

Master's Thesis

Community-supported agriculture in Germany

A case study analyzing sustainable
consumption among CSA consumer-
members

Josefina Luise Fädler

31 May 2017



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Aalborg University
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Master's Thesis

**Community-supported agriculture in Germany – a way
towards more sustainable consumption?!**

A case study analyzing sustainable consumption among CSA consumer-
members of CSA initiatives based in South-western Germany

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Abstract

Current food production and consumption processes have negative impacts on the environment and additionally, will not be sufficient anymore in a few years to feed the world's population. Therefore, alternative food supply systems to ensure global food are a subject of increasing interest and popularity. One example for an alternative food supply system is community-supported agriculture (CSA). This thesis contributes to the discussion by examining CSA in Germany and its capability to lead towards a more sustainable lifestyle of its consumer-members. Hence, this thesis is especially concerned with the awareness and knowledge about sustainability. While CSAs are locally based initiatives, global thinking is quite common among CSA consumer-members.

Theories and studies from the areas of CSA, community consumption, modernity and identity as well as sustainable consumption served as underlying concepts. To examine CSA's potential towards a more sustainable consumption behavior in Germany, semi-structured interviews with consumer-members of the CSA Aglasterhausen-Daudenzell and the CSA Rhein-Neckar/ Heidelberg were conducted. Overall, 15 interviews were accomplished while data was gathered from 17 CSA consumer-members. Respondents answered to questions about attitudes towards their CSA membership, the importance and benefits of community, their own consumption behavior and specific aspects of sustainability. An explorative online survey was conducted in advance to the interviews. Ad hoc meaning generation was used to examine the characteristics of the consumer-members of the two involved CSA initiatives.

Great awareness for produce, agriculture, nature and globalization was found among the interviewees. Nevertheless, a gap between their values and actions occurred for many of them. Moreover, the chosen data analysis method served to detect that common values and vision in a CSA community are from importance and the community itself provides benefits such as tolerance, direct democratic decisions and creation of further consumption communities. Symbolic consumption was not so much of a topic as being the ideal self of their perceptions – the interviewed CSA consumer-members rather aim to act as influencer and model. Critic was expressed on the society who does not value agricultural products as well as on the political and economic system which does not support or facilitate alternative (food) consumption systems. Among the social, ecological and economic aspect of sustainability, the ecological aspect was estimated as the most

important. Nevertheless, the interviewees understand sustainability in quite different dimensions: not more than needed, less of everything, specific part of resources, consideration of humans, animals and environment, appropriateness, ecological footprint, durable products, immediate cash flow. Some CSA consumer-members regard sustainable consumption as sacrifice whereas others perceive it as enriching. The interviewees could neither be categorized as pure *Homo sustinens* nor as *Homo economicus* due to CSA being part of the New Economics.

It could be discovered in this research that a basis knowledge and awareness is needed to participate in CSA at all. Once the interviewees became members of a CSA initiative, their knowledge and interest concerning food production, consumption and environmental processes was expanded. Furthermore, the CSA membership fosters a more sustainable lifestyle for most of the consumer-members. The global awareness of their food consumption behavior and its impact on the environment led to a more local focus and engagement among the interviewees.

Content

- 1. Introduction..... 3
- 2. Theoretical Framework 11
 - 2.1 Characteristics of CSA and its consumer-members 13
 - 2.2. Consuming within a community 17
 - 2.3. Modernity and Identity 20
 - 2.4 Sustainable Consumption..... 24
 - 2.5. Implementation of theoretical concepts 27
- 3. Methodology 29
 - 3.1 My world, my paradigm 29
 - 3.1.1 Ontological position 31
 - 3.1.2 Epistemological position 32
 - 3.1.2 Considerations..... 34
 - 3.2 My world, my knowledge..... 35
 - 3.2.1 Explorative Phase 37
 - 3.2.2 Data Gathering for the Analysis 39
- 4. Data analysis..... 48
 - 4.1 CSA – a mind-expanding initiative..... 48
 - 4.1.1 Development in progress 49
 - 4.1.2 Mind-expansion..... 50
 - 4.1.3 Values and action 55
 - 4.1.4 Perceived values 56
 - 4.2 People matter..... 58
 - 4.2.1 Common values and vision 58
 - 4.2.2 Solidary thoughts and community aspects 60

4.3 Tradition in a modern world?	63
4.3.1 CSA – a traditional model of consumption?	64
4.3.2 Symbolic consumption	65
4.3.3 Critic on society and system.....	65
4.4 Consumption behavior and sustainability.....	68
4.4.1 Pro-environmental consumer or ecological citizen?!	68
4.4.2 Sustainable consumption explained by CSA consumer-members.....	69
4.4.3 The sacrifice of sustainable consumption.....	71
4.4.4 A social, ecological and economic dimension.....	72
4.4.5 Homo sustinens & New economics.....	74
4.4.6 Spreading the word	76
5. Critical reflections.....	78
6. Conclusion	81
7. Recommendations for further research	84
Bibliography.....	86
Appendix.....	94
Appendix I.....	94
Appendix II.....	97
Appendix III.....	98
Appendix IV	101

1. Introduction

Growing up in Western society we take it for granted in our daily life that we can buy almost any kind of food at any time – despite its seasonal availability, geographical origin or exploitation of resources and labor. This is only possible due to globalization, a phenomenon which has affected every sector of economy and thus, has also been very rapid in the food production sector. (O'Hara & Stagl, 2001; Vinnari & Tapio, 2012). The process of globalization has not spared out the food market in Germany: In 2014, food and luxury food 75.5 billion Euros worth were imported, which is 8,3 per cent of total German imports; the food products were mainly imported from European countries, nevertheless, 14% of Germany's food products were imported from America, 7% from Asia and 3% from Africa (IXPOS, 2015). According to O'Hara and Stagl (2001) the trend of globalization is growing and has led to "increasingly homogeneous production methods, consumption patterns, built environments and patterns of social organization as well as the concomitant loss of social and biological diversity" (O'Hara & Stagl, 2001: 534). These results of globalization raise the question of the sustainability of our food system, especially when thinking about future generations. The production methods and consumption patterns especially in huge industrialized nations such as the USA but also the European countries are likely to cause a loss of biological diversity. Monocultural farming and the application of genetically modified crops, for example, lead to nutrient deficiency of soil and the extinction of single species. However, it is not only biological diversity that suffers from the population's food production methods (Paavola & Adger, 2006): raising greenhouse gas emissions and destruction of ecosystems are strongly interrelated and it is mainly the developing countries which suffer from the impacts caused by the developed countries (Pelletier, 2010; Tilman, Balzer, Hill, & Befort, 2011). All these mentioned results of globalization will in return cause a worldwide dilemma of nourishment:

"By the year 2050, the number of people on Earth is expected to increase from the current 6.7 to 9.2 billion. What is the best way to produce enough food to feed all these people? If we continue with current farming practices, vast amounts of wilderness will be lost, millions of birds and billions of insects will die, farm workers will be at increased risk for disease, and the public will lose billions of dollars as a consequence of environmental degradation. Clearly, there must be a better way to resolve the need for increased food production with the desire to minimize its impact." (Ronald & Adamchak, 2010: 184)

The need of a sustainable food production and consumption system in order to provide enough food for the world's population is a thought that is supported by Vinnari and Tapio (2012). This is probably not possible without people worldwide taking over responsibility for their consumption choices and lifestyles and the awareness that people share the planet among themselves and other species (Bina & Vaz, 2011). At the moment, it seems that sustainable nourishment becomes - or already is - a trend since "agricultural production systems that supply environmentally and ethically preferable food are receiving ever more attention" (Balázs, Pataki, & Lazányi, 2016: 100). However, it is not clear if a trend in nutrition raises enough awareness and deeper knowledge about the actual problem of sustainability and thus, can create a sustainable lifestyle and responsibility of human beings. At the moment, most food consumption choices are made without much reflection which is why deeper knowledge and awareness in food consumption could have a positive impact on the environment of our globalized world (Vinnari & Tapio, 2012).

Since globalization is a driver of changes, it is not unthinkable that it could also be a driver towards more sustainability. According to Vinnari and Tapio (2012), the debate around sustainability can be seen as part of a broader debate about societal development and thus, includes philosophical and political questions. It is a debate coming from a higher entity, but how can it give the society an understanding about the debate and be implemented by the individual citizen? So far, Globalization has caused changes in our society, in culture and religion and thus, is restructuring the way we live. People need these structures in order to make sense of the world they are living in (Giddens, 1990; Giddens, 2000). However, over the last few hundred years in Western society structures and traditions have been dissolved, nature has been retreated due to modern progress, globalization and the connected exploitative production and consumption practices (Burgh-Woodman & King, 2013). According to Fischler (1988: 275), food is still essential for people in terms of identity: "The way any given human group eats helps it assert its diversity, hierarchy and organization, and at the same time, both its oneness and the otherness of whoever eats differently." Following, food is central to people's sense of identity and the creation of individual identity and thus, the dissolved sociocultural frameworks of food have a major impact on our identity and identity construction (Fischler, 1988). Through all these processes of globalization things have become more

unpredictable and thus, subject to change (Giddens, 2000). In late modernity, a lot of changes were not only for the good but ended up in crises instead. Therefore, the nowadays environmental crises are not only causing damage to nature and habitat, they are also an indicator of human identity crisis (Pelletier, 2010). This crisis of identity affects mainly “the western industrial social model — a model that is fast becoming the dominant mode of human civilization” (Pelletier, 2010: 1893). The most destructive force in this crisis is the evolutionary anachronism of the question whoever humans are in relation to each other and with whom they constitute the conditions of life on earth (Pelletier, 2010). In a community of consumption, such as community-supported agriculture (CSA), there could be a chance that this kind of destructive force can be leveraged at least partly. This could happen for example through the allocation of responsibilities within the group and thus, create a clearer meaning of the relation in which people are connected to each other.

Furthermore, economic and technical changes in lifestyle have eliminated the above mentioned sociocultural frameworks of food as central point of people’s identity sense which in the old days governed and constrained food; the loss of these traditions in eating habits has also opened up a crisis due to food as objects without identity (Fischler, 1988). From a consumer’s perspective, modern food is devoid of origin or history which makes it an “unidentified edible object” (Fischler, 1988: 289). Since human beings of our era therefore are involved in identity construction and restructuring their lives, it could be a great chance to include a more sustainable way of living. Furthermore, this could lead to a more sustainable and conscious food consumption behavior: “As eating is such a fundamental part of people's daily activities it also forms part of their identities and affects how they position themselves towards other life forms.” (Vinnari & Tapio, 2012: 52).

Sustainability can usually be found in three aspects of society: social sustainability, economic sustainability and ecological sustainability (Rogers, Gardner, & Carlson, 2013; Sikdar, 2003). These three aspects are interwoven and thus difficult to regard disconnected from each other; also tensions between them are thinkable. However, it could be possible that one aspect has stronger influences and impacts on food production and consumption behavior than the others. I aim to investigate knowledge and

awareness about sustainability as an improvement of our lifestyle in order to maintain natural capital which means to maintain both source and sink of environmental services intact (Goodland, 1997). In other words, does more knowledge and awareness about sustainability help to create a more tenable lifestyle and thus, protect the natural assets of land, water and air around us?

One way of keeping these environmental services unimpaired by improving the lifestyle of people is the change of our food production and consumption behavior. There are already several initiatives going on for alternative food supplies of which one seems to address to all three aspects of sustainability: Community-supported agriculture. Social sustainability can be found in its solidary character, economic sustainability in its market-based actions, and ecological sustainability in its kind of cultivation. CSA represents a model of rethinking our food system and “among highly diverse conceptualizations, most analysts consider CSAs as important part of alternative food supply chains that strengthen the local economy and preserve agricultural diversity” (Balázs et al., 2016: 102). CSAs do not only offer an alternative vision on future food supply but could also affect lifestyle, food activism, experimenting, and food research (Balázs et al., 2016). These outcomes are likely to have their origins in the physical involvement of the members on the farm, choice restrictions, promotion of the CSA and the CSA’s creation of “futures where the growing and preparation of food is celebrated” (Balázs et al., 2016: 108).

“Community-supported agriculture (CSA) is a growing social movement” (Cone & Myhre, 2000: 187) that aims to establish a direct connection between food producers and consumers. Furthermore, CSA endeavors to establish communities of farmers and consumer members to secure the quality of food and the survival of small farmers (Cone & Myhre, 2000). CSAs function according to a solidary principle and each CSA is (at least in Germany) mostly a registered association in itself. The base of a CSA cooperative is a long-term relationship between food growers and food consumers and thus, sharing the risk of growing. “The underlying idea is that a farm supplies fresh and organic-grown food to its community whilst the community provides the funding and sometimes labor resources that are necessary to cover costs and to guarantee a fair wage to the farmer.” (Gebhard, Hagemann, Hensler, Schweizer, & Wember, 2015: 504). To become a member of a CSA, the consumers purchase a ‘share’ of the local farm and, in return, receive a

certain amount of produce. The produce varies on each farm and includes fresh vegetables and fruits, dairy products, eggs, meat, herbs and flowers. The weekly amount of produce shares are depending on the conditions of the growing season. The price of a share represents more a membership fee instead of the actual price for the products – thus, the price is independent of the volume of a share and the amount of produce received by the consume-members. Whilst the farm supplies fresh and organic-grown food to the respective community the consumer-members provide the funding and sometimes also labor resources (Allen, Rossi, Woods, & Davis, 2016; Balázs et al., 2016; Bloemmen, Bobulescu, Le, & Vitari, 2015; Cone & Myhre, 2000; Gebhard et al., 2015; O'Hara & Stagl, 2001).

Originally, the CSA movement started out in Germany, Switzerland and Japan in the 1960s and has spread all over the world; in the 1980s it also became quite popular in the United States (Cone & Myhre, 2000; Gebhard et al., 2015). The probably first CSA cooperative, the Teikei system in Japan, was initiated by a small group of Japanese women who were concerned with food safety, pesticide use, processed and imported foods (Bougherara, Grolleau, & Mzoughi, 2009). From this time on, CSAs became “grass-roots worldwide initiatives in various forms, in many different contexts” (Bloemmen et al., 2015: 110).

One major principle of CSA, however, is not only the risk-sharing of growing between farmer and consumer-members but also the solidarity aspect: “Community Supported Agriculture implies that a community is built around producing and consuming food.” (Balázs et al., 2016: 101). Community activities incorporate seasonal farm festivals, on-farm work, educational experiences and children’s activities and aim for interchange between farmers and consumer-members such as living circumstances, interests and needs; this shall create “a more integrated community centered on food and common identity as eaters” (Hinrichs, 2000: 300). The creation of a common identity seems to be essential in nowadays society, where a sense of a common identity has almost been lost. This implies that we mainly focus egoistically on ourselves instead of placing value on acting within a community, but even the individual identity is passing through a crisis. This condition of modernity could be improved by clearly defined communities such as CSAs. According to Cone and Myhre (2000) CSA farms provide an option to re-embed their consumers in time and place because their CSA membership links them to a particular

piece of land and an awareness of the seasons. Furthermore, CSAs show the potential for (re-) embeddedness for both the direct agricultural market and the self-identity of shareholders due to offering them a sense of cohesion with people who have similar ideologies (Cone & Myhre, 2000; Hinrichs, 2000; O'Hara & Stagl, 2001).

In my research, I regard the CSA's potential for a re-embedding of markets into their physical, social and ethical context as a way of sustainable acting and thus, the produce of CSAs as sustainable consumption (O'Hara & Stagl, 2001). O'Hara & Stagl (2001) determine the re-embedding of markets in their physical context through more direct feedback of the impact of human economic activity, in their social context through more direct communication between producer and consumer, in their ethical context through more opportunities to re-enhance knowledge systems and trust. In accordance with Pelletier (2010) who states that sustainability is rather a concern of community than of individuals, I aim to detect if CSAs have the potential to constitute a common identity. As this is a two-way process, it could also be the question if a common identity has the potential to constitute CSA as a sustainable future food system. Does the community sense put more emphasize on sustainable consumption as an individual's consumption choice? Is CSA a way to transform our consumption behavior towards more sustainability? By all means, plenty of researchers have found a future potential of CSA for a transition to sustainability and alternative food supply (Balázs et al., 2016; Bloemmen et al., 2015).

There has been plenty of research in terms of CSA based in the USA and France, also some in Australia and South America. But despite being one of the founding nations, there is little research about CSA initiatives in Germany. This is from special notice since Germany is the most densely populated country among the above named. Furthermore, German consumers spent significantly less and less of their income on food in the last decades (European CSA Research Group, 2016). In opposition to this is the growing number of CSA initiatives: Whereas there were 19 CSAs in Germany in 2011 (Kraiß & van Elsen, 2008), nowadays 126 CSA initiatives can be counted with 107 more farms being in the foundation phase (Solidarische Landwirtschaft, 2017). Therefore, it can be assumed that there is a raising interest in community-supported agriculture, which is functioning without the laws of the market economy or the agribusiness. The motto of the German association for CSA is "think globally – act locally"; originally this expression has turned to

the trade mark of the CLUB OF ROME. This German association is a unification of personalities from sciences, culture, economy and politics from all over the world. Its main idea is a sustainable development that focuses on the needs of present and future generations, on the limited resources and the limited resilience of our ecosystems. By focusing on local and seasonal production, CSAs in Germany are following this main idea of the CLUB OF ROME and turn it into their own maxim.

In my thesis, I would like to investigate how a trend towards local and regional consumption in Germany, namely “act locally”, can be part of the globalization in the sense of “think globally”. This is based on my personal view on sustainability as a way of consume resource-conserving and further consume in a way that leaves enough resources globally to enable sufficient nourishment for all. Following questions arise from my idea of sustainability: Is acting local in CSA becoming part of a globalized world to achieve more sustainability? Is CSA a way of sustainable consumption? What makes CSA consumer-members act locally? What do they get out of it? And how do CSA consumer-members view their involvement in regard to sustainable consumption and CSA as an alternative future food concept?

This research examines the awareness of CSA consumer-members in terms of sustainable food consumption and if they relate this to their own lifestyle. In order to do so, the following problem formulation and research questions are formulated:

In which ways do CSA consumer-members “think globally” while “acting locally” in regard to globalization and sustainable consumption?

- ☞ In how far does CSA create enough awareness and deeper knowledge about sustainability and thus, could create a more tenable lifestyle?*
- ☞ How do CSA consumer-members understand and practice sustainable consumption?*

The research aims to develop a deeper understanding of the awareness of sustainable consumption of the CSA consumer-members and their perception of sustainable consumption in regard of their CSA membership. The sustainability of this membership will be viewed from various aspects and priorities and thus, will indicate in how far CSA has a potential to create a more sustainable lifestyle among a small group of German

consumers. If CSA indeed has a potential to make consumption patterns more sustainable, it would then be interesting to hear how CSA consumer-members estimate the possibilities to spread these initiatives.

To tackle the research questions different relevant theories from four different consumption related fields will be included in this research. I will start my second chapter with characteristics of CSA consumer-members and an overview of previous CSA-related studies that have been conducted. Secondly, I will discuss the consumption within a community and how this is related to CSA. I will further develop how identity and modernity are related to our nowadays consumption behavior and the issue of sustainability. The fourth field will be concerned with different aspects of sustainability and sustainable consumption.

The case of consumer-members' awareness about the problem of sustainability and their own consumption behavior will be investigated from a region-focused standpoint as I have conducted in-depth interviews with CSA consumer-members of two initiatives in the south-west of Germany. This allows me to examine the awareness of sustainability and its relation to the consumer-members behavior both in rural and rather urban areas as single cases in a bigger picture.

2. Theoretical Framework

To understand consumers' participation in CSA I will discuss various relevant studies and theories in the following chapter. However, the most fundamental question hereby is: *What are theories and which theories are actually relevant to the topic under investigation?*

According to Costley (2006: 1-2) "a theory is an orderly, integrated set of statement that describes, explains and predicts behavior". He further explains that theories are directly influenced by cultural values and belief systems and hence, guide research. This is insofar essential for my research as the theories described in the following are carefully chosen and thus, will make it easier for me to stay focused and will help me to understand the examined phenomenon. This is supported by Costley's (2006) description of theories as lenses through which researchers look and give meaning to what they see. In the research on hand, I will use various lenses from the field of *identity and modernity, community practices* and *sustainable consumption*. Before looking through these lenses, I will summarize the *characteristics of CSA consumer-members* in the form of a literature review of studies undertaken in the past. This is particularly important as part of a theoretical framework in order to find out what knowledge is already available about the investigated topic and what remains to be explored – thus, it should be prevented to reinvent the wheel over and over again (Loudon & DellaBitta, 1988). With this in mind, the *characteristics of CSA consumer-members* will provide me with knowledge about this particular group of consumers from which I will later collect solid data.

A variety of studies and theories have been used to grasp the complex phenomenon of what drives CSA consumer-members to act locally in our globalized world and how their action has an impact on sustainability in Germany. First, in the chapter about *characteristics of CSA consumer-members*, different studies and results will be discussed to get a clearer idea of how CSA consumer-members act and what drives them. This will build a solid base for the interviews and data I will collect from these and help to evaluate the CSA consumer-members. In the second chapter *identity and modernity* a thorough explanation of identity and its struggles in the modern world is given. This is needed to understand why people decide to act on a local level such as getting involved in CSA and what this involvement means to them. The third chapter of my theoretical framework,

community practices, focuses on the CSA consumer-members as part of a community and the socio-cultural practices within it. This lens seems to be relevant because CSA is a community based initiative. The fourth lens through which I will look is *sustainable consumption*. The theoretical framework will include theories which are related with consumption; in this particular study I will lay the focus on sustainable consumption – motivations for and aims of consuming sustainable or green. This is most relevant for the case of CSA due to its community-based and local commitment.

The decision to focus on these theory lenses appears to be natural and suggestive after diving deeper into the topic of CSA and the studies that have been undertaken previously. These theoretical areas should provide a firm framework that gives me a better understanding if a trend in food consumption such as CSA raises enough awareness and deeper knowledge about the actual problem of sustainability and thus, can create a sustainable lifestyle and a feeling of responsibility among CSA consumer-members.

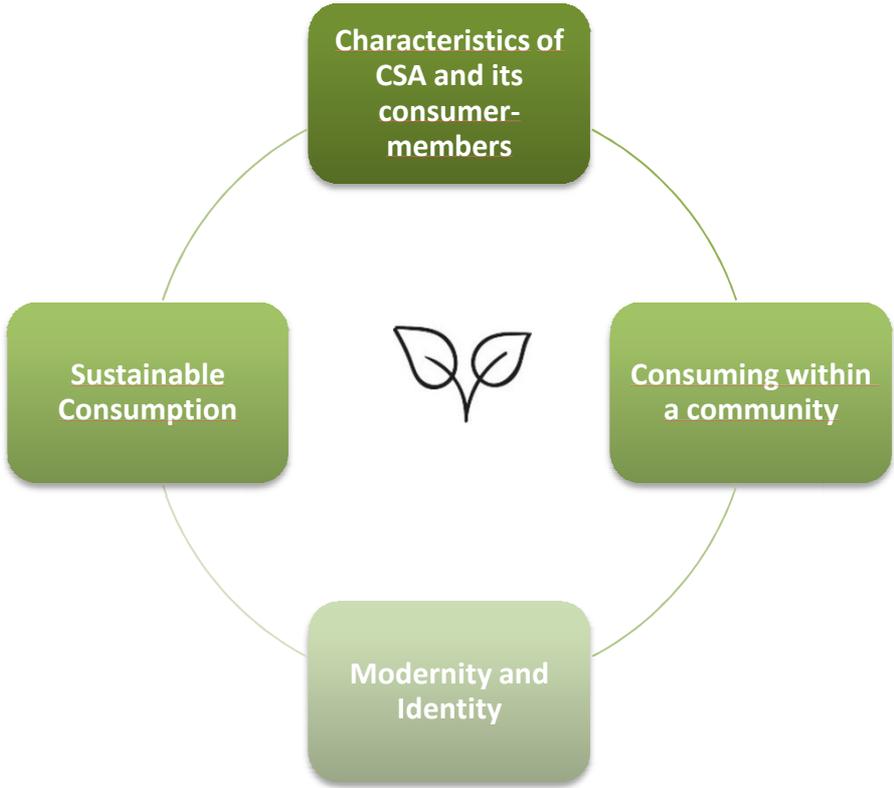


Figure 1. Major concepts within the theoretical framework.

From this figure it can already be guessed that CSA and the community behind it is much more complex and diverse as one would think at first glance – CSA is not only a different

way of procurement of food. In the following I explore various aspects in regard to CSA and the consumption of its consumer-members.

Characteristics of CSA and its consumer- members

2.1 Characteristics of CSA and its consumer-members

“As local food systems, CSAs provide a number of benefits in contrast to the global alternative. CSAs reduce the hidden costs associated with our food system. [...] Thus, less energy is consumed transporting food. Farmland is preserved [...]. CSAs also reduce the waste-stream associated with our food system, by minimizing the need for packaging [...] CSA food is typically produced using organic [...] methods [...]. As sustainable agricultural systems, they rely on regionally appropriate food varieties and production methods.” (Goland, 2002: 15)

As mentioned in the quote above, CSA is mainly characterized by various benefits regarding its use of energy, farmland, organic methods and its reduction of waste. However, according to Goland (2002), these are not the only benefits of CSA – the maintenance of biodiversity and local ecological knowledge support the externalized environment. This perspective on CSA is supported by Brehm and Eisenhauer (2008: 95) who see a strengthening of “community engagement and sustainability through an emphasis on local food systems”. Generally, it can be noticed that CSA is mainly described as an initiative with positive outcomes and many benefits. It inherits a high potential of an alternative system to the whole industrial farming besides the alternative inputs and methods that are used (Hayden & Buck, 2012; Hinrichs, 2000). Furthermore, CSA represents not only an alternative to industrial farming but also a “new alternative relationship between farmers and consumers in today's industrialized food system” (Cooley & Lass, 1998: 228). According to Cooley and Lass (1998), CSA thus challenges its consumer-members to re-evaluate their community, their food and their role due to its economic, social, environmental, and philosophical principles. These challenges also seem to be an important factor when new members are recruited. Goland (2002) states that CSA should target individuals with concerns in social and environmental issues because it is essential for a social movement as he calls CSA. However, this social movement needs a

new set of social objectives and behavioral change to become more dominant as an alternative food system (Farnsworth, Thompson, Drury, & Warner, 1996). Therefore, Brown and Miller (2008: 1300) voice misgivings of CSA as a major future food system by stating that “CSA farms will probably never be more than a small part of the food system”.

Despite the plenty of optimistic benefits CSA in Goland’s (2002) research provides such as pleasure, friendship, aesthetics, affection, loyalty, justice, and reciprocity as well as costs and quality, there could be also another side of the coin detected. Doubts come from the perspective on CSA as marketing arrangement and the promises made by it (Goland, 2002). Is CSA just another way for producers to get stability in their income and better conditions in an alternative market? Within the last decades the farmer’s revenues for domestic produce in Germany have dropped significantly which makes it difficult for them to survive on the market. However, in CSA all money that is spent by consumers on the farmer’s products goes directly into agriculture (European CSA Research Group, 2016).

This difficulty might also emerge for new potential CSA consumer-members; according to Cooley and Lass (1998) many consumers are not familiar with the new concept of CSA and are concerned about the worth of what they will get in return when buying a CSA share. They further found in their study that CSA consumer-members see various disadvantages in their membership such as limited choice of products, seasonality of the produce or inconvenience of picking up the weekly share at the farm. Goland (2002: 21) found in his study about CSA in the US that “despite the culinary and ideological appeal of the CSA concept, many shareholders are not prepared to deal with the unfamiliar foods, or familiar foods in unpredicted (and from their perspective, uncontrollable) quantities.” The unfamiliarity and unpredictability makes the CSA membership less appealing for some consumers. Therefore, it often happens that the positive expectations on CSA in the beginning quickly turn into disappointment – a reversal that Goland (2002) could detect for approximately 50 % of the consumer-members in his study. He further found that consumer-members who joined CSA for fresh and organic vegetables are unlikely to stay members within a CSA initiative for longer. Hence, the intention and ideas of participating in CSA and the actual membership practicalities do not concur in the described cases – a dilemma in consumption behavior that has been investigated by various authors. Some of

them, for example Ajzen and Fishbein (1977), Barr (2004), Barr (2006), (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006), and Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002), directly connected their research on the so called value-action gap with consumption of goods in a sustainable way.

A value-action gap occurs when behavior does not appear to correspond with the existing motivation to engage with and behave in a sustainable way (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). Vermeir and Verbeke (2006) found several influential factors such as individual characteristics (e.g. involvement with sustainability), situational and product-related factors that contribute to how far ideal and actual behavior are lying apart. According to Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002), comfort and convenience are two important factors regarding people's pro-environmental behavior, but on the other side it is rarely environmental knowledge and awareness that leads to more sustainable behavior. For that reason, I aim to discover if the values that led people to participating in CSA also go beyond their membership and thus, incorporate consumption behavior apart from CSA. Furthermore, if CSA consumer-members show a broader gap between their values and their actual behavior, it would be interesting to discover the reasons behind.

It seems that the majority of studies about CSA, however, found that the benefits of CSA for the consumer-members outweigh the problems and disadvantages described above. Many studies concerned with the motivational factors of consumers joining a CSA found that environmental concerns and interest in the respective local communities were repeatedly the most compelling factors (Cooley & Lass, 1998; Ostrom, 1997). In contrast to the just mentioned motivating factors are the findings of Cone and Myhre (2000): For approximately 90 percent of their respondents, concern for the environment, desire for fresh and organic food, and support for local food sources were the most important factors of joining a CSA whereas the interest in community work was rather less important. However, the data collection process of their study lasted much longer than my one, included eight farms in the USA and the perspective of both shareholders and farmers. Another examination about CSA consumer-members in upstate New York conducted by O'Hara and Stagl (2001) found that direct and personal interaction between consumers and producers of their food products were besides from fresh and organic food and environmental consciousness from great importance. This motivation results

from the chance to re-embed markets and the increase of community sense and connection with the consumer-members community (O'Hara & Stagl, 2001).

Whereas O'Hara and Stagl (2001) found a greater interest in environmental topics, Allen et al. (2016) and Ostrom (2007) reported no increase in agricultural and environmental concerns from their respondents. This is in accordance with the findings of Hayden and Buck (2012) but they state that the environmental awareness is an important characteristic for CSA consumer-members before even joining a CSA:

“Most members come to the CSA with an environmental ideology that encourages commitments such as sourcing local foods, recycling, using less energy and generally being conscious of how everyday decisions may affect the health of bodies, communities and the planet. So, for most, CSA membership does not create deep or lasting environmental commitments since they were present before joining.” (Hayden & Buck, 2012)

Moreover, a greater awareness of the interconnections between the CSA consumer-member actions and environmental consequences – also for their food supply – has been found though. For those consumer-members who joined the CSA out of a sense of environmental commitment, the CSA membership promotes holistic rightness of their lifestyle, e.g. through living “in greater harmony with the seasonal growing processes of a particular place” (Hayden & Buck, 2012: 340).

Following, not only the motivations of joining a CSA but also the values CSA consumer-members perceived from their membership serve as a theoretical base for this study Chen (2013). In his study of a CSA farm in China, revealed six dimensions of perceived values by the consumer-members: Agricultural product quality value, health value, epistemic value, educational value for children, emotional value, and social value. The value mostly found in other researches as well is *agricultural product quality value*, a general healthier eating habit (Perez, Allen, & Brown, 2003), change of diet (Russell & Zepeda, 2008), more meals at home (Curtis, Allen, & Ward, 2015), and an increase in the amount and variety of fruits and vegetables eaten by the consumer-members (MacMillan Uribe, Winham, & Wharton, 2012; Perez et al., 2003).

Goland (2002: 23) states that “Shareholders who are most likely to stay committed to the CSA are those who joined not just to obtain a certain kind of produce, but also because of

social and environmental concerns.” Environmental concern is an aspect which is missing in Chen’s (2013) study. Since this thesis will focus on sustainable consumption and environmental awareness among CSA consumer-members in Germany, the question for a seventh dimension is raising. I try to add another aspect such as *ethical value* to the six aspects of perceived value discovered by Chen (2013). This is supported by the findings of Cooley and Lass (1998: 228) that “members gain a stronger understanding of the relationship between sustainability and the environment.” By all means, the motivations and values perceived from CSA membership are strongly based on each individual consumer-member and his or her way of living, which leads me to the next chapter about *identity and modernity*.



Consuming within
a community

2.2. Consuming within a community

There is a long history in the concept of community, beginning with the ancient Greece. At that time, “community” and “society” were used interchangeably which changed in the 19th century when the terms were used as counter-parts (Stråth, 2001). In the meantime, the notion of *community* is open to wide interpretation and according to (Jacobs, 2001: 2383), used in relation to urban citizenship as well “as a reference point in complex discourses about identity, place, and social meaning.” He further elaborates geographic or place-bound communities who share territorial interests; place does not play a major role in ‘community identity’ though. More important for community-building is that individuals or groups share particular characteristics and thus, identify with each other (Jacobs, 2001). Bekin, Carrigan and Szmigin (2007) outlined the various kinds of communities that have been discussed in numerous discourses: communities of practice, communities of interest, epistemic communities, virtual communities, hybrid communities, imagined communities, consumption and brand communities and alternative consumption communities. Placing CSA in one of these categories I would

suggest it is either practice communities, interest communities or alternative consumption communities.

Even though many studies found that the sense of doing something with a community is rather a lower ranked motivation or reason for joining a CSA (Allen et al., 2016; Cone & Myhre, 2000; O'Hara & Stagl, 2001), the name *community-supported agriculture* already implies the importance of the community within it – a community which is built around producing and consuming food (Balázs et al., 2016). Brehm and Eisenhauer (2008) as well as Cooley and Lass (1998) also came to the conclusion that the importance of community attachment is quite significant. Chen (2013) discovered that members widen their social circle with people with similar interests – this is what Maffesoli (1996) refers to as tribes or *tribalism*, a term I will elaborate later on in this chapter. The consumption of CSA and its produce furthermore is a “way to re-embed place and the personal into self-identity of shareholders, offering them a sense of cohesion with individuals who hold and desire to act on similar ideologies” (Cone & Myhre, 2000: 188). Moreover, Bekin and Seyfang (2007) state that local organic food networks (what surely applies for CSA) are builders of shared vision and community.

In connection to the identity crisis discussed in the following chapter (cf. *Modernity and Identity*), it can be said that “the individual has never been so free in his or her private and public choices as today, and never so alone and cut off from the spirit of community” (Cova, 1997: 299). From this stance he developed a model of people’s community behavior link including the modern and postmodern era – the model of metamorphosis of social link.

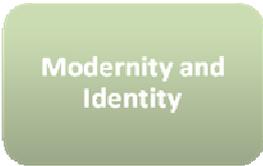


Figure 2. Model of metamorphosis of social link.

According to Cova (1997), all four modes presented in the model are coexisting in today's consumption practices concerning communities. Starting with traditional forms of communities such as family, village or religion the model transitions to modern aggregations, an era follows which is shaped by continuous liberation of the individual from these communities in order to become a free subject. This freedom of the individual is strongly supported by the market economy. In late modernity or postmodernity individualism still has priority; a totally autonomous human being characterized by showing its difference to others. This form is developing to postmodern tribes in which individuals share strong emotional links, a common subculture or vision and thus, are tied together in societal micro-groups. It is part of this era that "each postmodern individual belongs to several tribes in each of which he or she might play a different role and wear a specific mask" (Cova, 1997: 301). In line with this is Maffesoli's (1996: 75) definition of neo-tribalism in which a person can play different *roles* within various tribes and thus, "the costume changes as the person, according to personal tastes". Whereas classical tribalism induced stability, neo-tribalism is consequently marked by fluidity, occasional gathering and scattering (Maffesoli, 1996). Still, Maffesoli (1996) grasps tribes as groups that can only be understood as a whole and subverting its members' lifestyle to an ever growing degree.

Derived from the four forms of social link Cova's (1997) model can explain the coexistence of different forms of consumption such as individualized consumption

transitioning to a tribalized consumption, and in between modern mass consumption and traditional local consumption. Furthermore, the same person can experience all these modes of consumption in daily life (Cova, 1997). Since Cova's model has already been developed approximately a decade ago, it seems essential to mention that these forms of social links are connected with certain eras. The nowadays individual is independent and strong, which could possibly be the reason why we also need to strengthen the collective dimensions with consumption communities like in CSA.



Modernity and Identity

2.3. Modernity and Identity

The consumption of food in nowadays society has performed a volte-face compared to a couple of decades ago. Strongly involved in this shift is the agricultural sector:

“Agriculture no longer produces final products and it loses its links with final consumers. It becomes instead an economic sector producing intermediate goods for the agro-food industry. Upstream, it loses its link with nature, as techniques are increasingly determined by industrial inputs rather than by seasonal and territorial constraints or by the biological characteristics of the production process and the cultivated species.” (Fonte, 2002:15)

Since Fonte's research has been conducted in the early 2000s the meaning of agriculture might have changed in the last fifteen years. But also more recent articles came to the result that in the current situation “despite their obvious connection, agriculture and food are usually disconnected in scientific theories and public policies” (Lamine, 2015: 42; Dietrich, 2016). The loss of the connection between humans and nature is characteristic for today's “consumer society” as Giddens (1990) named it. It further is a consequence of modernity which Giddens (1990: 1) explains as “modes of social life or organization which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards”. It brought a dynamism into society due to the separation of time and space, disembedding of social systems and reflexive ordering and reordering (Giddens, 1990). This causes a “loss of certainty that makes it difficult for people to construct a secure and fulfilling narrative of self” (Cone & Myhre, 2000: 188). Paired with technical change, changing nutritional and

scientific indications as well as the crisis of traditional forms of family, participation of women in the labor market, new forms of work organization in late modernity, people developed some kind of anxiety in regard to food (Fonte, 2002). Possibly there is a chance of overcoming this anxiety by knowing the origin and production methods of produce as we find them in CSAs.

Fonte (2002) elaborated a comparison of food consumption models which include the traditional model, the agro-industrial model (modern society) and the satiety model (late modernity). “The traditional food consumption model is linked to a society of generalised poverty” (Fonte, 2002: 14), focuses on self-consumption and the producer-consumer whose production and consumption is mainly involved in a family farm; exchange of food happens within the local community. The agro-industrial model is based on global markets where farms are integrated in the agro-food industry and mass consumption of standard, durable food is also taking place outside home. In the satiety model the production process itself may still be industrialized, however, there is a re-evaluation of traditional techniques that leads to a segmentation of global markets; consumption styles are individualized, de-traditionalized and fragmented (Fonte, 2002). According to the characteristics Fonte (2002) is assigning the respective models, it can be said that people in Germany are currently mainly consumers as described somewhere between the agro-industrial and the satiety model. However, CSA would be rather placed within the traditional model which, “constrained by the territory and linked to the natural cycles of seasons, carries a sense of participation and identification with nature.” (Fonte, 2002:15).

This is insofar important as a strong connection between consumption and identity has been observed and researched by many authors, e.g. Belk (1988), Dittmar (2007), Jenkins (2014), and Loudon and DellaBitta (1988). Jenkins (2008:13) explains identity as “the basic cognitive mechanism that humans use to sort out themselves and their fellows, individually and collectively.” Following, people construct their identity in social situations with other human beings through segregating themselves by similarities and differences. According to Dittmar (2007), identity has a personal and a social dimension. The latter one can be related to the social identity theory by Tajfel and Turner (2004) among others. Social identity theory’s core premise is “that in many social situations people think of themselves and others as *group members*, rather than as unique individuals” (Ellemers &

Haslam, 2012). Tajfel (1974: 69) defined the concept of social identity as “that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership”. In terms of my study about the CSA consumer-members I thus aim to understand the emotional attachment to the respective CSA community as well as the knowledge that is created by it. There are three theoretical principles that are based on the assumption of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2004: 284): First, “individuals strive to achieve or to maintain positive social identity”; second, “positive social identity is based to a large extent on favorable comparisons that can be made between the in-group and some relevant out-groups: the in-group must be perceived as positively differentiated or distinct from the relevant out-groups”; third, “when social identity is unsatisfactory, individuals will strive either to leave their existing group and join some more positively distinct group and/or to make their existing group more positively distinct.” This means that in order to differentiate one’s own social group (in-group) from another (out-group) it is necessary to compare the groups to evaluate one’s own social group positively.

The dimensions of personal and social identity are subjective presentations of the multiple selves that are combined in one identity (Donahue et al., 1993; Vignoles et al., 2006), in other words one person has various identities depending on the current setting and circumstances. In contrast to Kleine et al. (1993: 2009) who states that the self is “a sense of who we are and what we are”, Jenkins (2008) includes aspects such as name and gender in his description of the personal dimension of the self. These aspects are rather difficult to change, however, other parts of the self can change over time and in various social dimensions (Blythe, 1997). Furthermore, Loudon and BellaDitta (1988) examined the *ideal self*, the state of how we ideally would see ourselves, as part of our identity. Landon (1974) also found that people tend to consume those products whose image is the closest to their own. This can be ascribed to what James (2013) defines as *material self*, explained by Dittmar (2007: 8) as people’s identity which is “extended beyond the physical boundaries of the body to include material goods.” In line with this is Belk’s (1988) concept of the *extended self* described by Solomon et al. (2010) as “you are what you consume.” Based on this, it can be assumed that material goods and produce might be consumed for their symbolic meaning, also known as symbolic consumption (Dittmar, 2007; Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1981). Hence, one way of expressing one’s ideal self could

be through the symbolic consumption of certain goods (Dittmar, 2007) like (organic) food as discussed in the following paragraph.

The consumption of food is not only central to our sense of identity but also central to individual identity due to the biological, psychological and social construction of individuals through the food it chooses to consume (Fischler, 1988). By Fonte's (2002) research, food serves as well as a marker of belonging, e.g. to a community or place, and as identifier of ideology or lifestyle.

However, through loss of sociocultural frameworks and the economic and technical changes in lifestyle, there has appeared a crisis in eating habits, which are now left to the choice of every individual (Fischler, 1988). This hypothesis is supported by Fonte (2002: 17) stating that "Technical change eliminates from the food system any locality and seasonal constraint, separating agriculture from nature and the consumer from its familiarity to places of production and productive techniques." Fischler (1988) elaborates the modern eater as "mere consumer" who largely consumes food without knowing about its production, history or origin – produces without identity. This might have changed since the 1980s: Informative labeling, listing of ingredients and other guarantees shall reduce uncertainty of consumers and are an attempt to reconstruct the identity of individuals by reconstructing the food's identity (Fischler, 1988; Fonte, 2002). At this point CSA comes into play; working against the principles of modernity, it actually has the potential to support the reconstruction of people's identity in regard to food consumption. Cone and Myhre (2000: 188) also see a potential of CSA farms to "re-embed" individuals in time and space by "linking them to a specific land and an awareness of the seasons." Moreover, they found a need for clearly defined community in our modern society of lacking identity (Cone & Myhre, 2000), a principle on which CSA definitely is based on.

2.4 Sustainable Consumption

In modern consumer society, a shift of the consumer ethos from a throw away culture to a sustainable consumption culture was detected (Autio, Heiskanen, & Heinonen, 2009; Moisander & Pesonen, 2002). Therefore, it is interesting for this study, how CSA consumer-members perceive their contribution to sustainability through their CSA membership. This is insofar interesting and relevant as Lovins and Hawken (2007) and Garner (2011) argue that there is a view on sustainable consumers as rational and ethical ideal subjects. This kind of consumer uses its consumption power to seem as pro-environmental consumer and “shop with the planet in mind” (Black & Cherrier, 2010). Van den Bergh and Ferrer-i-Carbonell (1999) found that for many people sustainable consumption has a strongly ethical or normative connotation with the consequence that we should completely change our lifestyles and consumption preferences. On the other hand, there is considered a ‘rebellious’ type of consumer, also called *ecological citizen*, who believes that there is no such thing as environmental friendly products. Consumers with such a radical pro-environmental mindset point out that the levels of consumption generally need to be reduced (Autio et al., 2009; Black & Cherrier, 2010).

Dealing with the term *sustainability*, the following question naturally occurs: What is sustainability actually? According to Siebenhüner (2000: 19), “sustainability has been characterized as an ethical concept, aimed at the humanistic survival of mankind and taking care for intra- and inter-generational equity.” Sikdar (2003) identified four types of sustainable systems which can be assigned to any of sustainability’s three pillars: economic aspects, ecological aspects and social aspects. According to Sikdar (2003), sustainable systems of type I include global concerns or problems such as global warming and other issues with a global nature. Following global treaties are needed to address these problems, e.g. the Kyoto Protocol which is an international treaty of State Parties pledging to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Type II systems are based on more restricted areas such as cities, villages and defined ecosystems. Type III is composed from businesses; they strive towards more sustainability for example through cleaner

technologies or reduction of greenhouse gases. The smallest systems are type IV systems and consist of sustainable technologies. The three aspects of sustainability which can be assigned to the four systems, however, are not just coexisting but depending on each other in specific ways (Adams, 2006):

“The economy is dependent upon society; economy could not survive, and would have no reason to exist, without its context within society. Similarly, society is dependent upon the environment; humans require resources from the environment and rely on the services of functioning ecosystems.”

In line with Adams is Siebenhüner's (2000) conclusion that it acquires more than barely economic reasoning to achieve social, economic and ecological goals; the consideration of people's social and ecological needs and its satisfaction is inevitable.

Siebenhüner (2000) further declares an entirely new species of humans which stands in contrast to the *Homo economicus*, namely the *Homo sustinens*. While the *Homo economicus* is acting egoistically and thus, shows no responsibility towards global issues but instead exploits environmental goods, the *Homo sustinens* “is imagined as a human being living according to the requirements of sustainability” (Siebenhüner, 2000: 19). The requirements of sustainability are referring to social and ecological rationality and emotional relationship of humans towards nature and other people, cooperation and communication, learning and creativity as well as moral responsibility (Siebenhüner, 2000). He built this concept of a *Homo sustinens* on the observation that people help each other altruistically, e.g. in families, friendships or communities, and also respect social and environmental norms even though not directly benefitting from this behavior.

However, in contrast to the *Homo economicus*, the behavior of the *Homo sustinens* is based on “permanent and positive emotional affectation” towards nature (Siebenhüner, 2000: 19). The behavior of *Homo sustinens* is kind of permanent and connected with positive emotional affectation, which is necessary for environmental action (Siebenhüner, 2000). Deci and Ryan (1985) argue that emotional attachment is essential since intrinsically motivated action usually lasts much longer than action that is externally motivated. Thus, sustainability in the concept of *Homo sustinens* is depicted as a social learning process through personal responsibility and emotional bonds with nature and other people (Meppem & Gill, 1998). For this reason, it will be interesting to discover for

this study, if CSA consumer-members are actually behaving as *Homo sustinens* or if it is rather a mix between *Homo sustinens* and *Homo economicus* behavior and if there can be found some egoistical bearings in their actions. Moreover, Siebenhüner (2000: 20) points out the importance of collective effort for the establishment of the *Homo sustinens* “to approach the environmental, social, and economic goals of sustainable development”.

This leads me to the concept of New Economics which is argued by Bekin and Seyfang (2007: 125) to be in direct contrast to the globalized food system that “divorces economic transactions from social and environmental contexts”. Instead, the New Economics gives preference to local and social embedded economies, growing connections between consumers and producers and strengthening the markets “against disruptive external forces of globalisation” (Bekin & Seyfang, 2007: 125). There are five key points that characterize the principle of New Economics: Decentralization of social and economic organization, equitable distribution of environmental goods and services, community-building, collective action, and creation of alternative provision systems (Bekin & Seyfang, 2007). It would be interesting to see in how far CSA for consumer-members in Germany fulfill the expectations of the New Economics concept.

The literature review and discussion of theories in the previous chapter illustrate topics that raise questions for further qualitative research. These research topics that function as a base for my research methods are summarized in figure 2 below.

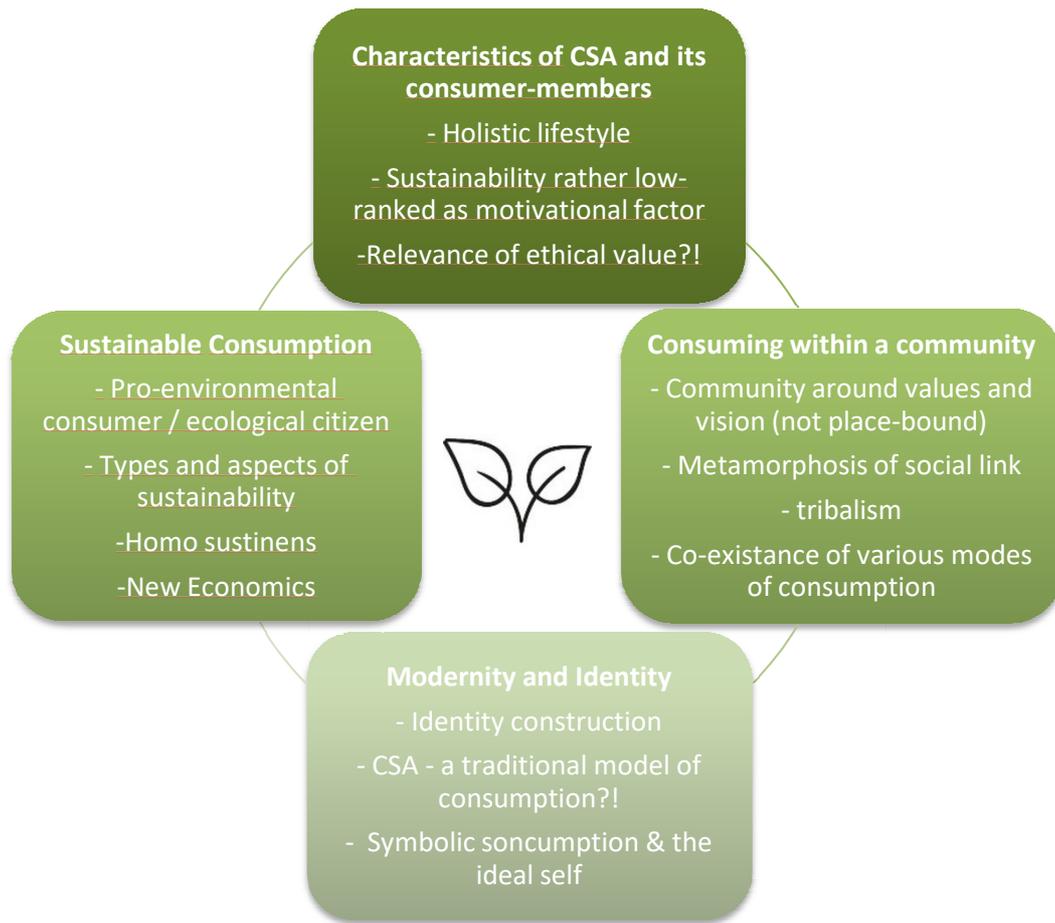


Figure 3. Summary of important points within the theoretical framework.

2.5. Implementation of theoretical concepts

After having introduced these four aspects of the theoretical framework underlying my research, the question arises how these theories and concepts are going to be useful. I started this chapter with characteristics of CSA and its consumer-members in order to gain knowledge, to get an idea what kind of research has already been conducted regarding CSA and what has already been found as characteristics of CSA consumer-members. The concepts and theories described in the chapters about consuming within a community and sustainable consumption serve as a base for the questions I will ask in the interviews with CSA consumer-members. Hence, I will develop questions that target directly to respective theories and the formulation of my problem. On the contrary, the chapter about modernity and identity are rather outlining contextual concepts that seem to be of importance for my research but do not directly serve as starting point for the questions in the interview guide. Instead, this chapter will help me

to better understand the circumstances of our society and the way of consumption of individuals.

3. Methodology

In this chapter, I am going to explain the methodological choices on which this thesis is built in order to tackle the research questions. This can be done in many *specific ways* as Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 18) point out: “The gendered, multiculturally situated researcher approaches the world with a set of ideas, a framework that specifies a set of questions that he or she then examines in specific ways.” Thus, the methodological framework determines and in which way information is obtained and has to be chosen carefully and deliberately (LeCompte, Tesch, & Goetz, 1993). The methodological choices for the research on hand will be composed of my perspective on the world and the knowledge within it as well as the methods chosen for data gathering and data analysis.

3.1 My world, my paradigm

The primary goal of this research is to construct knowledge about sustainable awareness and consumption through trends in food consumption. I therefore focus on the model of CSA and its consumer-members as well as on their perception of sustainable consumption and its possible increase through CSA. To gather and analyze data that will serve my research, it is necessary to discuss my view on the world as researcher and my perception of reality. The determination of my perception and perspective is crucial since the paradigm underlying a study affects how research is conducted (Guba, 1990; O'Donoghue, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

My beliefs as a researcher about what my world or - more detailed spoken - about what my nature of “reality” is (ontology), what the relationship between me (as a researcher) and the known is (epistemology) and how I gain knowledge from the world I know (methodology) determine my paradigm (Guba, 1990; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). A paradigm is a “basic set of beliefs that guide action” (Guba, 1990:17), a framework which determines how I as a researcher see the world and act in it. Furthermore, this set of beliefs is used to break down the complexity of the real world and provides “a view [of] how science should be done” (Punch, 1998: 28; Patton, 1975). Therefore, many researchers have discussed the complex term of paradigm from different stances (e.g. Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Candy, 1989; Guba, 1990; Pitman & Maxwell, 1992). It can be said that the paradigm will define how one sees and interacts with other people, a specific group of people or action while undertaking research. According to Guba and

Lincoln (1994), four main paradigms exist parallel in the social sciences: positivism, postpositivism, critical theory and constructivism. However, it is important to note that there is an uncountable number of paradigms constructed in the sciences and each paradigm is associated with a different name depending on its author (Willis, Jost, & Nilakanta, 2007). The paradigm of my stance will not only influence the method of data collection and analysis, but also the aims and results of this study.

The constructivist perspective has been explained by a lot of authors (Guba, 1990; (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Young & Collin, 2004; Caruana, 2007) as “a way of interpreting different aspects of social life as they were constructed and given meaning through social processes.” In line with Guba (1990), Caruana (2007: 295) believes that knowledge about consumption is obtained “through constant dialect between individuals.” Despite of this mindset, most studies about CSA and its consumer-members draw on more positivistic stances in order to bring out objective knowledge, also considered as ‘neutral’ (Guba, 1990). Additionally, Arnould and Thompson (2005) also put a socio-cultural dimension on their research to accentuate that knowledge is socially constructed and can change over time (Guba, 1990; Guba and Lincoln, 1989). This is an important consideration for me to understand how and why people consume in e.g. sustainable ways and how a trend can possibly turn into an alternative way of consumption. Thus, social constructivism enables me to gain a more thorough understanding of sustainable consumption of CSA consumer-members since knowledge is subject to the social-cultural contexts (Arnould & Thompson, 2005: 876).

As a result, a paradigmatic framework is essential in order to understand my perspective on the research in question which is closely linked to the chosen ontological and epistemological stance, and research design. As a researcher, I am convinced that categories such as organization and culture are not pre-given and social phenomena “are not only produced through social interaction” (Bryman, 2012: 33) but are constantly revised; this puts me in the mindset of a constructivist. The reason for this is my belief that this research on CSA consumer-members’ consumption behaviors, like any other research as well, is profoundly affected by preconceptions and people’s continuously changing perception and construction of reality. Due to the elaborated implications of my constructivist paradigm, this study does not intend to narrow down a concrete correlation

between CSA membership and a more sustainable consumption behavior of consumer-members and in society generally. Instead of this the intention is rather to explore the various facets of said interrelation.

3.1.1 Ontological position

Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality and *the knowledgeable*, “the human being in the world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Guba, 1990). Guba & Lincoln (1989) further question what there is that can be known, which again questions my perception as researcher of the reality around me. In opposition to the believe that there is one reality which reflects ‘the truth’ and only trust in verified hypotheses that are established as facts or natural laws – what is described as the positivist position (Guba 1990; Bryman 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) – I accept that there are multiple individual constructions of “reality” and the social world and no ultimate truth can be found. In line with this, social constructivism is argued to be constructed through human activity (Kim, 2001; Kukla, 2000; Polkinghorne, 1989; Salner, 1989). Furthermore, these authors claim that reality needs to be constructed by members of society before it can be understood. Hence, there is no *right or wrong* in the constructs of reality, instead of this the understanding of reality can be different for each person (Loudon & DellaBitta, 1988; Kukla, 2000). According to the constructivist social researcher Egon Guba (1990), there are four central points which serve as a base of the constructivist paradigm and its view on “reality”:

1. Reality exists only in the context of a mental framework for thinking about it (Guba 1990: 25). This leads to the belief that researchers cannot discover “how things really are” or universal valid facts since collected “facts” will never be independent of construct.
2. No theory can ever be fully tested because it is not possible to achieve one unequivocal explanation. Thus, many constructions can co-exist and reality “can be “seen” only through a window of theory” (ib.).
3. Research can never be value-free, however, as already claimed many constructions are possible: “If “reality” can be seen only through a theory window, it can equally be seen only through a value window” (ib.)

4. The results of a research always depend on the interaction between the researcher and the object under investigation; it never can be objective. Thus, all knowledge is a human construction.

This means for me as a researcher that I will always present “a specific version of reality, rather than one that can be regarded as definitive” (Bryman 2012: 33), a reality that is independent from human activity (Kukla, 2000). Therefore, the same ‘reality’ can have a different meaning for people depending on their experience and existing knowledge (Kukla, 2000; Gergen, 1985). Even though I am a constructivist, it is not necessary for me “to believe that there are multiple versions of the universe all floating around at the same time” (Kim, 2001: 6), but I acknowledge that there is a (re)construction and interpretation of each person’s reality in every experience and social interaction as human-being. This is possible since the belief of the nature of the external world is different to the belief about what knowledge is (Crotty, 1998).

The constructivist set of beliefs about what exists or what is real hence has an impact on my research question and how I approach it. Consequently, I believe that there does not exist one ultimate truth or reality about the awareness of sustainability in the consumption behavior of CSA consumer members and their perception of CSA as a towards a more sustainable lifestyle, but there are multiple ways of how this possible change is experienced and held for the individual consumer-members’ reality. Or, as Guba (1990: 25) puts it: “[...] no unequivocal explanation is ever possible. There can be many constructions, and there is no foundational way to choose among them.” Thus, my intension is to gain deeper knowledge about the individual CSA consumer-members’ construction of reality in regard to sustainable consumption and their CSA membership as a result of their action and interaction in the world (Packer & Goicoechea, 2010).

3.1.2 Epistemological position

Epistemology is concerned with the nature of relationship between the knower (the researcher) and the known (the people that inherit knowledge) (Guba, 1990). Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 157) express it different by phrasing “how do I know the world?”. From a constructivist stance I approach the investigated field as a subjectivist. This means that the researcher and the known are seen as a single entity which constructs findings and creates social and cultural products through human interaction (Guba 1990; Denzin &

Lincoln, 2000; Bryman 2012; Kim 2001). Knowledge is never value-free and objective as the positivist researcher would say but all knowledge is instrumental and can only emerge from interaction between and/or among people (Glaserfeld, 2002). Hence, knowledge is constructed by the influence of others on me and the world around me (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 257).

Based on this belief, I aim to find meaningful knowledge in the interaction between me and the CSA consumer-members based on their experiences and perspectives about sustainable food consumption instead of trying to produce universal valid, objective knowledge. However, this means that interpersonal interaction has an impact on how a phenomenon is perceived and that data can only be brought out through social interaction with others (Kvale 1990; Guba 1990). This is also why Guba (1990: 26) describes knowledge as “the outcome or consequence of *human* activity; knowledge is a *human construction*, never certifiable as ultimately true but problematic and ever changing.”

Regarding the research question, it can be said that from a constructivist position, a more sustainable lifestyle of CSA consumer-members will not appear as a result of natural processes; in contrast, it results from varying ways in which “meanings are constructed and reconstructed through people’s histories as they interact with each other” (Alanen, 2015: 149), how they experience and make sense of the world. Thus, I aim to view changes in food consumption as a result of social and cultural processes and to understand the awareness and knowledge about the sustainability issue (such as exploitation of resources and people) as a possible driver on CSA consumer-members’ responsibility feeling and food consumption with the objective to create a sustainable lifestyle. In other words, I intend to detect what kind of reasons the consumer-members proffer for their consumption behavior that they regard as sustainable.

In the study at hand, it has to be taken into consideration that the researcher herself has already inherited knowledge and experience about the investigated topic and consequently, her own construction of reality. This can be helpful in interaction with other CSA consumer-members in order to make sense of their realities, nevertheless it has to be incorporated that the researcher’s knowledge is part of the new knowledge that will be constructed in the social interaction – also during the process of data gathering.

According to Lincoln (2010), the reality I will construct as a researcher is, as a matter of subject, a world seen from my subjective perspective including errors, mistakes and wrong interpretations of constructions, which I have to take responsibility for. This means that I am aware that the analysis of my data and the results are only depicting one interpretation – that is to say my one – but there are countless other interpretations out there depending on the person to interpret.

3.1.2 Considerations

Each system of beliefs naturally has its vulnerability since it is a construct of humans and thus “subject to all errors and foibles that inevitably accompany human endeavors” (Guba 1990: 19). This is something every researcher should keep in mind no matter which paradigm he or she follows and what the topic is. In constructivism, it has been criticized that individuals’ knowledge of the meanings does not go far enough; individual actors do not live in worlds that are entirely constructed by their own knowledge and are unconsciously influenced and pressured in their perceptions and behavior (Candy, 1989). I am aware of that and will take it as a part of the construction between me and the CSA consumer-members I get data from, because I am interested in *how* they see their CSA membership and sustainable food consumption and this actually also includes (unconscious) influences. A second consideration stated by Guba (1990) is the lapse of the distinction between ontology and epistemology in a constructivist stance. He asserts that we have to see the known and the knower as a coherent whole, because the findings of an inquiry and of the “reality” are created through a process (Guba, 1990; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This is further explained by Gorman and Clayton (2005), who view the researcher as an *instrument* to gather data and thus, it is difficult to detach from the data collection process and its interpretation. Following, I will take this as an advantage for my investigation by constructing not just knowledge about sustainable (food) consumption of CSA consumer-members, but also (re)constructing the participants and my knowledge of reality. It could be argued that this makes it impossible to generalize my findings (Glaserfeld, 1976; Meiland & Krausz, 1982) but this will not be an issue since this is not the goal of my study.

3.2 My world, my knowledge

This chapter copes with procedures and techniques to do research or what Guba and Lincoln (1989: 83) phrase as “what are the ways of finding our knowledge?”. They further discuss methodology as a more practical process than epistemology or ontology are (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Nevertheless, my ontological and epistemological standpoints have an influence on the methodological approach of this thesis.

To be able to interpret parts of my research within the context of the whole as explained by Gadamer (1976), Bleicher (1980) and Thompson (1981), I will - to some extent - go with a hermeneutic approach. Consequently, the research is an on-going process within which I, as a researcher, will go back and forth between newly and previously gained knowledge (Guba, 1990). This approach will be from particular importance when conducting the in-depth interviews for my data analysis since the hermeneutic approach allows me to modify the interview guide (see appendix I) if needed in order to answer the research question in the best possible way.

In the following, I would like to present, define and justify my chosen methods approaching my research topic. It can be said that the constructivist position is closely related to qualitative research strategies (Bryman, 2012; Lincoln 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2009; Brinkmann & Steinar, 2005), since “qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 8). There are multiple conceivable options and combinations of methods to choose from in qualitative research like (participant) observation (Boote & Mathews, 1999; Mintzberg, 1970), Netnography (Kozinets, 2002; Langer & Beckman, 2005) and single interviews (Kvale, 2007; Hiller & DiLuzio, 2004) or focus group interviews (Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook, 2007). However, this does not mean that the use of quantitative strategies is precluded (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Silverman, 1998; Silverman, 2013; Hesse-Biber, 2010). Quantitative methods such as surveys and statistics can in some cases be useful to support qualitative investigation and to the trustworthiness of findings (Wendler, 2001; Bryman, 2012).

Since I am more interested in understanding changes in food consumption behavior and the awareness of sustainability amongst CSA consumer-members rather than in ‘hard’

facts such as numbers and logistic reasons, I will lay the focus on qualitative methods. Thus, my aim of the thesis is to “understand individual cases, rather than universal laws or generalizations” (Candy, 1989: 4) and to present various realities of CSA consumer-members regarding sustainable (food) consumption. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, these realities will be in reciprocal relationship with the researcher’s and the consumer-members’ knowledge. Due to my parents’ involvement in CSA which habitually is part of our conversations, I started this study with some own impressions and prejudices. These already existing experiences can also be called *prior knowledge* (Gadamer, 1976). Throughout the process of writing this thesis, and especially by the collection of data, I gained more knowledge about the CSA consumer-members’ awareness of the problem of sustainability and thus, a deeper understanding of the whole topic under investigation. Nevertheless, the qualitative data gained through in-depth interviews will be underpinned with a rather quantitative data sampling through explorative surveys that I conducted before the interviews (see Fig. 2).

Research Design

According to Bryman (2012: 46) “a research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data” and hence, helps the researcher with structuring his research process. As method(s) are the means to the creation of superior knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), it is essential to consider which methods lead to the kind of data that can answer the research question best (Vaus, 2009). In the research on hand, I consider the method of case study to be the most useful due to its character to investigate more complex social phenomena (Yin, 2009). “Generally, the chosen case is regarded as emblematic of a larger population of cases” (Elman et al., 2016) – the chosen case being the consumer-members of two specific CSA initiatives in Germany, the larger population being CSA consumer-members in Germany in general. These two CSA initiatives were chosen due to its distinctive size and location (rural vs. urban) and thus, to represent a broader population (Elman et al., 2016).

New alternative systems of food consumption seem to spread innumerable these days. One of it is possibly CSA with a continuously raising number of new initiatives in Germany. To investigate if this phenomenon can actually raise enough awareness and deeper knowledge about the actual problem of sustainability which is strongly connected with

our wasteful (food) consumption behavior (Ronald & Adamchak, 2010), the research for my investigated topic is separated into two stages; first, a phase of exploration, and secondly, a phase of data gathering which will be used for the analysis. During the explorative phase I will gather information through unstructured surveys. Quantitative data collected in the explorative phase will help me to generate new qualitative research questions for the phase of data gathering for the analysis (Hesse-Biber, 2010). The main data for the analysis will be raised through semi-structured in-depth interviews.

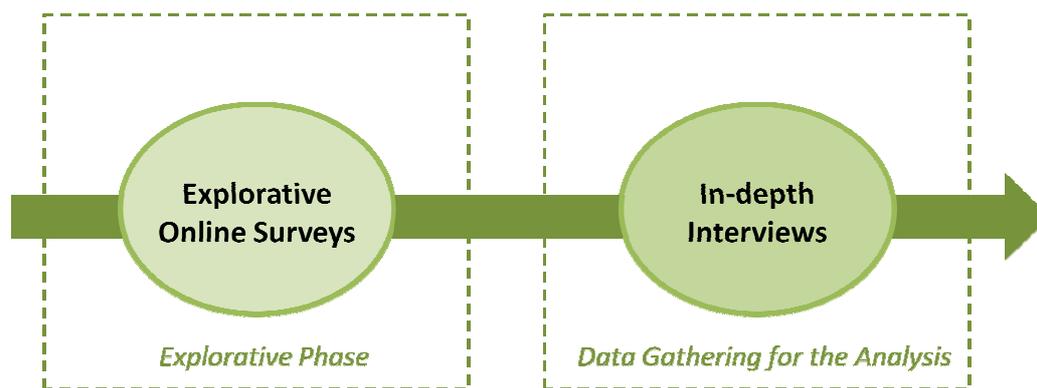


Figure 4. Illustration of the research design.

3.2.1 Explorative Phase

Starting the research with an explorative phase (as it can be seen in Fig. 4), I intend to get an overview of what is out there and what I could ask for in the in-depth interviews. As it can be read in the theoretical framework, CSA is not a new phenomenon and various data has been collected around its consumer-members. However, most of the collected data is concerned with the motivations to join a CSA (Cone & Myhre, 2000; Cooley & Lass, 1998; O'Hara & Stagl, 2001), whereas the aspect of its long-term potential as alternative food system and its impact on sustainable awareness and consumption generally has rarely been investigated. To figure out if the aspect of sustainable (food) consumption is feasible and relevant enough for an extensive study (Babbie, 2016), I decided that some explorative research would be necessary. Babbie (2016) further claims that exploratory research usually is conducted when there is no or only little knowledge about the topic under investigation. This is supported by Stebbins (2001) who views exploratory research as an approach to discover and familiarize oneself with the phenomenon. However, the results of exploratory research will not be used in the analysis but point out the most relevant areas to focus on within the research topic (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

To get a clearer picture of the sustainability awareness of a larger number of CSA consumer-members in relatively short time, I decided to conduct an explorative online survey (see Appendix II). Surveys in form of questionnaires are a good approach to find out about people's behavior, attitudes and backgrounds (Bryman, 2012). Since I intend to approach members of CSA initiatives, a consumer group which predominantly communicates via email, it was not a problem to distribute the survey via email. The email including the link to my explorative survey was sent to two CSA initiatives' managing committee with the appeal to distribute it to their members. The chosen initiatives were *CSA Aglasterhausen-Daudenzell* and *CSA Rhein-Neckar/ Heidelberg* where I also aimed to conduct my interviews later on. The survey entailed both closed-end and open-end questions in order to get some 'hard' facts like the CSA involved in or the estimated influence of the CSA membership on the general food consumption. At the same time, more insights were gained through the possibility for the consumer-members to mention examples of influences on other areas of their lifestyle through their CSA membership or to comment on their perception of CSA as a long-term alternative concept of food provision.

I do not intend to build the analysis upon the survey but it will assist me to figure out how strong CSA consumer-members regard the sustainability issue and their perspective on CSA as a future food system that I could go in depth with – briefly spoken, identify areas for clarification in the follow-up interviews. This way of exploring the field gives me an idea about what makes sense to ask in the in-depth interviews (in the second stage of data collection) and will maybe uncover thoughts I did not think or read about before and thus, not considered to ask about in the later interviews. Furthermore, the explorative online survey enabled me to get in touch with CSA consumer-members and possible interviewees for the actual data gathering process. By answering my survey, they could already get an idea about the topic of my thesis and then, decide if they would like to further provide me with valuable insights in a single interview.

The survey was spread through an internal email distributor of the CSA Aglasterhausen-Daudenzell since I have personal contacts and through the emails of the depot leaders of the CSA Rhein-Neckar asking them to spread the survey link. The survey questions were put in German because only consumer-members of German CSAs were contacted and

thus, it seemed to be most naturally to approach them in their mother tongue. In the period of one month, 32 CSA consumer-members did answer the questionnaire (13 participants of the CSA Aglasterhausen-Daudenzell and 19 participants of the CSA Rhein-Neckar).

The questions were concerned with the main motivation to participate in CSA, the influence of its membership on the consumers' consumption behavior of food and also other goods as well as the consumer-members' valuation of the future of CSA. The main motivational factors I found were, first, the provision with regional and sustainable produce which also support the environment, second, the support of a local farmer and thus, independency from capitalism, additionally used as a political statement, and third, the community behind the initiative (see examples in Appendix IIIa). The frequency with which these factors were named corresponds to the order in which they are mentioned above. More than two thirds of the participants experienced an impact of their membership on their attitude towards food consumption (see Appendix IIIb), whereas half of the participants found an influence of their CSA membership on their consumption behavior of other goods as well, e.g. clothing, care products, mobility or generally consuming less (see appendix IIIc). 75 per cent of the participants agreed that CSA is an alternative long-term concept of food consumption; however, most of them agree that CSA will not entirely change our food system and reach all parts of population (see Appendix III d).

3.2.2 Data Gathering for the Analysis

To completely understand the reality of the outside world around me and make sense of the social actors' experiences and what these mean to them, I decided to gather data from qualitative in-depth interviews. In the following, I will describe how I proceeded with gathering data for my analysis.

In-depth interviews

After getting an impression of what could be investigated deeper about my research topic during the explorative phase, I find it important to use this knowledge in the face-to-face engagement since this is how "we get to know other people, get to learn about their experiences, feelings and hopes and the world they live in." (Kvale, 2007). Kvale (1996)

further argues that an interview should be like a daily conversation between people in order to gain knowledge about the world or the topic of interest. However, there might be a bit more sensitivity and skills behind conducting an interview that is ethical correct and can be used for analysis than simply carry on a daily conversation. Consequently, it is the aim of the interviewer to see the participant not only as an object but also pose “follow-up questions, and nod, pause or utilize silence” (Hiller & DiLuzio, 2004: 2-3).

While Gorman and Clayton (2005) only distinct between structured and unstructured interviews, there is a broad range of ways to conduct interviews that reaches from unstructured to structured such as *semi-structured* interviews for others (Bryman, 2012). Semi-Structured interviews are “occupying the middle of the continuum” and hence, are a mix between structured (standardized responses) and unstructured (free responses) interviews (Knox & Burkard, 2009: 567; Bryman, 2012). According to Kvale (1996: 5-6) semi-structured interviews are interviews with the intention “to obtain description of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena.” Hence, the knowledge that is constructed between the interviewer and the interviewee is subjective and depending on the interviewer’s interpretation (Kvale, 1996). In a semi-structured interview, a protocol or interview guide serves as “a foundation on which the interview is built but one that allows creativity and flexibility to ensure that each participant’s story is fully covered” (Knox & Burkard, 2009: 567). Therefore, the semi-structured interview seems to be a useful and fruitful way to gather data from my constructivist standpoint where I am, because it allows me to dig deeper into particular topics that might arise during the interview.

Relating to my constructivist paradigm, it is also important to stress that I understand the interview as a “meaning-making experience” (Hiller & DiLuzio, 2004: 3), meanwhile producing knowledge through interaction between the interviewee and me as a researcher (Hiller & DiLuzio, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This means for the present research that it is not just the aim to uncover *if* there is awareness about the sustainability issue of food consumption, but also *what kind* of knowledge. Further, what do they *mean* to the individual and thus, how do the consumer-members perceive the potential of CSA to raise the knowledge and awareness in society about sustainability.

Consequently, the interview guide is composed of questions which derived from the theoretical framework of this study (cf. chapter 2) as well as questions that came up from answers to the explorative online survey. Apart from the main questions that are recorded in my version of the interview guide (see Appendix I), I also used follow-up questions and *probes* such as “can you give an example for this?” or “why do you think so?” during the interviews (Gorman & Clayton, 2004: 131; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). These questions are not noted down in the interview guide since they occur spontaneously which is possible in a semi-structured interview. Sometimes other questions – which are not included in the interview guide – are asked when there seems to be a chance to gain more knowledge about a certain topic which literary makes my interview guide a *guide*. It also happens that the order of questions is changed due to the themes the interviewees mention in their answers.

Overall, 15 interviews were conducted, 14 useful of them were useful. The first interview conducted was due to technological problems not recorded, so I had to write a memory minutes afterwards. Unfortunately, this interview does not create enough in-depth knowledge about the studied topic and thus, this will not be considered in the analysis even though it could have been worth to be included. The last part of a further interview was not recorded for the same reason; however, since the larger part of the interview was recorded and transcribed, I am still able to use this part for the analysis.

The appropriate number of interviews to conduct is an important decision I have to make as a researcher. According to Kvale (1992), the researcher should continue with interviewing participants till he finds out what he needs to know. Similarly, Guest et al. (2006) and Bryman (2012) suggest gathering qualitative data till saturation; but how to know when the point of saturation is reached? According to Bryman (2012: 421), saturation is reached when “new data no longer suggest new insights into an emergent theory or no longer suggest new dimensions of theoretical categories”. From a constructivist perspective it should not be necessary to reach a certain amount of interviews since every person constructs his or her own reality and thus, creates unique knowledge that contributes to my research. Therefore, I will try to conduct as many interviews as possible regarding my limited time frame and willingness of the CSA consumer-members.

The CSA consumer-members who participated in the exploratory online survey and declared themselves ready to comply with participating in an in-depth interview are shortly introduced with the following table (Table 1).

Name	Background & demographic information	Information related to sustainable consumption and CSA membership
Hanna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 51 years, Social Care worker - 1,5 person(s) obtain one CSA share - member of CSA Aglasterhausen-Daudenzell for 3 years 	Her CSA membership reduced her food purchase enormously as well as the consumption of other goods, the solidary thought and communication within the group means a lot to her.
Ute & Wolfgang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 64 years, retiree & 59 years, Social Care worker - 2 persons obtain one CSA share - members of CSA Aglasterhausen-Daudenzell for 2 years 	The main reasons for their membership are short transportation ways as well as regional and high-qualitative produce, CSA changed their awareness about quality and value of food. The ecological aspect is most important for them.
Birgit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 54 years, remedial teacher - 2 persons obtain one CSA share - member of CSA Aglasterhausen-Daudenzell for 3 years 	To support a local organic farmer is very important to her and she tries to utilize everything from her share. She views her membership as a political statement, but is aware that she is not living a sustainable lifestyle.
Carsten & Michael	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 39 years, research fellow & 42 years, mechanist for rehabilitation equipment - 2 persons obtain one CSA share - member of CSA Rhein-Neckar for 2 years 	CSA raised their awareness for the production and origin or products. They are CSA members because of regional and seasonal food and to sidestep traditional economic structures, however, they think maintaining an entirely sustainable lifestyle is difficult in industrialized countries.
Monika	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 48 years, biologist (currently housewife and mother of 2 children) - 4 persons obtain 4 CSA shares - member of CSA Rhein-Neckar for 6 years 	In her opinion CSA could help to reform the economic system, because members are not only consumers but also co-producers. She thinks consuming less of everything could create a more sustainable lifestyle.
Hans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 61 years, teacher - 2 persons obtain one CSA share - member for 5 years in CSA Rhein-Neckar 	He argues the 'organic economy' to be not more sustainable as the standard economy and is very much aware about the globalization of products. For him 'real' organic, regional and seasonal products are quite important.
Kirstin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 55 years, initially professional for elderly care, now own production and merchandising of food products - 2 persons obtain one CSA share - member of CSA Aglasterhausen-Daudenzell for 3 years 	To protect soil and wildlife is essential for her, which is why she rears bees. She wants to ensure that the local farmer can survive. She criticizes our consumption behavior and economic system and likes to be independent of

		it.
Ingrid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 58 Jahre, nurse - 4 persons obtain one share - member of CSA Aglasterhausen-Daudenzell for 1 year 	The community and people within it are important to her. She appreciates the products of the CSA share a lot more since she put her own manpower into it. She further claims for the protection of nature for future generations.
Nicolá	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 41 years, biologist - 3 persons obtain one CSA share - member of CSA Rhein-Neckar for 6 years 	His CSA membership is politically and economically motivated. For him, physical work on the farm is not necessary included in a CSA. He places high value on purchasing organic products.
Katja	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 43 years, biologist and natural health professional - 3 persons obtain one CSA share - member of CSA Rhein-Neckar for 2 years 	CSA changed her connection to seasonal products and she puts emphasize on a transparent production process. She aims to buy produce which has no negative impact on the ecological balance.
Benedikt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 23 years, student - 6 people obtain 2 CSA shares - member of CSA Rhein-Neckar for 1 year 	He detected CSA by searching for alternative economic systems and likes the regional produced foods. CSA eased his relationship to sustainability. He likes to produce food himself, e.g. bake his own bread.
Marischa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 28 years, biologist (currently in parental leave) - 3 persons obtain one CSA share - member of CSA Rhein-Neckar for 1 year 	Working within a community is quite important to her which is also why she lives in a multigenerational house. Organic and regional products are her motivation and she would like to be a model for others.
Herbert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 60 years, Social Care worker - 3 persons obtain one CSA share - member of CSA Aglasterhausen-Daudenzell for 3 years 	He considers organic products essential to avoid ecological issues. He tries to not throw away foodstuff and purchase durable goods. In his opinion CSA would be the ideal case to feed the people.
Ana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 50 years, qualified translator (currently in training for animal healer) - 2 persons obtain one CSA share - member of CSA Rhein-Neckar for 1 year 	She wants to avoid the industrialization of agriculture, scrutinize products and draw her fellows' attention to dubiousness in food production. Furthermore, appropriate keeping of animals is very important to her.
Rosemarie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 54 years, Social Care worker - 3 persons obtain one CSA share - member of CSA Aglasterhausen-Daudenzell for 3 years 	For her, regional and organic products are the most important. She appreciates the interpersonal contacts and views CSA as team work. Moreover, she likes the various other "consumption communities" which arise from the CSA community.

Table1. Overview of interviewees.

Among the participating CSA consumer-members some overall tendencies can be detected especially in regard to gender, age and professional background. Out of 17 participants there are ten women and seven men, a fact that matches the general characteristic of CSA as women-dominated initiatives. The age of the interviewees is to three quarters between 40 and 60 years which is a quite significant proportion and might indicate that some life experience but also a certain amount of revenue is presupposed to focus people's thoughts on topics around sustainable food consumption such as CSA. A further remarkable point in regard of potential biases among the interviewees is their professional background: Six interviewees work in a social occupation which is probably partly due to a large employer close to where the CSA Aglasterhausen-Daudenzell is located and four interviewees are biologists. Both professions can somehow be viewed in relation to CSA since it has a social dimension as well as an ecological dimension which both match perfectly with these two mainly represented professions. It is important to note though that the above mentioned declarations can only be made in relation to the voluntary participating CSA consumer-members.

Most interviews in this research are conducted face-to-face which allows the researcher to pay direct attention to the non-verbal interaction (Gorman & Clayton, 2005) and to create shared knowledge through being situated in the same time and space (Clark & Schaefer, 1989). Overall, 11 interviews were conducted face-to-face in the interviewees' homes, one in a café and three interviews were done via phone due to time limitations or according to the wish of the participants. The interviews took between 24 minutes and 56 minutes; the interviewees were between the age of 23 and 64 years, eight of them members of the CSA initiative in Aglasterhausen-Daudenzell and nine of them member of the CSA initiative Rhein-Neckar. To avoid that participants and their surroundings will be judged or categorized because of their statements and mindset, it is important to inform the interviewees about the characteristics of the research and provide them the opportunity to stay anonymous in this study (Gorman & Clayton, 2005; Babbie, 2007; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005). Anonymity will be in so far ensured that I will change the names of the interviewees who wished for it. Furthermore, I will remove all additional information of these interviewees from the table so that the recognition for other participants who might read the thesis is not given anymore. Since there is no risk that supervisor and examiner recognize any of the interviewed CSA consumer-members, they

will be provided with the background and demographic information of all interviewees. The interviews were all held in German because it is the mother tongue of both the interviewer and the interviewees, which means that quotes used in the analysis are translated into English. The original quotes and their English translations can be found in Appendix III.

3.6 My data, my analysis of meaning

Babbie (2007: 373) states that qualitative data analysis is “as much an art as a science, it has its own logic and techniques [...]” To analyze qualitative data there must be carefully chosen from various methods and “there are no cut-and-dried steps that guarantee success” (Babbie 2007: 384). According to Kvale (1996: 187) methods of analysis “can be used to organize the interview texts, to condense the meanings into forms that can be presented in a relatively short space, and to work out implicit meanings of what was said.” He further suggests five main approaches to analyze data gathered through qualitative interview and find its meaning: Meaning condensation, meaning categorization, meaning structuring through narratives, meaning interpretation and ad hoc meaning generation (Kvale, 1996). Ad hoc meaning generation is done through a combination of different analysis methods which I will follow throughout the analysis of my data. In the following, I describe the process and method of data analysis.

Transcriptions

There is the possibility for qualitative researchers to make use of computer programs to foster the analysis (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Babbie, 2007; Bryman, 2008). Despite this possibility, I decided to manually transcribe and analyze my collected data. During the interviews everything that has been said was recorded into audio files. I mainly transcribed the recordings of my interviews par for par, which is a time-consuming process but also ensures that no information gets lost and makes it easier for me to notice peculiar information and knowledge regarding my research question. However, those parts of the conversation that are not related or relevant for the research topic are not transcribed.

Ad Hoc Meaning Generation

Generating meaning through ad hoc methods means that there is “a variety of commonsense approaches to the interview text” (Kvale, 1996: 193), in other words it can be said that different approaches and techniques can be used to generate meaning from the interviews and “no standard method is used for analyzing the whole of the interview material” (Kvale, 1996: 203). Miles and Huberman (1994: 245-246) present an overview of thirteen tactics for generating meaning:

“Noting patterns, themes (1), seeing plausibility (2), and clustering (3) help the analyst see “what goes with what.” Making metaphors (4), like the preceding three tactics, is a way to achieve more integration among diverse pieces of data. Counting (5) is also a familiar way to see “what’s there.”

Making contrasts/comparisons (6) is a pervasive tactic that sharpens understanding. Differentiation sometimes is needed, too, as in partitioning variables (7).

We also need tactics for seeing things and their relationships more abstractly. These include subsuming particulars into the general (8); factoring (9), an analogue to a familiar quantitative technique; noting relations between variables (10); and finding intervening variables (11).

Finally, how can we systematically assemble a coherent understandable data? The tactics discussed are building a logical chain of evidence (12) and making conceptual/theoretical coherence (13).”

These tactics were partly used to generate meaning from my transcribed interviews but also meaning condensation as explained by Kvale (1996) played a major role. The purpose of meaning condensation is to compress long statements of the interviewees into shorter statements “in which the main sense of what is said is rephrased in a few words.” (Kvale, 1996: 192). This is mainly used to analyze extensive or more complex interview text to “condensate” the essential information. Following, meaning condensation is one part of ad hoc meaning generation in my data analysis process. Meaning condensation can be exemplified by the data of one interview where the interviewee explains why he does not buy flowers for his wife on Valentine’s Day. This story occupies two thirds of a page in the transcript whereas the condensate meaning is the global awareness of this interviewee.

To use this tactics and methods I printed the interview transcripts and read carefully through each. Afterwards, I made comments, “meaning units”, and markings in different colors, always having the above described tactics in mind. The marks and comments helped me to find themes and clusters guided by theory as well as contrasts and

similarities. The analysis of these findings from the qualitative data collection is presented in the following chapter.

4. Data analysis

In this chapter I discuss the various perceptions of CSA consumer-members concerning their membership in connection with sustainable consumption. This study focuses on understanding the consumer-members consumption behavior of two CSA initiatives in the south-west of Germany as well as the consumer-members' knowledge and awareness about sustainability. A list of the participating interviewees including demographic characteristics and information related to the context of CSA and sustainable consumption can be found in the methodology chapter. Since there were a lot of different themes discussed during the interviews not every bit of content will be its own theme in the analysis; instead I rather stay with the topics that I consider being major.

The structure of this chapter is guided by theory which means the topics addressed are taken up again from the theoretical frameworks discussed in chapter 2. Furthermore, I will try to address the problem formulation and provide answers to it and my research questions. Hence, I will first present an overview about the characteristics of the CSA consumer-members in my study, which mainly was that CSA evokes a greater awareness in various areas. This will be followed by a chapter about the community aspects within CSA and its importance for the interviewees. The third chapter of my analysis will mainly deal with identity and identity construction through consumption but also include some smaller themes such as critic on the system and differences CSA consumer-members see in rural and urban areas. In a final step, I will present the various types and aspects of sustainability that are mainly important for the interviewees and will depict how they understand sustainable consumption.

4.1 CSA – a mind-expanding initiative

From the analysis of the interviews it became explicit that their CSA membership raised the consumer-members awareness of many different themes in more or less extensive ways. But it became also clear that the CSA membership is rather a decision in a process towards a more sustainable lifestyle.

4.1.1 Development in progress

First of all, it was expressed by several interviewees that their awareness and knowledge about topics around sustainability was not just there but was a progress of thoughts and (consumption) behavior. For many of the interviewees the step to become a CSA member was rather a decision at the end of their thought journey towards more sustainability as explained by Ana (1): “In actual fact, CSA was the last consequence. That you can actually control how your food is produced. And that was really important at that point. At the end of a long line of thought.” Even though the CSA membership is the last consequence or the last step towards a more sustainable lifestyle, some of the interviewees consider their membership as part of an ongoing process which has not stopped yet. Herbert describes it as development of mindset within his family, for example to reduce the consumption of meat or to become vegetarian. This process is not only restricted to foods as can be seen for example in Katja, who also tried to change her consumption of clothes and other goods towards more organic products within the last couple of years – a development that is still ongoing for her.

One exception is the case of Ingrid who is not as much advanced with the topic of sustainability but became attentive through her daughter who wished to participate in CSA. From this, it can be derived that CSA might also work for people who did not consider sustainability topics (to a greater extent) before. It seems also important to some interviewees to not radically change their lifestyle but to do it step by step in a pace that feels convenient for themselves for an important reason: “I always try to do it step by step. CSA was actually one step and now I will continue...I will try to continue with clothing, yes. If you change everything at once, I think you will grow desperate and then you rather break it off. That’s why step by step.” (Nicolá, 5).

Generally, the majority of participating CSA consumer-members stated that their membership in the initiative was based on already existing knowledge and awareness about environmental topics and the relation of their consumption behavior to it. This goes in line with Hayden and Buck (2012) who found that environmental awareness is already an important characteristic of CSA consumer-members even before joining CSA. Carsten and Michael as well as Birgit agree that they would not have become CSA members if they would not have had the awareness about their environment and about

sustainability issues before. The awareness for sustainable produced goods is something that Monika (1) tried to live already before her CSA membership: “We have always tried to consume in a more sustainable way, to consume less and things that are more durable and preferably produced hereabouts.” Nevertheless, almost all interviewees mention that even though CSA was a consequence of their environmental awareness, it still did and does create a lot of new knowledge and awareness of various themes for them.

4.1.2 Mind-expansion

During the interviews it was mentioned a lot that even though some kind of awareness about sustainability has already been there before becoming a CSA member, the membership actually created more awareness about certain topics such as food production processes, regionality and seasonality of produce, agriculture generally and also the value of products. This new awareness comes through the contact with the production and the production methods, which leads to more knowledge according to Katja. The knowledge about agricultural processes comes mainly through the farmer or the gardener (Herbert) and includes knowledge about what is possible to grow on the available soil (Nicolá), what needs to be done to grow a carrot (Marischa) or how agriculture works as a cycle (Michael). Here, the new alternative relationship between farmers and consumers as described by Cooley and Lass (1998) can be found. Similar to this is the awareness about CSA being an alternative agricultural system in an industrialized world as described by Hinrichs (2000) as well as Hayden and Buck (2012):

“The appreciation of foodstuff and the famers’ work is simply not there anymore. And I really think that this was caused by the industrialization of the agricultural sector. That it isn’t worth anything anymore. And everybody got used to the fact that it doesn’t cost anything.” (Ana, 4-5).

With saying this it can be found that the CSA consumer-members seem to be quite sophisticated in terms of agricultural processes and its sustainability. This can be further seen in their awareness of the importance of regional produce which points in two different directions. First, the awareness of the regional conditions as explained by Rosemarie (2): “You have to develop esteem for the products that the soil in Daudenzell is capable to yield. That’s how it is. They’re not the best grounds and additionally to this, the climatic conditions and freak weather and yes.” This shows a greater understanding of

the conditions with which the farmers have to cope and also with the outcome of the harvest. The second aspect considers rather regional produce beyond CSA:

“My consumption behavior actually changed in that effect that I rather mind buying something regional. Not green power from the North Sea, but green power that originates here from the Heidelberger Bürgerwerke. And that’s actually, I think, a change for me. That I look into other areas ‘what originates from here?’. Of course, we don’t have coffee here. But if I buy some wine, it definitely will be from hereabouts.” (Carsten, 2).

Carsten thus transferred his awareness for regional products obtained through his CSA membership to other goods and services that he consumes. This further shows his awareness of the locality where he is and consumes and conscious of what we do as people on the planet. The environmental concerns and interest in the respective local community are in line with the findings of Cooley and Lass (1998) and Ostrom (1997) about the most compelling factors of CSA. For many consumer-members in this study, there is a possibility that the local awareness about the environment could be followed by a more global perspective as a next step after the local consciousness, in other words from local to global.

It is indeed not only the local interest that shows awareness for a broader perspective of the interviewees; also few other participants made statements that reveal that they look beyond the horizon. The statements go in various directions but do all support the decision of participating in CSA. When Hans talks about regionality and seasonality of products and the influence of the climate in Germany, he stresses the importance for him to buy products that are not detached from the global market such as pears from Egypt or Argentina in the normal supermarkets. He further shows his global perspective on consumption by comparing his situation with others:

“If you compare it on a global scale, we are in a situation where people fight for their survival and we live in clover. That’s something where I think outside the box and ask myself ‘what kind of life do I live on this planet and what does that mean for the planet or for the other people?’ or so...” (Hans, 4)

Thinking outside the box and considering the consequences of the own behavior and actions is something that can also be found in the interviews with Karin, Herbert and Rosemarie. Similar to Hans’ consciousness about our life in affluence is Kirstin’s perception of starving people while her living in opulence (even though other people in

her surroundings would say that she currently lives on the breadline). Herbert (3) actually talks about the background of the world hunger and thus demonstrates his global thinking: “[...] for example foodstuff that are cultivated in Africa but could also be cultivated here. And there, their own products are pushed back to grow animal feeding stuff for Europe, but actually they don’t earn enough money to buy sufficient food for themselves.” For Rosemarie, sustainable consumption means to avoid everything that harms humans, animals and plants in their life circle on a global level. This shows her awareness about consequences of human action not only for her local community but the whole planet: “[...] we always just spring from our immediate. It has to be viewed quite different on a global level. What I often think is that people don’t really see it global. Well, it is seen global in that sense that we can travel everywhere but not the consequences.” (Rosemarie, 7). The CSA slogan “think globally, act locally” thus applies to some of the interviewed CSA consumer-members as can be seen from their declaration. This is also an indicator for the holistic rightness of the consumer-members’ lifestyles described by Hayden and Buck (2012) that I will elaborate on further down in this chapter.

Generally, it can be detected that the awareness and appreciation of the interviewed consumers regarding the value of produce rose due to their CSA membership. Similar to the findings of O'Hara and Stagl (2001) the CSA consumer-members in my study show a greater concern for agricultural concerns and products. For most consumer-members the awareness about how much work actually is behind the produce generates a much higher appreciation (Michael, Monika, Hans, Ana). Sometimes, the appreciation also comes from the own participation on the farm work as described by Ingrid (1): “Yesterday, I also said to Michael [the gardener] ‘after having chopped the strawberry field, I will enjoy every single strawberry’. Because only then you know how much work is in such a field and this soil is ice-hard.” Hence, the imparting of knowledge through the farmer or gardener as well as the assistance with farm working is for many consumer-members an eye-opener.

Being asked about the main motivational factor to participate in CSA, many of the interviewees named regional and seasonal products among some other factors. Katja explains that she has a totally different connection now to what ‘seasonal’ and also what eating seasonally actually means. Living in harmony with the seasonal growing processes of a particular place is what Hayden and Buck (2012) describe as holistic rightness of the

CSA consumer-members' lifestyle. Seasonality is only one example though. Other examples that occurred during the interviews would be Marischa living in a multigenerational house, Ana, who's whole life is basically influenced by the sustainability thought or the utilization of too many products through conservation as Monika practices it. One could further argue that the importance of organic products is another example. This is mentioned in particular by Ute and Wolfgang, Hans, Nicolás, Herbert, Ana and Rosemarie for different reasons. For Herbert it is mainly the problems with groundwater that appear years later due to conventional spray, Ana rather sees organic agriculture as the only future possibility because otherwise the soil will be exploited soon and not useable anymore. Ana further explains that she only buys organic products with 'demeter' or 'Bioland' labels since this is a directive for her when she cannot directly examine the production process. In contrast to this preference is Carsten's and Michael's mindset: "I wouldn't need this high standard of organic as we have it here." For them, regionality and directness of produce is more important.

A further topic that is from particular importance for individual CSA consumer-members is the awareness and protection of nature and animals. On the one hand, this can be seen in Ingrid (4) who thinks that the awareness of the beauty of the nature got lost. "So much in your life is taken for granted, people don't see the beauty of my garden anymore. [...] Yes, and I am delighted about the nature and for me it's very, very, very important to preserve this nature and that you don't ruin everything." Also the topic about impacts of spray mentioned by Herbert and Wolfgang can be seen as part of awareness about nature and the aim to protect it. On the other hand, there is the keeping of animals that is mentioned by Ana and Katja. Both are aware about the intensive livestock farming in conventional agriculture which is why appropriate animal keeping is essential for them. Consequentially, Katja only buys dairy products from organic origin.

Moreover, the awareness of costs was something that was mentioned in connection with the value of the CSA products. For Carsten and Michael it surprisingly became clear that the costs for their foodstuff did not rise immensely because they now buy other things or more aware in addition to their weekly share. Another aspect concerning food prices was brought up by Katja (3):

“[...] not everybody is willing to pay the appropriate price. And yes, that’s of course the influence, the comparison, yes. There are always comparisons, people compare with supermarket prices, Aldi prices [...]. That’s not sustainable, yes, because for the cheap prices, someone else has to pay for. Someone else and in another time.”

The awareness of prices for food and the willingness to pay an appropriate price show no doubts as experienced by Goland (2002). Instead, the CSA consumer-members are willing to pay a bit more money in order to ensure fair wages (Hans) to the farm’s employees.

In contrast to Goland’s (2002) findings that consumers who joined CSA mainly for fresh and organic vegetables are unlikely to stay member for longer, I found that the knowledge of how agriculture works and the awareness of the regional conditions helped the CSA consumer-members to cope with unfamiliar foods and unpredictable quantities. This is because this knowledge helps them to better understand why it is as it is. Therefore, they are also willing to accept these insecurities and even find ways to turn it to something good. Many of the interviewees try new recipes with unknown vegetables or get inspiration from other CSA consumer-members. The CSA consumer-members actually reported that they became more eager to try out new things, Ana’s husband, for example, loves to create new dishes with the food from the weekly share. It sometimes even has a learning effect to other people as Ute and Wolfgang (9) describe their experiences:

“I made them [her children and grandchildren] a turnip stew, I thought ‘oh dear, hopefully they will eat it’, but then ‘oh, that tasted nice, what was that for a stalk?’.” (Ute)
“Yes, that was stuff they didn’t know. Now they know it. I think it is an enrichment for all.”
(Wolfgang)

The intentions and ideas of participating in CSA and the actual membership practicalities do not necessarily concur; however, this is not a reason for the consumer-members to resign. For some of the interviewees it is actually the opposite: “To me it is clear: this is not a try, but rather I will stay with it as long as possible.” (Birgit, 2). This statement is supported by Kirstin who likes about CSA that she is not shopping in a organic store or at the market as the whim takes her but instead bonds and gives the her money to the same farm every month.

A thought that only appeared for some members of the CSA Aglasterhausen-Daudenzell is the difference of people’s interest in CSA in rural and urban areas. The CSA

Aglasterhausen-Daudenzell is located in a rural area whereas the CSA Rhein-Neckar is located in an urban area. The difficulties that is presented by the consumer-members of the rural area is that most of the people in the countryside already have their own little kitchen garden and thus, do not have the need to actively help forming the farmer's fields (Rosemarie). As a result of this, it is also challenging to find new members who would like to participate in CSA (Wolfgang). This is in line with Rosemarie (6) saying "I think that it is more easy in the city than here in the countryside because here the appreciation for the produce of a CSA is not very high." Despite this problematic of acquisition of new members, Birgit is confident that CSA is also functioning in rural areas. She causes her viewpoint on this with the disproportional number of CSA members in their rural community compared with the number of members of the CSA Rhein-Necker.

4.1.3 Values and action

When being asked about the sustainability of their own lifestyle, the majority of the interviewees admitted that in their eyes they do not live a sustainable lifestyle even though being CSA members. The reasons that are named for this so called value-action gap are various and address quite different topics. On the one hand, there are rather external factors or circumstances as explained by Michael and Benedikt. Michael perceives it as really difficult to live entirely according to sustainable principles when living in an industrialized country such as Germany. Benedikt (4) sees the structures within the society he is living as boundaries:

"[...] I am caught in so many structures which are surely not sustainable and which maybe won't change quickly towards more sustainability that I can't describe myself as entirely sustainable. [...] When I walk around at university, there are for sure many things in need for improvement."

These structures Benedikt is depicting here are probably valid for a lot of CSA consumer-members and can be categorized as situational factors, one of several influential factors named by Vermeir and Verbeke (2006).

On the other hand, there are more individual factors that are causing a gap between ideal and actual behavior such as organization and lack of time (Rosemarie) or convenience and comfort (Herbert). The latter ones are described by Kollmuss & Agyeman (2002) as two important factors regarding people's pro-environmental behavior. However, in this case,

it is rather the contrast since Herbert takes the car a lot due to living in the countryside and thus, out of convenience. Other reasons for the value-action gap are more concrete such as using the bike instead of the car (Kirstin) or not being self supporter (due to lacking piece of land in the city) (Ana and Marischa). Monika also mentions that one have to compromise when having kids. A third factor that is rather applied to the CSA community and farm itself is explained by Hans (4): “We would like to improve sustainability in energy consumption. We are thinking about building a water well, because we say, yes, if we consider climate change, the Kraichgau is actually threatened by drought.”

Even though there are various factors that lead to a gap between ideal and actual behavior for the participating CSA consumer-members, I do not entirely agree with Kollmuss and Aygeman (2002) stating that environmental knowledge and awareness rarely leads to more sustainable behavior. As described above, the awareness about CSA consumer-members environment, especially about the origin of their food and agriculture increased significantly through their membership. This does not mean that they automatically consume more sustainable, but the interviews showed that the CSA consumer-members actually consume more sustainable and more aware inspired through their CSA membership. Nicolá, Katja, Benedikt and Ana mentioned the consumption of clothes as a good they try to consume sustainable, for Herbert and Rosemarie it is sustainable grooming products. Moreover, most of the interviewees claimed to watch out for regional and seasonal products when doing groceries shopping apart from their CSA share – a sign that sustainability of products and its production seem to matter for them.

4.1.4 Perceived values

Naturally, it appeared that the own CSA membership has different values for each consumer-member. When being asked about the most valuable thing the CSA consumer-members retrieve from their membership, most of them named the fresh and organic produced products followed by the community or people they meet through CSA. This is in line with Chen's (2013) categories *Agricultural Product Quality Value* and *Social Value*. The four other categories *Educational Value*, *Emotional Value* and *Epistemic Value* can be found in the data although not in the parts were I directly asked about the perceived value of CSA. *Educational value* can be found in Ingrid's (2) description of a project where

she and another member introduced children to the farm and taught them about the farm work: “[...] to lead the children to what is cultivated here, that you can also eat it immediately. And I have to say, no one is more docile than these kids. They grasped it instantly and went with Michael [the gardener] into the greenhouse and tried everything.” For Ingrid, the perceived value is to bring children in touch with the natural world and to let them experience and understand agriculture. This seems also quite important for CSA consumer-members who have smaller children such as Marischa who states that she always has the possibility to take her son to the farm so he can build a relation with where their food comes from. *Emotional value* is perceived by Carsten (3) through the different and more personal relation to the products: “The lettuce we planted ourselves, you eat that lettuce differently. [...] Especially for a city boy as I am, the self-planted lettuce is definitely something hot. It even grows and one can eat it afterwards. That’s indeed something special. And that’s something emotional.” The awareness and knowledge about agriculture and agricultural products generated through the CSA membership (as discussed in chapter 4.1.2) can be categorized as *Epistemic Value*. This value is mentioned by several members, one example that shows this perceived value in particular is Marischa (2): “For me personally, it is extremely important that I get to know the [agricultural] techniques. I’m really interested in self supply and find it super interesting how to grow stuff and to learn it, yes, I find it really important that this is possible.”

The *Health Value* in the sense of exercise, peaceful environment and fresh air as described by Chen (2013) is a value I cannot confirm among the participating CSA consumer-members. However, health related value can be found in Wolfgang’s explanation of reading the ingredients list of products and trying to avoid products that contain sugar when doing his groceries in the supermarket. Moreover, he states that he eats less meat since he and his wife are participating in CSA. Dietary change is a value that is not explicitly mentioned by Chen (2013) but definitely comes within the health aspect.

From the interviews it became apparent that also an ethical value is underlying in plenty of the consumer-members’ statements. This perceived value is not part of Chen’s (2013) findings but seems to be relevant in the data I gathered. The perceived ethical value might not be as obvious as the other six values mentioned before; however, it can be

found in explanations such as Ana's (1): "[...] factory farming. For me, that's sheer animal torture, that's a no-go." Consequently, she perceives her CSA membership as a statement against factory farming and thus, it has an ethical value for her. The perceived ethical value is also visible in the explanation of Hans about fair wages for the farmers to ensure their survival. To financially support someone who in return supplies regional and seasonal produce is also an underlying value in statements of Karin and Birgit; to both it feels needed and good that they can help someone to exist who operates sustainable.

Additionally, Hans and Benedikt talk about the value of the right to be heard and to cooperate in decisions concerning their initiative. The most positive Benedikt (2) sees in the community is the influence he can have on it: "That I have a chance to help shape it if I like, that's not essential but if I like, I can have a bearing on the processes that are going on. And to add my opinion. Yes, that's something I don't have if I go to the supermarket." This perceived value seems to be strongly connected with the *Social Value*, however, Chen's (2013) description of it does not match very well with what is meant by Benedikt. Therefore, this perception could be placed in a category such as societal value. As societal value I consider the perceived esteem of a person as member within society generally but also within particular communities such as CSA.

4.2 People matter

It kind of is already predicted by the name *community-supported agriculture* that community and people play a major role in the CSA initiative which I can also confirm based on the conducted interviews. Generally, it seems that the community has a high significance for the CSA consumer-members. The various aspects of community that were broached by the interviewees will be presented in the following.

4.2.1 Common values and vision

Even though place does not play a major role in community identity according to Jacobs (2001), the respective CSA initiative is a community that is place-bound due to its corporation with a farmer or gardener. It further is a principle of CSA to act local, which restricts the extent of the community geographically. The identification with each other is for the CSA consumer-members the produce: "The connection is the vegetables, yes, the vegetables that we consume." (Birgit, 1). The shared values and vision are mentioned by Nicolás, for whom the most valuable about CSA is the interconnection with other people

who have a similar mindset and at the same time the experience how different people who support CSA can be. This shows that on the one hand, common interests and values are necessary to create a community identity; on the other hand, this is only one part of the CSA consumer-member and thus, there can be found a broad variety of characters and backgrounds among the members. The variety of people is not only recognized by Nicolás but also by Birgit and Rosemarie:

“The most valuable for me personally are actually the interpersonal contacts which I haven’t had before to such an extent. [...] Here, a lot of different people get together. Plenty of different people.” (Rosemarie, 2)

“[...] to see how diverse the people actually are and in which directions they move, that’s what I like.” (Birgit, 1)

CSA surely is an *alternative consumption community* if categorized according to the terminology of Bekin et al. (2007). In the above quoted statements it can also be seen that it is an *interest community* which is further supported by Marischa’s feeling that the common work within the community makes it possible to swap ideas and develop common visions. The magnitude of interest and engagement some consumer-members contribute to the community is emphasized by Hans (3):

“It’s nice that there are also enough volunteers who team up into working groups [...], communication group and so forth and invest a lot of time and energy and there are several outstanding people who are almost full-time volunteers. For some you really have to wonder how they can manage it time-wise.”

This description further shows the importance of the topic and the functioning community around it. Community cooperation is of particular importance “because without community nothing will work within CSA. Well, then you can say good-bye to CSA.” (Ingrid, 2). Marischa also experiences the community aspect in CSA as very important because she thinks that people cannot live by themselves. In her opinion, people need the support of others which is also why she moved into a multigenerational house. These findings are in line with the findings of Brehm and Eisenhauer (2008) as well as Cooley and Lass (1998) who state that community attachment is quite important. Furthermore, this is a reason why one could also talk about tribes when talking about CSA initiatives (at least regarding the interviewed CSA consumer-members).

According to Cova (1997), it is characteristic for tribes to share a common vision while still keep individualism up. This can be found in the statements about the variety of consumer-members explained above. The fluidity, occasional gathering and also the different backgrounds and interests besides the CSA membership is what Maffesoli (1996) labels as neo-tribalism. However, as can be deduced from Rosemarie's (2) explanation, the fluidity sometimes can lead to a non-binding nature and disappointment:

“Well, maybe you always have to correct yourself and bring it [the importance of community] in accordance with the others who might not feel it to the same extent. [...] If I expect a very high value of community, sometimes possibly even an inflated one, then I have to envisage that I might meet with disappointment. [...] the qualities that are in demand such as reliability for example when people accept certain offices are viewed differently depending on the people. That's how it is in every team.”

The difficulties that are described by this CSA consumer-member are typical for the occasional character of neo-tribalism. However, Rosemarie accepts this as part of the community identity and compares her CSA community with any other team work where people show different commitment.

The interviewed CSA consumer-members are dedicated to their respective CSA community to various degrees. Especially the freedom of choice to what degree the consumer-members are involved is essential for some of them: “I like very much about CSA that it is some kind of community which you can choose how intense you would like to live it.” (Monika, 2). This freedom also allows the consumer-members to practice different forms of consumption at the same time as described by Cova (1997). It is not only tribalized consumption but at the same time also individualized consumption, e.g. for those of the CSA consumer-members who have their own kitchen garden, or modern mass consumption for those who also shop in conventional supermarkets. However, none of the interviewees stated that the community has no importance for him or her which shows that consuming within a community is appreciated to a more or less extend besides individualized consumption.

4.2.2 Solidary thoughts and community aspects

There are several further aspects of community that are mentioned by the CSA consumer-members during the interviews. These aspects related to community consumption and

identity reach from the thought of solidarity and its meaning to the building of other communities within the CSA community.

Solidary thoughts

Solidarity is illuminated by the interviewees in different contexts which shows that they understand the solidary concept in various ways. Wolfgang (2) depicts the difficulty of the interpretation of solidarity as following:

“Yes, and I also think that this solidary thought is not entirely implanted in the people’s mindset yet. Some view it as weekly green box but to actually work in the field ‘why do I additionally have to do that?’. Sometimes you also see that one picks the best things and the crooked cucumber is left in the box till the end. The solidary thought is also that you really share everything including crooked stuff with blemish and spots.”

This thought is supported by Birgit who claims that the awareness that not everything you exactly measured as your share is only “yours”. She further explains that CSA helps to not insist on certain things and that CSA not conveys the thought “that’s my right, that’s what I pay and that’s mine.” (Birgit, 7). Therefore, she indicates characteristic signs of a community identity. In opposition to Wolfgang’s explanation of the solidary thought, is Nicolà’s statement. For him, physical work on the farm is not part of the solidarity within CSA: “In my opinion, helping on the farm is not necessarily part of the community-supported agriculture. Instead, solidarity is related to support the farmer to produce his own harvest and to ensure that he gets fair wages and not to grow stuff yourself.” (Nicolá, 2). What can be found here, is also the difference between the individual CSA initiatives. The CSA farm Rhein-Neckar (of which Nicolá is a member) has several farmers employed whereas the gardener of the CSA Aglasterhausen (of which Wolfgang is a member) works on his own and needs more the physical support of the consumer-members in the field.

The financial aspect of solidarity is mentioned by Carsten. He tells that within their community they currently had a discussion about CSA being open for everyone even though the person cannot contribute one’s entire financial share. He experiences this as a conflict of thoughts because on the one hand, the consumer-members are not amused about members who cannot pay their full contribution but on the other hand the community wants to be solidary and not an “exclusive club of eco-romantics” how he

calls it. However, the consumption community can lead to more indulgence and tolerance as described by Ana (2):

“The packaging of the shares, for example, it’s actually volunteers who prepare the stuff. And sometimes the amounts are nothing like correct because someone miscounted or forgot something. But because it’s volunteers doing this, it’s not that bad. You know, then you are more tolerant and tell yourself ‘it’s alright, we are one community, we are humans and we consist from volunteers and help the farmers’.”

Even though there are some organizational problems, this CSA consumer-member is ready to accept these because of the solidary thought and the appreciation of the community as well as the dedication and engagement of other members.

Grassroots democracy

Grassroots democracy is a theme only discussed by consumer-members of the CSA Rhein-Neckar since they have many more members than the CSA Aglasterhausen-Daudenzell and therefore, regularly assemblies for discussion and decision-making. These kind of assemblies are perceived rather positively, however, there are also mentioned down-sides of some consumer-members. While Nicolás thinks it is kind of nice to participate in the grassroots democracy assemblies from time to time, Benedikt (3) perceives a deeper value out of it:

“This means, we also built a community here in which we can discuss, in which different opinions come together and if you go to the assemblies, you also notice quite quickly that different opinions are only do good and that there are many aspects which I maybe wouldn’t have thought of. That means, the decision-making process within the community is somehow quite beneficial, that’s my feeling.”

Hans (2) further elaborates on the advantages of such a grassroots democracy: “[...] that we are a community which tries to find solutions while proceeding direct democratic and there’s no patronizingly decision-making and the best is that we have more sympathy for the farmers, their worries, their work, their joys and so on.” From these two statements, it can also be derived that community decisions are more sustainable since they include and consider many different aspects.

Nevertheless, practicing such a grassroots democracy is not always easy and can be debilitating. Carsten and Michael perceive grassroots democracy as time-consuming business and view it as difficult to manage a company in a way which always has to listen

to 180 shareholders. They still perceive it as important to have the right to be heard but they also state that it makes decision-making processes challenging.

Communities within the CSA community

It is not only the CSA community itself that has a high value by the interviewed consumer-members. Beyond the community of CSA consumer-members, other (smaller) communities and connections arise and flourish. This supplement of communities is in particular pictured by Rosemarie (3): “Well, since lately there’s this ‘rent-a-hen’ thing which derived from CSA. [...] why not, why shouldn’t we build an egg-community with our own rules? I think that’s already a great offshoot.” Since CSA for her provides only vegetables, she really enjoys that some other CSA consumer-members produce foodstuff and she can support them by buying or co-producing the regional and seasonal produce of these people. The contact to other CSA consumer-members or even other contacts of them thus support her way of alternative consumption behavior. Thinking the other way around, from the own local CSA community to a global perspective on CSA is what inspires Kirstin. She has the opinion that it is important to contribute her share to the local community by supporting CSA: “That’s the most valuable for me and also the awareness that many other people do this at different places, that’s actually a good feeling.” (Kirstin, 2).

It can be derived from the interviews that CSA generally can create a community identity which is perceived as valuable or even necessary by the consumer-members. The solidary thought, the right of being heard, more tolerance, other alternative consumption options that arise from the CSA community are important aspects that foster a more sustainable lifestyle.

4.3 Tradition in a modern world?

Despite being rather underlying concepts some of the aspects from the theoretical framework about modernity and identity could be found partly in the gathered data. The findings presented in the following are less about identity construction but instead about traditional and symbolic consumption, critic on the society and system of modernity.

4.3.1 CSA – a traditional model of consumption?

The traditional consumption model focuses on self-consumption and the exchange of food happens within the local community (Fonte, 2002). Thus, the traditional consumption model comes close to the concept of CSA because one is not a mere consumer but also a co-producer as Monika describes it. As elaborated explicitly in chapter 4.1 the CSA consumer-members emphasize seasonality, show awareness for nature and are constrained locally, three aspects that are in line with the traditional model of consumption. Herbert (3) further continues the thought of the traditional model: “I think the ideal case would be if everyone would grow foods like this and if only CSA would exist, then the community would support the farmers and the farmer would nourish the community”. To entirely fulfill the aspects of the traditional food consumption model, the consumer-members would need either the supply with all goods from one farmer or several farmers who provide them with goods the consumers need. Since the entire supply with all goods is not ensured for the interviewed consumer-members, they are still dependent on other sources of foodstuff such as farmer markets, supermarkets, etc. Furthermore, Fonte (2002) states that the traditional consumption model is linked to a society of generalized poverty which is not valid for an industrialized country such as Germany. However, compared to the other models of food consumption described by Fonte (2002), the traditional consumption model is closest to the model of CSA.

Another thought about consumption models is brought up by Rosemarie (7):

“A lot of the initiatives that exist nowadays – which is really weird for us, really weird for our Generation – all that has been there already. This whole direction did exist before 30, 40 years once already. Buying directly from the farm, producer-consumer-communities, Co-ops, that already existed once. You could get everything in paper bags, you could get everything unpacked.”

From this observation it can be derived that there might be a circulation of the different consumption models that keep repeating itself. However, that would also mean that we would never reach an entirely sustainable lifestyle of society since we would be caught in this circle of consumption modes.

4.3.2 Symbolic consumption

The interviews showed that – at least among the participating CSA consumer-members – most consumer-members are CSA members out of conviction and less because of symbolic consumption. Nevertheless, claims as “I think it’s a good move” (Ingrid, 1) show that sometimes the symbolic meaning of the consumer-members CSA participation come into effect. Another example for symbolic consumption is told by Birgit (2) about a friend who recently became CSA consumer-member: “[...] she really thinks it’s brilliant because then you can actually raise a flag and say ‘Here is a proof of sustainability’, that you participate in CSA.” Hence, this example does not only speak for symbolic consumption but also for the state of the *ideal self*. The consumption of food produced from CSA serves as an identifier of a sustainable lifestyle. By claiming CSA as a proof of sustainability this consumer-member also would like to be perceived as human with a general sustainable lifestyle, the *ideal self* of her.

Other consumer-members such as Benedikt (2-3) have really high expectations to their *ideal self*; however, for him the CSA membership eased these expectations:

“[...] before, I was extremely sustainable and only organic and fair traded and so on. And this did change a bit for one resulting that we shop more in common now and [...] have to find a consensus, and on the other hand due to hidden agenda of ‘yes, I am already participating in CSA and there comes already enough from me’.”

Even though he might have relativized his state of *ideal self*, it can still be partly symbolic consumption detected in his statement about his CSA membership. Symbolic consumption not necessarily means that you use the CSA membership as a sign for the surrounding world but can also have a meaning only to one self. Rosemarie for example, experiences it as attraction to buy as less as possible in addition to her weekly CSA share. With buying as less as possible, she tries to reach the state of her *ideal self*.

4.3.3 Critic on society and system

During the interviews several critics on the attitude of society as well as the governmental and economic system emerged – indirectly, these are critics on modernity since the mentioned institutions are part of modernity. In Kirstin’s opinion, it is actually good to be a bit unsatisfied with our societal system since this causes reconsideration of where we have a collective problem or contribute to it. The dissatisfaction issues for Birgit (6) from

the behavior of people within the society: “Sometimes I have the feeling that we have this culture to always scrape off, ‘where’s the glamour gone, where can one scrape off even more?’, and people don’t see the big picture anymore.” However, she does not only see this kind of behavior in society generally but also within the CSA. Therefore, she speaks for not questioning the whole CSA just because of smaller dissatisfactions. Ana thinks that the mindset of society needs to change to actually make a change but she also points out the problem that society is dominated and influenced by the economy.

Critic on the economic system could also be found among the CSA consumer-members. They criticize that the whole economic system in Germany is not designed for sustainability (Herbert) and it needs to be entrenched in the economic system that not everything should be destroyed (Kirstin). This is why several of the interviewed consumer-members were looking for alternative types of economy “[...]to counteract the force of growth [...] and one special case was CSA. So you can actually do something to reform the economic system.” (Monika, 1). Carsten and Michael would also endorse the idea to change the economic industry through corporate systems where several farms provide a variety of products for a larger number of people. The problem with this is outlined by Birgit who explains that our political system does not support such an alternative system but instead puts obstacles in such a system’s way. It would be necessary that the politics would support and want alternative economic systems.

Some other interviewees such as Rosemarie (6) talk about much more concrete problems they see in the economic system: “[...] actually the whole world aims for extremely cheap products. It should be as cheap as possible in order to consume even more with the saved money.” Furthermore, she thinks that the general society is not interested in the coherencies of production processes and also the willingness to change the own consumption behavior is quite low. In this statement one of the theoretical principles of social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 2004) can be found, which is the distinction from an out-group who is no interested in the coherencies of products and not willing to change its consumption behavior. Following, the in-group which in this case is the respective CSA community is perceived as positively. Another consumer-member who describes the in-group in a positive manner is Marischa (3):

“The feeling that I arrived in CSA – I already got to know many other projects – and I have the impression that here in this community there are many very engaged people who are both social and otherwise very mature and it really fills me with pleasure to be part of it, to participate, to bring forward own ideas, to help.”

In Marischa’s statement, the emotional attachment and her self-concept derived from her knowledge of her membership as described by Tajfel and Turner (2004) can be found in the pleasure of being part of this community that is very mature in her opinion.

Similar to what has been brought up by Rosemarie about the disinterest of consumers in the coherencies of products is Nicolás’s (4) perspective on consumer information: “The labeling of products is a big problem. That means how can the man in the street who doesn’t engage himself so much to go to the supermarket and can clearly say ‘okay, that’s pork of which I would eat’ or ‘that’s pork its tail got cut off?’” This is a perfect example for what calls Fischler (1988) food without identity. The consumer does not get the information how the products he or she can buy in the supermarket were actually raised or growth which leaves the consumer in insecurity. Even though Fischler (1988) and Fonte (2002) both claim that informative labeling and listing of ingredients shall help to reduce uncertainty and are thus an attempt to reconstruct the food’s identity, it can be concluded from Nicolás’s explanation that this might only be possible for an interested consumer who is willing to spend time on collecting information about the foodstuff he or she purchases. Questioning the background and production method is something Ana does even more conscious since her CSA membership; she also does not hesitate to ask other people whether they know where their meat comes from or how the animals are kept. This behavior – which was enhanced through CSA – draws attention to the food production methods for other consumers outside CSA and thus, helps to distribute more knowledge and awareness. That the organic branch is not any better though is a strong conviction of Hans (2):

“For me, sustainability is a label that is affixed to products in the same way as regional and seasonal. If you look around in an organic supermarket, then you will see that it is neither social nor regional nor seasonal nor somewhat sustainable. It’s nothing else than a segment in a through capitalized agriculture which can only fight back with few exceptions to not be destroyed already.”

According to Hans, the only exception in the through capitalized agriculture is CSA. It becomes clear that he sees organic supermarkets quite critical and not as a solution for a

more sustainable consumption behavior since the consumer is misled also in the organic segment of our economy.

4.4 Consumption behavior and sustainability

In this part of the analysis, the findings about how CSA consumer-members understand sustainability and how they implement it into their daily lives will be presented. Furthermore, I will discuss which aspects of sustainability seem to be most important to CSA consumer-members.

4.4.1 Pro-environmental consumer or ecological citizen?!

Overall, it can be said that the interviewed CSA consumer-members agreed that their membership led to the fact that they throw away considerably less foodstuff than before. This phenomenon is for example reported by Birgit, Ingrid as well as Ute and Wolfgang. Further aspects in connection to the utilization of food are brought up by Katja (1): “Sometimes we give stuff away [of the weekly share] but throwing stuff out is actually out of question for us. Because one aspect that I really like about CSA is that there is thrown out or culled so few, yes.” The thought of utilizing as much as possible of the produce is not only valid for the consumer-members but also already on the farm. In a normal supermarket the consumer only gets the presorted standard food as further described by Katja. In the same way Birgit emphasizes that nothing goes bad because you really try to utilize everything that is supplied with the weekly share. This is in accordance with the findings of Autio et al. (2009) and Moisander and Pesonen (2002) who discovered a shift of the consumer ethos from a throw away culture to a sustainable consumption culture. This cannot only be discovered in regard to food products but also other goods as Herbert (3) explains: “[...] to mind if you really need this product and if yes, then to watch out that it is something that you can repair it and it’s something durable.” Similar to this is Wolfgang’s viewpoint to take care of quality and also to sometimes spend a bit more money on goods because then you will benefit in long-term.

In some of the conducted interviews statements that indicate consumption behavior either as pro-environmental consumer or as ecological citizen could be found. The majority of these statements pointed towards consumption behavior with the mindset of a pro-environmental consumer whereas one statement could be categorized as ecological citizen consumption behavior. The aspiration of a pro-environmental consumer to buy

only or mostly organic products can be viewed in the answers of Rosemarie, Katja and Nicolás:

“Either in the organic supermarket or in the small traditional organic store. That’s my decision then. [...] Well, or organic products from the normal supermarket, yes.” (Rosemarie, 5)

“Mainly in the organic store or from regional producers at the farmer’s market. Or directly from the farm, yes.” (Katja, 4)

“Organic and regional, that’s sustainable for me. Normal products are actually completely discarded. When I go to the supermarket

It can be derived from these statements that these CSA consumer-members “shop with the planet in mind” (Black & Cherrier, 2010) and use their consumption power to buy products which are organic and from their point of view more sustainable. The more radical position of the ecological citizen is represented by Monika (3) who thinks that we generally need to consume less of everything: “The more is produced, even though it’s organic or fair or otherwise, it has to be inserted energy anyway and afterwards waste is accumulated, and this turnover, it surely is the most effective, if you reduce it a bit.” This position can be found in Autio et al. (2009) as well as Black and Cherrier (2010). However, these authors also state that there is no such a thing as environmental friendly products, which is contradicted by Monika (3) in terms of foodstuff: “Well, in nutrition it’s not necessarily less, but rather really organic cultivated and fair produced products.” Hence, both positions of consumption intention can be found in her person even though the ecological citizen mindset might be predominantly since this is her overall attitude. In contrast to Lovins and Hawken (2007) and Garner (2011) claiming the sustainable consumer as rational and ethical ideals subjects, the interviewees do not perceive themselves as ethical ideals just by participating in CSA. All of them agree that there are still parts of their consumption behavior where they are not behaving entirely sustainable and improvements could be done.

4.4.2 Sustainable consumption explained by CSA consumer-members

Asking the consumer members about their understanding and interpretation of sustainable consumption, several different aspects could be found which will be presented in the following.

In line with her attitude as ecological citizen, Monika understands sustainability as consuming less of everything. Nicolás's (3) thoughts go in the same direction: "I think if it should be sustainable, it needs to be less. Even vegetables are eaten too many by Western Europeans and all the more Germans." In the eyes of these CSA consumer-members consuming less would thus result in less production and less waste of resources. Another thought that results in the same outcome but is different though, is brought up by Birgit (4): "To me, sustainable consumption means to operate with food – not only food, of course also with textiles, clothes, ride comfort, we can go far here since we actually consume permanently – in such a way that I don't use more than necessary." Following this, is the explanation of Karin and Herbert to consider 'what is really needed?' before consuming goods.

Several of the interviewed CSA consumer-members connect sustainable consumption to saving resources. According to Carsten (5) one consumes sustainable when not using more than is due to him or her:

"One part of this terrestrial of land or the harvest of it belongs to me, a certain share, and I don't take more than is due to me. You can also extend it to our planet. I'm entitled to use a certain part of air, a certain part of soil, a certain part of water. And everyone who takes more is actually not operating sustainable."

In the same breath he notices that he is using more than his particular share despite participating in CSA. For Ana and Rosemarie sustainable consumption is to be considerate of human beings, the environment, animals, living organisms in general so that following generations also have the chance to live on this planet. This is supported by Marischa who adds the social dimension to it by emphasizing fair traded goods. This definition comes quite close to the Siebenhüner's (2000) concept of sustainability as an ethical concept with the aim of mankind's survival and intra- as well as inter-generational equity. To ensure this, the concept of the ecological footprint was developed which is an important measure of sustainable consumption according to Nicolás. In his opinion, it is essential to keep the ecological footprint as small as possible by creating a circular economy, e.g. using the dung to fertilize the soil. Katja's (3) definition of sustainable consumption displays parallels with the concept of Siebenhüner's terms of mankind's survival: "Preferably purchase, consume those products that make a negative impact on the ecological balance with the result that it could eventual continue like this."

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, durable products and utilizing everything food wise so you do not have to throw out stuff are essential for sustainable consumption as viewed by Herbert. Similar to this, Benedikt thinks that the durability of goods is essential when it comes to sustainable consumption. Rosemarie (4) defines sustainable consumption from an economic relations point of view: "Sustainable consumption would be purchasing directly from the producer as consumer and immediate cash flow hereof. No intermediate trade and also no gambling." This viewpoint is connected with the importance of fair wages for the farmers as discussed in chapter 4.1 and has additionally a political connotation in that sense that it is a critic on gambling on food products which actually takes place in our economy.

Asking yourself in the consumption process 'what is good?' and 'what is less environmental friendly or bad?' and thinking about the production process of goods is necessary for a more sustainable consumption according to Benedikt. Another CSA consumer-member takes this thought even further: "We always have to ask oneself not only what we want and can but what really is required and appropriate so that others also have an appropriate live." (Kirstin, 4). Again, in this statement a global awareness in regard to consumption can be detected. This CSA consumer-member is not only focused on its own local community, but sees sustainable consumption as a mode of consumption where you consider the impacts on other people's life as well. Despite all the mentioned aspects of sustainable consumption, both Carsten and Nicolás doubt that it is possible to live and consume somewhat sustainable in an industrialized country. The doubts on this derive from the opulence of available goods and foods and also from having a great number of possibilities, e.g. moneywise (Nicolá).

4.4.3 The sacrifice of sustainable consumption

In regard to sustainable consumption, in approximately one third of the conducted interviews the CSA consumer-members approach waiver. This theme is brought up in different context and with different connotations. On the one hand, there are consumer-members in whose opinion sustainable consumption and a sustainable lifestyle has its limits. Ingrid and Hans for example agree that some convenience and indulgence is still important. This is supplemented by Ute stating that one still need the enjoyments of life such as going on holidays. From these viewpoints it can be extracted that some of the

interviewed CSA consumer-members understand a sustainable lifestyle partly as sacrificing convenience and joy. In their case, this understanding is not directly connected to their CSA membership but rather to things like holidays, household appliances and foodstuff that is not provided with their CSA share. They feel like they would need to eliminate these things to operate a sustainable lifestyle.

On the other hand, there are the consumer members who emphasize that participating in CSA as well as sustainable consumption does not mean that you feel like sacrificing or missing out on something. Birgit (2) explicitly refers to her CSA membership and the vegetables she receives: “You hold it in your hands and you know it’s from hereabouts. And I think it’s strengthened through the thought that often occurs ‘is it sustainable or not?’. And that’s not a disadvantage, it’s something beautiful.” The focus of Katja’s (4) opinion is rather on the sustainability of the solidary principle: “That’s the solidary thought, you bear the positive sides but also the negative sides. Yes, and that’s somehow also a nice thought. That’s not just something where I say I have to prohibit something, that’s not how I conceive it.” By the explanations of these two consumer-members it can be observed that they entirely support the CSA with its aims of solidarity and sustainability even though it might not always be easy and comfortable. Furthermore, Katja (4) elaborates on the difficulties of a sustainable lifestyle:

“Yes, you consciously need to do something else than the mainstream, but that takes energy. I somehow really like spending my energy on this, but it’s also debilitating. And it also makes me sad that it is that way. Only those people who actively spend their energy on this, will do something different whereas the others will always do it the way you do it, how you always do it.”

Following, it is not always easy to change your consumption behavior and your lifestyle towards more sustainability due to the force of habit. Nevertheless, most of the interviewed CSA consumer-members show goodwill in making alterations in their consumption behavior.

4.4.4 A social, ecological and economic dimension

CSA is a sustainable system which is based on a restricted local area and thus, corresponds with what Sikdar (2003) defines as type II system. To any of his four types, three different aspects of sustainability can be assigned: social, ecological and economic. For most of the interviewees the ecological and economic aspect of sustainability seems

to be the most important. The social aspect was rather low ranked among the CSA consumer-members. Almost all asked consumer-members found it difficult to view the three aspects independently from each other which is in line with the interdependency of the aspects as described by Adams (2006). Accordingly, there was one consumer-member who could not make a point of which is the most important aspect from his perspective whereas another interviewee suggested a third to each aspect.

The importance of the social aspect is rather justified by precluding the other aspects as done by Hans (4): “The third aspect [economic] is something where I say that in principle, we don’t change anything by uncoupling from the normal economic circle with CSA.” Because he cannot see any economic progress regarding sustainability, Hans considers the social and ecological dimension as most important. In line with this is another CSA consumer-member’s statement despite giving any reason for her decision.

Most interviewees decided for the ecological dimension as main aspect – possibly due to the fact that the physical product the consumer-members receive from their CSA share is most likely connected to the ecological aspect. One fundamental reason that speaks for the ecological aspect is given by Katja (3):

“In the end, the ecological dimension is the most important simply because it’s the basis of existence for people. If you don’t have it anymore, then everything else is not useful either, then you can still be a great community but there’s nothing anymore that you can do together.”

In her opinion, the ecological dimension serves as base for CSA and without this dimension, CSA would be obsolete. Another reason why the ecological aspect is the most important one is stated by Kirstin (4):

“The protection of nature has priority for me because humans are able to come to an arrangement whereas other creatures are threatened by our manners. The main motivation is that someone who works ecological in a small dimension and is diversified, which means rears no monoculture, can sleep easy.”

Her main motivation to protect the nature determines the most important aspect of sustainability for her. It is interesting to hear that she is rather worried about other creatures than human beings, which further shows her understanding of coherencies between people and nature. The manner of Monika’s reasoning is similar to Ute and Wolfgang’s who explain that short ways as well as seasonal and regional food is their

main concern and following name the “environmental aspect”, which can be equated with the ecological aspect, as most relevant. Often the ecological and economic aspects are mentioned together as most important, but the interviewees then decide for the ecological dimension as Marischa and Rosemarie do.

For those interviewed consumer-members who decided for the economic dimension to be the most important it is mainly about leveraging the market economy and creating an alternative market which entails initiatives such as CSA. The motivation behind this aspect is described in detail by Monika (3):

“I think altogether it is mostly important to escape the market economy, to show that an alternative economy is working, that in a smaller dimension you can participate with planning and from this it probably emerges automatically that people would like to grow organic stuff.”

In accordance with Monika’s explanation is Benedikt’s feeling that CSA is actually a functioning system against structures of market economy. He further believes that other ecological systems would be thinkable in structures of capitalism, which is why he prioritizes the economic aspect over the ecological one. Current structures of economy are also Nicolás’s (3) reason to decide for the economic dimension: “The more important thing is the farmer’s survival, to preserve the smallholder structures.” Preserving smallholder structures by supporting one particular gardener is for Birgit a political statement. Even though she explicitly calls it political, this can be considered as being part of the economic dimension since it is a political statement against the structures of the market economy.

4.4.5 *Homo sustinens* & *New economics*

When it comes to decide if the interviewed consumer-members can be labeled as *Homo sustinens* or a mix between *Homo economicus* and *Homo sustinens* I consider all interviewees somewhere between *Homo economicus* and *Homo sustinens*. Some of them might be closer to the behavior of *Homo economicus* whereas others might be quite close to what Siebenhüner (2000) describes as *Homo sustinens*. I do not consider any of the CSA consumer-members as *Homo economicus* because their membership in a CSA initiative is already a step closer to the concept of *Homo sustinens* no matter what the main motivation of their participation is. To a various degree all of the interviewed

consumer-members show signs of social and ecological rationality, emotional relationships towards nature and other people, cooperation and communication, learning and creativity as well as moral responsibility. Some of the most significant signs for behavior according to *Homo sustinens* will be presented in the following paragraphs.

Cooperation can be found, firstly, among the CSA consumer-members but also, secondly, between the CSA consumer-members and the farmer. By cooperating with the farmer, the involved consumer-members support him financially and thus, ensure his basis of existence. This means that all CSA consumer-members are somewhat closer towards *Homo sustinens*, a behavior that is particularly mentioned by Karin and Ana. Another aspect is creativity, also mentioned by many interviewees in relation to utilize the food stuff received through their CSA membership, e.g. Kirstin's explanation (2):

“And I become inventive for example when there is way too much of a certain vegetable the question arises how to conserve it because it must not end up in the compost. There you hit on great ideas. It's good for creativity, if you accept it and get yourself into it. You develop new recipes, you can swap ideas and yes, it is no longer the activity of a consumer who says 'I want this and that now' but the process starts somewhere else. 'I have this and that and now I model something from it.' These are different consumption behaviors.”

Additionally, the emotional relationship towards nature can be found in Karin's (3) behavior since she rears bees: “[...] bee-keeping is a silent act of nature protection. Nobody pays attention to it but you would notice it if it wouldn't be there.” Emotional relationships towards other people are practiced a lot within the respective CSA community. One consumer-member who practices this social dimension in a quite particular way also outside the CSA is Marischa because she lives in a multigenerational house.

For many CSA consumer-members, moral responsibility is already part of their membership but they might not be particularly aware about it. This is different for Katja (2) who formulates her feeling of moral responsibility in the following way: “[...] the awareness that you also have an impact on the others depending on the foods I buy or by being involved in CSA, I change a bit the mode how agriculture is practiced.” Hence, it can be discovered that she feels responsible for her actions and the impact of her consumption behavior and not merely consumes without considering her environment.

This is actually the case for many of the interviewed CSA consumer-members, for example Kirstin (as described in chapter 4.4.2).

Similar is the situation with the concept and principles of New Economics by Bekin and Seyfang (2007). Generally, the concept of CSA fulfills all principles of the New Economics concept: it is decentralized of social and economic organization; it supports the equal distribution of environmental goods; it builds up a community as well as supports collective action; it is an alternative provision system. Moreover, New Economics gives preference to local and social embedded economies as well as growing connections between consumers and producers. These are aspects of CSA that have been discussed in detail in the previous chapters and thus, fitting into the concept of New Economics. One example for this is be Benedikt's (1) prediction of CSA as a future concept due to CSA being based on the principles of New Economics: "[...] somehow CSA is a thing where you can really try to busy yourself in a different way and thus, is something that could be more a future thing. To maintain long-term economic relations and different producer-consumer relations." Another example that demonstrates the community-building and collective action can be found in Marischa (2): "[...] for me, the CSA community has really become very, very important, there are several people with whom I'm close friends and I often drive to the farm with several people to assist." Not every principle of New Economics might fit with the intention of participating in CSA for each consumer-member but the overall concept and implementation of CSA definitely belongs to the concept of New Economics.

4.4.6 Spreading the word

In the following, a short overview of the possibilities and chances to spread the word of CSA and hence, the idea and behavior of CSA initiatives from the perspective of the interviewed consumer-members will be given. To spread the word of CSA more successfully Nicolà regards it as essential to keep up with the times, e.g. by creating a Facebook page for the CSA Rhein-Neckar since there is indeed a Facebook profile for the CSA network in Germany but not for each individual CSA initiative. Related to this is Rosemarie's idea of placing banner advertisement for CSA online and thus, draw the user's attention to the coherencies of food consumption and agriculture. The information about these coherencies is the main factor of a change in food consumption according to

Ana (4): “I think the public relations about CSA are a bit few [...]. But the people need to be more interested in it most certainly, and I think then, if they would really know about the backgrounds of their groceries, that there could change something.” Not only information about the coherencies within the food sector but also general marketing for CSA is a point mentioned by several CSA consumer-members, e.g. Ingrid, Nicolás, Benedikt and Monika. In Ingrid’s opinion more marketing for CSA is needed so people know that “here we have CSA and we can participate here” (Ingrid, 4). Nicolás considers events such common breakfasts important where people get in touch with the concept of CSA. Regional and sustainable economic relations as well as organic produced foods are the things that should be promoted in particular going by Benedikt, who views these two aspects as the main attractive factors for people to participate in CSA. Another consumer-member who is quite engaged in giving talks is Monika (4): “Such information events, which are also promotional events for us of course, make people thinking, discussing, viewing it critical and my goal is that eventually there will be many more CSA initiatives so that there are many more consumer-members.”

5. Critical reflections

The findings discussed and developed in this study are a result of the chosen method and need to be further evaluated. Doing such an assessment ensures a more accurate and well-founded base for the findings, since it describes the thoughts I had throughout the design process. Hirschman (1986) has four concepts which are used to evaluate humanistic inquiries and the trustworthiness of the findings: *Credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability*, and *confirmability* will be explained and applied in relation to my study and its findings.

Credibility ensures that the findings in this study are credible which means in the ideal case that they can be verified by CSA consumer-members in Germany, who are the subjects of my research. In contrast to testing findings as done in positivistic inquiry, Hirschman (1986) reasons that the subjects hopefully respond in the most possibly honest and open way while the researcher has the intention of understanding. Consequently, my approach towards the interviewees was in line with Hirschman's (1986: 244) words "people are as they appear to be". This means that the knowledge and realities constructed during the interviews result from the appearance of interviewer and interviewee in a particular moment. This entails the risk that the interviewees could be obliged to give desired answers since they knew the gathered data were going to be used for the analysis of my study. Therefore, I aimed to focus on understanding their situation and provided knowledge during the conversation by keeping it as informal as possible and creating a non-judgmental atmosphere.

Transferability can be compared with generalization, which is an applicable measurement in quantitative research (Hirschman, 1986). As generalization is not an applicable dimension in my study due to a qualitative design and method, I rather aim to question if "*one manifestation of a phenomenon can be transferred to a second manifestation of the phenomenon*" (Hirschman 1986:245). To determine this, it is necessary to know the characteristics and especially the context of the particular field under investigation. In other words, ensuring the transferability of this study entails staying true to the cultural or social contexts it is embedded in. As I am aware that this research is embedded in a context of (food) consumption behavior in Germany, I acknowledge these circumstances throughout the study. Despite being familiar with the context of the research, there could

be other contexts that the specific constructions and ideas could be transferred to which I am not aware of. The findings of this study are predominantly applicable for the interviewed CSA consumer-members, but there might be other CSA consumer-members in Germany or elsewhere who think and feel in a similar way. To increase the transferability of the findings of my study, more CSA consumer-members from other areas in Germany could have been interviewed. With more interviews more thick and valuable data about sustainable consumption in relation to CSA involvement would have been created.

Dependability usually refers to the instruments of measuring or analyzing in quantitative research and its consistency over time. Including other scholars' works or more investigators in the research process is one way of increasing dependability according to Hirschman (1986). As I wrote the thesis by myself, there was no possibility to compare my findings with those of other researchers about the same case. However, considering the various sources reviewed for the literature of this study, I regard the research I draw upon as sufficient to ensure broadly dependability. Nevertheless, I recognize that qualitative research can only reach a limited level of dependability due to different levels of interpretation, different people, contexts and phenomena (Hirschman 1986: 245-246). Hence, my interpretations and findings might – to various degrees – be context-dependent and value-laden.

Confirmability deals with objectivity and neutrality in traditional positivistic research (Hirschman 1986:246), and is therefore adapted into quite the opposite here: Subjectivity and bias. My role as researcher will and should affect the study within a constructivist approach. According to Hirschman (1986: 246) "The goal [...] is not the impossible one of eradicating value judgments, but the realistic one of eradicating bias. This is achieved only by recognizing and validating the value of judgments on which the activity of the scientist, like all other rational activity, must rest." My own experiences and sense making of the conversations around CSA and sustainable (food) consumption influenced the way of how I understood and interpreted the interviews. Furthermore, I estimate the topics chosen in the analysis are of great importance in this context. To ensure that the constructions of knowledge can be traced back to the initial source, I tried to use original quotations from

the interviews as much as possible in the analysis, and additionally, attached the transcriptions to this study.

6. Conclusion

In the following, I will provide conclusions based on the research that has been carried out for this thesis. The aim of this research is to investigate the awareness of CSA consumer-members in terms of sustainable food consumption and how this impacts their own lifestyle. I attempt to give answers to the two following research questions:

- ☞ *In how far does CSA create enough awareness and deeper knowledge about sustainability to establish a more tenable lifestyle?*
- ☞ *How do CSA consumer-members understand and practice sustainable consumption?*

In regard to the first research question it can be concluded that the CSA consumer-members in this research showed that CSA indeed is a mind-expanding experience which creates a higher awareness and knowledge about food production and agricultural processes, impact on the environment and its protection as well as globalization. However, this awareness and more knowledge is perceived by the interviewees as a progress and CSA as one step within it. It further was found that becoming a consumer-member and the participation in CSA requires a certain degree of awareness and interest in topics around sustainable food production and consumption or other environmental-related topics. To ensure long-term success of a sustainable lifestyle it seems to be important to proceed step-by-step towards more sustainability. The participation in CSA does in so far lead to a more tenable lifestyle as the appreciation for agricultural produce grows with the consumer-members CSA membership and thus, almost all interviewees additionally attach great importance on organically produced foodstuff (some also on organic clothes).

Most of the interviewees wish to live more sustainable than they actually do at the current state, but it was detected that their CSA membership indeed caused thoughts and considerations that also spread to other areas of life such as mobility or power. Furthermore, by creating a community identity and being based on the solidary thought CSA fosters a sustainable lifestyle of its consumer-members, e.g. through more tolerance, the right of being heard and other small communities which grow out of the CSA community and create a more sustainable alternative economic system. A further point

which shows that CSA is supporting sustainability and a sustainable lifestyle of its consumer-members is the conviction behind the membership. Most CSA consumer-members are not participating due to symbolic consumption but have high expectations to themselves and to fulfill their ideal self.

Regarding the second research question, it can be said that sustainable consumption is understood in various aspects by the interviewed CSA consumer-members. Sustainable consumption is mainly understood as less consumption but also as having future generations in mind by saving resources and by protecting wildlife and environment. Furthermore, two major aspects of sustainable consumption were the regress from a throw away culture by investing in more durable products when it comes to goods besides foodstuff. For the interviewees, the ecological aspect is considered as most important which seems to be related to the background of being CSA consumer-members. Nevertheless, sustainable consumption is perceived as both sacrifice and enrichment which is mainly due to our abundant lifestyle in an industrialized country.

It can be concluded that the CSA consumer-members practice the shift from a throw away culture to a more sustainable and considerable consumption culture as described in the literature. This is especially valid when it comes to the food provided with the weekly CSA share. Their membership makes the interviewees to a higher or less degree to *Homo sustinens* whereas none of them can be labeled as absolute *Homo economicus*.

The answer to the overall problem formulation *In which ways do CSA consumer-members “think globally” while “acting locally” in regard to globalization and sustainable consumption?* can be derived from the two above answered research questions. It is a finding of this research that most of the interviewees are aware about the environmental and economic impacts “normal” consumption behavior can have which is one of the reasons why they decided to participate in CSA. The global awareness of their behavior let them act more on a local level, e.g. by building consumption communities for many other goods besides the CSA produce. Moreover, a variety of criticism appears towards global processes that impinge on our societal and economic system, which is why the interviewed CSA consumer-members often try to escape from these systems and to find other solutions within their local community. Generally, it can be said that the

interviewed CSA consumer-members are mindful of their immediate (consumption) behavior and its impact on a broader level.

7. Recommendations for further research

Since this study is concerned with a specific aspect of sustainable consumption in a particular part of Germany, I will point out some implications about further or broader research in this field. This thesis is a rather exploratory research that tries to contribute knowledge about CSA initiatives in Germany and how these could distribute the idea of a more sustainable lifestyle. Therefore, I touched upon some areas within sustainable consumption of CSA consumer-members such as characteristic behavior and mindsets, community consumption, modernity and identity as well as CSA consumer-members' perspective on sustainable consumption and the definition of it. Nevertheless, more research could be done to generate more and deeper knowledge about the phenomenon of sustainable consumption.

Since my focus was on two CSA initiatives in South-western Germany, it would be interesting to include many more CSA communities in the research to get a broader picture of all over Germany or to detect differences between certain areas within Germany. Including consumer-members of CSA all over Germany would also help to draw a more detailed picture of this particular kind of consumer and how CSA consumer-members understand and practice sustainable consumption. Additionally, focusing on particular demographic characteristics, e.g. gender, age or education, and possible differences within these would be interesting to include since there are quite a few studies concerned with this in other countries but less based on CSA consumer-members in Germany. Following, it would be fruitful to compare findings among German CSA consumer-members with findings of other (European) countries' CSA consumer-members and thus, discover cultural differences in regard to the perception and practice of sustainable consumption or sustainable lifestyles.

It would further be worth to investigate the CSA farmers' perspective on sustainable consumption. This would lead to a more complete picture since the farmers are an essential part of a CSA community and the counterpart of the CSA consumer-members. There could be found valuable insights especially in regard to the knowledge and awareness of the sustainability issue. Moreover, it would be interesting to compare the CSA consumer-members' perceptions and mindsets with the ones' of consumers who are not participating in CSA but a comparable initiative (possibly in another area of life) or are

not at all involved with the topic of sustainable consumption. Generally, it would be interesting to discover in how far other alternative consumption systems and communities such as car sharing or urban gardening could lead towards a more sustainable lifestyle in Germany. It would be worthwhile to focus more in depth on strategies that would help to spread the idea of CSA and thus, could foster a more sustainable consumption behavior and lifestyle of people who are not participating in CSA (yet). Is pure face-to-face marketing or via Facebook enough to mobilize more consumers to participate in alternative consumption systems or is governmental support needed to distribute the idea and thus, to successfully involve more consumers?

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Appendix

Appendix I

Semi-structured interview guide

Themes	Questions	Theories and concepts underlying the questions
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who am I? - Clarify that interview will be recorded - Interviewees are free to answer the questions and to quit the interview at any time - Explain the topic and the purpose of my study - Clarify if interviewee would like to stay anonymous 	
General information about interviewee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Name - Age - Occupation - Number of people living in the household that receives food provided by a CSA 	
CSA membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How long have you been member of a CSA? - What was your main motivation of becoming a CSA consumer-member? Why? - What were the main impacts of your CSA membership so far in terms of (food) consumption / other areas? - What is the most valuable thing you gained from your CSA membership? Why? - How would you consider your awareness concerning sustainability BEFORE and then some time AFTER becoming a CSA consumer-member? 	<p>“Motivations to and impacts of CSA membership” (Cooley & Lass, 1998; Kane & Lohr, 1997; O’Hara & Stagl, 2001; Goland, 2002; Hayden & Buck, 2012; Perez et al., 2003; Russel & Zepeda, 2008)</p> <p>“Perceived value of CSA” (Chen, 2013)</p> <p>“Holistic lifestyle” (Hayden & Buck, 2012)</p>

<p>Consumption and community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How important is the community aspect in CSA for you? Why? - Do you do things for the community you not benefit from immediately or directly? Examples? -How do you generally feel about you being a part of the CSA community? Is there something you (don't) like particularly? - Would you say that the consumption in a community leads to more knowledge and greater awareness (e.g. about sustainability)? Inhowfar? / Examples? 	<p>“CSA as social movement“ (Goland, 2002)</p> <p>“Homo sustinens” (Siebenhüner, 2000)</p> <p>“Shared values and vision” (Cone & Myhre, 2000; Bekin & Seyfang, 2007)</p>
<p>Sustainable consumption</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What does sustainable consumption mean to you? Why? / Example? - Which is the most importance aspect of sustainability in your view regarding CSA? Why is this? - How did your food consumption (not) become more sustainable through CSA? - Do you also consume other things than food in a more sustainable way now? Why (not)? - Do you consider your lifestyle as sustainable? Why? - How much of the food you consume comes from your CSA share? - Where do you purchase your other food products? - Do you think CSAs raise the awareness and knowledge about the problem of sustainability? In which ways? 	<p>“Sutainable Consumption” (Autio, 2009; Autio & Heinonen, 2004; Moisander & Pesonen, 2002)</p> <p>“Aspects of sustainability” (Sidkar, 2003; Adams, 2006)</p> <p>“Value-action gap” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Barr, 2004; Kollmuss & Aggyeman, 2002; Barr, 2006)</p> <p>“Pro-environmental consumer vs. ecological citizen” (Black & Cherrier, 2010; Autio et al., 2009; Van den Berg & Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 1999)</p>

<p>Close-up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why could CSA help to create a more sustainable lifestyle? - Is there anything you would like to add to this interview? - Is there a particular question you would like to elaborate further on? 	<p>“New Economics” (Bekin & Seyfang, 2007)</p>
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Appendix II

Explorative online survey

Solidarische Landwirtschaft in Deutschland

* 1. Was war für Dich der Hauptgrund einer Solawi beizutreten?

* 2. Würdest Du sagen, dass sich Deine Einstellung gegenüber dem Konsum von Lebensmitteln seit Deiner Mitgliedschaft in der Solawi verändert hat?

- Ja
 Nein
 Unentschieden

* 3. Würdest Du sagen, dass Deine Solawi-Mitgliedschaft auch andere Lebensbereiche außer dem Konsum von Lebensmitteln beeinflusst (hat)?

- Ja
 Nein
 Unentschieden

Wenn Du "Ja" geantwortet hast, gib bitte, wenn möglich, ein bis zwei Beispiele an.

* 4. Wie schätzt Du die weitere Entwicklung der Solawis in Deutschland ein?

- kurzfristiger Trend
 langfristiges Konzept für ein alternatives Ernährungssystem
 Sonstiges (bitte angeben)

* 5. Du bist Teil welcher Solawi?

Weiter

6. Wenn Du zu einem Interview (Dauer ca. 30 Minuten) bereit wärst, würde ich mich freuen, wenn du Deinen Namen und Deine Emailadresse hinterlässt, sodass ich Kontakt zu Dir aufnehmen kann.

Name

E-Mail-Adresse

Das Interview kann persönlich, via Telefon oder Skype im Zeitraum vom 05.04.-29.04.2017 stattfinden.

Die von Dir gemachten Angaben werden vertraulich behandelt und nur im Rahmen meiner Masterarbeit (anonymisiert) verwendet.

Falls Du weitere Fragen zu Dieser Umfrage oder dem Interview hast, kannst Du mich gerne jederzeit unter folgender Emailadresse erreichen: jfadle15@student.aau.dk

Zurück

Fertig

Appendix III

a) Examples for motivational factors:

Information, Unterstützung, kurze Wege, regional, verpackungsfrei, biologisch, Gemeinschaft, fair, persönlich,

03.04.2017 09:26 [Beantwortungen von Befragten anzeigen](#)

Politische Gründe (Arbeitsbedingungen in der konventionellen Landwirtschaft, Preisdiktate durch Discounter)

03.04.2017 08:54 [Beantwortungen von Befragten anzeigen](#)

Alternatives Wirtschaftsmodell ohne Wachstumszwang

03.04.2017 08:15 [Beantwortungen von Befragten anzeigen](#)

Unterstützung der kleinbäuerlichen Landwirtschaft

02.04.2017 10:44 [Beantwortungen von Befragten anzeigen](#)

regionale Lebensmittel, Erhalt der kleinbürgerlichen Strukturen

01.04.2017 21:20 [Beantwortungen von Befragten anzeigen](#)

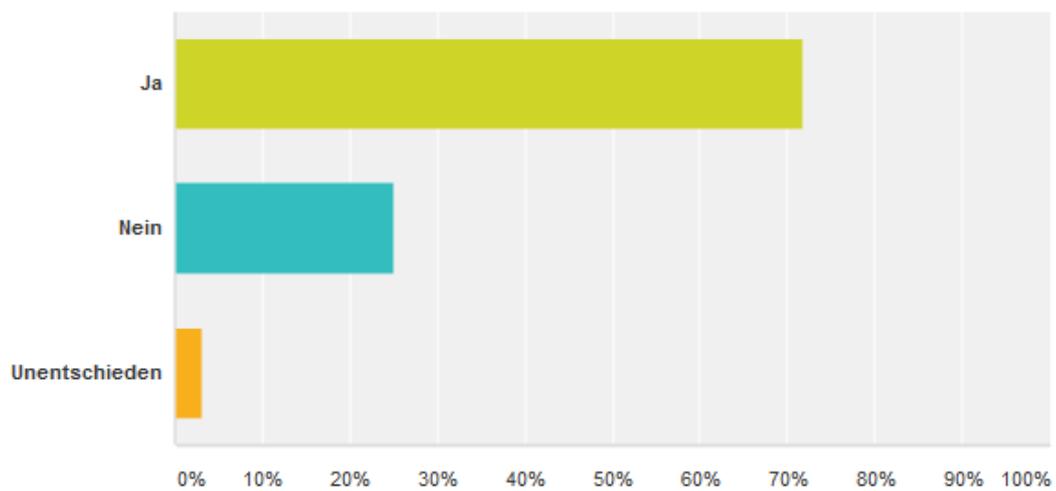
Ich wollte regionales gesundes Gemüse haben

31.03.2017 19:20 [Beantwortungen von Befragten anzeigen](#)

b) Influence of CSA membership on food consumption behavior:

Würdest Du sagen, dass sich Deine Einstellung gegenüber dem Konsum von Lebensmitteln seit Deiner Mitgliedschaft in der Solawi verändert hat?

Beantwortet: 32 Übersprungen: 0



c) Influence of CSA membership on consumption behavior of other goods:

ich achte mehr auf meinen Konsum in anderen Bereichen, z.B. Kleidung, Umweltbelastung durch Benzinverbrauch

08.04.2017 12:21 [Beantwortungen von Befragten anzeigen](#)

Mehr Kooperation und Vernetzung mit anderen beim Lösen der auftretenden Anforderungen (ob Vereinsgündung oder Erdbeerpflücken) oder bei geselligen und kulturellen Anlässen (gemeinsam essen und feiern, Besuch thematisch aktueller Filme im Kino)

07.04.2017 08:16 [Beantwortungen von Befragten anzeigen](#)

Körperpflege , Kleidung Konsum allgemein I

06.04.2017 10:19 [Beantwortungen von Befragten anzeigen](#)

stärkere Motivation mehr selber herzustellen, und weniger zu konsumieren

04.04.2017 16:29 [Beantwortungen von Befragten anzeigen](#)

Ich versuche gezielter einzukaufen! Nicht mehr so viel wegwerfen!Wenn möglich frisch verarbeiten??

03.04.2017 10:01 [Beantwortungen von Befragten anzeigen](#)

Das Bewusstsein für die faire und ökologische sinnvolle Herstellung von Produkten weitet sich zum Beispiel auf Kleidung aus und führt zum Verzicht von Produkten, die auf diese Weise hergestellt nicht erhältlich sind.

03.04.2017 08:54 [Beantwortungen von Befragten anzeigen](#)

d) Comments on future development of CSA:

Beitrag zu einer Agrarwende hin zu einer nachhaltigeren Landwirtschaft

03.04.2017 10:08 [Beantwortungen von Befragten anzeigen](#)

Solawis sind m.E. kein kurzfristiger Trend, werden aber das Ernährungssystem auch nicht umwälzen, sondern allenfalls ergänzen.

03.04.2017 09:26 [Beantwortungen von Befragten anzeigen](#)

Wird als Nische noch lange überleben, hat aber leider nicht das Potential, um größere Teile der Bevölkerung zu mobilisieren.

03.04.2017 08:54 [Beantwortungen von Befragten anzeigen](#)

Appendix IV

Translated quotes for analysis:

- Ana (1):

“In actual fact, CSA was the last consequence. That you can actually control how your food is produced. And that was really important at that point. At the end of a long line of thought.”

„Nee, die Solawi war im Grunde dann die letzte Konsequenz, ne. Dass du wirklich kontrollieren kannst wie deine Lebensmittel entstehen. Und das war ganz wichtig dann quasi. Am Ende einer langen Gedankenkette.“

- Nicolás (5):

“I always try to do it step by step. CSA was actually one step and now I will continue...I will try to continue with clothing, yes. If you change everything at once, I think you will grow desperate and then you rather break it off. That’s why step by step.”

„Naja, ich versuch’s halt immer Schritt für Schritt zu machen. Also solidarische Landwirtschaft war jetzt tatsächlich ein Schritt und jetzt geht’s halt...Versuch mit der Kleidung weiter zu machen, ja. Wenn man alles auf einmal macht, ist glaub ich...wird man verzweifeln und dann bricht man eher ab. Deswegen Schritt für Schritt.“

- Monika (1):

“We have always tried to consume in a more sustainable way, to consume less and things that are more durable and preferably produced hereabouts.”

“Wir waren immer schon...haben wir versucht ein bisschen...ja, nachhaltigen Konsum zu machen, wenig zu konsumieren und Dinge die länger halten und möglichst aus der Gegend hergestellt werden [...].“

- Ana (4-5):

“The appreciation of foodstuff and the farmers’ work is simply not there anymore. And I really think that this was caused by the industrialization of the agricultural sector. That it isn’t worth anything anymore. And everybody got used to the fact that it doesn’t cost anything.”

„Einfach die Wertschätzung für Lebensmittel und die Arbeit der Bauern, die ist nicht mehr da. Und ich glaube wirklich das hat diese ganze Industrialisierung der Landwirtschaft bewirkt. Dass es einfach Nichts mehr wert ist. Und alle sind daran gewöhnt, dass es Nichts kostet.“

- Rosemarie (2):

“You have to develop esteem for the products that the soil in Daudenzell is capable to yield. That’s how it is. They’re not the best grounds and additionally to this, the climatic conditions and freak weather and yes.”

“[...] man muss es in seiner besonderen Konstellation sehen und sich damit zufrieden geben und auch eine Wertschätzung entwickeln, dass das die Bodenqualität in Daudenzell hergibt. Es ist so. Also das sind halt nicht die besten Böden und dazu kommen die klimatischen Bedingungen und dazu kommen die Wetterkapriolen und ja.“

- Carsten (2):

“My consumption behavior actually changed in that effect that I rather mind buying something regional. Not green power from the North Sea, but green power that originates here from the Heidelberger Bürgerwerke. And that’s actually, I think, a change for me. That I look into other areas ‘what originates from here?’. Of course, we don’t have coffee here. But if I buy some wine, it definitely will be from hereabouts.”

„Und tatsächlich hat es sich bei mir auch in anderen Bereichen dahingehend verändert, dass ich eher darauf achte, etwas Regionales zu kaufen. Nicht den Ökostrom von der Nordsee, sondern den Ökostrom der hier irgendwie bei den Heidelberger Bürgerwerken entsteht. So. Und das ist tatsächlich, glaube ich, bei mir eine Veränderung. Dass ich in anderen Bereichen schaue, was kommt von hier. Natürlich kommt von hier kein Kaffee. Aber wenn ich Wein kaufe, kommt mein Wein garantiert hier aus der Region.“

- Hans (4)

“If you compare it on a global scale, we are in a situation where people fight for their survival and we live in clover. That’s something where I think outside the box and ask myself ‘what kind of life do I live on this planet and what does that mean for the planet or for the other people?’ or so...”

“Wenn man’s aber im Weltmaßstab vergleicht, sind wir ja eh irgendwie in einer Situation, wo andere Leute um’s Überleben kämpfen und wir Leben wie die Maden im Speck, sagen

wir's...das ist schon etwas wo ich über den Tellerrand hinauskucke und mir die Frage vorlege ,was verbringe ich hier für ein Leben auf dem Planeten und was heißt das für den Planeten bzw. für die anderen Menschen?' oder so..."

- Herbert (3):

"[...] for example foodstuff that are cultivated in Africa but could also be cultivated here. And there, their own products are pushed back to grow animal feedingstuff for Europe, but actually they don't earn enough money to buy sufficient food for themselves."

"[...] zum Beispiel irgendwelche Sache, die in Afrika angebaut werden, die man auch bei uns anbauen kann und dort werden ihre eigenen Lebensmittel zurückgedrängt, die dort eigentlich gut wachsen, nur damit man halt Futtermittel anbaut für Europa und sie aber eigentlich nicht so viel verdienen, dass sie sich dann genügend Essen kaufen können davon."

- Rosemarie (7):

"[...] we always just spring from our immediate. It has to be viewed quite different on a global level. What I often think is that people don't really see it globally. Well, it is seen global in that sense that we can travel everywhere but not the consequences."

"Aber damit gehen wir immer von unserem Unmittelbaren aus. Es ist ja global ganz anders zu sehen. Also global, das denk ich oft, dass es nicht wirklich global gesehen wird. Also es ist schon global gesehen in dem Sinn ,oh, wir können überall hinreisen', aber nicht was für ein Mist da passiert."

- Ingrid (1):

"Yesterday, I also said to Michael [the gardener] 'after having chopped the strawberry field, I will enjoy every single strawberry'. Because only then you know how much work is in such a field and this soil is ice-hard."

"Also ich hab auch gestern zum Michael gesagt ,also nach dem Erdbeerhacken genieß ich jede Erdbeere einzeln', also da weiß man erstmal wie viel Arbeit in so nem Acker steckt und der Acker ist bockelhart."

- Michael (1):

"I wouldn't need this high standard of organic as we have it here."

“Ich bräuchte auch nicht diesen hohen Biostandard, den wir hier haben.“

- Katja (3):

“[...] not everybody is willing to pay the appropriate price. And yes, that’s of course the influence, the comparison, yes. There are always comparisons, people compare with supermarket prices, Aldi prices [...]. That’s not sustainable, yes, because for the cheap prices, someone else has to pay for. Someone else and in another time.”

“[...] es sind nicht alle bereit dann da den entsprechenden Preis zu bezahlen. Und klar, das ist natürlich der Einfluss, immer der Vergleich, ja. Es gibt ja auch immer Vergleiche wie Leute, die vergleichen mit Supermarktpreisen, Aldi-Preisen[...] es ist nicht nachhaltig, ja, weil die Billig-Preise, da zahlt halt jemand anders den Preis. Jemand anders und in einer anderen Zeit.“

- Ingrid (4):

“So much in your life is taken for granted, people don’t see the beauty of my garden anymore. [...] Yes, and I am delighted about the nature and for me it’s very, very, very important to preserve this nature and that you don’t ruin everything.”

“Also vieles ist halt in deinem Leben einfach selbstverständlich geworden, die Leute sehen doch nicht mehr die Schönheit hier von meinem schönen Stückl, meinem schönen Blumen [...]. Ja, und da freu ich mich auch an der Natur und für mich ist auch ganz, ganz, ganz wichtig, dass diese Natur erhalten bleibt, dass man sich nicht alles kaputt macht.“

- Ute and Wolfgang (9):

“I made them [her children and grandchildren] a turnip stew, I thought ‘oh dear, hopefully they will eat it’, but then ‘oh, that tasted nice, what was that for a stalk?’” (Ute)
“Yes, that was stuff they didn’t know. Now they know it. I think it is an enrichment for all.” (Wolfgang)

“Ja, denen hab ich auch mal so ein Steckrüben-Eintopf...da dachte ich auch ,ohgott, hoffentlich essen sie das’, aber dann ,oh, hat das toll geschmeckt’, ,was war denn das für ein Stängel?’“ (Ute) „Ja, das war auch Sachen, die sie nicht gekannt haben. Jetzt kennen sie es halt. Ich denke, das ist schon eine Bereicherung, denk ich mal, für alle.“ (Wolfgang)

- Birgit (2):

“To me it is clear: this is not a try, but rather I will stay with it as long as possible.”

“Also für mich ist auch klar, das ist kein Versuch, sondern ich bleib’ dabei solange wie es geht.”

- Rosemarie (6):

“I think that it is more easy in the city than here in the countryside because here the appreciation for the produce of a CSA is not very high.”

“Also ich denk, dass in der Stadt das einfacher ist als hier auf dem Land, weil hier die Wertschätzung für die Produkte einer solidarischen Landwirtschaft gar nicht besonders groß sind.”

- Benedikt (4):

“[...] I am caught in so many structures which are surely not sustainable and which maybe won’t change quickly towards more sustainability that I can’t describe myself as entirely sustainable. [...] When I walk around at university, there are for sure many things in need for improvement.”

“[...], allerdings hänge ich in so vielen Strukturen drin, die sicherlich nicht nachhaltig sind und die sich vielleicht auch wenig schnell zum nachhaltigen ändern werden, dass ich mich nicht als vollständig nachhaltig bezeichnen könnte, ja. [...], wenn ich mich jetzt irgendwie in der Uni bewege und so, dann gäb’s da sicher viel verbesserungswürdige Sachen oder so.”

- Hans (4):

“We would like to improve sustainability in energy consumption. We are thinking about building a water well, because we say, yes, if we consider climate change, the Kraichgau is actually threatened by drought.”

“Wir wollen kucken, dass wir zum Beispiel die Nachhaltigkeit in puncto Energieverbrauch verbessern. Wir sind am überlegen, ob wir uns mal einen Brunnen bauen, weil wir sagen, ja, wenn wir den Klimawandel berücksichtigen, dann ist der Kraichgau eigentlich mit Trockenheit bedroht [...].“

- Ingrid (2):

“[...] to lead the children to what is cultivated here, that you can also eat it immediately. And I have to say, no one is more docile than these kids. They grasped it instantly and went with Michael [the gardener] into the greenhouse and tried everything.”

“Auch die Kinder darauf hin zu führen, was hier angebaut wird, dass man das dann auch direkt essen kann. Und ich muss sagen, niemand ist gelehriger wie diese Kinder. Die haben das sofort so aufgenommen und sind mit dem Michael in das Gewächshaus und haben alles probiert.“

- Carsten (3):

“The lettuce we planted ourselves, you eat that lettuce differently. [...] Especially for a city boy as I am, the self-planted lettuce is definitely something hot. It even grows and one can eat it afterwards. That’s indeed something special. And that’s something emotional.”

“Also die Salatpflänzchen, die wir selbst eingepflanzt haben, den Salat isst man schon anders. [...] Aber so als Stadtpflanze, die ich eigentlich bin, ist ein selbstgesetzter Salat schon was Heißes. Und der wächst auch noch und hinterher kann man den aufessen. Das ist schon sehr besonders. Und, das ist was Emotionales.“

- Marischa (2):

“For me personally, it is extremely important that I get to know the [agricultural] techniques. I’m really interested in self supply and find it super interesting how to grow stuff and to learn it, yes, I find it really important that this is possible.”

“Für mich persönlich ist es halt auch noch voll wichtig, dass ich auch so die Techniken kennenlerne. Also ich interessiere mich ja doch viel für Selbstversorgung und finde es natürlich super spannend wie man das anbaut und das auch zu lernen, genau, das find ich auch ganz wichtig, dass das halt möglich ist.“

- Ana (1):

“[...] factory farming. For me, that’s sheer animal torture, that’s a no-go.”

„[...] die Massentierhaltung. Das ist für mich absolute Tierquälerei, das geht gar nicht.“

- Benedikt (2):

“That I have a chance to help shape it if I like, that’s not essential but if I like, I can have a bearing on the processes that are going on. And to add my opinion. Yes, that’s something I don’t have if I go to the supermarket.”

“Also dass ich irgendwie ne Chance hab mitzugestalten, wenn ich denn will, das muss ja nicht, aber wenn ich will, dann kann ich irgendwie darauf Einfluss nehmen auf die Prozesse, die passieren. Und meine Meinung dazu geben. Ja, das hab ich halt nicht, wenn ich in den Supermarkt gehe.“

- Birgit (1):

“The connection is the vegetables, yes, the vegetables that we consume.”

“Und das Verbindende ist das Gemüse, ja, über das Gemüse, das wir konsumieren, [...]“

- Rosemarie (2):

“The most valuable for me personally are actually the interpersonal contacts which I haven’t had before to such an extent. [...] Here, a lot of different people get together. Plenty of different people.”

“Das Wertvollste für mich persönlich sind eigentlich die zwischenmenschlichen Kontakte, die ich vorher in dem Maße zu so einem Thema nicht hatte. [...] Hier kommen viele verschiedene Menschen zusammen. Sehr viele verschiedene.“

- Birgit (1):

“[...] to see how diverse the people actually are and in which directions they move, that’s what I like.”

“[...] aber dann zu sehen, wie vielfältig, die Leute doch sind und in welche Richtungen sie sich bewegen, das find’ ich schön.“

- Hans (3):

“It’s nice that there are also enough volunteers who team up into working groups [...], communication group and so forth and invest a lot of time and energy and there are

several outstanding people who are almost full-time volunteers. For some you really have to wonder how they can manage it time-wise.”

“Schön ist, dass es eigentlich auch genügend Freiwillige gibt, die sich in Arbeitsgemeinschaften, sogenannten AGs, Kommunikations-AG und so weiter, zusammenschließen und da sicher sehr viel an Zeit und Energie investieren und da gibt’s einige ganz herausragende Leute, die fast so wie hauptamtlich Ehrenamtliche sind. Also, bei manchen muss man sich fragen, wie die das zeitlich überhaupt stemmen können [...].“

- Ingrid (2):

“because without community nothing will work within CSA. Well, then you can you can say good-bye to CSA.”

“Weil ohne Gemeinschaft geht gar nichts in der Solawi. Also dann kannst du die Solawi vergessen.“

- Rosemarie (2):

“Well, maybe you always have to correct yourself and bring it [the importance of community] in accordance with the others who might not feel it to the same extent. [...] If I expect a very high value of community, sometimes possibly even an inflated one, then I have to envisage that I might meet with disappointment. [...] the qualities that are in demand such as reliability for example when people accept certain offices are viewed differently depending on the people. That’s how it is in every team.”

“Also man muss sich da vielleicht ständig selber korrigieren und das mit den anderen übereinstimmen, die das vielleicht nicht in dem Maße haben. [...] Wenn ich einen sehr hohen hab und sehr hohe Erwartungen hab, dann muss ich damit rechnen, dass ich enttäuscht werde. [...] die Qualitäten, die gefragt sind wie Verbindlichkeit, auch wenn man bestimmte Ämter übernimmt, die sind halt werden halt schon sehr unterschiedlich gesehen. Das ist wie in jedem Team.“

- Monika (2):

“I like very much about CSA that it is some kind of community which you can choose how intense you would like to live it.”

“Ich finde sehr gut, dass das so ne Gemeinschaft ist, die man sich wählen kann, wie intensiv man sie leben möchte.“

- Wolfgang (2):

“Yes, and I also think that this solidary thought is not entirely implanted in the people’s mindset yet. Some view it as weekly green box but to actually work in the field ‘why do I additionally have to do that?’. Sometimes you also see that one picks the best things and the crooked cucumber is left in the box till the end. The solidary though is also that you really share everything including crooked stuff with blemish and spots.”

“Ja, und ich denke auch, dieser solidarische Gedanke, der ist halt noch nicht so ganz implantiert bei den Leuten. Manche sehen es als ‚grüne Kiste‘, aber jetzt mal aufs Feld zu gehen und zu hacken, ‚warum muss man das auch noch machen?‘. Man sieht’s auch manchmal...also man sucht sich dann die schönsten Sachen raus und die krumme Gurke lässt man dann bis zum Schluss in der Kiste liegen. Der solidarische Gedanke ist halt, dass man sich wirklich alles teilt und halt auch krumme, mit Macken und mit Flecken.“

- Birgit (7):

“that’s my right, that’s what I pay and that’s mine.”

“das ist mein Recht, das bezahl ich und das gehört mir.“

- Nicolás (2):

“In my opinion, helping on the farm is not necessarily part of the community-supported agriculture. Instead, solidarity is related to support the farmer to produce his own harvest and to ensure that he gets fair wages and not to grow stuff yourself.”

„Aber auch das Mithelfen auf’m Hof, das ist ja auch meiner Ansicht nach nicht so unbedingt Sache einer solidarischen Landwirtschaft selber mitzuhelfen, sondern solidarisch bezieht sich ja auch sozusagen den Bauern dazu ertüchtigen selber die Ernte herzustellen und dafür auch das gescheite Geld zu kriegen und nicht um selber anzubauen.“

- Ana (2):

“The packaging of the shares, for example, it’s actually volunteers who prepare the stuff. And sometimes the amounts are nothing like correct because someone miscounted or forgot something. But because it’s volunteers doing this, it’s not that bad. You know, then you are more tolerant and tell yourself ‘it’s alright, we are one community, we are humans and we consist from volunteers and help the farmers’.”

“Zum Beispiel beim Verpacken, ja, das sind ja freiwillige, die das Verpacken für jedes Depot und manchmal stimmt’s halt hinten und vorne nicht, weil sich jemand erzählt hat oder weil jemand dies vergessen hat oder jenes, aber dadurch, dass es freiwillige sind, ist es dann auch nicht so schlimm. Weißt du, da ist man toleranter und sagt sich ‚es ist okay, wir sind ne Gemeinschaft, wir sind Menschen und bestehen aus Ehrenamtlichen hier und helfen den Bauern.“

- Benedikt (3):

“This means, we also built a community here in which we can discuss, in which different opinions come together and if you go to the assemblies, you also notice quite quickly that different opinions are only do good and that there are many aspects which I maybe wouldn’t have thought of. That means, the decision-making process within the community is somehow quite beneficial, that’s my feeling.”

“[...] das heißt da bilden wir auch nochmal ne Gemeinschaft irgendwie, in der wir diskutieren können, in der unterschiedliche Meinungen zusammen kommen und wenn man irgendwie auch im Plenum ist, dann merkt man halt auch auf jeden Fall, dass unterschiedliche Meinungen nur gut tun und dass es ganz viele Aspekte gibt, über die ich vielleicht gar nicht nachgedacht hätte. Das heißt irgendwie der Entscheidungsprozess in der Gemeinschaft ist irgendwie sehr förderlich, hab ich das Gefühl.“

- Hans (2):

“[...] that we are a community which tries to find solutions while proceeding direct democratic and there’s no patronizingly decision-making and the best is that we have more sympathy for the farmers, their worries, their work, their joys and so on.”

“[...] dass wir tatsächlich eine Gemeinschaft sind, die versucht Lösungen zu finden indem wir basisdemokratisch irgendwie vorgehen und es also kein von oben herab bestimmen gibt und das Beste ist, wir haben mehr Verständnis für die Landwirte, ihre Sorgen, ihre Arbeit, ihre Freuden oder sowas.“

- Rosemarie (3):

“Well, since lately there’s this ‘rent-a-hen’ thing which derived from CSA. [...] why not, why shouldn’t we build a egg-community with our own rules? I think, that’s already a great offshoot.”

“Also es gibt da ja seit kurzem diese ‚Rent-a-Huhn‘-Geschichte, die sich aus der Solawi ergeben hat. [...], warum sollten wir uns da nicht ne Hühnereier-Gemeinschaft mit eigenen Regeln machen? Also das finde ich schonmal einen ganz tollen Ableger.“

- Kirstin (2):

“That’s the most valuable for me and also the awareness that many other people do this at different places, that’s actually a good feeling.”

- Herbert (3):

“I think the ideal case would be if everyone would grow foods like this and if only CSA would exist, then the community would support the farmers and the farmer would nourish the community”.

“Ich mein, der Idealfall wäre, wenn dann alle so anbauen würden und wenn’s nur solidarische Landwirtschaften gäbe, dass halt die Gemeinschaft praktisch die Bauern trägt und der Bauer ernährt die Gemeinschaft.“

- Rosemarie (7):

“A lot of the initiatives that exist nowadays – which is really weird for us, really weird for our Generation – all that has been there already. This whole direction did exist before 30, 40 years once already. Buying directly from the farm, producer-consumer-communities, Co-ops, that already existed once. You could get everything in paper bags, you could get everything unpacked.”

“Vieles von dem was es heute gibt, das ist komisch für uns, absolut komisch für unsere Generation, komisch, richtig komisch: das gab es alles schon mal. Diese ganze Richtung, das gab’s schon mal vor 30, 40 Jahren, das war alles schon mal da. Es gab dieses direkt beim Bauern kaufen, es gab Erzeuger-Verbraucher-Gemeinschaften, es gab Ko-ops, es gab...das gab’s alles schon mal. Es gab alles in Papiertüten, es gab alles offen.“

- Ingrid (1):

“I think it’s a good move”

“Also von dem her denk ich ist das ein guter Zug [...].“

- Birgit (2):

“[...] she really thinks it’s brilliant because then you can actually raise a flag and say ‘Here is a proof of sustainability’, that you participate in CSA.”

„[...] sie findet es so toll, dass es sowas gibt, weil dann kann man wenigstens mal ne Fahne hochheben und sagen ‚Hier, ein Beweis der Nachhaltigkeit‘, dass man bei der Solawi mitmacht.“

- Benedikt (2-3):

“[...] before, I was extremely sustainable and only organic and fair traded and so on. And this did change a bit for one resulting that we shop more in common now and [...] have to find a consensus, and on the other hand due to hidden agenda of ‘yes, I am already participating in CSA and there comes already enough from me’.”

“[...] ich war vorher so stark so nachhaltig und nur Bio und fair gehandelt und so weiter – und das hat sich so ein bisschen entspannt einmal daraus resultierend, dass wir, dass man halt mehr dieses Gemeinschafts-Einkaufen hat und dass man auf mehr Leute angewiesen ist [...] und einen Konsens finden muss, und zum anderen dadurch dass man halt irgendwie auch immer den Hintergedanken hat ‚ha, ich hab ja schon die Solawi und da kommt ja schon genug‘.“

- Birgit (6):

“Sometimes I have the feeling that we have this culture to always scrape off, ‘where’s the glamour gone, where can one scrape off even more?’, and people don’t see the big picture anymore.”

“Ich hab so manchmal das Gefühl, dass das auch bei uns eine Kultur ist, immer zu kratzen ‚wo ist der Lack ab, wo kann man noch mehr abkratzen?‘ und gar nicht mehr das große Ganze sieht.“

- Monika (1):

“[...] to counteract the force of growth [...] and one special case was CSA. So you can actually do something to reform the economic system.”

„[...] um eben diesem Wachstumszwang entgegen zu wirken [...] und da war ein Spezialfall solidarische Landwirtschaft. Dass man einfach mal wirklich was machen kann, um das Wirtschaftssystem zu reformieren.“

- Rosemarie (6):

“[...] actually the whole world aims for extremely cheap products. It should be as cheap as possible in order to consume even more with the saved money.”

“[...]eigentlich will alle Welt nur ganz billig. So billig wie möglich, um dann das Gesparte für weiteren Konsum, für noch mehr Konsum zu haben.“

- Marischa (3):

“The feeling that I arrived in CSA – I already got to know many other projects – and I have the impression that here in this community there are many very engaged people who are both social and otherwise very mature and it really fills me with pleasure to be part of it, to participate, to bring forward own ideas, to help.”

“Also das Gefühl, ich bin jetzt in der solidarischen Landwirtschaft gelandet, ich habe ja schon andere Projekte kennengelernt und hab so den Eindruck, dass hier in der Gemeinschaft sehr viele sehr engagiert Menschen sind, die auch sowohl sozial als auch sonst sehr reif sind und es macht dann richtig Spaß da Teil zu sein, also da einfach mitzumachen, Ideen einzubringen, mitzuhelfen, genau.“

- Nicolás (4):

“The labeling of products is a big problem. That means how can the man in the street who doesn't engage himself so much to go to the supermarket and can clearly say 'okay, that's pork of which I would eat' or 'that's pork its tail got cut off'?”

“Das ist so ein großes Problem und dann die Kennzeichnung überhaupt. Das heißt, wie kann der einfache Mensch, der sich jetzt nicht so intensiv damit beschäftigt zum Supermarkt gehen und klar sagen ‚okay, das ist ein Schwein, von dem ich das Fleisch essen würde oder das ist ein Schwein, wo der Schwanz abgemacht ist‘.“

- Hans (2):

“For me, sustainability is a label that is affixed to products in the same way as regional and seasonal. If you look around in an organic supermarket, then you will see that it is neither social nor regional nor seasonal nor somewhat sustainable. It's nothing else than a segment in a through capitalized agriculture which can only fight back with few exceptions to not be destroyed already.”

„Nachhaltigkeit ist für mich genauso ein Etikett, das irgendwo aufgeklebt wird, wie regional und saisonal. Wenn man sich den Biomarkt ankuckt, dann ist es weder sozial noch regional noch saisonal noch irgendwie nachhaltig. Es ist nichts anderes als ein Segment in einer durchkapitalisierten Landwirtschaft, die sich gerade mal mit Ausnahmen wehren kann nicht schon längstens untergegangen zu sein.“

- Katja (1):

“Sometimes we give stuff away [of the weekly share] but throwing stuff out is actually out of question for us. Because one aspect that I really like about CSA is that there is thrown out or culled so few, yes.”

„Also verschenkt haben wir schon manchmal was, was wir nicht mögen, aber wegschmeißen kommt für uns eigentlich nicht in Frage. Weil da kommt auch nochmal der eine Aspekt eben so rein warum ich die Solawi so toll finde, weil halt wenig weggeschmissen wird und auch nicht so viel aussortiert, ja.“

- Herbert (3):

“[...] to mind if you really need this product and if yes, then to watch out that it is something that you can repair it and it's something durable.”

“[...] eben ob man was unbedingt braucht und wenn man was unbedingt braucht, dann halt drauf kucken, dass das ja eben was ist, was man reparieren kann und was langlebig ist.“

- Rosemarie (5):

“Either in the organic supermarket or in the small traditional organic store. That's my decision then. [...] Well, or organic products from the normal supermarket, yes.”

“Naja, da kann ich mich jetzt auch entscheiden, ob ichs im Biosupermarkt oder im traditionellen, kleinen Bioladen. Das ist meine Entscheidung dann. [...] Naja, oder Bioware im normalen Supermarkt, ja.“

- Katja (4):

“Mainly in the organic store or from regional producers at the farmer's market. Or directly from the farm, yes.”

“Also hauptsächlich im Bioladen oder so bei regionalen Erzeugern dann auf dem Markt. Oder ja, direkt vom Hof.“

- Monika (3):

“The more is produced, even though it’s organic or fair or otherwise, it has to be inserted energy anyway and afterwards waste is accumulated, and this turnover, it surely is the most effective, if you reduce it a bit.”

“Je mehr produziert wird, auch wenn’s ökologisch oder fair oder sonst wie produziert wird, trotzdem muss immer Energie reingesteckt werden und trotzdem fällt hinterher Müll an und diesen Turnover, den...es ist sicherlich das effektivste, wenn man den ein bisschen verringert.“

- Monika (3):

“Well, in nutrition it’s not necessarily less, but rather really organic cultivated and fair produced products.”

“Also in der Ernährung ist es ja nicht unbedingt weniger, da ist es mehr wirklich ökologisch Angebautes und fair Produziertes.“

- Nicolás (3):

“I think if it should be sustainable, it needs to be less. Even vegetables are eaten too many by Western Europeans and all the more Germans.”

„[...] ich glaube, wenn es halt nachhaltig und auch weniger natürlich, das ist grundsätzlich, selbst Gemüse essen die Westeuropäer und die Deutschen erst Recht viel zu viel, [...].“

- Birgit (4):

“To me, sustainable consumption means to operate with food – not only food, of course also with textiles, clothes, ride comfort, we can go far here since we actually consume permanently – in such a way that I don’t use more than necessary.”

“Nachhaltiger Konsum heißt für mich so wirtschaften mit den Lebensmitteln – nicht nur mit den Lebensmitteln, natürlich auch mit Textilien, Kleidung, Fahrverhalten, jetzt können

wir ganz weit gehen eigentlich, man konsumiert ja ständig – so wirtschaften, dass ich nicht mehr verbrauch wie nötig.“

- Carsten (5):

“One part of this terrestrial of land or the harvest of it belongs me, a certain share, and I don't take more than is due to me. You can also extend it to our planet. I'm entitled to use a certain part of air, a certain part of soil, a certain part of water. And everyone who takes more is actually not operating sustainable.”

„Mir gehört ein...von diesem Land bzw. dem was halt dieses Land produzieren kann, ein gewisser Anteil und ich nehme mir nicht mehr als mir zusteht. Man kann das jetzt noch auf Planet ausdehnen. Mir gehört ein...oder ich darf einen bestimmten Anteil Luft, einen bestimmten Anteil Boden, einen bestimmten Anteil Wasser nutzen. Und jeder sich mehr nimmt, handelt eigentlich nicht nachhaltig.“

- Katja (3):

“Preferably purchase, consume those products that make a negative impact on the ecological balance with the result that it could eventual continue like this.”

“Ja, dass ich möglichst solche Produkte kaufe, konsumiere, die nachhaltig sind, die sich nicht negativ auf das ökologische Gleichgewicht ausüben, sodass es letztlich immer so weitergehen könnte, ja.“

- Rosemarie (4):

“Sustainable consumption would be purchasing directly from the producer as consumer and immediate cash flow hereof. No intermediate trade and also no gambling.”

“Nachhaltiger Konsum wäre direkter Einkauf vom Erzeuger, beim Erzeuger als Verbraucher und unmittelbarer Geldfluss diesbezüglich. Also kein Zwischenhandel und auch keine Spekulation.“

- Kirstin (4):

“We always have to ask oneself not only what we want and can but what really is required and appropriate so that others also have an appropriate live.”

“Und da würd ich sagen, die Frage müssen wir und in dem Erdteil immer stellen. Nicht nur was wir wollen und können, sondern wirklich notwendig ist und angemessen ist, damit andere auch angemessener es haben.”

- Birgit (2):

“You hold it in your hands and you know it’s from hereabouts. And I think it’s strengthened through the thought that often occurs ‘is it sustainable or not?’. And that’s not a disadvantage, it’s something beautiful.”

“[...] man hat es in den Händen und weiß, das ist jetzt von hier. Und irgendwie glaub ich, es wird verstärkt dadurch, dass man sich ganz oft Gedanken macht ‚ist das jetzt nachhaltig oder nicht?‘. Und das ist nicht ein Nachteil, sondern es ist etwas Schönes.“

- Katja (4):

“That’s the solidary thought, you bear the positive sides but also the negative sides. Yes, and that’s somehow also a nice thought. That’s not just something where I say I have to prohibit something, that’s not how I conceive it.”

“Aber das ist halt auch der solidarische Gedanke, also man trägt halt die positiven Seiten und eben auch die negativen Seiten mit. Ja, und das ist irgendwie auch ein schöner Gedanke. Das ist nicht nur irgendwas, wo ich sage ‚jetzt muss ich hier irgendwas, ja, verbieten oder sowas‘, das empfinde ich nicht so.“

- Katja (4):

“Yes, you consciously need to do something else than the mainstream, but that takes energy. I somehow really like spending my energy on this, but it’s also debilitating. And it also makes me sad that it is that way. Only those people who actively spend their energy on this, will do something different whereas the others will always do it the way you do it, how you always do it.”

“Ja, du musst halt wirklich bewusst, bewusst was anders machen als der Mainstream, aber das ist halt in vielen Dingen einfach...das kostet Kraft. Also ich steck sie irgendwie gerne da rein, aber trotzdem, es ist einfach was Zehrendes auch, ja. Und es macht mich aber auch traurig, dass das so ist. Weil nur die Leute, die da wirklich aktiv Kraft rein stecken, werden das so machen und alle anderen es halt so wie MAN es macht...wie man’s bisher gemacht hat, wie man’s immer macht.“

- Katja (3):

“In the end, the ecological dimension is the most important simply because it’s the basis of existence for people. If you don’t have it anymore, then everything else is not useful either, then you can still be a great community but there’s nothing anymore that you can do together.”

„Also letztlich ist für mich das Ökologische das Wichtigste, weil das sind einfach die Lebensgrundlagen von den Menschen, wenn du die nicht mehr hast, dann nützt dir alles andere nichts mehr, dann kannst du noch so ne tolle Gemeinschaft sein, dann gibt’s halt einfach nichts mehr, was du gemeinsam tun kannst.“

- Kirstin (4):

“The protection of nature has priority for me because humans are able to come to an arrangement whereas other creatures are threatened by our manners. The main motivation is that someone who works ecological in a small dimension and is diversified, which means rears no monoculture, can sleep easy.”

“Also für mich steht schon der Naturschutz sehr, sehr weit oben, weil die Menschen sich doch eher arrangieren können als die anderen Wesen, die doch durch unsere Verhaltensweisen bedroht sind. Also das...also die Hauptmotivation...dass jemand, der ökologisch wirtschaftet im Kleineren, also, und diversifiziert ist, also keine Monokultur da aufzieht, dass der ruhig schlafen kann, also seine Existenzgrundlage.“

- Nicolás (3):

“The more important thing is the farmer’s survival, to preserve the smallholder structures.”

“[...]das wichtigere ist, glaube ich, tatsächlich, dass der Bauer überleben kann, also die kleinbäuerlichen Strukturen zu erhalten [...].“

- Kirstin (2):

“And I become inventive for example when there is way too much of a certain vegetable the question arises how to conserve it because it must not end up in the compost. There you hit on great ideas. It’s good for creativity, if you accept it and get yourself into it. You develop new recipes, you can swap ideas and yes, it is no longer the activity of a consumer who says ‘I want this and that now’ but the process starts somewhere else. ‘I

have this and that and now I model something from it.' These are different consumption behaviors."

"Und ich wird eben auch erfinderisch, zum Beispiel, wenn zu viel da ist, ist die Frage, muss ja nicht auf dem Kompost landen, sondern wie konserviere ich's. Also da kommt man auf tolle Ideen. Also für die Kreativität ist das auch was gut, wenn man das annimmt so, ne, wenn man sich drauf einlässt, find ich. Du entwickelst neue Rezepte, du kannst dich austauschen damit und ja...ist zwar nicht mehr die Aktivität als Konsument, dass ich sage ,ich will jetzt das und das und das', sondern ich hab die Aktivität...also der Prozess fängt ein bisschen wo anders an, also ,ich habe das und das und das, und daraus gestalte ich was'. Das sind bisschen unterschiedliche Konsumverhalten."

- Kirstin (3):

"[...] bee-keeping is a silent act of nature protection. Nobody pays attention to it but you would notice it if it wouldn't be there."

"[...] die Bienenhaltung ist ein stiller Naturschutz, beachtet keiner, aber man würde merken, wenn es nicht da wäre."

- Katja (2):

"[...] the awareness that you also have an impact on the others depending on the foods I buy or by being involved in CSA, I change a bit the mode how agriculture is practiced."

"[...] das Bewusstsein dafür, dass das was du tust auch die andern beeinflusst mit, indem ich diese Lebensmittel kaufe oder dadran beteiligt bin, ändere ich ja auch etwas an der Art wie Landwirtschaft betrieben wird."

- Benedikt (1):

"[...] somehow CSA is a thing where you can really try to busy yourself in a different way and thus, is something that could be more a future thing. To maintain long-term economic relations and different producer-consumer relations."

"[...] irgendwie ist halt Solawi so die Sache wo man so wirtschaften wirklich in ner anderen Form ausprobieren kann und ja, was für mich auch irgendwie mehr so ein Zukunftsding sein könnte. Also wie man langfristig irgendwie Wirtschaftsbeziehungen aufrechterhalten kann und andere Erzeuger-Verbraucher-Beziehungen."

- Marischa (2):

“[...] for me, the CSA community has really become very, very important, there are several people with whom I’m close friends and I often drive to the farm with several people to assist.”

“[...] für mich ist die solidarische Landwirtschaft-Gemeinschaft auch wirklich sehr, sehr wichtig geworden, also es gibt da einige, mit denen ich auch recht eng befreundet bin und mit einigen fahr ich dann auch häufiger zum Hof und helfe dort mit.“

- Ana (4):

“I think the public relations about CSA are a bit few [...]. But the people need to be more interested in it most certainly, and I think then, if they would really know about the backgrounds of their groceries, that there could change something.”

„Ich glaub die Öffentlichkeitsarbeit der Solawis ist ein bisschen wenig, [...] Die Menschen müssten sich mehr dafür interessieren, auf jeden Fall, und ich glaube dann, wenn sie wirklich die Hintergründe wüssten über ihre Lebensmittel, glaube ich schon, dass sich was ändern könnte.“

- Ingrid (4):

“here we have CSA and we can participate here”

“hier gibt es sowas und hier kann ich sowas nutzen“

- Monika (4):

“Such information events, which are also promotional events for us of course, make people thinking, discussing, viewing it critical and my goal is that eventually there will be many more CSA initiatives so that there are many more consumer-members.”

“Solche Informationsveranstaltungen, die natürlich auch Werbeveranstaltungen für uns sind, die bringen sicher Leute dazu, nachzudenken, zu diskutieren, das kritisch zu sehen und mein Ziel ist natürlich schon, dass es irgendwann sehr viel mehr Solawis geben wird, sodass es sehr viel mehr Mitglieder gibt.“