not having them. However, in regards to regulation, difference, economic benefits and reasoning rhetoric German and Russian media differs a lot. That is why it is reasonable to say that Russian consumers tend to be more suspicious about organic food and understand it differently from German consumers, who tend to receive more positive information about organic food and perceive it equally safely as usual food products. Consequently, German consumers tend to understand organic food as the way to preserve the environment, natural resources and treat animals in a better way; the way to support local economy if being protected from the import invasion; identifiable with the ecolabels based on permanently tightening of the organic production regulations. On the contrary, Russian consumers is known to understand organic food as more tastier and useful for the health and because of this more expensive in comparison to conventional food; the way to develop local economy since national standards allow producers to enter global market and decrease the level of import from Europe; the products which could be identified only by self-checking due to the absence of national ecological label and certification. However, consumers in both countries are aware of the possible fraud and decision cases, what make them have less confidence in organic food. In general, mass media usually emphasize all the disadvantages of the Russian market and make consumer suspicious about organic food what brakes market from further development by undermining consumer trust. In contrast, German media usually emphasizes more positive things about organic food and that's what makes people trust in them more.

#### **4. The impact of governmental and private standards on building trust on the organic food market in Russia and Germany**

As it was revealed from the results of the online survey and interviews conducted with organic food consumers in Russian and Germany they tend to base their trust in it on the base of the label which can be found on a product. However, it is also important to mention that not just the label but what is behind it: laws, norms and regulations and their compliance matter the most. It is necessary for a produce to comply with these norms in order to put the label on an item and if there is the label it means that this production was checked and the product is really organic. Nevertheless, despite the common ground defined by the guidelines of Codex Alimentarius and IFOAM, which are voluntary, national legislation in terms of organic production and labeling differs significantly between Russian and Germany. This part is devoted to the analysis of current legislative base for organic food and aim at revealing similarities and differences between them in order to understand why both Russian and German consumers tend to rely on labels while choosing an organic product.

##### *Governmental standards for organic production in Russian and Germany*

As we have mentioned before, there is a common base for defining the notion of organic product both for Russia and Germany. “The Codex Alimentarius” and “The IFOAM norms” contains basic guidelines for member countries, including those analyzed in this work, in case they would like to approve the production of organic food as a separate kind of food industry. It is so called “standards for standards” as they tend to guide governments and private certification organizations in the process of rules setting. However, it is just voluntary in nature and delegates a wide range of responsibilities to local authorities.

First of all, it is of crucial importance that German sector of organic food production is regulated much well than in Russia. The evidence proves that on German market it is possible to find three types of regulations which were developed at different levels. These regulations are European Union law on organic production which is common for all EU state members (Council Regulation No 834/2007/EC of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation № 2092/91/EEC; Commission regulation (EC) №889/2008 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation № 834/2007; Commission regulation № 271/2010); German law on organic production (The Organic Farming Act - ÖLG) and private standards approved by the largest organic-food association in Germany – Bioland together with some private organizations rendering services of ecological labeling, as



Demeter, for example. At the same time the documents that set out rules for organic production in Russian Federation on the governmental level are GOST P 56104-2014 on organic food products: terms and definitions; GOST P- 56508-2015 on organic products: rules of production, storage and transportation; GOST P 57022-2016 on organic production and the procedure of voluntary certification of organic production; and the standards for organic production, processing and labelling developed by non-commercial partnership “Ecological Union” in St. Petersburg as a private initiative. In comparison to German regulations, Russian ones are not obligatory for all and could be implemented optionally by producers. It shows that in Russia any product could be labeled as organic even if doesn’t meet the requirements of organic production what makes Russian consumers more vulnerable to fraud and deception in comparison to German buyers. Moreover, it doesn’t guarantee the common understanding of the concept among Russian and German consumers even with the main aim pursued by all listed regulations, which is to sustain effective functioning of the market, guarantee fair competition, and ensure consumer confidence and protecting their interests.

To begin with, the Council Regulations, as the basic regulatory tool for organic production in Germany, were developed by the European Parliament and the Council in cooperation with the Regulatory Committee on organic production, comprising representatives of all EU countries and a Commission representative as chairperson ([https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/eu-policy/eu-legislation/regulatory-committee\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/eu-policy/eu-legislation/regulatory-committee_en)). But in fact it does not propose the definition of organic food explicitly but states that “processed food should be labeled as organic only where all or almost all the ingredients of agricultural origin are organic” and “organic means coming from or related to organic production” (Council Regulation No 834/2007/EC, 2, 4).

With regard to Russian organic production legislation, it is necessary to mention that GOST P 56104-2014 “On organic food products: terms and definitions” was developed by the division of Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation which is National Fund for Protection of Consumer’s Rights. These organizations have nothing to do neither with agriculture in general nor with organic production in particular, what allows to state that organic production regulation in Russia is not perceived as something special as it takes place in Germany. At the same time GOST P- 56508-2015 “On organic products: rules of production, storage, and transportation” in contrast, was developed by the Committee of State Duma on agriculture questions, what makes it more detailed and concrete. The latter also proposed a rather

broad definition of organic products, which is as follows: “natural or processed product made from plant or animal raw material, grown in the zones for organic agriculture, and also forest, bee-, and fish products, grown, produced, processed, certified, labeled, stored and traded in accordance with the rules of organic production, for the purpose of further consumption in processed or not processed type” (GOST P 56104-2014). It is stated the documents was developed in keeping with basic guidelines of “Codex Alimentarius”; “IFOAM norms” and EU Council regulations, what ensure the common understanding of organic product in Russia and Germany.

Generally, GOSTs represent the same points as the European Regulations; the requirements converge with each other because of the common ground wrote in Codex Alimentarius and IFOAM norms. Nevertheless, there is a notion about labeling which tells that product could only be labeled organic if it corresponds to the requirements of the GOST, but there is no any notion about who should carry out responsibilities of controlling and checking farms to the consistency those rules and what kind of label should be used. However, GOST P 57022-2016 “On organic production and the procedure of voluntary certification of organic production” reveals the procedure of organic certification for those bodies who are responsible for the realization of this activity. But what is notable, till now, there is no any official governmental authority responsible for ecological labeling (<http://www.ecocluster.ru/monitoring/?ID=13728>). It allows saying that even with the approval of organic production legislation in Russia people still remain unaware of whether product organic or not because of the absence of any label issued by controlling body. In this case product could be labeled as organic in producer’s sole discretion; moreover, any notion of the organic or biological origin of a product could be used.

It is important to highlight that European regulations, on the contrary, prohibit the usage of terms that indicate organic food in relation to the non-organic product throughout the community and independently of the language (Ibid. 3). The implementation of EU-label is obligatory for the organic product since 1 July 2010 along with the indication of the place where the agricultural raw material was farmed; it basically means that any really organic product should be labeled, but only in case it contains more than 95% ingredients of organic agricultural origin (Ibid.). What is more “the organic logo of the EU shall only be used if the product concerned as produced in accordance with the requirements of Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 and its implementing regulations or Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 and the requirements of this

Regulation” (Commission regulation №271/2010). As for Russian producers, organic certification is not compulsory, there is no officially approved logo or certificate, moreover, and there is no one common certification and controlling authority (GOST P 57022-2016).

However, the obligation to control and evaluate farms for consistency organic production rules remains with special controlling bodies, which are not clearly defined in both documents, and any case of mislabeling should be immediately communicated between controlling bodies in case of European regulations, but not the case when concerning Russian law (Commission regulation №271/2010; GOST P 57022-2016). What is more, a special platform which is called “The Anti-Fraud Initiative” was created among European countries to protect the market from fraud (<http://www.organic-integrity.org/>). Its aims are “to analyze fraud cases, to raise awareness for the problems and to improve the processes where relevant” (IFOAM, 23). In return, Commission should be informed about the names and addresses of competent authorities (Ibid. 21). Any case of fraud is considered as the punishable offense. As reported by German Federal Ministry of Food and agriculture: “Violations of the EU legislation governing organic farming are liable to one-year imprisonment or a fine of up to € 30,000. This applies especially to the fraudulent use of indications referring to organic production methods in the labeling and advertising of organic products” (BMEL).

This is not the case on the Russian market. Organic products are not included in the list of food products that must be obligatory certified (<http://www.rospromtest.ru/content.php?id=14>). It means that even with the implementation of governmental regulations there is still a high risk of fraud. Those producers who label their products as organic even if they do not meet the requirements written in the GOST are not the subject of punishment. The only penalty that could be implemented in accordance with the regulations is the certificate termination for those who already have one. Nor fees or imprisonment are mentioned as measures against rules violators (<https://www.inventech.ru/lib/pravo/pravo-0221/>). Surely, the violations of governmental regulations, in general, are subject to civil, administrative and criminal liability, but still, organic certification is voluntary there are no legal ways to restrain producers from misleading consumers.

It could be a little bit complicated in the case of European regulations as they should counteract with local laws. In Russian, no cases were documented about attempts of local governments to implement any rules for organic production. However, European Council regulations by no means prevent the implementation of local regulations, which could be even

stricter than European regulations, but should not contradict with them. It follows that already mentioned “Organic farming act” was created with the aim to increase the effective implementation of the EU legislation governing organic farming, particularly in Germany. It serves to clarify and supplement the changes in EU legislation in the area of organic farming along with the strengthening the inspection system in organic farming ([http://www.bmel.de/EN/Agriculture/SustainableLandUse/\\_Texte/OrganicFarmingInGermany.html#doc381512bodyText9](http://www.bmel.de/EN/Agriculture/SustainableLandUse/_Texte/OrganicFarmingInGermany.html#doc381512bodyText9)). These changes are concerned with the publication of records and certificates of organic companies that are subject to the organic inspection system (Ibid). However, it doesn’t propose any certificates or logos to be received by producers. The main content of this document is the allowance to delegate specific inspection tasks to the inspection bodies operating in the respective Land, what transfer the controlling tasks to even more local level; it is also allowed to delegate sovereign tasks to the private inspection bodies (Ibid.). So, the main field of regulation by the Act is the delegation of controlling authorities to the third parties.

Speaking about labeling and national standards, as it was mentioned earlier, In Russian Federation there is no common ecological sign. Conversely, on the base of Council regulations, every interested manufacturer could receive EU-logo, which looks like a leaf made of 12 stars on the light green background (Commission regulation №271/2010, 21). Another biological label which is widely spread all over Germany is Bio-Siegel. While EU-Logo is a compulsory label for organic food in Europe, including Germany, Bio-Siegel is a national German organic production logo that may be used on a voluntary basis ([http://www.bmel.de/EN/Agriculture/SustainableLandUse/\\_Texte/OrganicFarmingInGermany.html#doc381512bodyText9](http://www.bmel.de/EN/Agriculture/SustainableLandUse/_Texte/OrganicFarmingInGermany.html#doc381512bodyText9)). In order to receive Bio-Siegel logo, production must meet the requirements stated in EU council regulations analyzed above. This basically means that “the products are manufactured and controlled in accordance with the requirements of the EU legislation governing organic farming; as the Bio-Siegel is based on the EU legislation governing organic farming, it is fully subject to its inspection provisions” (Ibid.). The authority responsible for this logo issuance is Federal Office for Agriculture and Food (<http://www.ble.de/>). There are a number of local ecological labels as well, for example, BIOlokal, Lippequalitaet or Senne Original from Nordrhein-Westphalen region.

All in all, the Council Regulations and German Organic Farming Act along with Russian governmental regulations are based on Codex Alimentarius and IFOAM norms in many aspects.

It indicates the implementation of international guidelines for local standards to ensure the common base for organic food concept understanding and controlling of the production process. Nevertheless, those regulations do not identify an organic product with organic labeling as the Codex does, but mostly define organic food as connected to the organic production and further provide the detailed description of organic production rules following the same order as the Codex and IFOAM rules. In general, they ensure the respect for natural system and cycles. “Biological and mechanical production processes and land-related production should be used to achieve sustainability, without having recourse to genetically modified organisms” ([https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/eu-policy/eu-legislation/brief-overview\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/eu-policy/eu-legislation/brief-overview_en)).

Moreover, the preferential is given to the closed cycle's system, where internal inputs and resources are used instead of open cycles based on external resources (Ibid.) However, if there is no possibility to use only internal resources, external one should be: organic materials from other organic farms; natural substances; materials obtained naturally, or mineral fertilizers with low solubility; and when synthetic resources are inevitable they should be included in the list of allowance in the annexes to the council regulations (Ibid.). To summarize, the new regulation and the EU organic logo have made some significant progress in achieving “clarity for consumers throughout the Community market” (Recital 24 of Regulation (EC) No 834/2007), and in promoting “a harmonized concept of organic production” (Recital 28 of Regulation (EC) No 834/2007).

One more important issue covered by regulations is import. The Codex Alimentarius subscribe some guidelines for the organization of organic products trade with other countries in comparison with IFOAM norms where the lack of such issues is noticeable. Nevertheless, European regulations take import as a more serious issue in comparison to Russian rules. Thus, in European regulations the whole title VI, Articles 32-33 are devoted to the topic of trade with third countries and the details of this process are covered: how, from what countries, under what circumstances imported goods could be allowed to enter a local market (Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007). In comparison, Russian GOSTs do not present any rules about the process of organic goods import from other countries. In fact, it makes Russian market flourishing with lots of imported products which are hardly possible to check. That is why import of organic food is a subject for general food import regulations implied on the food market.

#### *Private regulatory initiatives in Russia and Germany*

Till now we were considering only official standards but it is also necessary to look at the private standards concerning organic food production both in Russia and Germany as they play a similar role in the process of controlling the organic market in both countries. It is reasonable to say that they are usually stricter than governmental regulations what makes them more trustworthy for consumers. For instance, one of the most famous private certification and controlling regulations in Germany were approved by organic food association Bioland. It is known to be the leading association for organic farming in Germany united more than 6300 farmers, gardeners, beekeepers and winegrowers producers corresponding Bioland standards (<http://www.bioland.de/ueber-uns/about-us.html>). It promotes organic production as the one in balance with nature, supporting biodiversity and environment and climate protection for the better future of humankind (Ibid.). Based on IFOAM norms it claims to bear social responsibility by establishing sustainable jobs (Ibid.). Along with social development, it pursues the aim of sustainable economic development by creating a positive image of organic agriculture for young people and sustaining fair prices inside the partnership (Ibid.). Those who are working under the requirements of Bioland carry their label. As can be expected, requirements of Bioland are more firm than those approved by EU-legislation. There could be found a number of differences, for example, according to Bioland standards 100% of the farm must be based on organic food production, while EU regulations allow organic and traditional food production within the same household; a number of animals kept on the farms are lower according to Bioland norms; product certified by Bioland logo must contain 100% organic ingredients, while the EU-regulations allow labeling product organic when it contains at least 95% of organic ingredients (Council Regulation No 834/2007/EC; Bioland Standards).

One more private organization establishing ecological standards of organic production, which also exceed the governmental one, for those who want to have their ecological label is Demeter which is also popular on the German organic food market today. Demeter is known as the largest certification organization for biodynamic agriculture (<http://www.demeter.net>). Their regulations are quite similar to those proposed by Bioland and set a number of rules regarding production, processing, certification, and labeling of products, including concrete requirements for the growing of fruits and vegetables; cattle keeping complimented by the social responsibility of production units. However, in contrast to other certification bodies, they propose the special requirements regarding beekeeping as a separate type of production. What is notable there is a special document which contains the rules of processing with the special notion on each kind of

item starting with fruits, vegetables, nuts, and ending with alcohol drinks, like beer and wine (demeter.net).

As for Russian private certification bodies a couple of them could be mentioned, but “Vitality Leaf” is the most famous not only in Russia but also worldwide, as the first and only internationally recognized system of voluntary environmental certification of goods, works and services which are based on their life cycle analysis (<http://ecounion.ru/en/vitality-leaf-program/>). It was developed and approved in 2001 by non-commercial partnership “Ecological Union”. The mission of the “Vitality Leaf” ecolabel, as stated by the Union, is “to assist the development of green economy in order to supply high quality of life and save the healthy environment for future generations” (Ibid.). In order to receive this label the whole controlling process of production in correspondence with rules written in the document the “Standard of organic agricultural food production and processing” should be done by special Commission. In the base of those rules again Codex Alimentarius, IFOAM norms, European regulations and current governmental standards. As in the case with Bioland, these norms are more detailed and in some aspects stricter than governmental regulations what make consumers be more aware of organic origin of a product with this particular label. One more example of private ecological certification in Russia is the program “Chistie rosi”, which is also marked with a special label, developed by non-commercial partnership “Agrosotia” on the base of the European Union Regulation № 2092/91/EEC ([http://xn--80agpxakiz4h.xn--p1ai/?page\\_id=37](http://xn--80agpxakiz4h.xn--p1ai/?page_id=37)). There were also some attempts from the side of LavkaLavka farmer’s cooperative to introduce their own standards for those farmers who want to sell their products under their trademark and it still works (<http://lavkalavka.com/expertize>). For the purpose of farm’s preparation for international certification, LavkaLavka provides the system of internal certification and labeling based on private regulations, published on the official webpage of cooperative (Ibid.).

As many of German consumers refer to the private labels when were asked about choosing between organic products these private labels are more trustworthy than governmental ones in terms of requirements for production. In order to put these label producers need to meet stricter criteria. And as it is almost impossible to counterfeit these labels German consumers tend to rely on them more than on the governmental one. The same goes for Russian consumers, but it might be the case that private organic label for them is the only available national one due to the lack of any governmental sign and because they know that this particular label “Vitality Leaf”

could hardly be faked due to the very work of this organization with which they are most personally familiar.

To summarize, it is possible to say that both in Russia and Germany there are governmental regulations of organic production, in the case of Germany both on the EU-level and national level. In general, they define an organic product as produced with correspondence to the rules of organic production, which are described in respective documents concerning every type and stage of the production chain, and not of the least importance labeled as organic. Along with governmental regulations some private standards could be found in both countries and which are usually stricter and more detailed than governmental regulations. Nevertheless, the main differences between German and Russian regulatory standards are the presence of the national organic label and controlling authority in Germany, which does not present in Russia. Moreover, the misleading of consumers by means of false labeling or absence of organic logo on organic food are punished by German law, while in Russia organic certification is fully voluntary practice and given false labels do not prosecute by the law.

To conclude, it is possible to say that German market is better organized in terms of governmental regulations in comparison to Russian one; organic production in Germany is better controlled and labels on items are considered to be always justified and trustworthy as no one would counterfeit them and use any words which can make consumer think that the product is organic while in reality, it's not because it's just unprofitable. The same goes for private labeling initiatives which are even stricter than the governmental one. The cases of forgery are severely punished, precisely, with enormous fines what makes no sense for producers to cheat. It is known that those producers who once break this law are cleaned from the market completely and have no way to come back. And it could be suggested that this very fact makes German consumers trust in their labels. It's rarely the case in Russia. Russian legislation does not presuppose any kind of punishment for groundless usage of these signs, at least for now. In turn, it might make producers free in manipulation with the signs, labels, and different kinds of the declaration on their products to make the false impression on consumers and sell their production with higher prices.

The very problem, as it was stated during the roundtable on the problem of “greenwashing” which took place on the 4th of April in the Federal Antimonopoly Service of Russia, is the lack of knowledge among Russian consumers concerning organic labeling. They should be informed about how real labels should look like and how to distinguish real signs from



self-declarations and “greenwashing”. What is more, the express survey was conducted in association with the “Ecological Union” in St. Petersburg in April 2016 which main aim was to understand the current situation on organic labeling in St. Petersburg. The results show that quite a big number of products are declared as organic and only a tiny part has internationally recognized signs of organic certification. Definitely, these declarations are hardly possible to be checked and it makes Russian consumers more vulnerable in terms of labeling. This fact in addition to the lack of Russian national ecological label makes Russian consumers still base their on labels but only on one come from Europe. It is supported by the fact that during the interviews Russian consumers usually recall European labels as they are more controlled and guarantee the organic origin of a product. To conclude it is necessary to say that Russian and German consumers tend to rely on labels because they could hardly be counterfeited but only if these labels are European both governmental and private.

Nevertheless, it is reasonable to state that the standards for organic food production, distribution and labeling could hardly be analyzed without taking into account what are the main characteristics that a product should have in order to meet consumer’s expectations and thereby support their trust. Five characteristics were defined as the basic qualities a product should possess in order to be called organic and satisfy consumer’s motives for buying it. They are safety, nutrition, quality, ethics and value for money. The fact is that without control from the third parties, whether it is a governmental body or private certification organization, it is hardly possible to identify when a product correspond these requirements or not. Moreover, the labels on a product which aim to guarantee its organic origin are always supposed to prove that those rules written in normative documents were followed by producers. Thus, European, and especially German, standards are stricter and regulate the process of organic production stricter and more detailed in comparison to Russian legislation. They describe the very tiny step of production and make consumers be sure that at the end they will get a safe product which is ready to satisfy their nutritional and sensorial needs, and, moreover, will provide them an opportunity to safe nature and contribute to the overall economic development. So, this very fact makes consumers in both countries rely on European organic food labels when choosing an organic item.



## Conclusion

In the final section of the paper, it is necessary to come back to the questions outlined throughout the thesis. A brief overview of the obtained empirical results in their connection to research findings and theoretical concepts outlined in the first chapter will be provided. Moreover, the limitations of the research will be discussed in addition to some ideas for future research.

The research seeks to provide a comparative analysis of the consumer trust in organic food formation on the German and Russia markets. The investigation is based on the theoretical framework organized around two major concepts: organic food and consumer trust. With respect to the former concept recent work demonstrates the complexity of such notion as organic food as it is based on a range of different characteristics. However, as based on the current literature three basic approaches to explaining this term could be found which are mostly based on the differences between organic and conventional food at different stages of production and consumption process. First, the process-oriented approach, which was not found as the fundamental one for consumers, emphasize that organic food should be understood as the fresh food with minimal, careful and sustainable processing what allow at the end to keep as many useful compounds in a product as possible, and also not to harm those, who take part at the processing stage. Second, the agro-ecological approach is based on the idea of organic agriculture which is based on environmentally- and animal-friendly techniques in order to preserve natural resources, such as soil, water, air, etc., as well as biodiversity. Following the rules of organic agriculture, no chemicals or only a few allowed could be used; soil should be free from pesticides and other harmful substances; production waste has to be utilized with no harm to the environment; animals should be kept under the special conditions. All in all, it means that all the stages of growing correspond to the requirements of organic production. Finally, product quality-oriented or consumer-oriented approach highlights those benefits that could be obtained from the very process of consuming organic products. It is connected with such characteristics as nutritional value, bioactive compounds, health impact, safety, and taste. The last two approaches were revealed to be the foundational for consumer understanding of organic food both in Russia and Germany. Moreover, standards defined by the Codex Alimentarius and IFOAM complement these approaches by stating that an organic product could be called organic only if it was certified and carries an ecological label on it. Based on this argumentation, generally, we define organic food as one produced by environmentally - and animal friendly

techniques, which allow to preserve natural resources and biodiversity; as a consequence associated with naturalness and freshness; which is undergone minimal, careful, and sustainable processing what in turn guarantee its higher nutritional value, positive effect on consumer health and characterized by better sensory attributes.

The second theoretical concept used in the theoretical framework for the research is consumer trust. Our definition of trust was based on two basic sociological approaches which are rational and sensual. The former one sees trust as a product of rationalization which is not groundless and inborn but based on some calculations; actors try to predict the outcomes of each other's actions based on some computations. The latter, conversely, understand trust as the element of faith; actors based their trust on feelings and beliefs that familiar things will remain stable. However, when talking about market relations and consumer trust it is necessary to say that these approaches could be implemented simultaneously and that's how the notion of critical trust appears. It means that consumers base their trust both on feelings and calculations when undertaking their actions on the market. Generally, consumer trust was defined as a bet about the future fulfillment of expectations in a situation of uncertainty, caused by other human's actions and underpinned by a lack of important information, based both on rational calculations and people's beliefs. In the case of organic food, this uncertainty connected with the fact that consumers can hardly know whether the product is really organic or not in terms that it is not always possible how it was grown and processed by the actors of the production chain and the access to this information is usually hindered. At the same time, expectations are strongly depend on consumer's definition of organic food and their motivation to buy it. In order to define the level of trust in organic food among consumers the methodology proposed by a group of Danish authors (Kjærnes et. al. 2007) was used. Thus, 5 key factors that reflect basic characteristics and consequently consumer's expectations from organic food were distinguished (safety, nutrition, quality, ethics, and value for money); on the base of consumer's level of agreement with the statements about the presence of these qualities the trust index was calculated.

However, grounds for trust could be different and on the organic food market, they strongly depend on the information sources where consumers get knowledge about ecological products. In these regards, institutional and network approach were used to compare whether personal contact or institutions are considered by consumers to be the most trustworthy sources of information about trust. In this case recommendations from other consumers were considered as personal contacts, while labels, brands, content, mass media and advertisement were defined

as institutional arrangements. In regard to these grounds for trust such categories as thin interpersonal trust, thick interpersonal trust, and institutional trust were used to describe the results. Thus, respondents were asked how often they pay attention to these different sources of information during the process of purchasing a product starts with the very decision to start. Later the dependencies between these two variables: trust level and the frequency of paying attention to different sources of information were calculated when trust index is dependent variable. The results of the survey were also complemented by structured interviews with organic food consumers.

Turning now to the empirical findings it is necessary to remind that the main research question of the thesis was: how consumer's trust in organic food is constructed on the market? And the main aim was to prove that despite numerous differences between the Russian and German organic food markets, there is a high level of trust in these products, underpinned equally by interpersonal communication between consumers and institutional regulations on both of them. The results show that consumers in both countries have high level of trust in organic food what is proved by trust in organic food indexes which are 4, 10 and 4, 29 for Russian and Germany correspondingly. On the scale from absolute distrust to absolute trust, it could be interpreted in general as trust. Moreover, it was also found out that interpersonal communication and institutional arrangements have a big influence on consumer trust in both countries. However, consumer's trust on the market is formatted gradually and is influenced by different factors on every stage which could be stated as the decision-making process, choosing process, and the very act of purchasing. That's why it is possible to view trust, not as a stable phenomenon, and it should be analyzed in the process of its formation. Nevertheless, by fulfilling the specified tasks the hypothesis formulated at the beginning were partly proved.

First of all, it was assumed that personal communication among consumers related to organic food consumption positively affects consumer's trust in these products both in Russia in Germany. This assumption was partly proved due to the fact that personal communication plays the most important role during the process of decision making both in Russia and Germany and positively correlated with the level of trust, but do not have much influence during others stages. It slightly influences only Russian consumers during the choosing process and highly depends on whom exactly they communicate with, namely, experts in the field of organic or at least those who possesses more knowledge about these matters. On the base of the survey results underpinned by the information obtained from the interviews, it is possible to state that

generally, people decide to start buying organic food and base the initial trust impulse exactly on their personal communication. Approximately half of the respondents for the first time received information about these commodities by means of so-called “Word of mouth”. It refers both to the people with whom people are known to have strong connections, for example, family members. But also connected with just other consumers, for example, those with whom consumers communicate in social networks. That’s why this stage is characterized by thick and thin interpersonal trust.

Secondly, it was presumed that institutions regulating Russian and German organic food market influence consumer’s trust in these products. This hypothesis was proved completely: institutions have strong influence on consumer’s trust and more than that they increase its level during the stages of choosing and purchasing. Importance of institutional regulations is explained by the fact that consumers are not able to recognize whether a product corresponds to the basic requirements of being organic, but controlling bodies on the base of laws and regulations are able to detect those qualities on every stage of production process. For example, whether production process is not harmful for the environment, how animals are treated, which additives a product contains. However, institutional arrangements that increase the level of trust on each stage vary. Thus, labels play the most important role during the process of choosing both for Russian and German consumers. Strong correlation between trust index and the labels was found out. Nevertheless, as it was revealed from the interviews, not just the presence of label matters but what is behind the labels, precisely, laws and regulations which regulate the process of organic production.

Moreover, it is necessary to mention the fact that European labels could hardly be counterfeited because it is unprofitable for producers to do so: punishment for these actions is rather severe. That is why when speaking about Russian market, where the lack of national legislation and national organic labels could be noticed precisely European labels are the base for trust. At the same time German consumer tend to rely on their national labels more than on their European analogs what indicates a high level of confidence on national regulating systems. In comparison to self-declarations about organic qualities made by producers on the Russian market, which are pretty often groundless, European labels are more trustworthy because they are better controlled and it allows saying that Russian consumers trust more in European controlling institutions but not in national ones. Simultaneously, German consumers also highlight the difference between governmental and private labels and tend to rely more on the

latter, because this labels usually presuppose stricter rules for production. However, the lack of trust towards national labels among Russian consumers demonstrate the absent of trust towards state controlling bodies and the national way of organic certification in general. It in turn shows pretty low level of trust towards national institutional system.

Surprisingly, it was also revealed that mass media influences consumer's trust in organic food but oppositely in Russia and Germany. As it turned out mass media serves as the trustworthy source of information and in general increases the level of trust in these products among German consumers: the more they pay attention to mass media the higher their level of trust is. It is the other way round when considering Russian consumers: strong negative correlation was found out between mass media and trust. Generally, this difference could be explained by the fact that German mass media covers the topic of organic food more often and usually focuses on positive aspects of the topic. On the contrary, organic food in Russian media is discussed only occasionally and is put in more negative light with constant emphasis on its unreasonably high prices, permanent cases of forgery, and so on. At the same time, German media often pay attention to such issues as control in the sphere of organic production, strengthening of rules and regulations.

Finally, during the last stage, namely, the very process of purchasing the most attention is paid by consumers to the information about the content that they can find on the packaging. Thus, 52% of German respondents and 54% of Russian respondents named information about the content on the packaging of the product as the decisive factor in the choice of organic products. It could be explained by the fact that some norms allow the usage of particular additives to the product, which might be unacceptable for them or have a bad impact on the health. Reasons could be different and need further investigation. However, this is also what is reasonable to call institutional trust as long as what can be written on a packaging is also controlled by corresponding legislations and regulatory bodies.

A key limitation of the research as could be stated for now is the inability to make the investigation which covers the whole markets in general. Nevertheless, even if the current study is limited by organic food systems which include only several actors of the market, it is reasonable to say that they could be applied to the whole German and Russian organic food markets in general. Even the very fact that these markets are rather different makes the results of the research rather disputable, but, nevertheless, the cases of analysis were chosen in a way to be as similar as it possible in order to cope with this problem. Moreover, some methodological

limitations should also be mentioned, such as, for example, the difficulty of trust measurement. It is known that trust is a complex phenomenon and could hardly be studied in quantitative techniques. However, the attempt undertaken in this work allows making necessary calculations in order to create the general picture of trust. Moreover, structured interviews also reduce the amount of information that could have been gathered by means of semi-structured interviews. However, investigation of trust problem by means of structured interviews help to avoid the abundance of unnecessary information connected with the specificity of the subject.

To conclude, it is important to express some ideas for future research which could be realized in further studies. It would be interesting to concentrate attention particularly on the first target of trust, namely labels and content. It could be supposed that these arrangements could be regarded also as secondary targets of trust as long as labels are issued by certification bodies and to trust in labels it is necessary to trust in these bodies. The same goes for the content as long as to trust information written on the packaging it is important to trust those who provide this information and control this process. What is more, the problem of trust in organic food was studied here from the point of consumers, while it would be great to enrich the results by researching producers and other actors of the market in order to get complete picture of the problem. In general, it is possible to say that results of the work could be considered as applicable for those who are interested in the further development of the organic food market in Russia and Germany.



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## **Appendix I Research program for empirical study**

### **I. Topicality and problem statement**

It is obvious that nowadays a market for organic food in Europe, and especially in Germany, is constantly growing (European Commission). The same trend can be also observed in Russia (Bruschi V et.al. 2015). Despite of numerous differences between German and Russian organic food markets there is one common problem which is typical for both. This is the problem of information asymmetries. Organic products are often even called credence goods because the information about the nature of the product is asymmetric: while producers know whether the product is really organic or not, in most cases the presence or absence of the organic characteristics are not detectable by consumers even after purchase and use of the product (Giannakas K., 2002). Consumers generally cannot distinguish organic products from conventional ones by their appearance or taste. More than that, it is hardly possible to say if the product organic or not even after the consumption (Schneider F., et.al. 2009). In other words buyers do not really sure if the product is organic unless they are told so. Of course, this issue is relevant for any market in general, whether it is the automobile, insurance, credit or labour markets (Akerlof G., 1970) and for the food market in particular (Nestorowicz R., 2014). This is explained by the fact that producers from the very beginning possess more information about goods they offer. We can't but agree with this but at the same time for the organic food market this problem becomes even more important due to the peculiarity of traded goods which will be covered below.

From the one hand, reasons for purchasing organic food are seem to be very altruistic. Thus, originally organic farming has been emerged as an alternative production system to help preserve the environment , and reduce the negative impact on natural resources such as soil, air and water (Vega-Zamora M., et.al. 2013). This goes along with the striving for rural economic development (Ibid.). On the other hand, motifs for buying such products are also rather egoistic. Individual health and food safety together with the quality and flavor are in the spotlight for many people (Ibid.). However, in both cases commodities, which are purchased by people who claim themselves as organic food consumers, are endowed with a bigger value. It is difficult to argue that a person would choose organic product instead if it's conventional counterpart without having a strong reason. And this very strong reason makes organic food and organic food market unique. In order to satisfy particular needs of consumers it is important for them to be sure that money is invested in a truly ecological product. For this reason, information provision can affect

consumers' willingness-to-pay for environmental goods (Rousseau S., 2013). And this confidence can't be totally full until the problem of information asymmetries is solved.

Actually, one of the possible solutions for this problem is the formation of consumer trust toward the organic food. In fact, there is a general agreement on the importance of trust in decisions on organic food (Schneider F., et.al. 2009). But the question arises: how customers could be informed about the organic origin of a product in order to trust it? Especially, when on the market it is hardly possible to talk about trust in a products itself (), because trust is a social phenomenon and caused by human actions (Sztompka, 1992). That is why trust in food is generally known to be based on information which consumers get from trustworthy information sources. However, sources of information could be different when considering organic food market. Generally, there is an opinion that "social institutions and arrangements <...> are better viewed as the efficient solution to certain economic problems" (Granovetter M., 1985). Quality uncertainty and trust formation could be attributed to these problems as well. There are studies that prove the importance of institutions in regard to the food safety and trust in food in general (M. Harvey et. al., 2007). If we speak precisely about the organic food market it is necessary to say that numerous institutions emerge to counteract the effects of quality uncertainty. George A. Akerlof identifies four basic types of such institutions: guarantees, brand-name, chains and licensing practices or certifications (Akerlof G., 1970). Moreover, according to the reviewed literature, it is possible to state the most common way to enhance consumer trust especially in organic food, highlighted by numerous researchers, is the establishing of various institutions, like labels, brands, laws, regulations (Giannakas R., 2002, Schneider F., et.al. 2009, Zagata L., Lostak M. 2012, Janssen M., Hamm U. 2012, Brčić-Stipčević V., Petljak K. 2012, Smed. S., et. al. 2013, Hamzaoui-Essoussi L., et. al. 2013, Anisimova T., Sultan P. 2014, Vittersø G., Tangeland T. 2015).

Nevertheless, the occurrence of these institutions does not lead to absolute protection against a fraud. It is explained by the fact that introduction of these activities sometimes create incentives for such manipulations as, for example, mislabeling of conventional food as organic (Giannakas R., 2002, Müller C., Gaus H. 2015). So, it shows that certification and labelling are necessary but insufficient for winning the trust of consumers. In this perspective we can agree with G. Akerlof who writes that "informal unwritten guarantees are preconditions for trade and production" (Akerlof G., 1970, 500). But where and how than these informal guarantees can

arise if not in institutions? Our assumption is that communication between the participants on the market can be the way to establish such informal agreements.

## **II. Background**

Nowadays German organic food market is the second largest market for organic labeled products in the world and is the first place among European countries (Rehder L.E., Le A. 2014, [www.ifoam-eu.org](http://www.ifoam-eu.org)). The data reflecting economic characteristics of the market proves that the demand for organic food in Germany is constantly growing and this allows us to say that there is a trend of organic food popularization among German consumers and considerable growth of German organic food market (IFOAM EU Group Germany). The same trend line is quite observable on the Russian organic food market as well (Kolchevnikova O. 2013, <http://sozrf.ru>).

Nevertheless a number of differences between these two markets could be mentioned. First of all, it is the price level. It is known that the prices for organic food in comparison to its conventional counterparts are different, but in Germany this difference is considerably less than in Russia (Kolchevnikova O. 2013, Rehder L.E., Le A. 2014, [http://www.numbeo.com/food-prices/country\\_result.jsp?country=Germany](http://www.numbeo.com/food-prices/country_result.jsp?country=Germany)). It is also considerable to mention the data about the sales outlets where people usually purchase organic food. Indeed, the ways of organic food distribution in both countries seek to be analogous, because specialized organic food stores are still remain the significant way of supplying within the markets. Nevertheless, in Germany more and more organic food items are sold in discounter stores and big supermarkets, while Russian consumers can mostly find these items just in high-end supermarkets (Kolchevnikova O. 2013, Rehder L.E., Le A. 2014, <http://www.agr.gc.ca>, <http://gain.fas.usda.gov>).

The more striking difference could be found in the legislation and controlling field. Thus, the data we obtain about national regulations of organic products in both countries indicates absolute difference between them. Unlike the German market, where a number of common European Union's and national German standards are applied with the aim to clearly define the notion of organic food and to control the whole process of its production, in Russia there is a lack of laws concerning organic food industry (Bruschi V. et. al. 2015, <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/>, <https://www.bmel.de/>). The same goes to the labeling of organic food products. In Russia there is a "Vitality Leaf" sign – the first and the only voluntary system of ecological certification which is accepted by international expert society (<http://ecounion.ru/>), whereas in contrast on the German market a number of European labels, which are accepted throughout the EU as well as national German organic food label Bio-Siegel are used (<https://www.bmel.de/>).

I can't but say that German organic food market is rather good studied, especially in terms of consumer trust formation. There are various interesting papers presenting the results of different projects, for instance, "How can consumer trust in organic products be enhanced?" by Schneider F., et. al. (Schneider F., et.al. 2009); "Growth, business logic and trust in organic food chains: an analytical framework and some illustrative examples from Germany" by S.V. Muenchusen and K. Knickel (Muenchusen S.V. and Knickel K., 2014); "Transparent Food and Consumer Trust" by Kriege-Steffen A., et.al. (Kriege-Steffen A., et.al. 2010). At the same time there is still a lack of papers regarding this topic in Russia.

### **III. Theoretical framework**

Speaking about the theoretical framework it is necessary to define what the notion of trust generally means. It is known that among social scientists there is a substantial difference in defining this term. Nevertheless, two major groups of authors who strive to see this phenomenon from the two opposite perspectives could be distinguished. One could be named "rationalists", who sees the trust as the product of rationalization and calculation (Sztompka P. 1992, Luhmann N., 1979, 1988, Coleman J.C. 1990) and the second could be named "fatalists", who look at the trust as more sensual phenomenon (Giddens A. 1990, Fukuyama F. 1995). However, these two opposite views, which seem to contradict each other, are tend to supplement each other under the conditions of market relations. As a result, the term "critical trust" will be used to define trust as a bet about future fulfillment of one's expectations in a situation of uncertainty, caused by other human's actions and underpinned by a lack of important information, based both on rational calculations and people's beliefs. In our case these expectations are connected with the purchased food to be truly organic. And in this case "the grounds for trust <...> come down to certain knowledge, information obtained by the truster about trustee" (Sztompka, 1992, 60, 70).

However, when considering the problem of trust in food, it is important to say that there is no such notion as direct trust in food (Kjærnes, et.al, 2007). It is hardly possible to trust a product itself as long as trust is a social phenomenon and takes place only when the situations of uncertainty are "of human and not purely natural provenance" (Sztompka, 1992, 20). That is why one trusts food and especially organic one, as long as it is humanly created. However, it is rarely the case, when consumers are able to check the production themselves in order to be sure that the products they purchase are produced in a really organic way. That is why it is possible to state that one could trust those who provide necessary information about food but not a product itself. In the case of organic food the information about whether the product is organic or not is of the

most importance. However this information in the organic food market could be distributed by various actors.

The main channels of information distribution are closely connected with the way market is organized. Organic food market could be analyzed from the point of view of two approaches to market analysis: neoinsituational and network, both of which assume the issue of incomplete and assymetric information. According to the first approach institutions tend to provide necessary information for individuals and thereby enable individuals to act (Hodgson, 1998). Institutional arrangements consider being a mechanism of filling the information gap between actors on the market. Those institutions are labels, brand names, mass media and advertisement. At the same time network approach see market as a plexus of social networks, when the latter are understood as a set of stable relations between market actors (Radaev, 2008). Thus, Granovetter (1992) argues that under the conditions of information asymmetry, market agents seek to look for trusted sources to get information or to give recommendations about how to implement transactions. It basically means that the lack of important information on the market is compensated by personal interaction which could be considered as trustworthy sources of necessary information. These personal interactions involve other consumers as well as producers, whom consumers are connected either with weak or strong ties.

According to the literature describing food markets in general and organic food market in particular (Kjærnes, et.al, 2007; Bruschi et al. 2015; Hemmerling, 2014; Hoffmann & Eisinger-Watzl, 2015) following actors are mainly involved in the process and could be considered as the key players on the market: consumers, producers, retailers, private certification bodies, official controlling authorities, mass media. Thus, based on who of them provide necessary information about organic food three basic types of trust could be eliminated: thick interpersonal trust (trust in relatives, friends and other close surrounding); thin interpersonal trust (trust in other consumers and producers), and institutional trust (trust in labels, mass media and advertisement). Thereby trust in food is substituted with the trust in those actors or in other words trust in these actors based on information they give about organic food transit to organic food.

However, in order to estimate the level of trust in food it is important to distinguish several criteria which would be able to demonstrate people's desire to give or withdraw trust in it. Follow the scheme, proposed by U. Kjærnes (2007), 5 key parameters of food were used in order to do that. They are safety, nutrition, quality, ethics and value for money (Kjærnes U. 2007, 42). It could be applied to the research on trust in organic food as well, because different studies

show that exactly these factors are the most influential when considering the process of organic food consumption (Kolchevnikova O. 2013, Buder et.al. 2010, <http://gain.fas.usda.gov>, <http://www.agr.gc.ca>). Moreover, as mentioned by some researches, time could be also used as a marker for trust (Sztompka P. 1992; Buskens V. 1999). Thus these 5 factors in addition to the time were used as the indicators of consumer trust in organic food.

#### **IV. Main research question**

In regard to what we have discussed above, it is possible to formulate the main research question as follow: how Russian and German consumer's trust in organic food depends on the source of information they tend to pay attention the most when buying those products. We are going to analyze if recommendations from other consumers or rather information provided by various institutions influence more the level of trust in organic food among our respondents. It is connected with the main research problem which is that it is not really known if consumer's involvement into network interaction with other consumers somehow influences the level of their trust in organic food or their belief in institutional arrangements matters in this case more. In order to provide the whole picture during the pilot study if the research the decision was also made to analyze regulations and norms on organic food in Russia and Germany in order to understand how institutional base for the market works. Moreover, qualitative analysis of Mass Media as one of the institutional bodies was also decided to include in the research as it influences consumer's perception of the goods sold on the market.

#### **V. The object of inquiry and comparison base**

As the objects of our comparative research we have chosen four bio markets: Denn's in Bielefeld and Alnatura in Dusseldorf; and Organica and Eco Garmonia in St. Petersburg. All of them specialize in organic food sales. They offer a wide range of biological goods, including organic food, in which we are especially interested. Regarding the supply of food commodities the assortment is rather similar. Consumers can buy organic fruits, vegetables, dairy products and cheese, ready-to-cook foods, meat and meat products, lasting food, beverages and many more. The companies presented work with such eco labels as Demeter, EU Organic Bio, Bio-Siegel, Bioland. Organica shop also offers some food labelled with national Russian logo called Vitality Leaf (the first and the only internationally recognized Russian system of voluntary certification). So, the products sold in these shops are marked with either international or local labels (<http://supergreen.ru/>, <https://www.denns-biomarkt.de/bielefeld-apfelstr-8/marktseite/>).



We have chosen specialized organic food stores because analysis shows that despite of the fact that the channels of organic food distribution differ a lot within two countries, specialized organic food stores are still remain the significant way of supplying (Kolchevnikova O, 2013, Rehder L.E., Le A., 2014). It is interesting that Denn's supermarket is the biggest organic food retailer which is nationwide as well as Alnatura, in Russia there has been observed the lack of truly nationwide organic food shops. But at the same time Organica and Eco Garmonika allow people from all over Russia to order the products they want which then will be delivered directly to home. It gives us the reason to consider them also as a nationwide supplier. More than that, all of them are rather active in Internet as long as they have web-pages in various social networks. In common they have official web-sites, where consumers could get acquainted with basic principal of their work process, products selection, contacts, etc. They also keep accounts in Facebook and Instagram, although Organica and Eco Garmonika also have a page in national Russian social Network called Vkontakte. This, in turn, facilitates the access to the target population of our online survey.

In order to obtain representative results we are going to distribute our questionnaire among the consumers of these shops simultaneously via before mentioned Internet communities. However, the sample was also supplemented by two organizations, which are "Ecological Union" in Russia and Bioland in Germany. Both of them are private certification bodies who provide services for ecological certification and labeling based on their private standards, which are, nevertheless, oriented towards European Council regulations on organic production. They also have web-pages in social networking sites Vkontakte and Facebook respectively. The questionnaire was also distributed there in order to collect data from people who participate in their Internet communities.

Moreover, national Russian and German governmental laws and private regulations on organic production, processing, distribution and labeling were analyzed. These are European Union law on organic production (Council Regulation No 834/2007/EC of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labeling of organic products and repealing Regulation № 2092/91/EEC; Commission regulation (EC) №889/2008 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation № 834/2007; Commission regulation № 271/2010); German law on organic production (The Organic Farming Act - ÖLG); Bioland Standards; Demeter Standards; GOST P 56104-2014 on organic food products: terms and definitions; GOST P- 56508-2015 on organic products: rules of production, storage and transportation; GOST P 57022-2016 on organic

production and the procedure of voluntary certification of organic production; and Vitality Leaf standards. Moreover, following Media sources were analysed in terms of different techniques and instruments that are used to cover the topic of organic food: The Local DE, Bild, Taz.archiv, Spiegel и Deutsche Welle in Germany; Gazeta.ru, Arguments and Facts, Komsomolskaya Pravda, Izvestia, RIA news and Rossiya 24 in Russia.

When comparing German and Russia organic food retailers it is important to be aware of strong differences in general living conditions between two countries. Thus a substantial part of Russian population suffer from poverty and economic inequality and this have resulted in inadequate eating patterns with widespread consumption of low quality and fake foods, as well as insufficient intake of proteins and calories. (Berg L., Kjaernes U et al., 2005) But it is known also the social standard of living varies a lot from region to region in Russia. St. Petersburg region is considered to be one of the wealthiest Russian cities what means that there are more people with a high income here. The average level of income in 2016 was approx. 660€ which is one of the highest among other Russian regions and higher than the countries' average income (<http://bs-life.ru/rabota/zarplata/srednyaya-zarplata2016.html>). As long as the price difference between organic and conventional food differs a lot – cost for organic food could be a way higher when compare to the conventional one – only people with sufficient income can afford to buy such food (Kolchevnikova O, 2013). That's the reason why organic food consumption in Russia concentrate, beside Central region, in St. Petersburg.

When speaking about Germany it is reasonable to mention that organic food consumption here is not “focal” but rather commonly spread. It is connected to the fact that the price level for organic food in Germany is still practically on the same level as the conventional one (Rehder L.E., Le A., 2014). Moreover the average income in Germany in 2016 was approx. 4900€ what is very high in comparison to the standard of wages in the rest of Europe (<http://bs-life.ru/rabota/zarplata/srednyaya-zarplata2016.html>). This indicates more possibilities for buying organic food nationwide.

This is also proved by presence of numerous different distribution channels. Thus, initially, the only possibility to buy organic products for German consumers was either directly from farmers or in healthy food stores. But with the entry of supermarkets and discount stores into the organic food sector, the supply of organically produced food has risen substantially. It is estimated that all in all there are over 2,400 organic food retail shops in Germany. (Gottschalk I., Leistner T., 2013). At the same time in Russia only two options exist for purchasing organic

food: specialized all-organic stores and high-end supermarkets, for instance Azbuka Vkusa and Globus Gourmet (Kolchevnikova O, 2013). After looking for the location of shops offering organic food we can say that most of them in Russia are located in Moscow and St. Petersburg, while in Germany they could be found nationwide.

To conclude we can say that German market is a part of European market which is mature. More than that Germany is widely famous as a country with a big market share for organic products and ranks №2 among others European markets (<http://www.ein-herz-fuer-bio.org/sites/default/files/downloads/germany.pdf>). As well as St. Petersburg could be named as a second largest market (after Moscow) for organic products within the borders of Russian market due to some social and economic reasons (Kolchevnikova O, 2013). With the common way of organic food distribution through specialized stores they remain the centers of organic food consumption. It allows us to state that the comparison between the chosen shops is rather justified.

## **VI. The aims of the research**

In order to answer the main research question following aims have to be fulfilled:

- To define how the concept of organic food is understood by Russian and German consumers as well as to know their reason for buying these products;
- To find out what is the initial source of information consumers get to receive the very first knowledge about organic food;
- To understand what the decisive factor is for consumers when making decision about purchasing an organic item;
- To eliminate what are the major sources of information consumers used to pay attention the most when buying an organic item and to test if there are dependences between these sources and consumer's level of trust;
- To distinguish the main differences in national legislation on organic food in Russian and Germany;
- To analyze the differences in media coverage of the organic food topic in both countries.

## **VII. Hypothesis**

H1: It could be assumed that German and Russian consumers understand the concept of organic food with some degree of differences;

H2: It is possible to expect that German and Russian consumers buy organic food for different reasons;

H3: Both Russian and German consumers are expected to receive the initial information about organic food mainly by means of their personal contacts;

H4: It is expected that German and Russian consumers will base their final decision about buying an organic item on different ground;

H5: Organic consumers in Germany are expected to have higher level of trust in organic products than Russian consumers do;

H6: It is expected that in Germany the level of consumer trust in organic food positively related to eco labels, while in Russian it is expected to be positively connected with personal communication;

#### **Additional hypothesis:**

H1: It is reasonable to assume that organic food legislation is better developed and stricter in Germany in comparison to Russia;

H2: It could be expected that the topic of organic food in Germany is reported more often and in more positive light than in Russia;

H3: Organic consumers in Russia and Germany differ in socio-economic characteristics

### **VIII.Methodology**

According to the aims of the study, it was decided to stick to the mixed methodology of data collection and analysis, which includes both qualitative and quantitative methods. The methods include online survey, structured interviews, qualitative analysis of documents and media content. Online questionnaire was used at the basic tool, while formalized interviews were considered to be more as a supportive instrument.

In order to estimate consumer trust in organic food we will use the methodology, which was applied by U. Kjærnes et.al in their research on trust in food in general. However, according to the tasks of this research the initial scheme was slightly changed. Respondents are planned to be asked about their level of confidence in the organic origin of food, as well as the level of their agreement/disagreement with the proposed statements which consider such organic food features as nutrition, quality, ethics and value for money. We are going to ask if consumers think that organic food is safer, tastier, more nutrient, and less harmful for the environment in comparison to conventional food and if they agree to pay more money for organic food in comparison with usual substitutes. We will give the options following values: strongly agree – 5; agree -4; neither

agree or disagree -3; disagree -2; strongly disagree -1. Then the results of every respondent's evaluation will be summed up and divided by the number of statements in order to calculate personal trust in organic food index. Then the results of personal indexes will be summed up and divided by the number of respondents. In this way it would be possible to estimate general trust in food index, where 1 will be "total distrust" and 5 will mean "total trust". One additional parameter which should be added to this index is the time dimension. Respondents will be asked about the duration of their organic food consumption.

In order to investigate the question of information acquisition two main questions will be asked. First is about the way respondents usually receive initial information about organic food before start to buy it. And the second one is devoted to the sources of information about organic origin of a product consumers tend to pay attention the most when purchasing organic products. For this purpose following options always -5; often -4; sometimes -3; rarely -2; never -1 will correspond to each source of information, which are recommendations, information on a packaging; ecolabels; brand name; information from mass media, and advertisement. After that regressions between the trust index and the source of information will be calculated in order to show if the level of trust depends on the sources of information about organic products. In this case trust index is considered to be dependent variable, while the frequency of paying attention to different information sources is independent variable.

We also use the trust index as dependent variables when participation in social media and decisive factors for choosing the products are independent one. We will identify if there are some correlations between these variables.

One more method which is going to be implemented in this research is structured interview. It is aimed at receiving more detailed information about consumer experience in organic food consumption and serve as an additional tool in proving the hypothesis stated in the beginning. The interview guide consists of 10 questions which correspond to those, included in the questionnaire but allow respondents to give fuller answers.

## **IX. Data collection and analysis**

The questionnaire (as the main tool of the research) will be formulated in English and then will be translated in two languages (both Russian and German). It consists of three parts. The first has questions which allow to build the "the trust in organic food index". The second devoted to the information sources and will consist of questions which help to receive the data on how consumers tend to get know about organic origin of the food. And the last part will include some

questions about socio-economic characteristics of respondents. The questionnaire will be distributed among the consumers of the chosen organic food stores via Internet. For this purpose social networks Facebook (for both countries) and Vkontakte (only for Russian side) is used. The questionnaire will be distributed on the web-pages of communities of specialized organic food shops and in two groups of private certification bodies. The general sample compiles 44 260 consumers in Germany and 36 210 in Russia. The difference between the sizes of the samples could be explained by the overall imbalance between the market shares for organic food in both countries and significant differences in the consumption volume in Russia and Germany as well (<http://www.ifoam-eu.org/en/germany>, [http://sozrf.ru/rost\\_2013/](http://sozrf.ru/rost_2013/)). Respondents for interviews will be found by means of the snowball method. The general sample consists of ecologically oriented consumers who buy organic on the regular basis.

The methods of analysis used over the survey data are for the most part relatively simple and straightforward. Excel Analysis ToolPak will be used to make a statistical analysis of data obtained from the online survey. In the course of data analysis acquired from interviews, the ATLAS software package will be used. Each interview will be coded and then analyzed on the basis of theoretical concepts. No special tool will be used for the analysis of normative base and media content as it is not necessary for the aims of the research which are to find common similarities and differences in those sources.

## **X. Expected outcomes**

After the research is finished and results are analyzed and interpreted it is expected that some of the hypothesis formulated in the beginning will be fully confirmed and some partly confirmed. It is possible to expect that information sources influence consumer's trust in organic food both in Russian and Germany, but the level of trust depends on a certain source of information. As we expect personal contacts might have some influence in their combination with institutional arrangements, which are mostly certification and labeling. It is also reasonable to say that the way legislative base works in both countries have a big influence on consumer's grounds for trust in organic food, while Mass Media plays more negative role, rather than positive one.

**Appendix II Questionnaire for consumers (in English)**

Hello!

I am Master student from the Faculty of Sociology at Saint-Petersburg State University conducting research on trust in organic food for my thesis. The goal of research is to elicit what consumers think truly organic products are and what is the basis for their trust in them. I would be pleased if you participate in this survey. Your sincere answers will allow identifying which products could be named really organic and why people think they are trustworthy. Answering these questions will take no more than 10 minutes.

Please, read questions carefully and choose one of the options proposed. If it is difficult for you to make a choice, then mark, please, the one which you think is the closest to your opinion. Most questions are about your opinion and attitude. There is no right or wrong questions.

All the responses will be processed in common and no personal data will be disclosed.

1. At the moment, how long do You buy organic food?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 3-5 years
- More than 5 years
- Difficult to say

2. Where do You mostly buy organic products today?

- Specialized organic food stores
- Usual supermarkets/hypermarkets
- Discount markets (for Germany only)
- Open-air markets
- Directly from the farm
- Internet-shops
- Depends on situation

3. Which categories of products do You buy today most often? (several options possible)

- Fresh vegetables
- Fresh fruits
- Meat and meat products
- Fish and fish products
- Milk and dairy products
- Eggs
- Cereals
- Bread and bakery products
- Beverages
- Semi-finished products
- Cookery



- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. According to your opinion, organic food is (several options possible):

- Food that is produced without any chemical additives (e.g. pesticides, growth promoters, artificial fertilizers, toxic chemicals, etc.)
- Food produced with environmentally/animal friendly techniques
- Products that don't contain any artificial additives (colorants, aromatizers, stabilizers, etc.)
- Food with minimal processing that save its nutritive elements
- Products that are labeled «organic»
- Products produced by yourself (in a garden, at summerhouse, in own household)
- Food free from genetically modified organism (GMO)
- Difficult to say
- Other (please, specify) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Please, continue the statement «I buy organic food, because...» (several options possible):

- It is healthy
- It tastes good
- It is produced in environmentally friendly way
- Animals are treated better
- It is safe
- It's production is better controlled than conventional one
- I want to support local producers
- Someone recommended me
- It is a family tradition
- Difficult to say
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

6. In the following question, please, identify the level of your agreement/disagreement with the proposed statements

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Difficult to say
I am confident that the food I usually buy is really of organic origin						
In comparison to conventional food organic food is more safe						
In comparison to conventional food organic food is more tasty						
In comparison to conventional food organic food have more nutrients						
In comparison to conventional food organic food is healthier						
In comparison to conventional food production of organic food is less harmful for the environment						
I agree to pay more for organic food in comparison to conventional one						

7. How often do You usually pay attention to the following information?

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Difficult to say
Recommendations from other consumers (either personal or in social networks)						
Information about product composition on a packaging						
Ecolabels						
Brand name						
Information from Mass Media (TV, radio)						
Advertisement						

8. Where did you get information about organic food for the first time? (several options possible)

- «World of mouth» (recommendations from family members, friends, acquaintances, etc.)
- Mass Media
- Advertisement
- Social networks (i.e. Facebook, Instagram)
- Bought accidentally to try
- Difficult to say
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

9. If You have a problem or seek for an advice concerning organic products whom do You most likely contact to? (several options possible)

- Can ask other consumers in person
- Sometimes ask other consumers online
- Prefer to ask a producer personally
- Have never faced this problems
- Difficult to say

- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

10. What can you name as the decisive factor in the choice of organic products?

- Recommendations and advices of social surrounding (family, friends, acquaintances, etc.)
- Information on the packaging
- Eco labels
- Brand name
- Advertisement
- Difficult to say
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you participate in any Internet-communities, connected to the topic of organic food?

- Yes, participate in a community in a social network
- Yes, registered in a forum about organic food
- Yes, I am the member of ecological organization
- No, do not participate anywhere
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**To conclude, some biographical questions**

12. What is your gender?

- Male

- Female

13. How old are you?

- 18-20
- 21-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 and older

14. What is your marital status?

- Single, never married
- Married or domestic partnership
- Divorced
- Widowed

15. Do you have children?

- No
- Yes, one child
- Yes, more than one child

16. Which of the following statement better describe financial situation of You/ Your family?

- Don't have enough money for the daily costs
- Entire salary goes to the daily costs
- We have enough money for the daily costs but buying clothes is difficult
- In general we have enough money but need to borrow money to buy expensive items
- We can afford almost everything but the purchase of flat or a country house is difficult
- Everything is affordable

17. What is the highest educational level you complete?

- No education/primary education
- High school
- Higher education (bachelor, specialist, master)
- Postgraduate and higher

18. What is your employment status?

- Working fulltime
- Working halftime
- Retired
- Working at home
- Student
- Temporarily unemployed

19. In which city do you currently live? \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank You very much for Your help!**

## Appendix III Interview guide (in English)

**Hello!**

*First of all, I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is Ivanova Mariia. I am a student of Master Program «Studying in European societies» at St. Petersburg State University. I am currently making my research project for the Master thesis which topic is «Consumer trust in organic products on the Russian and German markets». My research represents a comparison between Russian and German market for organic food and especially the reasons due to which consumers trust in these commodities. I would like to talk with you about your experience of organic food consumption. Your participation is very important as help in understanding the process of consumer trust formation in organic products. It is important for me to create an overall picture of organic food consumption in contemporary Germany.*

*The interview should take less than an hour. I will be taping the session because I don't want to miss any of your comments. Although I will be taking some notes during the session, I can't possibly write fast enough to get it all down. That's why I would like to record our conversation as it will also save time writing your answers entirely. The information will be used only for my personal analysis purposes. Your identity will be kept anonymous in reports if you like. Remember, you don't have to talk about anything you don't want to and you may end the interview at any time. This interview is an ordinary conversation, and there is no right or wrong answers there.*

*Are there any questions about what I have just explained? If no, let's start.*

1. Could you, please, tell what kind of organic products do you usually buy?
2. What do you understand, in general, as organic food?
  - ✓ Which qualities should a product have in order to be called organic?
  - ✓ Is the presence of these qualities very important for you? How could you understand that product really has these qualities/ characteristics?
  - ✓ Why do you prefer organic products to conventional one?
3. Could you say that when buying organic food, you are absolutely sure that you buy a real organic product and not a forgery? What makes you trust in pure ecological origin of a product?
4. Could you, please, remember and briefly tell me how and why did you start to buy organic food?
  - ✓ What «pushed» you to this decision?

- ✓ Maybe you had a particular reason for that? Or it was just a spontaneous decision?
5. Could you also remember, when you have started to buy organic food, was there someone in your surrounding who already was buying these items?
- ✓ In case there were someone, who were they? Were it relatives, friends, acquaintances, colleagues?
  - ✓ Did this have any impact on your personal decision about starting to eat organic food? Maybe, someone told you about their experience, share impressions with you, gave advices and recommendations to try organic food?
6. Tell me, please, do you buy organic food in a particular place now or prefer to go shopping at different places? Maybe prefer a concrete producer or trade mark?
- ✓ Do You usually pay attention to eco labels?
  - ✓ If a product doesn't have any bio signs, how could You understand that it is organic?
7. Have You ever read any regulations concerning the production of organic food?
- ✓ If You rely on labels, do You know what are the requirements for producers to receive them?
  - ✓ Which label do You prefer and why? Do you trust it?
  - ✓ Were there any cases when You bought products with no organic labels on them but still considered to be organic? If, yes, how could You identify that it is organic?
8. If yes, does someone from your surrounding also buy organic food at this place (buy food from this trade mark/ producer)?
- ✓ Maybe you go shopping for organic food together?
  - ✓ Or share your impressions later with each other and give advices each other in regard to organic food in general or organic food store/trade mark/producer in particular?
9. Could you, please, remember, when you have some problems with the choice of organic product or with finding a place where to buy a good organic food, or you didn't know if it is worth buying food in this or that place, from this or that producer, do you consult (seek advice) other consumers?
- ✓ If yes, who are they?
  - ✓ Do you know them very well or it is just other consumers whom you don't know personally?



10. Do you participate in any Internet-community connected with organic food?
- ✓ Maybe you are a member of some group on Facebook or Instagram?
  - ✓ Maybe you read some blogs?
  - ✓ If yes, does it help you somehow? Do you receive any valuable information there?
  - ✓ Could information from these sources change your opinion about organic food?
11. And, finally, how do you think, information about organic food that you receive from your acquaintances, friends, colleagues or family is more reliable, trustworthy than one from Mass Media, advertisement, etc.
- ✓ If yes/no - why? Does it influence your consumer behaviour somehow?

*In order to finish our conversation could you please if possible tell me some information about yourself? What is your age? What is your marital status? Do you have children? Where do you currently live? And your name, if possible.*

*Is there anything more you would like to add? If not then thank you for your participation! If you are interested, I can share my MA paper with you once it is finished.*

## Appendix IV Table of respondents

### Russian case

Name	Gender	Age	Marital status	Children	City
Anastasiia Prikazchikova	Female	31	Married	No	St. Petersburg
Anastasiia Rogova	Female	25	Married	No	Vsevolozhsk
Mariia Prokophieva	Female	27	Married	One child (1,5 years)	Pushkin
Olga Taranova	Female	31	Married	No	St. Petersburg
R5	Female	34	Married	One child	St. Petersburg
Elena Shershneva	Female	60	-	No	St. Petersburg

### German case

Name	Gender	Age	Marital status	Children	City
Hanellore Ingang	Female	58	Married	2 children	Werther
Anna	Male	33	Married	One child	Bielefeld
Nina	Female	24	Unmarried	No	Fürth
Sebastian	Male	27	Unmarried	No	Bielefeld
Susanne	Female	-	-	-	-
Lidia	Female	45	Married	Two children	Bremerhaven

## Appendix V Example of the interview transcript (German)

February, 5. Female, 58.

Hannelore Ingang, (HI)

M: So, I think that the first question, it's like to start, I want to know what kind of products do you usually buy? I mean organic products.

B: Almost all we buy. All products

M: Like milk, fruits, vegetables?

H: I say not everything. Ok, we try to buy as much biological products as it is possible. Yeh, as Bruno said, milk, vegetables...

B: Meat

H: Meat, yes. Meat, we generally never buy other meat. But, it's ok, we try not eat too much meat, we like meat but don't eat like many German people meat every day. Ok, when we go to a restaurant, sure we would like to eat meat and we eat meat, normally it's not biological, but we try

B: It depends

H: Hm?

B: It depends whether biological restaurants

H: Yeh, but it's not the way we chose when we go, for example, to a restaurant, we are not looking, it's not the first point, that it must be biological but, yeh, with the meat for example, it's like...maybe I can explain. We try to buy in special shops, for example, here there are two farms, close to Werter. It's a farm <...>, they started, I think, 30 years ago to produce organic food and we went there every time and buy once per week vegetables, all that stuff and, for example, meat, we have also here a little farm very close, it's called Maas, they also when we want to eat meat then we go there and the other stuff is that...

B: Fresh meat

H: Fresh meat, they have animals, yeh, so we know directly that it's from there. But, sometimes we also go to the Lidl, little shop here in Werter, it's not biological butchery, we go there, because it's not biological, but it's local. They say that they get the animals from farmers around. So, we also go there sometimes, but we never buy

B: They are not recognized by biological labels. They are only recognized by local

H: Local food, genau, local meat. And the other thing is we, not yet, but as you saw, we are here in a little bit countryside, so, for example, our eggs, we have our own chicken, so, we the eggs from our chicken. And we know, we saw it's biological, because

B: And rabbits

H: Yes, we also have rabbits. Bruno is from countryside, his family is from farmers

B: Little farmers

H: Little farmers and so for many years we have rabbits and...we eat them. And the other stuff is Bruno has also an older brother, he lives in the north from Hannover, Wendland, it's called Wendland and he has ships, so sometimes we also take from him meat, He makes sausages, but he is also social worker, but it is like a hobby and so we take from him meat.

M: Ok, and you are absolutely sure that he produces this meat in organic way and he doesn't use any prohibited, you know, chemicals?

H: Yes, because we see ships and they are eating grass and we know he doesn't give them toxic stuff

B: And normally he uses only biological products to make the sausages, for example, he can catch from pig meat and combine with sheep meat to make sausages and in this case he announces "I have the sheep and this sheep is biological

H: But not the part of the pig

B: They are only local

H: Because he understands, some sausages it is not possible to make it only from the meat of the sheep and so he needs to buy a little bit pork meat, but it is also from the Redna there. Ok, it's not absolutely 100% but we try to

B: We try to choose our food with labels Bioland, Demeter, and so on. If it's not possible, it should be local and if it's not local, sometimes we eat it nevertheless

H: Yes, we are not dogmatic. But, ok, maybe we can, first we have to answer the question, because you said, finally, everything we buy biological. That's not true, for example, things for cleaning, the house, we are not buying every time. There are existing biological stuff

B: And clothes also

H: Yes, and clothes, then we but normal stuff. Sometimes I buy also biological things. For example, I told that I <speaking in German> I showed you this Willhelmsdorf. When I on this online shop they also have, for example, to clean the dishes, they have biological stuff. Sometimes I take from them, but sometimes I also go to ALDI and buy there. It depends.

M: Ok.

H: It's a big price difference between both.

M: You mean the price difference between different organic producers ?

H: Aldi and when you, for example, buy biological this stuff for cleaning the dishes, for example in Aldi, it's, I think, it's 1 Euro and others is 2 Euros. But sometimes I but it because, yeh, it depends, because, generally, maybe as of the next questions, because we would do this, because, you would like to continue with this, or?

M: Yeh, I think we can continue, I mean the next question is about your motivation to buy organic.

H: Ja, genau. It's not because only, for me, sure I want to eat healthy food, but that's only one part. For me it's also important, how to explain this, I think with the normal way we in Germany and also in other countries they are producing, for example, meat or vegetable is in a way where they destroy bios and where they put a lot of toxical things inside and for me also to buy healthy food is something against this way of producing things. Like, for example, with the animals, I stop eating chicken because when I saw once, it's many years ago, I saw how chickens are gathered and treated and they are in big houses and one close to the other and it's a way...

B: With antibiotal

H: With antibiotal, it's not for me human way to treat animals and therefore it's this way is a political way, when I am eating healthy food.

M: So, you are actually eating organic food not for your so to say egoistic motives, but also some altruistic motives, so to preserve environment, and...

H: Yes, exactly

M: And to treat animals better?

H: Yeh. For example, animals also, vegetables. I think it's a big problem with genetic...

S: With the toxicity of the soil. But it's supporting in a way that other ways of doing and producing food can have a chance, because I mean mass production kills all this other in matters of price. So they are able to contribute and see people are making efforts to do, to produce in this way and to survive.

H: Yes, but I think that the change in the beginning it was that people who try to produce biological stuff, it was very difficult for them because everybody was laughing at the them, hahaha, what are thwy doing, and products are a little but more expensive, though, sure, I think it

was be able also to support this people so they can grow up. And in Germany now there is a very big...one part of the producers that produce today biological

S: Sector, sector so to say

H: And the other thing is that also, you know, what I told you before about chicken. For me it's also a question of how we deal with other countries, for example, with Africa. You know, here in Germany they produce a a lot of chicken and then they sell it to African countries, market and destroy, for example, the market in Africa, local market in Africa. And that's also one reason for me why I don't want to buy for example this chicken, because they destroy the other market and people are already poor and they getting poorer and poorer. You know it's not only local, it's to see what are the relations with other countries

M: Yes. It's very interesting because I have never heard about this before

S: No, the ruin, the ruin other markets

M: I know about this phenomenon, yes, but I have never heard that people explain their desire to buy organic food by this, it's very interesting

B: For example they buy it in Germany or in Europe the legs of a chicken and then export it to...

H: Ghana, for example, I think

B: Yes, Ghana and it destroys regularly local market because they are cheaper than the farmers in Africa sell it

S: Yes they have the same problem in South Africa, they are fighting with but they didn't win the battle. They still expose their chicken on us now. And it's gonna destroy the local market

H: Yes, it's the same thing with the clothes. The all clothes that we throw, our all clothes into these boxes and then they send it, for example, to Africa. And then people there buy this type of clothes and the local clothes they are more expensive, and the other things are destroyed

M: Yes, ok

S: It's not only on that one. Even in China. Because of their lower labour costs. They manufacture clothes so cheap and they import them and ruins local manufacturing sector. And it doesn't mean that in South Africa industry didn't become more competitive, maybe they also have changed enough all over these years. But I mean not to destroy them. Not to ruin all these places to work and the jobs. That's not right.

H: But you know it is also about conditions of the workers in India, for example, in Pakistan, Bangladesh and so, yeh. Sometimes I try, there are also alternatives, they are also more expensive, for example, here very close to us Mass Natura and in Bielefeld also there is a little

shop where you can buy organic clothes. Because they also try to produce, for example, in Germany and take biological cotton, But only when they have specials because it is expensive. So, I am not 100% in everything but I try and I think it's good because they try to make an alternative to buy this other stuff.

B: And we are worrying conditions of producing, and history, from where they are...

H: Yeh, genau

B: In history if look at it...

H: From where they. Yes, so that's one reason why we try to buy biological stuff. It's not only for our health, I think it's also for to look what is with our environment. And what does it mean for...because, well yeh, I think that for me it is also a political state, because people, you know this big discussion with the refugees and so on. But it's also our fault that we destroy market where people are coming from. And, so, I don't have so much power to change everything but in my daily life I can try to do something.

M: Yes, I understand now, little steps, ok.

S: But I think in Germany, I don't know about other countries also, but all these issues of organic food production come from the peace movement. They started there and that's maybe why you also find this political approach to it. Like, you said it's unusual. It's not just the health issue. Yeh, it started from the peace movement in 70<sup>th</sup>.

M: So, it doesn't come from individual decision, but from these movements.

S: I think peace movement expended in terms of awareness, is started from internal look. It started with this in the 70<sup>th</sup> and then included more and more issues of social justice in general and then those equality issues as well. And then the more food had issues the more it came in. So, actually I think the base was more...came from political, social issue side, from those movements.

B: I came to France and then I discovered that in the town where I lived they had a food cooperative

H: You know what is it?

M: Yes, yes, I think I know what it is, because we have, I think something similar

B: They bought packages of meat and rice and then feel small packages to give to the people who have <...> Information about how food is produced and it was very important for me to see that it exists. It doesn't exist in Germany but it exists already in France

H: They had no peace movement like here. But, what I let say, before with this health food, I think, he was very in the 80th and at the end of 70<sup>th</sup>, it was a movement against nuclear power and there were also another movements to be alternative, I mean that you live together in communities and share other things together and you are against the old fashion. That was also the movement APPO, I mean the student's movement in the 60<sup>th</sup> and so. And you know there were other also, the idea was to live in other way and more...more think about your environment I think. There were a lot of movements at this time. And with this there was also this movement with more healthy food. But at the beginning it was also politically because it was against the way how they produce things. And I think it is getting worse and worse.

M: But except for this, you know, external factors, for example, when you buy organic food, can you somehow differentiate from conventional one? Maybe it has some different taste, or...

B: It has labels

M: Yeh, but it's not about labels, like, for example, if you go to this farm and you buy meat without label how can you understand that it's organic? Just because they told you?

B: It is very important that they have labels, if it's controlled, it force produce to respect some laws. And these labels are very common and every big chain try to make its own label, for example, Aldi has their own, Lidl also has biological labels, which are not so...

H: The same standard, for example, like Demeter, it's one of the best labels and then Bioland and so. But you mean when we don't see that is has the label. I think, you can't, every time you can't say that the normal food tastes not as good as biological food. Sometimes I think there are products, I think, you can taste it, for example, carrots, that every time it taste better, tomatoes, cucumbers, they are also very good normal. Local products they are also every time better. For example, when you get tomato from Greece and it's not biological they taste better because there is more sun. For, example, they also have circumstances. So, sometimes you can taste it but not every time. And from meat, yeh, we don't buy so many times, but people tell me when they have meat from local where they use smaller, a lot of water comes out of meat, maybe this is different. But the taste, I don't know if it's...it's not every time better.

B: It's not the entire product. Sometimes they taste it and then didn't find the difference. But in this case it is a lot of producing with treating animals and so on, in sense that it's better.

S: But there are organizations, like Demeter or Bioland that strictly regulate it, those products and proper standards are. They do enforce them, do test them so that consumer does have some



level of assurance that at least what one is buying has been tested according to those specific standards

B: Yeh, the European law and therefore European label they designed it to establish this label <...> If you buy in the big market and you have to see the label, they stay in a little corner

H: Sector of the market

B: Yes, sector and the decision was to regulate the whole European market

H: What Bruno wants to say means that European biological that...when biological label is European it's not so strict like, for example Bioland or Demeter. They are other labels, they are more organic. That's the difference but as he said maybe it's not better to get bigger sector of the general market and to stay in little corner. For example, like I said, we are going to the farmers. Normally people want to go to the supermarket and they are looking for biological food and that's also. I think it's more success that more people are buying today biological food in Germany as 10 years before. It's not only a small group of people

B: And the big change in Aldi, they try to get this part of the economy, they develop

S: They advertise

B: They offer more ecological products. They have, for example, thousand products and have five products which are biological recognizable and then publish <...> to make the impression that they are biological, they change

M: Do you think that this advertisement really plays a big role in the distribution of information about ecological food? I mean, like, how people do usually start to buy organic food? Because they see advertisement or they read some Mass Media, or, I don't know, or it's just because someone around them already buy these products? Like, their friends, maybe just tell them something and they start to buy? Do you think it's important?

B: We have just changed yesterday there was an order to keep chicken in houses, not in the nature, not in the gardens or in the fields, but to keep indoors and every day there was a discussion about this keeping the animals indoor or not. And every time we know that it's a problem of the mass production. Because if the chicken are in little boxes in the field and so on its sure they can won't get ill at the same time, when they are not so...in bad conditions. And the discussion, propaganda is always every day, because the minister says: "No we can't, that chicken grow old" and so every day there is a discussion, and therefore it is important to have labels

H: Yeh, but again, but the question was from where people get started to buy biological food. I think, for example, this big discussion and TV and so, newspaper and then some people start to think about. For example, with the eggs. A lot of people...more people are buying now eggs from chicken that can run around because normally

B: We have the category of Bioland and biological, organic and then we have free range and also these indoor...and so from one day to another this indoor production was empty, nobody bought these eggs anymore. The market was cleaned up in one week, it was over and because people had to choose and it was not very more price, price was not so...

H: So much higher, yeh

B: So much important and people decided never to buy these eggs that were produced indoor in bad conditions.

H: Because it was on TV, in all the channels. Ok, well, I mean, when there are scandals then people are starting to think, like Bruno said, not to buy these eggs because I think now everybody knows in Germany, Only if you think it's...there are still a lot of people who, for them it's not important, they only want to have very cheap products. I think it's about scandals when people start to think about it and when you have people in your surroundings, when you see that people are buying this it's also one thing. And there are also these movement of vegetarian, vegan, they also, it's very common now but it's also that people start to think about what I would like to it, there are a lot of, for example vegetarian people, who say: "I don't want to eat meat because it's"...a we forgot one part! It's not only that the conditions of the animals, but also of the climate, our wheather. There were so many animals that <..> our climate and so, yeh, the weather is changing and all this stuff, yeh, and why people are changing and eat...

B: Very often it begins with one point and then you look at this point and then you discover behind that it also produces this effect. At the beginning people they only have an intention to buy another egg and more and more they discover that there is a big discussion behind

S: It's complex, it's not so easy. I think also the <..> that getting portrait on the TV, I think many people are chocked by that. It's like you don't see it, you don't hear it, you just a ready product on the shelves, so, I think, here in Germany, I think people are a bit sensitive when it comes to animals, wellbeing, health and so on. But I also think that health issues around antibiotics. I think, because, you know we eat all this stuff. I think there is information on the TV about this meat that we eat. But, like Bruno said, not everybody really cares about that, takes it seriously, but...

H: It depends what is important for you. You know, I, for example, just want to tell about the meat that I got very nervous, for example, when people are coming here and see our rabbits and garden and then we say we are eating them and then they people start, like, aaah, it's brutal and sometimes I get really angry because they go to the supermarket and buy chicken under the bad conditions, very bad, so it's...yeh, it's very interesting, when you go to France, they normally eat everything from the animal and in Germany they take only one part and people would like to have their stake and nothing else. It's alienation, because people they don't have contact with animals, they see only stake and it's fine and I think it's also a problem that there is no relation with how animals are living with this mass production. This is a big problem with how much food is wasted also.

M: Ok, yes, I see. But I think you have started to eat organic food very long ago, how did you start actually?

H: I think it started at the beginning of the 80<sup>th</sup>. When we were students and we lived in the <...> And there were the first shops where you can buy biological stuff. It's called Bioladen. You know we started to eat things we don't know from our families, for example, miliet, you know, this is a little yellow stuff, it's like couscous and all this stuff, you know, we didn't know from my family, from my parents and then they started to eat this things and then we started to repeat about from there. And It was the first step for us when we had children also then we said we want them to grow healthy and we want to buy only biological food, so then we started to buy vegetables and fruits from the Bioladen

M: But, firstly, you just decided to try?

H: Yeh

M: There was no concrete reason to go?

H: No, try and then we found it very tasty, for example, in Germany is very famous for good bread and then there was this movement when it's wheat and vollkorn brot, I liked it very much, and then we get used to it and, for example, today I like more this kind of bread than the white bread and, for example, I don't like bread from the supermarket, I buy more often this vollkorn brot, yeh. It's also that your tastes change a little bit.

M: Ok. But do you know many people who buy organic food? Do you have some contacts with these people? Do you somehow discuss these issues?

B: Almost all whom we know use more or less organic food

M: But like, who started first, for example, to buy organic food? Or you might become friends because you buy organic food, that's what I mean

H: Ah, ok, I think, when we started, we lived in the community and then somebody bought this and the other one bought this and we tried together

B: And discussed

H: And discussed some things but it doesn't mean that we only know people who buy biological things. We know a lot of people who buy something else

B: Organic more or less

H: I think, more or less nobody is against biological food. But a lot of people have this argument that it is too expensive, it is the main argument against biological food. But I don't know who started first. It was a process, you know. For example I lived in the beginning, before...but Musli, you know, Musli it was also the one step in the beginning, I ate it when I stayed with my family and my mother, for example, she said oh it's tasty, I would also eat it. So, I bought it and then she also sometimes ate it. But we were not dogmatically, that's also important. You know, it's ok for us, but it's a political question for us.

B: We know that the other way is that it's not justice and it is important to say our friends that there is another way, we must change the system

H: Yes. For example, with the meat for us, you know there is a big slaughterhouse here in Gutersloh and they kill 25 thousands pig per day. And that's not only because it is very bad against the animals, also people who are working there, it's very brutal, they get not much money and the labor conditions are also very bad. They have people from Romania who have to work not for so much money, that's also, we are against this.

B: We have the product and we have our hands not touch the blood and we give this chance to poor people and eat our schnitzel and so on

H: Very cheap, yes. You know, it is also interesting that we have our own animals, for example Bruno has his rabbits. When you know how long time it takes to grow up a rabbit before the slaughter and then you go to the supermarket and see how cheap is one rabbit. And then you know that it can't be this way, you can only do it if you have so many under bad conditions

B: It's the same as with chickens. They can't be for this 2 Euros or 3 Euros. For 2 Euros you can by frozen and all prepared chicken and so on. But even the process of slaughter...

H: And the process of cleaning it takes time, so...

M: In this way we can say that these higher prices for local food are justified? So, it's right that it costs more?

S: But on the other hand we were also forced into this mass meat consumption. When we grew up there was no talk about organic, you ate once per week you ate meat, usually on Sunday.

B: Today it's everyday

S: And it's not good for us even if it's organic or not. It's just not good for human body to feed it with animal meat in this way. But it is also the problem with hormones. But as Bruno says you can't raise animals like this, so you put medication, artificially, so they grow faster. And all that we are eating. Now in more and more quantities. But you know the impact of that, the sometimes it is quite. I don't hear much about this when I am here.

H: And pure water, it becomes rare

S: And resources also, energy, it's all involved in food production

M: Yes, of course, it is all involved

H: So, as we started in the beginning, it's not only for our health, but also for our living conditions

M: Yes, it's true. I think I got a lot of useful information! I want to ask just the last question, I think. You have mentioned in the beginning that you go to buy organic products to some farm, sometimes to Lidl and all that places. And this friends, who are buying also organic products, where do they go, you know? To the same places? Do you recommend them to go somewhere or maybe they sometimes tell: "Oh, I bought such a good product there, you should also go there!"

H: Yes it happened that they say this

B: Many of these people, they have this box

H: Yes, you can also order this box with vegetables in front of your house. But, yeh, here you have a lot of possibilities where you can go. You can go to this farm that is far away or here and yes people say: «Look there is a new shop where you can go»

B: Sometimes I go Werther in the weekend with those who wants to buy there

H: Yeh, and we go shopping together because you don't have to buy by your own car, you can go there together and there is also publicity, for example, two years ago, I discovered that there is a very nice market on my way home from work, so I go there, there are very good things there

B: Organic market?

H: Yes. Organic market.

B: But as you said in here it is a rural area, kind of. It's different in towns, it's not so easy for people to get all this organic food

H: No, there is no problem. In every big city there is Denn's or other few biological supermarkets.

B: Everybody can go there. It is directly

H: In Bielefeld there is no problem, you can go to normal markets, for example, Denn's, it is a market where there is a biological things also and everybody...if you look for, it's not a problem today. In former times maybe they have to drive somewhere but today you can find it everywhere. It's not a problem, there is a big offer.

M: Yes, I think it's the second problem, because when you have a wide choice of these places, you just don't know where to go. And that's the time maybe to ask someone or look for some information about these places, where to go. Because, for example, if I go the one shop, I can't be sure that I will buy a very good product, that I will be satisfied at the end. So, I need some information before, to decide where to buy

B: Yes, you come there to see

H: The labels

B: Yes, Bioland or Demeter, even on the products, on every product it is mentioned if it is biological or not

H: And from where it is, for example,

B: It's maybe possible that it is not more tasty than another product, it's ok

H: But I think when you go in here, when you go to biological shop then you can be generally sure that it's an organic stuff. Yes, ok, and then it is also for you to choose, for example, as we said in the beginning, it is also important when there is two carrots, for example, one from Spain and one from Lippe, from here, so you can also choose. It is better to choose local, but normally with the labels they are ok.

B: It is very important that they are controlled. You can rely on this if it's a Bioland, normally you can rely on this. I don't know if in other countries, if the state is not so engaged, I don't know how it is in Russia.

M: Yes, that's why I ask actually. That's because in Russia we don't have this, you know, labels. We have only one, and, like, I think nobody knows it actually and if on the product you see that it's written, ok, it's organic, you can't be sure that it is organic because everyone could write it. So, you can't rely on this.

B: Yes, we have a lot of meat from Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary which is forgery. It exists also. We also have these problems even here, in Germany, some problems. Because the label is not so exactly, farmers can have at the same time Bioland and they can have conventional way of production. This is much criticized, because it's difficult to control which food is given to these animals.

H: Yes, but you can say that biological food is more established than in the beginning. It is every time people try to do something else against law but I think generally it is well established and farmers who make biological stuff they also know that they are controlled because when there is a scandal, they say the biological food is bad, so they can't sell this stuff to people

B: We have few things for you. This id from Green Party, you can look what you can get in Bielefeld, under which conditions and so on, and so on

H: Maybe you know this «Food and corn», it is a newspaper, I get it, for example, from this William Guterslo. They put it in the box but you can also get it at the biological shops. And it's where people who produce ecological stuff, they use this and also advertisement, there are also some articles. But also sometimes about, here, different about production and so. There is inside, for example, I like very much this label called Rapunzel. Yes, and I like, I like it very much. Long time they are doing this job. And you know they started as very nice, they started in the beginning, it was also a community, where they want to make biological food and now it is really a very big concern, corporation. But it's really nice. Because they really make a very good chocolate, for example, but when they go to these countries, for example, they look for cacao and they look how much they can give to the farmers. They try to buy these things in a fair price. That's also one thing, fair trade, yeh. For example, our coffee, we try to buy on fair trade. It means that farmers who produce coffee they get the money. Because in supermarket you can buy coffee a packet for 3 Euro. Or, for example the black tea or the green tea, we buy from, it's called, Tea compain. They started 20 years ago. There was a project at the University of Berlin. And they say we want to give the people who pick the tea leafs, it was especially women, we want to give them better price and then they studied, they went to India and they started to make contract with special tea farms. They say we will take all your tea and we will give you this price and you should take less pesticide and then they say to people, we don't want to store tea for a long time in our shops. When you want, three months per year, we sell the tea and if you want to take our tea, then you have to buy, for example, for one year, so. For example, we bought three packets each 3 kilo black tea and we have the tea the whole year. And it's cheaper than you buy

in the normal shop. And it's also that the people get the good prices. This is this kind of compains. But it started in Berlin.

B: It's another way to economize

H: Yes, and it is a very good quality

M: Ok, but it doesn't have, for example, any label

H: Yes, there is the label only of this compain

B: Another conception, they say, we are not looking if they are producing in biological way we control at the end if there is something in or not

H: Yes and then for the farms and they say we want take your tea if there are not so many pesticides inside and so over the years the quality of the tea improved. And at the end people who were working there get more money and it's directly...it's like the fair trade, they buy it directly without middleman and that's for both sides better. For us it is because of the high quality of the tea and it's cheaper. And for the owners of tea plantations it was also interesting because they get a good price, they benefited from it

B: But with every product it's not possible, for example, it was the same with rice and noodles, with those who kept long

H: Yes, then it is possible. So, it was another example.

M: I think it was very interesting. I know so many things now.

B: I remember example, my parents had a little farm to produce potatoes. And the others in the town or in the village they produce potatoes in mass. And they came in the evening; they came to us to buy for their own consumption. They knew that they produce bad product and for their own consumption they bought at my father's.

M: Ok, I think that I actually asked all questions that I wanted. It was actually very good. I liked that you told me your own story; it is more interesting than to just ask questions. It is always better. Ok, so thank you very much. I will turn of the recording now.



## **Appendix VI Example of the interview transcript (Russian)**

April, 4. Female, 25.

Anastasiia Rogova, (AR).

М: Скажите, пожалуйста, какие группы эко продуктов Вы сейчас покупаете чаще всего, какие категории товаров?

А: На данный момент я чаще всего покупаю следующие группы товаров: косметика; средства для уборки дома; некоторые виды продуктов питания.

М: А какие именно продукты питания Вы пробовали?

А: Очень сложно определить, органический продукт или нет, т.к. не на всех товарах есть информация о наличии экомаркировки. В тех же самых сетевых магазинах, покупая свежую рыбу, мясо, птицу, овощи и фрукты, мы уже видим сам продукт без упаковки. Из того, что сертифицировано, я пробовала: кэроб, льняное и оливковое масло, шоколад, вино.

М: Что для Вас в принципе означает эко продукция? Каким должен быть продукт, чтобы его можно было назвать органическим? Как Вы можете определить, что продукт действительно обладает этими самыми характеристиками? Почему вы покупаете именно эко продукты, а не обычные товары?

А: Органический (экологический) продукт - это сертифицированная продукция, изготовленная без применения искусственных пищевых и косметических добавок ( а также ароматизаторов, красителей и консервантов), ГМО, пестицидов и синтетических минеральных удобрений, т.е. иметь натуральное происхождение. Данная продукция должна иметь экомаркировку, подтверждающую её статус. При изготовлении продукта должны быть сертифицированы все этапы производства, а упаковка, транспортировка и утилизация продукта не должны наносить вред окружающей среде. Употребление экологически чистой продукции имеет огромное значение, как для человека , так и для окружающей среды и в целом всей планеты. От этого зависит уровень здоровья и качество жизни человека, животных, растительных видов, а также чистота окружающей среды. В нашем мире всё взаимосвязано, поэтому пагубные действия, нанесенные человеком на экологию (загрязнение воды, выбросы ядовитых веществ с промышленных предприятий, неправильная утилизация мусора) приводят к тому, что экосистема начинает меняться: вымирают или мутируют животные и растения, которые в дальнейшем человек мог бы употребить в пищу, возникают кислотные дожди, происходит истощение почв и полезных

ископаемых, глобальное потепление. Также появляются озоновые дыры, происходит уменьшение количества лесов и увеличение площадей пустынь, сокращение количества пресной воды. Я покупаю органические продукты, т.к. забочусь о состоянии собственного здоровья и здоровья окружающих меня людей, животных, растений, а также об уровне экологии в целом. Определить экопродукцию можно при наличии соответствующей маркировки проверенных сертификационных органов, а также необходимо читать состав продукции на этикетке. К сожалению, иногда очень сложно разобраться в значении тех или иных компонентов состава продукции и понять, какой вред они могут нанести. Некоторые группы товаров натурального происхождения можно отличить от искусственных путем внешнего осмотра (запах, цвет, форма). К таким товарам я отношу фрукты и овощи.

М: А на что Вы обращаете внимание, когда оцениваете внешний вид продукта?

А: Я обращаю внимание на неоднородность формы и запах. Например, если яблоки все красивые, блестящие, одинаковые по форме, но без запаха яблок, то этот продукт скорее всего был выращен с применением улучшителей.

М: Можете ли Вы сказать, что при покупке эко продуктов, вы полностью уверены в том, что они действительно органические? Вы верите в то, что это не подделка и не маркетинговый ход со стороны производителя или распространителя? Что является для Вас основой веры (доверия) в органическое происхождение товара?

А: Я могу быть уверена, что продукт органического происхождения только в том случае, если у него есть подтверждающая статус экомаркировка, а лучше сразу несколько. Т.к. даже если состав продукта на этикетке подходит под стандарты экопродукции, нельзя точно сказать, что при процессе производства, хранения, транспортировки эти стандарты не были нарушены. Стоит отметить, что стоит доверять только известным и проверенным маркировкам. В связи с тем, что на экологичные товары появился повышенный спрос из-за веяний современной моды на здоровый образ жизни, недоброкачественные производители ставят на своих продуктах вымышленные маркировки со словами «эко», «био», «органик», дабы повысить уровень продаж.

М: А какие экомаркировки для Вас наиболее значимые? Какие Вы стараетесь покупать?

А: Я преимущественно доверяю экомаркировкам первого типа, т.к. сертификация проводится в соответствии с принципами международного стандарта ISO 14024 исключительно независимой третьей стороной (сертифицирующим органом) и учитывает

весь жизненный цикл товара, включая происхождение сырья, его обработку и заканчивая утилизацией продукта по окончании срока эксплуатации. В России есть только одна маркировка первого типа - «Листок жизни», в других странах - «Северный лебедь» (страны Скандинавии), «Голубой Ангел» (Германия), «Европейский цветок» (Евросоюз) и другие. Кроме того, сертификат имеет ограниченный срок действия – от 1 до 3 лет. Каждый раз, чтобы продлить право пользования экомаркировкой первого типа, компания должна снова проходить проверки и сдавать продукцию на лабораторный анализ. Таким образом, можно защитить себя от недобросовестных производителей. При выборе косметики я обычно ориентируюсь на экомаркировки ICEA, COSMOS-STANDARD, ECOCERT, BDIH

М: Вспомните, пожалуйста, как и почему вы решили покупать эко продукты? Что подтолкнуло Вас к этому решению? Была ли какая-то определённая причина? Или это было спонтанное решение?

А: Впервые я стала интересоваться темой экологических продуктов, когда стала искать альтернативу обычной косметике из масс-маркета, т.к. хотела улучшить свой внешний вид. Благо, у меня есть подруга, которая работает в экологическом союзе «Листок жизни», она мне дала очень информативную справку на этот счет. Углубившись в тему экопродукции, я поняла, что покупкой косметики дело не может ограничиться, поэтому стала покупать средства для уборки и продукты питания. К сожалению, большую часть продуктов питания приходится всё-таки покупать в обычных магазинах, т.к. фермерские продукты на порядок дороже, а на данном этапе жизни, я не могу себе этого позволить.

М: Когда вы начали покупать эко продукты, кто-нибудь из вашего окружения, уже являлся потребителем такой продукции? Повлияло ли это как-то на Ваше решение покупать органическую еду? Может быть, кто-то рассказывал Вам о своём опыте, делился впечатлениями, советовал тоже попробовать подобные товары?

А: Да, некоторые мои друзья уже использовали экопродукцию на тот момент. Безусловно, это отчасти повлияло на мой выбор, т.к. я получила массу положительных отзывов и весомых аргументов в пользу данной продукции.

М: Скажите, пожалуйста, сегодня, Вы покупаете эко продукты в каком-то конкретном месте или ходите за покупками всегда в разные места? Может быть, предпочитаете какого-то конкретного производителя или торговую марку? Откуда Вы обычно узнаете, где можно купить экопродукты?

А: У меня есть несколько постоянных специализированных экомгазинов, в которых я обычно делаю массовый заказ. Из производителей уходовой косметики предпочитаю марки: Natura Siberica; Dr. Hauschka; Biotique Botanicals; СпивакЪ; Макошь. Из декоративной косметики я предпочитаю средства марок: Chocolatte; Era minerals. Для хозяйственных целей: Synergetic; Organic people; BioMio. К сожалению, не у всех производителей, описанных мною выше, имеется экомаркировка, но я всё равно покупаю их продукцию из-за состава, который меня устраивает. Мне кажется, если у товара нет экомаркировки, то нельзя утверждать, что товар экологически чистый на 100 %, даже если указан неплохой состав. Обычно, я ищу информацию о местах покупок в интернете, иногда нахожу их вживую, прогуливаясь по магазинам.

М: А в Интернете где именно можно такую информацию?

А: Я узнаю о производителях органической косметики из блогов, посвященных этой тематике, а также при выборе уже полюбившейся косметики в интернет-магазинах (обращаю внимание и на другие средства). Недавно был пост в Инстаграме у сообщества Lookbio на тему мест покупки органических продуктов: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BSRTkYCh-Qd/> От себя могу добавить, что есть ещё неплохие магазины: «Клевер»: <https://cloverclover.ru/>; «Зеленый»: <https://the-green.ru/>; «4fresh»: <https://www.4fresh.ru/> У знакомых спрашивала отзывы насчет косметики фирм Natura Siberica, BioMio, Dr. Hauschka, Organic People, Organic Shop. Список органических средств по категориям и места их покупок также можно будет посмотреть через приложение «Экополка», когда его доработают до конца.

М: А кто-либо из Вашего окружения тоже совершает покупки в этом месте, приобретает продукты этой марки/этого производителя? Возможно, вы совершаете покупки вместе? Или потом делитесь впечатлениями и советуете друг другу что-то относительно продукции данного магазина/марки или производителя?

А: Есть подруги, которые покупают те же марки косметики, что и я, но мы не делаем это вместе. Отзывами о приобретенной продукции, конечно, делимся друг с другом. Также я сама частенько рассказываю коллегам на работе и членам семьи о плюсах приобретения экопродукции.

М: Вспомните, если у вас когда-то возникали проблемы с выбором эко продукта или поиском места для его покупки, или вы не знали, стоит ли покупать товар в том или ином

месте, того или иного производителя или марки, обращались ли вы за советом к другим потребителям?

А: Перед покупкой того или иного продукта, я смотрю наличие маркировок, состав и отзывы потребителей. Могу посмотреть видео и статьи эcobлогеров Анны Тятте (<http://myecoblog.ru/>), Анастасии Приказчиковой (<http://www.imorganic.ru/>). Лично с ними не знакома.

М: Состоите ли вы в каком-либо Интернет-сообществе, посвящённом эко продукции? Может быть, являетесь членом группы в Вконтакте или Facebook? Возможно, читаете какие-либо блоги, связанные с данной тематикой?

А: Да, я состою в нескольких группах Вконтакте: «Экологический союз. Экомаркировка «Листок жизни» (<https://vk.com/ecounion>), у меня есть на смартфоне их приложение «Экополка», созданное для знакомства потребителя с экомаркировками, ассортимента сертифицированных товаров, а также упрощения поиска мест их покупки; Эcobлог ImOrganic (<https://vk.com/imorganic>); Ecolavka (<https://vk.com/ecolavkastore>); Eco Bio Boutique «Зелёная корзина» (<https://vk.com/biogreenbasket>). Я подписана на пару пабликов в Инстаграм: Lookbio (<https://www.instagram.com/lookbio/>), idealissta.blog (<https://www.instagram.com/idealissta.blog/>), а также смотрю описанные мной блоги в ответе на предыдущий вопрос. Помимо получения полезной информации, связанной с экопродукцией (новости, отчеты с поездок на экофермы, отзывы о средствах), также я могу поучаствовать в розыгрышах призов.

М: И напоследок, скажите, как Вы считаете, информация об эко продуктах, которую Вы получаете от своих знакомых, друзей и коллег более надёжная, нежели та, которую можно получить посредством СМИ, рекламы и других источников? Влияет ли это как-то на ваше поведение как потребителя подобной продукции?

А: Я не считаю, что информация полученная от коллег, знакомых и друзей надёжная на 100 %. Данная информация может нас подтолкнуть на выбор той или иной продукции, но в любом случае она имеет субъективный характер и должна быть проверена на достоверность. Информация, полученная из СМИ и рекламы, обычно несёт чисто коммерческий характер и не всегда так сказать «картинка на коробке соответствует действительности». Т.е. эту информацию тоже необходимо всегда проверять.

М: Как её можно проверить?

А: Наличие экомаркировки само по себе является гарантом экологичности. Если на товаре нет экомаркировки, то нельзя утверждать, что товар натуральный или органический, потому что для этого нужны исследования на всех этапах производства. Подробнее про экомаркировки можно почитать в ГОСТах.

*В заключение, если возможно, могу ли я узнать информацию о Вас? Сколько Вам лет? Состоите ли Вы в браке? Есть ли у Вас дети? В каком городе Вы проживаете в настоящий момент? И, если можно, Ваше имя.*

Меня зовут Анастасия. Мне 25 лет, нахожусь в браке, детей пока нет. Проживаю в городе Всеволожске, работаю в Санкт-Петербурге.

*Есть ли ещё что-то, что Вы хотели бы добавить? Если нет, то большое спасибо за участие! Если Вы заинтересованы, я могу поделиться с Вами результатами данного исследования, как только оно будет полностью завершено.*