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Master Thesis

Finding the balance between pragmatism and idealism

– Producers' perspectives on the social sustainability of CSAs

Submitted by

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I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this work. No assistance other than that which is permitted has been used. Ideas and quotes taken directly or indirectly from other sources are identified as such. This written work has not yet been submitted in any part.

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Abbreviations

AFC =Alternative Food Cooperatives

AFN = Alternative Food Networks

Con GTM = Constructive Grounded Theory Methodology

CPI = Consumer Producer Interactions

CSA = Community Supported Agriculture

CSAFM = Community supported agriculture financing method

GTM = Grounded Theory Methodology

JS = Job Satisfaction

NSL = Netzwerk Solidarische Landwirtschaft

org.= organizational

Orga- Team = Organization Team

PDM = Participatory decision making

1 Abstract

Due to negative social and environmental effects caused by the current dominant food system as well as an increasing level of market concentration and corporate power in the food sector, alternative agricultural concepts, like community supported agriculture (CSA), are continuously increasing and multiplying over the last past years. This shows the increasing interest of producers and consumers in this model. The CSAs model depends on a strong community of all members (consumers and producers). Nevertheless, producers' fluctuation is a challenge CSAs face nowadays. A high fluctuation can lead to instability and endanger the success of CSA initiatives. Likewise, CSAs are accompanied with an ethical trade-off between idealism and pragmatism in their decision-making processes, due to their strong moral background. At the same time a strong idealism can be found in the context of self-exploitation and burn-out, and therefore might have an influence on the fluctuation of producers in CSAs. The ethical attitude of CSAs is based on four spheres, which are a social, a political/economical, an ecological and an organizational one. Thus, within this master thesis, the influence of the ethical attitude of CSAs on the work conditions and well-being of CSA producers' will be examined, as well as on the allover organizational structure, to contribute to the future growth and success of the CSA movement.

The empirical research design consists of 8 case studies in Austria and Germany with a qualitative research approach, following the grounded theory methodology. Observations and discussions during three days of participation on each CSA, as well as interviews with the producers are analyzed concerning the motivation and background of the producers, the current work conditions, well-being and needs of the producers and the communication and community building in the whole CSA. In total, 16 interviews with CSA producers and 8 diaries kept by the researcher during the participation on the CSAs were conducted.

It was found that CSAs tend to compromise regarding their idealism in the four spheres, as they cannot have a strong idealism in all four spheres. Besides that, it is observable, that the ethical tendency, resulting from this compromise has an influence on the work conditions, well-being, and organizational structure. CSAs with a strong idealism in the social sphere tend to a higher well-being and less fluctuation underneath the producers. At the same time, a strong political idealism can have a negative influence on the well-being and the work conditions. Especially in the context of working hours, stress, and wages. Other factors that influence the well-being of producers are, the personal expectations and experiences, while producers with a realistic expectation of the work in a CSA tend to have a higher well-being, the structure of decision and implementation processes, the transparency regarding wages and working processes and the communication culture and the use of supervision. Furthermore, the tendency to value the lifetime and therefore recording working hours and observing leisure and holiday time is important. The main needs producers in CSAs have in respect to a long-term commitment are appreciation, a good team dynamic and atmosphere, a good communication culture, a sufficient earning, self-determination, and a strong community based on trust. Likewise, the research gives a summary of best practices and attitudes for CSA in their starting period or times of trouble. These are a decent wage for the producers from the beginning on, organic growth of the CSA, standardization, and transparency in working processes, a comfortable working area and continuity regarding land and community.

Keywords: Community supported agriculture (CSA), idealism, pragmatism, work conditions, well-being, social sustainability

2 Kurzfassung

Durch die negativen sozialen und ökologischen Effekte des derzeitig dominierenden Ernährungssystems, sowie eine steigende Konzentration auf den Markt und zentralisierte Machtverhältnisse in dem Nahrungsmittelsektor, ist die Anzahl an alternativen landwirtschaftlichen Konzepten, wie Solidarische Landwirtschaft (SOLAWI) in den letzten Jahren deutlich gestiegen. Diese Bewegung zeigt ein gesteigertes Interesse von Produzierenden und Konsumierenden an diesem Model. Das SOLAWI Modell basiert auf einer starken Gemeinschaft aller Mitglieder (Produzierende und Konsumierende). Eine Herausforderung, die SOLAWIs betrifft, ist eine hohe Fluktuation der Produzierenden, welche zu Instabilität in der SOLAWI führen kann und dadurch den Erfolg des Projektes gefährden kann. Gleichzeitig, stehen SOLAWIs durch Ihren stark moralischen Hintergrund, in Ihren Entscheidungsprozessen oft vor einem trade-off zwischen Idealismus und Pragmatismus. In der Literatur wird ein starker Idealismus oft im Zusammenhang mit Selbstausbeutung und Burn-Out gesehen, wodurch dieser in einen Zusammenhang mit der hohen Fluktuation in SOLAWIs gebracht werden könnte. Die ethische Einstellung (Idealismus/Pragmatismus) von SOLAWIs wird im Rahmen dieser Arbeit in vier Sphären eingeteilt: Sozial, politisch/ökonomisch, ökologisch und organisatorisch. In dieser Masterarbeit wird der Einfluss der ethischen Einstellung von SOLAWIs auf das Wohlergehen der Produzierenden untersucht, sowie auf die allgemeine Organisationsstruktur, um zum weiteren Wachstum und Erfolg der SOLAWI Bewegung beizutragen.

Das empirische Forschungsdesign dieser Arbeit baut auf der qualitativen Datenanalyse von 8 Fallstudien (SOLAWIs) in Deutschland und Österreich auf und lehnt sich an die Grounded Theory Methodologie an. Die Datensammlung basiert auf Beobachtungen, Interviews und Unterhaltungen während drei Tagen Mitarbeit bei den 8 SOLAWIs. Die Interviews wurden nach der Motivation, dem Hintergrund, den aktuellen Arbeitsbedingungen, dem Wohlergehen und den Bedürfnissen der Produzierenden analysiert. Insgesamt wurden 16 Interviews mit Produzierenden und 8 Tagebücher (2-10 Seiten) geführt.

Die Analyse hat gezeigt, dass SOLAWIS dazu tendieren Kompromisse bezüglich der vier Sphären eingehen, da es nicht möglich ist in allen vier Sphären einem starken Idealismus zu folgen. Außerdem, war zu beobachten, dass die ethische Einstellung, die aus diesem Kompromiss entsteht, einen Einfluss auf die Arbeitsbedingungen, das Wohlergehen und die Organisationsstruktur einer SOLAWI hat. SOLAWIs mit einem starken Idealismus in der sozialen Sphäre zeigten ein höheres Wohlergehen und weniger Fluktuation auf der Produzierenden Seite als die anderen SOLAWIS. Gleichzeitig scheint ein starker Idealismus in der politischen Sphäre eher einen negativen Einfluss auf das Wohlergehen und die Arbeitsbedingungen zu haben. Vor allem im Zusammenhang mit Stress und, Arbeitsstunden und Lohn. Andere Faktoren, die das Wohlergehen der Produzierenden beeinflussen sind die persönlichen Erwartungen und Erfahrungen, wobei Produzierende mit einer realistischen Vorstellung von der Arbeit in einer SOLAWI zu einem höheren Wohlergehen zu neigen, die Entscheidungs- und Ausführungsstruktur, die Transparenz in Bezug auf Gehälter und Arbeitsprozesse und die Kommunikationskultur und Gebrauch von Supervision. Weitere Faktoren sind, die Tendenz Lebenszeit wertzuschätzen und daher Arbeitsstunden aufzuschreiben und Freizeit sowie Urlaubszeiten einzuhalten. Die wichtigsten Bedürfnisse, die Produzierende im Zusammenhang mit einer Langzeitperspektive in ihrer SOLAWI genannt haben sind, Wertschätzung, eine gute Kommunikationskultur, einen ausreichenden Lohn, Selbstbestimmung und eine starke Gemeinschaft basierende auf Vertrauen. Zusätzlich gibt die Arbeit eine Zusammenfassung über praktische Anwendungen und Einstellungen für SOLAWIs, welche, Projekten in Ihrer Startphase oder schwierigen Zeiten helfen können. Diese sind unter anderem, ausreichende Löhne von Anfang an, modulares Wachstum, Standardisierung, Transparenz in Arbeitsabläufen, eine schöne Atmosphäre am Arbeitsplatz und Kontinuität in Bezug auf Land und Gemeinschaft.

Keywords: Community supported agriculture (CSA), idealism, pragmatism, work conditions, well-being, social sustainability

3 Introduction

3.1 Motivation

My interest in the social sustainability of CSAs in the context of producer's needs arises from experiences I have gained during my work at different agricultural businesses, and especially at a community supported agriculture (CSA) initiative, as well as my studies. I believe it is possible to farm in a way that neither exploits land nor people, and to build up an un-exploitative farming system is my own personal goal once I have finished my studies. CSA is a huge step in the direction of the emancipation of agriculture, but as a model it still has some challenges to overcome. The idealism that guides its founders and participants, as well as the initial expectations of people who work in CSAs and their fulfillment during the work, is something that I myself experienced and came to see as hugely controversial in its influence on CSA structures. This research is motivated by my desire to question my own experiences and to gain knowledge about CSA best practices and producers' needs for the sake of future CSA initiatives including my own planned one.

3.2 Background

CSA is a social movement as well as an alternative food network (AFN) that arose in the 1960s due to the increasing exploitation of nature and humans along the food chain (Plank et al., 2020). It is an alternative, locally based economic model of agriculture and food distribution with the initial idea to mutually share production costs, risks, and produce between a group of people, instead of leaving the risks and costs on the shoulders of the farmers. It supports the transformation of the current food system by building up self-organized, small structured agricultural businesses which reconnect producers and consumers (Kolodinsky & Pelch, 1997; Schermer, 2015; White, 2015). The motivations and aims of CSAs as well as the way the model is put into practice varies a lot. Some CSAs mainly focus on sustainable food production and distribution, whereas others have a more activist aspiration regarding political or social relations. Nevertheless, most of them aim to build up local communities that succeed for a longer term and reach social, ecological, and financial sustainability.

Due to the innovative nature of CSAs, they face several major challenges. One is a high fluctuation of staff on the producer side, due to workload, income, and stress level (Galt, 2013; White, 2015). This might be connected to an existing divergence between the initial idea of CSAs, that aimed to mutually share the risks and costs of production to increase the welfare of producers, and the current situation in some CSAs, where not all costs are mutually shared, because wages are set too low, or overtime is not reported. Thus, denying consumers the real costs, can lead to self-exploitation of CSA producers.

Another challenge that arises in many cooperatives, collectives, and communities is related to the idealism that underlies many CSAs. The process of decision-making tends to involve trade-offs between following moral, idealistic values or pursuing a more practical, short-term solution (Kivetz & Tyler, 2007). In CSA initiatives this struggle is seen in a variety of social, political/economical, ecological, and organizational topics. On the one hand, CSAs tend to be activist movements that try to change the current system and clearly differ from hegemonic models through their basic principles. On the other hand, CSAs are embedded in the very system they want to change, as they are dependent upon the financial condition of their consumers and are in a competitive situation with other food distributors because consumers can choose to quit to order their food elsewhere if the share price becomes too high (Rammert, 2010).

As CSAs build on a strong and stable community (Groh & McFadden, 1998; van Elsen & Kraiß, 2012), a focus should be on strengthening them to counteract the listed challenges. Up to now mainly the consumers' needs were investigated and perceived as a stabilizing factor for CSAs, whereas the fluctuation on the producer side is mentioned but not examined to the same degree. Quit behavior of employees/producers is closely related to satisfaction and well-being in the job. Wherefore, increasing job satisfaction (JS) and well-being can lead to reducing fluctuation in the producer team and foster loyalty and motivation (Clark et al., 1997; Fitzroy & Nolan, 2020). As the number of CSAs in Germany and Austria quadrupled in the last six years (European CSA Research Group, 2016; Netzwerk Solidarische Landwirtschaft e.V., 2021), the CSA model seems to gain increasing interest of producers and consumers, what also might increase their contribution to an agrarian change. To affect this course in a positive way, the challenges of CSAs should be seen as chances to grow and improve the whole movement insofar as they are reflected and questioned critically. By analyzing the experienced realities of CSAs from a producer perspective and trying to bridge theoretical concepts and practical approaches, this research aims to contribute to the success and further growth of the whole CSA movement and AFNs. The research leans on the Constructive Grounded Theory Methodology (Con GTM), after Charmaz (2014) (see chapter 4.1.).

3.3 Research Problem

CSA is an innovative concept that might influence change in the current food system. The number of CSAs in Germany and Austria quadrupled in the last six years (European CSA Research Group, 2016; Netzwerk Solidarische Landwirtschaft e.V., 2021), which serves to highlight the increasing interest of producers and consumers in this model. Therefore, research is needed that contributes to the further development and growth of the CSA movement by examining success factors and in particular, factors that might support new or struggling CSA initiatives. The success of cooperative initiatives like CSAs depends on a strong, stable community (Groh & McFadden, 1998; van Elsen & Kraiß, 2012). As fluctuations on the producer side of CSAs (Galt, 2013; White, 2015) might lead to instability in a CSA, the factors that influence the work conditions and well-being of producers should be investigated and understood. Likewise, CSAs face the challenge of an ethical trade-off between idealism and pragmatism in their decision-making processes, similar to other groups and individuals with a strong moral background (Burger & Bless, 2016; S. Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990; Skitka, 2010). Strong idealism is often found in the context of self-exploitation and burn-out (Cox, 2019; Galt, 2013; White, 2015).

3.4 Objective and Research Questions

This thesis examines the ethical tendencies of CSA initiatives in Germany and Austria when taking decisions regarding social, political/economical, ecological, and organizational topics, namely trade-offs between idealism and pragmatism. It ascertains the mutual influence of ethical tendency and organization structure and dynamics and the influence these have on the working conditions of producers. Moreover, it investigates if the current working conditions meet the actual needs of producers, as well as the other factors that influence the well-being of CSA producers. Finally, it analyses the attitudes, best practices, and factors that CSA producers have experienced and consider as successful and expedient regarding a stable community and financial/social and ecological sustainability.

This master thesis with a geographical focus on Austria and Germany aims to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1: Which needs do CSA producers have regarding their work?

RQ 2: What are the current working conditions of CSA producers, and do they meet the needs of the producers?

RQ 3: How idealistic or pragmatic are CSAs in their decision-making regarding social, political, ecological, and organizational topics?

RQ 4: How does the ethical stance of a CSA influence its dynamics and its producers' working conditions?

RQ 5: Which other non-monetary factors influence the well-being of producers?

RQ 6: What are the best practices and methods experienced by producers that have led CSAs to reach a structure that supports good working conditions, financial stability, a sufficient yield, and a strong community?

4 State of the Art

In this chapter, the results of the first stage of the literature review will be presented. The initial literature review was conducted having Glaser and Strauss (1967) concerns in mind, who invented the Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM), in terms of reading and using existing material with a healthy skepticism and reflectivity.

4.1 Definition of Important Terms

In this part of the literature review an overview and explanations of important terms used in this thesis will be given.

Food System

A food system can be defined as a network of different, independent activities and relations in between them, regarding the production, processing, distribution, sales, and consumption of agricultural goods. Moreover, the management of food waste relates to food systems. The trade of food between producers and consumers is organized through the exchange of monetary values. The networks can be on a local, a national, a global and industrial or an ethical scale (Sumner et al., 2014)

Current Dominant Food System (CDFS)

The current dominant food system (CDFS) is a network of corporate, industrialized, and conventional food elements, that operate on a global level. It bases on profit-making, competition, exclusion, exploitation of human, animal and environmental resources (Sumner et al., 2014). At the same time the CDFS offers a huge variety of products, low prices and convenience for the consumers (Karner, 2010). In the agricultural context, the industrialization led to a disconnection of people and nature as well as a disconnection between food producers in local agricultural communities and consumer in the cities. Food lost its linkage to the ecology of local regions (McMichael, 2005).

Alternative Food Network (AFN)

There is not one official definition of AFNs in literature, but overall, it can be seen as a countermovement to the CDFS. Basically, it contains every food system that differs from the conventional currently dominating food system. AFN includes among others, CSAs, fair trade, farmers markets, food cooperatives and the slow food movement, with a common aim to create new food exchange models, which support the local connection of producers and consumers, built communities and increase environmental sustainability, social justice and the welfare of people and animals (Edwards, 2016).

Food Sovereignty Movement

Food sovereignty aims to reach food security and is a call for peoples 'rights' to shape and craft food policy. The movement strives to give the power over food production and distribution, back to the people who produce and consume (Patel, 2009). La Via Campesina (1996) state that food security can only be achieved in a system, where food sovereignty is guaranteed, and people have the right to produce their own food in their local region respecting cultural and productive diversity.

Commons Movement

'Commons' is a term for resources that are maintained, owned, and used in a self-organized, collective and need based way. The current commons movement is transnational and aims to implement a transition to new decentralized systems of implementing and provisioning democratic behavior. It contains diverse commons, like seed-sharing cooperatives; open-source software programmers; forests; arable land or communities that use local, alternative currencies. Commons support sovereignty for their participants over essential live basics, like food, water, land and knowledge (Bollier, 2014).

4.2 Emerging and Development of the CSA Concept

The CSA concept started in Japan in the mid- 1960s as the "teikei" concept, which means directly translated "partnership" or metaphorically "food with farmer's face on it". In this time, people realized the rise of imported food and the decline of small, local farms. A group of women had the idea for the first teikei farm in 1965 and started it with local farmers (Van En, 1995).

CSA is a model of agriculture where production costs, risks and produce are shared mutually between a group of people (McMichael, 2009). "A group of people commits to a farm in the long term. Together, they finance the yearly operational costs of the farm in advance, in return they receive a proportional share of the harvest, as well as the knowledge of the farmers using the land, the water, the animals and plants in a responsible and sustainable way" (Netzwerk Solidarische Landwirtschaft e.V., 2021).

CSA is an AFN as well as it is part of the food sovereignty movement. In this context , CSAs have a possible influence on the transformation of the CDFS (McMichael, 2005) by fostering an agrarian change trough solidarity self- organized, independent, small scale agricultural production and consumption (Friedmann, 2016; McMichael, 2014; Plank et al., 2020; Schermer, 2015).

Furthermore, CSAs are using an alternative economic system. Solidarity economy names a form of economy which fulfills the needs of people by voluntary cooperation, self- organization, and mutual help (Chen et al., 2019; McMichael, 2014; Ripess, 2015; Schermer, 2015). The principle of solidarity stands in contrast to the focus on competition and maximization of profit in the capitalist market economy.

As there is not one official definition of CSAs, a huge variety exists. They differ regarding their ownership, legal form, decision, and responsible structures and individual or cooperative values. Some food distributors, who are not farmers, call themselves CSAs, as well as entrepreneurs who sell their products at market price or have a box-scheme with a monthly contribution of the consumers. Even though the diversity of CSAs might be confusing and some might use the positive image of CSAs while selling at market price, a centralized definition and standardization could "cause serious harm by shifting collective ownership and vision away from the thousands of participants who have infused CSA with a vibrant blend of individual and cooperative values" (White, 2015, p. 60).

This research focuses on collectively founded or/ and owned CSAs in Germany and Austria. These CSAs are constituted of members or participants, what designating in terms of this research, all people that participate in a CSA (producers and consumers). Producer is the term for people who are employed by the CSA and work there for an earning, while consumers is the term used for people who pay a yearly contribution and get therefore a regular share of the produce of the farm. Volunteers are consumers who support the producers on a regular basis or take over responsibility positions CSA organization (e.g. in the association, depending on the legal form). During this research, it is important to have the variety of CSAs in mind, as the comparison of the different projects can only be done regarding this lived diversity.

4.3 CSA in a Socio-Political Context

When exploring the emergence of Community Supported Agriculture, the following dilemma comes into effect: “Humans who work in agriculture mostly only have the choice of either exploiting nature or exploiting themselves.” (Netzwerk Solidarische Landwirtschaft e.V., 2021). CSAs have a political dimension through which they can directly change structures on a small scale, but indirectly contribute to changing structures on a larger scale due to their characteristic democratic and participatory approaches. For example, most CSAs oppose socially unfair conditions. The extent to which a CSA can achieve specific political goals depends on the socio-political context in which CSAs exist, for instance the country, region, politics and underlying values of the society (Anderson et al., 2014; Lawless, 2003). In the context of Germany and Austria, the CSA initiatives try to change existing structures in which they are embedded at the same time. While the principles embodied by CSA farms differ clearly from hegemonic models, CSA cannot be interpreted as something outside the capitalist economic and political system (Rammert, 2010). More precisely, CSAs which try to build up new anti-capitalist structures that differ from existing ones, are still acting in a world that is dominated by existing structures; formed by politics, businesses, people, and society. From a socio-economic perspective, and even if they do not believe that such a system is ideal, the people who participate in a CSA are still part of a capitalist system that gives everything a monetary value. Furthermore, it needs to be questioned if the anti- capitalist function of CSA is fulfilled even though the monetary resources for memberships contributions are mainly gained through wage labor (Rammert, 2010).

4.4 CSAs in the Context of Austria and Germany

The few existing studies focusing on CSAs in the German and Austrian context cover their status quo, development, and problems and possibilities (Blättel-Mink et al., 2017; European CSA Research Group, 2016; Plank et al., 2020; van Elsen & Kraiß, 2012; Wellner & Theuvsen, 2016). A comprehensive analysis of CSAs in Germany as a social innovation is given by Blättel-Mink et al. (2017). An analysis of CSA members’ motivations and the reasons why CSAs are established, shows that CSAs are not a homogeneous phenomenon but that each differs in the way it expresses social innovations and its attitude to the existing food-system crisis. The value-based mode of production and consumption in the context of Austria’s third food regime is examined by Plank et al. (2020). This research shows that only a few CSA farmers share their entire production costs (including a fair salary for the producers) among the members. An understanding of CSAs, it is clear, differs depending on the demographic and geographical location.

4.4.1 Origin and Distribution of CSAs in Austria and Germany

In Germany and Austria, the understanding of CSA is tighter than in other countries (Netzwerk Solidarische Landwirtschaft e.V., 2021). This must be considered during the comparison and transmission of scientific research from other regions.

Germany

The first CSA in Germany was established in 1988 and is named the „Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft Buschenberghof“, located close to Hamburg (van Elsen & Kraiß, 2012). Around this time, an increasing demand of cheap and convenient food led to an intensive agricultural mass production in Germany and a distinction between consumers and producers (Simon, 2012). This intensive, industrial agricultural production came under criticism, which led to the development of alternative agricultural movements. This situation likely encouraged the development of CSA in Germany (Wellner & Theuvsen, 2015). According to the list offered on the website of the CSA network in Germany (www.solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/solawis-finden/auflistung), there are currently 377 CSAs in Germany and 87 in their founding stage (Netzwerk Solidarische Landwirtschaft e.V., 2021). In comparison to 2015 (92 CSA initiatives) (European CSA Research Group, 2016), the number of CSA initiatives has quadrupled. The German national CSA network, defines CSAs as (Netzwerk Solidarische Landwirtschaft e.V., 2021):

“Solidarity based agriculture/ farming together (on a voluntary basis) as producers and consumers ...

- means sharing the risks and responsibilities of farming;
- means organizing economic processes on the basis of solidarity and mutual trust;
- means agreeing on the standard according to which the farming is done (and the size of the farming operation) and on the costs of agricultural production, including an appropriate level of pay for the farmers and farm workers. All the costs are covered by the members;
- creates a reliable relationship between the producers and the consumers, involving a long-term and binding commitment;
- creates freedom from economic coercion in agricultural production; leads to genuine food sovereignty;
- is beneficial for the health of soils, water bodies, plants, animals, and people and promotes their wellbeing and development; and
- promotes a spirit of internationalism and understanding among nations.”

The national CSA network in Germany is quite strong and sees itself as an association and movement of grassroots democratic organization.

The network offers advice, help and company to CSA farmers, brings together producers and consumers, coordinates inquiries from scholars and politicians, and engages in public relations work. Twice a year national meetings are held to exchange ideas, discuss various issues, and work on the development of the movement (European CSA Research Group, 2016). It is essential to communicate transparently the central ideas and the context CSAs are embedded in, as well as the challenges the movement faces, especially now that the concept of CSA is becoming better known to the general public in Germany.

Austria

Due to its different agrarian structure, the development of CSA in Austria started later than it did in Germany. The Austrian agricultural sector has traditionally been mainly shaped by small agrarian businesses orientated in the direction of high-quality products and regional specialization. This results in a way of marketing that focuses on regional production and a close link between producer and consumer (Pabst, 2015; Schermer, 2015). The consumer-producer association BERSTA, founded in 1978 out of a working group of the Austrian Mountain Farmers Coalition (ÖBV) (Rohrmoser, 2016), was perhaps the earliest Austrian initiative sharing the characteristics of a CSA. However the first actual "CSA" was founded in 2011 from a gardening business that faced financial troubles and sought a solution. The gardeners had encountered the CSA idea three years earlier in publications about CSA written by Katharina Kraiß. Wolfgang Stränz, one founder of the first CSA initiative in Germany, had visited Vienna to give a lecture about this new farming model and its current implementation. This impulse led to the foundation of the CSA "Ochsenherz" close to Vienna. Almost simultaneously another CSA was started in upper Austria, called "Gemüsefreude"¹.

Between 2011 and 2015 around 27 CSAs developed in Austria. The actual number of CSA initiatives in Austria is perhaps unknown; the last available count took place in 2015 in the context of European CSA research² (European CSA Research Group, 2016). The idealistic backgrounds of CSAs in Austria are diverse, ranging from bio-dynamic ideals over religion or science to Marxist and permaculturalistic ideals (European CSA Research Group, 2016). However, the definition of Community Supported Agriculture in Austria was formulated collectively and is common to all the initiatives: "Gemeinschaftsgestützte Landwirtschaft (CSA) means a direct partnership, which is contractually defined for a certain period between one or several producers and a group of consumers. The producers provide food for the consumers, who allow the producers decent working conditions and earnings. As well the risk and the yield of the production are shared between all members. Through this system, the product is decoupled from a certain price. The harvest-sharers or members of a CSA do not buy several products, but they contribute with their regular payments and other contributions to a common agriculture. The ones who directly work in the farm don't produce for an insecure, anonymous market, but provide food for people with names and faces. CSA peasants and members aim at being most independent from the conventional market" (European CSA Research Group, 2016).

The producer role in Austrian CSAs is very relevant, as most of the collective, self-organized Austrian CSAs are founded through the engagement of some members and the distinct idealism of producers. Furthermore, many producers are currently engaged in tasks (e.g. member support, community events, public work) which should, following the ideal, not be their responsibility.

For example, the integration of members in the farm and the transparent declaration of the budget to the members are not tasks that the producer him or herself should be responsible for.

¹ Information through personal communication (one of the leading experts of CSAs in Austria)

²a small networking group, which brings together farmers and members, facilitates biannual meetings and organizes a networking website

4.5 Financial Situation of CSAs

The financial situation and financing methods of CSAs is a highly discussed topic in the literature. Sabih and Baker (2000) test the potential of “the Community Supported Agriculture Financing Method (CSAFM)” as a realistic alternative to conventional financing. Their results show that the alternative financing method of CSAs is a win-win situation for both consumers and producers. Nevertheless, they state that often the share price is not calculated from the total budget. Opitz et al. (2019) examine the influence of consumer-producer interactions (CPI) on the economic stability of CSAs. They show that the CPI can be seen as one of the key factors influencing economic stability. Experts were surveyed and they named the consideration of consumer needs regarding qualities and quantities of produce as a relevant stabilizing factor. Feagan & Henderson (2009) examined the development of a CSA in England over some years, and how it needed to constantly react, adapt, and readapt to the fluidity it was confronted with. Precisely this is the contrast between the CSA producers’ conflicting convictions, loyalties, and beliefs, and the economic situation of the CSA. They noticed that in the beginning, their commitment to ethical principles clashed to some extent with getting by financially. The financial struggles of CSA farmers are also discussed by other scholars (Galt, 2013; Lass et al., 2003; Pilgeram, 2011; Samoggia et al., 2019; White, 2015). White (2015) claims that the positive brand mythology that surrounds CSA makes it difficult to admit and critically discuss this problem. He claims there is a need to share financial information openly with participants, and to share production and organizational information (best practices, problems, and new tested strategies) with the public to improve the image of the CSA movement. search by Samoggia et al. (2019) is mainly concerned with fair incomes and a living wage for the workers on the farm. They see the need to balance monetary and non-monetary benefits for the producers in a better way. Lass et al. (2003) claim that CSA represents an ideal that has yet to reach economic security. Their 2001 state-wide survey of CSA producers (in Massachusetts, USA) shows that over 68 percent were not satisfied, and 32 percent were very unsatisfied with their financial security, which includes health insurance and retirement contributions among other elements. At the same time, 57 percent of the producers felt their needs were being met in the context of life quality and stress levels. They found that 34 percent of farmers who left CSAs did so because of too low income and 12.5 percent because of burnout. Reacting to this survey, the ethnographic study of alternative food production published by Pilgeram (2011), has the alarming title, “The Only Thing That Isn’t Sustainable Is...the Farmer.” Pilgeram claims that such a system built on the personal beliefs and ideologies of producers to justify their own self-exploitation should be questioned. This critique is repeated by Galt, who in a national survey in the USA, identifies CSAs’ “moral economy” as a “double-edged sword” that combines the loyalty producers feel to the values of the CSA model, which is inclined towards low wages and self-exploitation (Galt, 2013). Another challenge, CSA farmers face, due to the organizational structure of many CSAs, is their double role as paid workers and members of the CSA association, which runs through voluntary work. It is challenging to draw a line between these two areas and how to handle a CSA producer who is doing voluntary work as well.

Summed up, CSAs differ regarding their underlying motivation, aims and concepts. There is a wide gap between the current situation in CSAs and the initial goal of CSAs, i.e. to mutually share production risks and costs to increase the welfare of the producers. The financial difficulties of CSAs have a great influence on the producers and can lead to self-exploitation. Yet up until now, mainly the consumers’ needs were investigated and perceived as a stabilizing factor for CSAs. The tendency of research orientated on consumer needs counteracts in certain ways the initial idea of CSA and could support a reversion to disconnected producers-consumer relations which concentrate on the needs of consumers and known from the CDFS. Moreover, a struggle for CSA producers exists, which consists of a self-exploiting tendency, when they follow strictly the values of the CSA model as well as through their double role as members and producers.

4.6 Success Factors of CSAs

Some success factors of CSA initiatives in Germany are discussed by van Elsen & Kraiß, (2012). Their study shows that success factors of CSA initiatives are a good, understandable textual explanation and representation of aims, motivations and ideas towards members, future members, and farmers (depending on the site). Subsequently, basic success factors for communities such as mutual trust, voluntarily participation, communication, and conflict ability (ability to handle conflicts in a constructive way) are important for CSA initiatives. Other scholars have determined success factors for food cooperatives or AFNs (Ganci, 2013; Pirker, 2015), which to some extent can be applied to CSAs, such as:

Organizational Structure: The way alternative food cooperatives, as CSAs, are structured in regard to growth, decision-making processes, and responsibility distribution might have an influence on their success. A slow and gradual modular growth is a success factor for the long-term existence of cooperatives (Lawless, 2003). Specific tasks, autonomy and feedback enhance the motivation of producers and volunteers, whereas increased bureaucracy and formalization generally have a negative influence on motivation levels. However, certain kinds of formalization and hierarchy might be positive for stability and clearness (Studer & Von Schnurbein, 2012).

The transparency of working processes and responsibilities to protect the project from becoming dominated by single individuals is another important factor mentioned by Ganci (2013). Through transparency, members can alternate their working tasks more easily and knowledge is not lost to the same extent. Letting people choose in which field they want to work also increases their motivation (Ganci, 2013)

Suitable Premises: As soon as premises are found, motivation and joy of founding a food cooperative rises (Pirker, 2015).

Financial Resources: Especially needed during the start-up period, and later, for stock, like machinery, tools and seeds, deposit and rent for premises, or maintenance costs.

Finding suitable premises which are also affordable can be a challenge. Additionally, money is needed to be able to cover unforeseen costs, such as repair costs (Ganci, 2013).

Public Relations (PR): Through PR it is possible to reach more people and consequently it is easier to gain new members. Additionally, the idea of the food cooperative can be spread easier (Pirker, 2015).

Knowledge and skills in the fields related to food production and supply are an essential success factor for alternative food networks (Ganci, 2013). During the starting phase it is an advantage to have people on board who have already experience with starting an initiative or project, and if this is not the case, information and knowledge exchanges are helpful (Pirker, 2015). Participants of AFNs often have various backgrounds and need to collect knowledge and know-how from different sources, such as via exchanges with experts of the field or through attending training programs or courses. Additionally, the learning process is constant and never ends, because one must be able to react to fast-changing circumstances. Regarding CSAs, this continuous learning process is even more intense, because it involves building up something completely new in terms of marketing, wherefore the work in a CSA is a constant repetition of trying, evaluating, and adapting. All kinds of education can also be provided, for instance, via school visits on farms, campaigning, food tourism, food projects, or direct consumer-producer contact (Ganci, 2013; Karner, 2010).

Transparency about finances and cultivation methods is one of the basic principles of the CSA network in Germany. “All costs of the agricultural production, especially the labor expenses, investment costs and savings are transparently communicated towards the members. If the farm markets its produce only partly in a solidarity way, this needs to be constituted. The same transparency counts for the cultivation methods, resources, and additional purchases (Netzwerk Solidarische Landwirtschaft e.V., 2021). There is a reluctance towards transparency although this is a basic principle of CSA networks and an element that early CSA visionaries had said was crucial (Groh & McFadden, 1998; Netzwerk Solidarische Landwirtschaft e.V., 2021; Urgenci, 2019).

According to White (2015), CSA producers tend to be good at promoting CSA and many of its aspects as an ideal model, but at the same time are not so transparent in sharing some of its dysfunctional realities.

Community: When people work together towards a common goal, it creates a sense of community. A strong sense of community enhances motivation which is crucial for the development of CSAs (Ganci, 2013). As CSAs are communities, the following four factors – mutual trust, voluntarily participation of consumers, communication and conflict ability, the ability to use conflicts in a constructive way – are important for overall success (van Elsen & Kraiß, 2012).

Trauger Groh, a pioneer of CSA in Germany, states in his book, 1990: “the primary need is not for the farm to be supported by the community, but rather for the community to support itself through farming. This is an essential of existence, not a matter of convenience” (Groh & McFadden, 1990, p. 6). To build up a strong community, that can resist times of troubles, participants need to understand the purpose of the initiative and identify with its specific goals and moral understanding. This common understanding and belief strengthen a community (Pirker, 2015).

A sufficient Network and external Support are substantial success factors for food cooperatives, especially during the early period. All kinds of support have positive effects for the development of a food cooperative during the start-up period, whether it is financial, physical, or mental support from institutions or private people (who want to support the idea), or sponsorship or financial support by passive members. Further support is attained by knowledge sharing from established initiatives and the national network, practical help by family, relatives, and friends of members, as well as help by people from outside the organization in the fields of graphic design, IT, PR, administration, law, or finance. Furthermore, the provision of premises, a reduction of rent for premises, and support by finding suitable premises by other initiatives is helpful. Exchanging information with already established initiatives provides important support during the start-up period, for instance the passing on of producers’ contacts or contacts of important institutions, the handling of certain difficulties, and the answering of open questions (Pirker, 2015).

Consumers’ Commitment: Several scholars address the low retention rate of consumers and how to counteract it (Bougherara et al., 2009; Freedman & King, 2016; Samoggia et al., 2019). Several surveys can be found about consumers’ motivations, perceptions and needs in different countries. The most important points can be summarized as: organic produce, reducing environmental impacts, convenience, and reasonable prices (Bougherara et al., 2009; Chen et al., 2019; Connolly & Klaiber, 2014; Diekmann & Theuvsen, 2019; Freedman & King, 2016; Hvitsand, 2016; Kolodinsky & Pelch, 1997; Yu et al., 2019). Chen et al. (2019) analyzes the participation dynamics among CSA consumers in the USA. Their survey shows that consumers from younger generations, high-income families and people who are convinced of organic, sustainable agriculture are more likely to renew their CSA membership. Other factors that are important for CSA members include the time of food distribution, the price of products and the location of the farm or its depots. A study by Connolly & Klaiber (2014) indicates that consumers’ willingness to pay is higher if they participate for a longer term, if off-farm pick up is possible, and if there is a long distribution season and organic production. Furthermore, consumers value any kind of risk mitigation (discount or money back) (Yu et al., 2019).

Methods to overcome consumer fluctuation include offering consumers the possibility to choose the content of their box or offering a pay-as-you-go model, which attracts consumers that need less than a box per week (Freedman & King, 2016). The needs and perceptions of consumers is an important factor for the persistence of a CSA. However just as important as the commitment of the consumers is the welfare and commitment of the producers, but this topic is not analyzed to the same degree in literature.

Producer's Motivation: Dong et al. (2019) examine why producers decide to market their products via CSA. The survey shows that young female operators, and operators for whom farming is the only income source tend to market via CSA. Samoggia et al. (2019) address the perceptions of CSA farmers in the USA and Hungary. CSA farmers experience some managerial challenges in both countries, including difficulties in finding and keeping trained labor, in setting the price for the share, in recruiting (and keeping) CSA members, and in having adequate storage space. Communication with CSA members and the management of pick-up points are of limited concern. Furthermore, the motivation that drives people to work in a CSA influences the commitment and therefore, the success. Motivation is a basic condition for getting involved in a CSA, and keeping this motivation alive is crucial for the success of a CSA (Samoggia et al., 2019).

Producers' motivations, and what is needed to keep them alive, has not been sufficiently researched. This research thesis attempts to fill some of the above-mentioned gaps in the current research about CSAs. The work conditions and needs of CSA producers will be examined regarding wages, non-monetary values, like appreciation, team dynamic or self-determination and organizational structure. The perception of producers of different CSAs, about their earnings, workload, mutual risk- and cost sharing, responsibility sharing on the farm and underlying individual and collective values will be compared. Furthermore, the ethical tendency that underlies the different evaluated CSA initiatives will be analyzed and related to the producers' perceptions and researchers' observations. In the next chapter, a theoretical and analytical framework will be developed, to categorize and compare the different ethical tendencies of the CSAs.

5 Theoretical Framework

During the second and third stage of the literature review, a theoretical and analytical framework for the data analysis, comprised of several important concepts, was developed (Thornberg & Dunne, 2019). This chapter contains four sections: the first elaborates the study's main concepts, the second discusses the trade- offs between pragmatism and idealism in decision-making, the third discusses different worldviews, and the final section discusses four spheres of idealism.

5.1 Concepts

A set of important, interconnected concepts influence the dynamics and relations in CSAs and, therefore, and understanding of these is central to this research. Figure 1 gives an overview of these concepts and their theorized inter-connections. This research shines a spotlight on the well-being of CSA producers as this component is understood to influence the fluctuation of CSA producers and therefore the stability and success of CSAs. The well-being of producers is influenced by the ethical attitude of the CSAs, working conditions in the CSAs, and to which degree the needs of the producers are compiled in a CSA. These elements and their potential influence will be analyzed, as well as the impact of other non-monetary factors. Moreover, the organizational structure of the CSAs will be investigated to better understand the dynamics of CSAs and the possible connections of this structure to the ethical attitude. The concepts defined in this section are: self-exploitation, as something that needs to be overcome in CSAs; success, as something that is desired by CSAs; sustainable activism, as something that should be reached to avoid self-exploitation; well-being, as a condition that should be aimed for in CSAs; and idealism and pragmatism as ethical tendencies, found in all CSAs, that might influence all the other concepts.

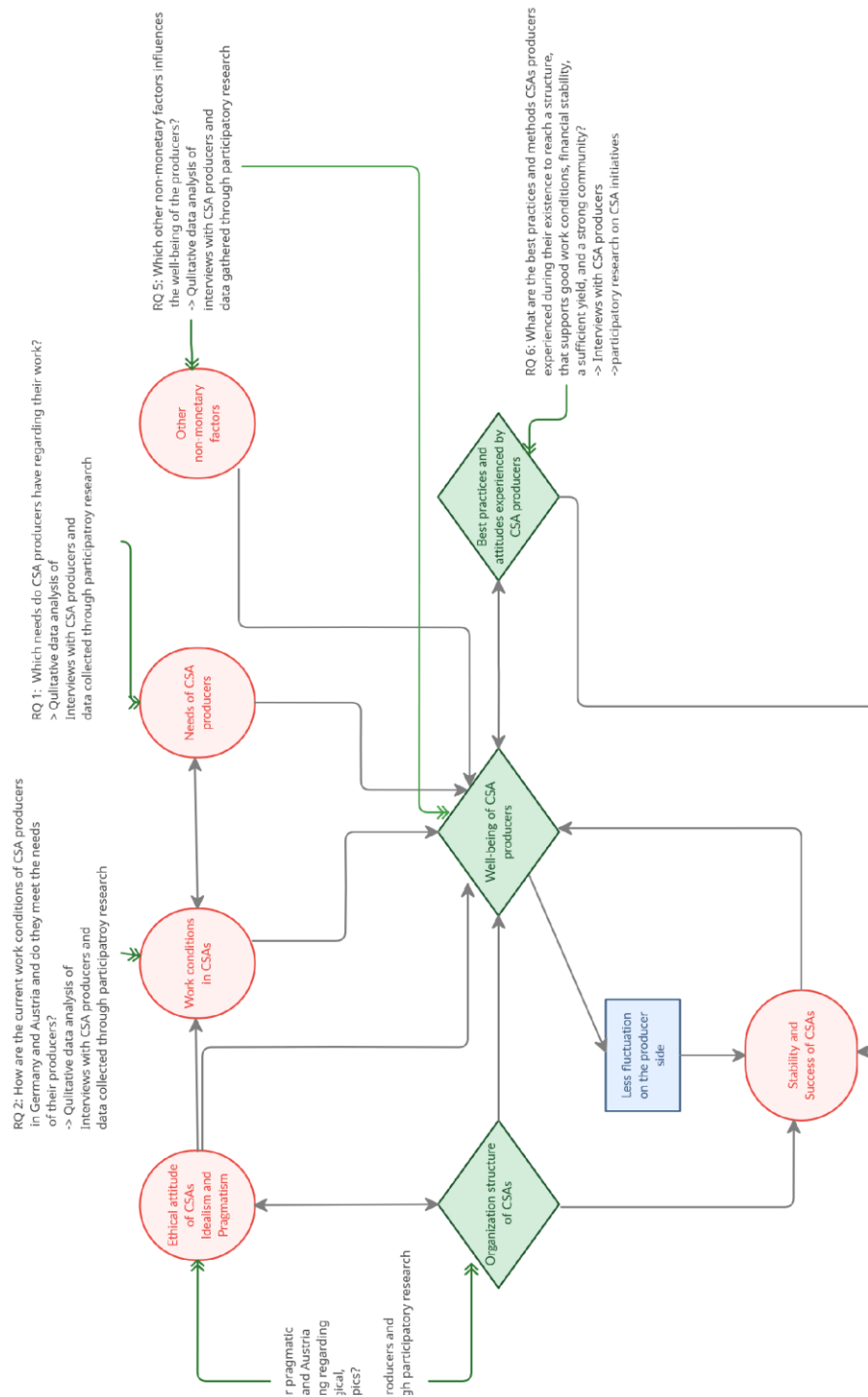


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework: Understanding dynamics and relations in CSA initiatives

(Source: own)

Red circles: Independent variables; Green squares: Control variables; Red oval: dependent variables;

Grey arrows: show the potential connections and influences between the different analyzed variables;

Green arrows: relate the research questions to the variables they aim to examine.

5.1.1 Self-exploitation

Self-exploitation is an important concept in agrarian political economy. It originated with Karl Kautsky (1988) to explain how small family farms can compete against huge capitalist firms in agricultural production (Kautsky, 1988), by continuing to produce, even if the average rate of profit is absent (Mann & Dickinson, 1978). The original sense of the term “self-exploitation” is the harming of physical and mental selves of peasant families for a rate of return that is lower than the regular wage (Chayanov, 1966). This phenomenon is present in the CSA movement nowadays. Several scientists are mentioning this concept in conjunction with political activism, small scale organic farming and/or alternative food networks (AFNs) (Cox, 2019; Guthman, 2014; Hinrichs, 2000; Trauger, 2007).

If and when all the risks and costs are not shared by CSA farmers with the consumers, then CSA farmers bear the externalities of the industrial system on their own shoulders instead of spreading this burden on the many shoulders of the consumers; as is the theoretical idea of CSA (Galt, 2013). There are at least two forms of self-exploitation, which are often inter-related but can exist separately from one another: work for a meager payment, and over-work that can lead to burn-out.

In this context, the non-monetary rewards that CSA producers get in return for their work must also be considered. These rewards and their prioritization vary from farmer to farmer and cannot be categorized in the “rationality of maximizing monetary returns” (Pratt, 2009, p. 172). But even though, monetary values are still vital for these projects and the people working there (Galt, 2013). To understand and analyze the different rewards is suspensefully and innovative but also difficult with existing methods. At the same time, it is important to try new methods and find solutions for self-exploitation beneath CSA farmers, as it endangers the long-term continuity of CSA. For the long-term perspective of CSA it is crucial to examine what CSA producers need to avoid the feeling of self-exploitation.

5.1.2 Success

Success is defined by achieving aimed results and positive development, in other words, achieving a positive result after putting in effort for an intended effect (Bibliographisches Institut, 2019). Additionally, according to Bullen & Rockart (1981) success depends on the stakeholder’s point of view and his or her position within the organization, as well as which factors are perceived as successful or hindering. Thus, success within this thesis is defined as the positive development and performance of CSA initiatives, and to which extent the aims and goals of the participants are achieved.

5.1.3 Sustainable Activism

Activism is defined as a practice that emphasizes action, and is mainly implemented to support or counteract a controversial debate and to cause existing structures to move away from grounded identities (Svirsky, 2010). Sustainable activism can be understood as the attempt of people to participate for a long term in collective, mainly state-independent, political projects and initiatives without harming their physical and mental health (Cox, 2019). By trying to make a change in the current system, CSAs are part of the activist movement (Rammert, 2010). How strong the activist tendency is depends on the aims and values of each CSA as well as the personal motivation of the members. People who have professionalized their activism, like CSA producers, can strongly tend towards internal (self-) exploitation (Cox, 2019), as they need to keep the daily work and organization running as well as handle their wider motivations for action. Successful, long-lasting communities seem to be the exception rather than the rule, therefore the factors that strengthen sustainable activism to counteract self-exploitation need to be understood and put into practice (Cox, 2019).

5.1.4 Well-being

The term well-being has been discussed and defined in different ways (Code & Dybikowski, 1980; Fletcher, 2016; Goldman, 2018), but there is a common notion that well-being refers to what makes life good for an individual. The well-being of a person consists of a personal feeling of pleasure over pain (hedonistic view) and of moral components which desire to increase the overall well-being (utilitarianism) (Crisp, 2021). In the context of this research, well-being is understood as an all-inclusive personal value, that arises from the compliance of deeply rooted subjective needs and desires. Happiness at the emotional level, pleasure at the sensory level and meaning as a moral matter typically influence the well-being of individuals (Goldman, 2018). Moreover, self-evaluated job satisfaction is a crucial factor for subjective well-being (Fitzroy & Nolan, 2020). Following this understanding, the well-being of CSA producers is partly determined by how far their working conditions meet their needs.

5.1.5 Idealism and Pragmatism

The terms idealism and pragmatism are used in different ways in daily life and in philosophy. Idealism is defined differently according to the historical moment and context, but basically, it describes a position that states that reality is formed through cognition and thinking (Bibliographisches Institut, 2019). Pragmatism on the other hand is understood as an attitude that seeks out solutions that are practical, even mechanistic in their approach and follow a clearly predefined pattern. (Malpas & Davidson, 2012). In popular usage, an idealist is someone who believes in high ideals and strives to make them real, even though they may be impossible to attain. In contrast, a pragmatist's goals may be less ambitious but more attractive as they appear achievable.

In this study the ethical worldview of the selected CSAs is understood to be composed of the individual worldviews of its members. Idealism is considered to be an attitude that puts individual principles and values over functional deliberations. These values and principles are identity-relevant (Burger & Bless, 2016). In modern human societies these principles and values are often enriched with attributes connected to spirituality, moral beliefs and/or a strong desire for justice (Kivetz & Tyler, 2007). Pragmatism, by contrast, refers to an action orientated mental representation, that focuses on practical subjects and solutions. This attitude draws from realism, efficiency, and materialism.

5.2 Trade-off between Idealism and Pragmatism in Decision-Making Processes

The trade-off between idealism and pragmatism in the decision-making processes of individuals and groups has been examined by scholars in different contexts. In a temporal context, a focus on the here and now promotes pragmatic decisions and a more future perspective supports idealistic decisions (Kivetz & Tyler, 2007). The tension between idealism and pragmatism in alternative food networks (AFNs) and other self-organized groups has been observed by several scholars (Ashforth & Reingen, 2014; Blanusa, et.al., 2018; Burger & Bless, 2016; Poças Ribeiro et al., 2021). Blanusa et al., states that "the history of activism is, in part, the history of a struggle between opposing worldviews. On one extreme is the idealist who hews to highest principles and refuses to compromise, regardless of efficacy, in service of radical transformation. At the other pole is the pragmatist who prioritizes progress, even if it is incremental or at the expense of ideological purity and makes compromises behind closed doors to achieve any amount of progress. This debate continues in this new golden era of grassroots politics, and it inevitably involves the foundations and professional advocates seeking to improve public policy"(2018, pp. 1–6) In society as a whole, individuals and groups are influenced by this tension in both mundane and critical decision-making processes (Kivetz & Tyler, 2007). Moreover, Lawless (2003) states, considering the peril of oversimplification, as things are not black and white in the context of farming, AFN members and founders can historically be divided in two groups. Idealists strive to develop utopian solutions and seek for independence. Nevertheless, cooperatives, driven by visionaries are often reliant on the pragmatic voice for grounding (Lawless, 2003).

Defining whether observed people's and institutions' attitudes were more idealistic or more pragmatic was, in this research, based on their prioritization in different contexts between adhering to personal values and moral principles or choosing more practical methods (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987; Skitka, 2010). The data was analyzed based on the understanding that within each CSA there are varying shades of idealistic or pragmatic opinions, and that the different ethical perspectives of CSAs and their producers cannot always be clearly attributed to one side or the other. The ethical tendency (more idealistic or pragmatic), people and groups show in their decision-making processes, is based on different values. An idealistic or pragmatic attitude draws on the values that are prioritized. Values in terms of this research are understood as ideas of the desirable, that have an influence on the decision people make about action plans and in terms of evaluating events (Kluckhohn, 1951).

5.3 The underpinning Values of the different Worldviews

The choice between idealism and pragmatism is often made based on the different values individuals and institutions draw on. The values that influence people to participate in alternative cooperatives can be roughly divided into utilitarian, moral values (values that increase the welfare of the society) (functional) and hedonistic, personal values (what is good for me as an individual) (Code & Dybikowski, 1980; Crisp, 2021; Finch et al., 1998). A more detailed assessment of the values that underlay peoples' attitudes and decisions is given by Schwartz (1992), who defines 11 human value sets based on the conceptualization of 36 values defined by Rokeach (1973). These value sets were revised by Schwartz et al. (2012) to 19 value sets: self-direction- thought, self-direction- action, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power- dominance, power- resources, security- personal, security- societal, tradition, humility, conformity- rules, conformity- interpersonal, face, benevolence- dependability, benevolence- caring, universalism- nature, universalism- concern and universalism- tolerance (Schwartz et al., 2012). The initial value sets of Schwartz (1992) have been widely used as a framework to understand cultures and their different values (Feather, 2002; Rohan, 2000; Shalom H Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987).

Of these value sets, ten sets are used in this research: stimulation (change in life, novelty), universalism- concern, universalism- tolerance and universalism- nature (tolerance and protection of the welfare of people and nature, appreciation, wisdom, social justice, equality, peace), benevolence- dependability and benevolence- caring (helpful, honest, loyal, responsible), self-direction (self-respect, creativity, freedom, independence in actions and thoughts), security- personal and -societal (personal and social safety and stability) and achievement (success according to social standards) (Schwartz et al., 2012). These sets are used as a guideline for contextualizing the eight case studies between the two poles of idealism and pragmatism.

Summed up, the ethical attitude (idealistic/pragmatic) of CSAs will be examined by analyzing their tendency in decision-making processes. This ethical tendency follows different personal and collective values. To understand the influence of the ethical tendency on the dynamics of a CSA, their connection to self-exploitation and the well-being of the producers is investigated. It is assumed that the well-being of CSA producers has an influence on the success of a CSA initiative. As CSAs are often politically active, producers are therefore activists and farmers at the same time. CSA producers should thus understand the concept of sustainable activism if they are to be able to handle this double burden in a way that does not lead to their self-exploitation. Built on the understanding of a high complexity of CSAs, regarding their aims and values, the ethical attitude of CSAs will be studied in four different contexts (or spheres). These four spheres – a social, a political/economical, an ecological and an organizational – are explained in detail in the next section.

5.4 The four Spheres of Idealism

Where a CSA, is positioned between the two poles of idealism and pragmatism, in the context of this research, depends on decisions they make regarding political systems, social aspects, environmental topics and organizational structures. To analyze the eight selected different CSAs, a fitting framework for this research is designed, to fit the according to the definitions and theories presented in the previous part above. The framework consists of eight different corner stones which are namely, social idealism/pragmatism, political idealism/pragmatism, ecological idealism/pragmatism, and organizational idealism/pragmatism. In between these eight corners, the Each single CSAs will be positioned between these eight stones during the analysis, to gain insights about the influence of the worldview of CSA initiatives on the wellbeing of the producers working there. To define these eight corner stones, values from the former mentioned value sets, stimulation, universalism, benevolence, self-direction, security, and achievement based on Schwartz (1992), Schwartz et al. (2012) and Rokeach (1973) are used. The values will be attributed to the four spheres social idealism, political idealism, ecological idealism, organizational idealism. Certainly, the value sets are not directly transferable to progressive, self-organized CSAs whose worldviews are from an external (conventional) point of view all quite idealistic. Nevertheless, with the help of this value typology, in the next part, ideals, attributes and principles, regarding CSAs will be defined, that indicate a strong idealism. This is done with the help of the defined aims of the Austrian and German national network of CSAs (European CSA Research Group, 2016; Netzwerk Solidarische Landwirtschaft e.V., 2021; Urgenci, 2019), as well as from my own experiences and personal insights and information gained through contact and participation in CSAs in Austria and Germany.

Social Idealism refers to a focus on people needs, i.e. a sufficient income, a good work life balance and enough space for a good community, personal topics, and a transparent, open communication culture. In CSAs which have a strong social idealism, the needs of the producers are more important than the needs of the business. A strong social idealism often tries need- orientated structures, like need-orientated wages or self-determining hours. The value sets that correlate with this kind of idealism are: benevolence-dependability (having a reliable trustful dealing in the group), benevolence caring (commitment to the welfare of ingroup members), security-personal (safety in the personal immediate environment), universalism-concern (commitment to justice, equality and protection for all people) and benevolence-tolerance (acceptance and understanding of other opinions) (Schwartz et al., 2012).

Accordingly, the values of CSAs that correlate with a strong social idealism are: prioritization of producer's needs, mutual appreciation inside the team and the community, giving space for the communication of people's needs and thoughts, tolerance towards other opinions, equity, reliability and trust inside the group, feeling of safety (socially and financially), protection of people and enhancing the welfare of people in and outside the community.

Political Idealism regarding CSAs, bywords for having a focus on a change of the current food and economic system by building up new, innovative, small-structured, independent agricultural businesses and showing alternatives to the status quo. Trying to implement a new economic model/system, that differs completely from any capitalist way of financing, distribution, cash-flow, etc. A CSA initiative should be able to exist outside the capitalist system. This political idealism goes along with the following value sets: security-societal (safety and stability in a wider society), achievement (success according to chosen social standards), and stimulation (excitement, novelty and change) (Schwartz et al., 2012).

Accordingly, the values of CSAs that correlate with a strong political idealism are: changing the political-economic system, not using tools from the conventional system, choosing own goals, self-dependency of the current system, building up a successful alternative, influencing the current politics, implementing economic innovations and educational work.

Ecological Idealism is a fitting concept for CSAs that try to manage the cultivation and production on the farm in as regenerative and sustainable way as possible. The aim is to protect and regenerate ecosystems and to change the current conventional way of food production that is seen to harm people and nature. To do so, such CSAs try to use as few external inputs as possible, try to renounce the use of fossil fuels and machines that could compact the soil, save and multiply their own seeds, and to cultivate as diverse and rich variety of crops as possible. These CSAs focus on agricultural experimentation and innovation to generate knowledge about regenerative and sustainable cultivation methods. Ecological idealism refers to the value sets: universalism-nature (preservation of the natural environment), stimulation (excitement, novelty, and change), security-societal and security-personal (safety in the personal environment and in the wider society).

Regarding CSAs, the principles that indicate a strong ecological idealism are: applying existing regenerative and sustainable cultivation and animal husbandry methods, protection of ecosystems, closing natural cycles, putting effort into innovative regenerative agricultural methods, high biodiversity, minimal external material input, minimal use of fossil energy, and a focus on seed-proof, locally adapted varieties.

Organizational Idealism is understood as idealistic aims regarding organizational structures. CSAs with a strong idealism on organizational structures try to be as non-hierarchical as possible. They tend to have a collective organizational structure in which individuals have space for self-determination and realization. They aim to codetermine the community of consumers in the daily business and build up a strong, supportive community for safety and stability. As a group of producers and consumers they choose their own goals which try to shape a community that can survive independently from single individuals and independent of the society. Organizational idealism aims to be as transparent as possible. Value sets, underpinning organizational idealism are: self-direction, self-thought (freedom to cultivate own ideas and utopias), self-direction–action (freedom to determine one’s own actions and implement them), stimulation (excitement, novelty and change) and security- societal (safety and stability in the community) (Schwartz et al., 2012).

Attributes that need to be met to have a strong organizational idealism as a CSA are: flexibility and enabling self-determination, good and direct communication culture, fault tolerance, striving to include all members in the decision processes, putting effort into the innovation of resilient organizational structures, creating strong and participatory communities, anti-hierarchical, equality of all members.

An approach to visualize the positioning of the CSAs according to the framework was set up with the help of a simplified matrix of idealism and pragmatism according to the four spheres. As these data are not measurable, the aim of the matrix is to qualitatively illustrate the tendencies of the CSAs to facilitate the comparison of their ethical attitude.

If the decisions go along with values that are ideal for participants of CSAs, the CSA has an idealistic tendency regarding a given sphere. This is the case if the values are of high importance for the participants. If the values are not highly prioritized, more practical decisions are made, which points to a more pragmatic attitude regarding a given sphere. Constructed on the awareness about who is making the main decisions in the single CSAs (producers, founders, members or all together), the ethical attitude in their decision- making processes is considered for the individual CSAs as an entity. For each sphere a total of 8 values are considered. If a CSA follows 6-8 of the values, it shows a strong idealism in this sphere. If they stay with 3-5 of the ideals in their decisions, they show a medium idealism in this sphere and if they go along with 0-2 of the ideals, they have a pragmatic attitude.

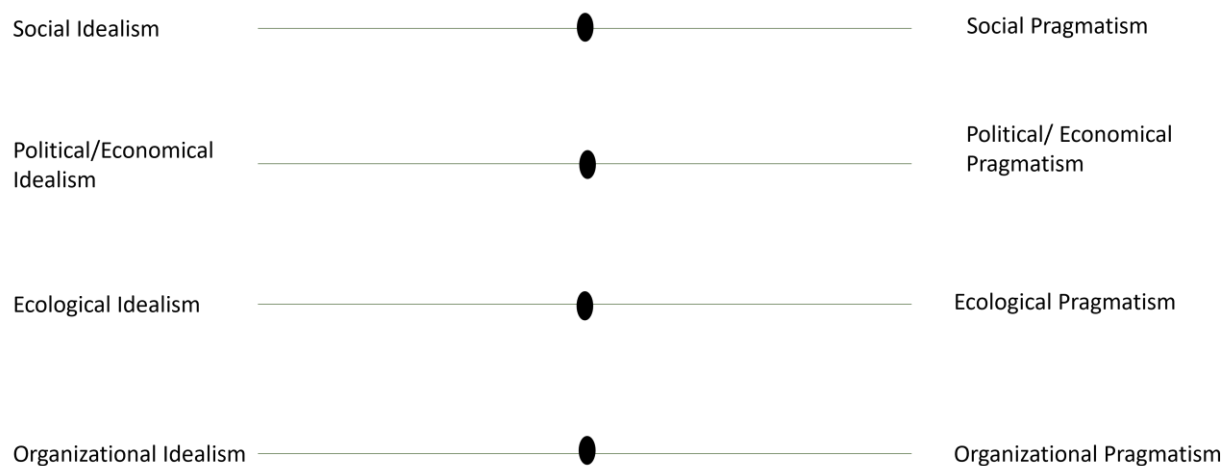


Figure 2 Framework of Idealism and Pragmatism according to the four spheres

6 Methods and Strategies

6.1 Constructive Grounded Theory Methodology (Con GTM)

The methodology employed in this research uses the Constructive Grounded Theory methodology (Con GTM), an approach of Charmaz (2014) that builds on the Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM) introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967). GTM is a methodology that sets up a guideline for the development of a theory or explanation for a phenomenon, that evolves through reflexivity and constant comparison of a diverse variety of collected, qualitative data. The researcher should resist consciously or unconsciously selecting any previous developed theory to guide the research or influencing the studying process in other ways (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As GTM is recognized as a suitable methodology to gain an understanding of underlying social processes associated with a phenomenon (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), it fits to this research that aims to understand the social dynamics in CSAs and their influence on the well-being of producers.

The Con GTM approach for qualitative studies adds to GTM, co-construction of knowledge with participants and the awareness of subjective interpretation in analysis. Charmaz uses the term “theorizing”, which is an interpretive practice of engaging with the collected data and constructing an understanding of it (Charmaz, 2014). During the abductive qualitative research approach of this study, a range of eight individual cases is investigated through a process of constant comparison of data up to a theoretical saturation. The data is collected through observation, participation, and interviews. Con GTM suits this research because it allows the exploration of lived experience while acknowledging that there is always some subjectivity included in qualitative data analysis (Charmaz, 2014). Participatory observation was conducted at eight CSAs to investigate the lived experience of CSA producers, specifically in relation to their current working conditions and their needs and motivations. Observations and interviews from a single perspective can never be objective; with this understanding, subjectivity must be reflected and actively included in an epistemological context and therefore accepted in the process of constructing knowledge (Bumbuc, 2016; Charmaz, 2014; Rhodes & Brown, 2005). Due to my motivation for this research, which is quite personal and subjective, an approach of active and reflexive handling of subjectivity is important.

As reflexivity is core to practice-based professions, this part of Con GTM is complementary to the nature of my field of research, which is to gain an understanding of social dynamics in CSA practices.

The defining components of Constructive Grounded Theory methodology (Con GTM) practice used in this research are the following (Charmaz, 2014):

- Simultaneous data collection and analysis
- Construction of codes and categories from data and not from a preconceived hypothesis
- Constant comparative methods at each stage of the analysis
- Improving the development of explanations for the studied phenomenon during each step of data collection and analysis
- Memo writing to work on the categories, specify their properties, define relationships between categories and identify gaps
- Sampling aimed towards the construction of an explanation
- Conducting the literature review after creating an independent analysis

A qualitative research approach was conducted, as it offers the possibility to analyze and understand subjective views, captured through spoken and written expressions (Helfferich, 2011). Attitudes and opinions, as well as individual, detailed and subjective perceptions of why and how people do certain things were collected through qualitative methods (Charmaz, 2014).

Participatory research (observation, diary), following Girtler (2001), and semi-structured interviews are fitting tools for this survey of Con GTM that addresses research questions that deal with the (subjective) motivations, needs and perceptions of CSA producers.

6.2 Case Selection and Period of Data Collection

This research includes participation, observations, interviews, and website content analysis. Eight CSAs in Germany and Austria were analyzed. At each CSA, 1-4 producers were interviewed, depending on the size of the CSA. In total 16 interviews and 8 diaries, ranging from 4-10 pages, were generated. As no database or statistics exist from which the case studies could have been selected, and because of the nature of this qualitative study, the selection of the case studies was made using several criteria:

- Collectively founded, except for two of the CSAs each of which were founded by a single person and some years later transformed into a collective farm (Case 2 and Case 8).
- A wide range of sizes, from 40 to 2000 members.
- A range of ages (the founding years from 2002 to 2021).
- An even geographical distribution: two cases are located in Austria and six in Germany, situated in five different states (Bavaria, Baden Württemberg, North Rhine-Westphalia, Hesse, and Saxony).
- Differing ethical attitudes (i.e. idealistic or pragmatic) towards political, social, ecological, and organizational topics, as determined by website content (Cases 7, 8) and by information from personal contact (Cases 1-6).

The data were obtained between July and October 2021 by means of participatory research including: two to three-day farm visits, interviews, observation, and participation in daily work. A total of 16 qualitative interviews were made, each taking on average about 30 minutes (the longest interview took one hour and 10 minutes, the shortest about 19 minutes). 14 interviews were made in German and two in English, whereas 13 interviews were done face-to-face and three via video call. The quotes from the German interviews presented in this thesis are directly translated by the researcher.

6.3 Methods of Gathering Data

For the gathering of data, a combination of participatory research methods was used, including: participatory observation and the keeping of a personal diary of observations and conversations. Additionally, the content of the eight CSA websites was analyzed. Participatory research offers the researcher the possibility to take an observers' position without being experienced as such from the studied persons or groups. This offers to a certain degree the possibility to analyze daily social lives, dynamics, and habits in a natural surrounding (Girtler, 2001). Therefore, this approach fits to understand the different dynamics and lived experiences of CSAs. Following Constructive Grounded Theory methodology (Con GTM), the whole process of gathering and analyzing data was done in a simultaneous process. More precisely, data was directly analyzed after each visit to a CSA and the interviews and observation at the next CSA were adapted to the ongoing results of the analysis.

6.4 Qualitative Interviews

The 16 semi-structured, (single) personal interviews were conducted following an interview guideline that was continuously adapted during the study process.

SPSS Model for Interview Guideline

The structured approach to develop an interview guideline for qualitative interviews was done following the SPSS model of Helfferich (2011). Problem-centered interviews were applied as they ask for personal perceptions, possible solutions and needs, which are in this study best practices, personal needs, and challenges of CSA producers. The problem-centered interview supports the theory generating process of the Constructive Grounded Theory methodology (Con GTM) (Charmaz, 2014).

For the first version of the interview guideline, as many questions as possible were firstly collected regarding the research question and according to the theoretical concepts found in the literature. Secondly, the collected questions were reduced based on their suitability for qualitative interviews and their contribution to answer the research questions. Their formulation was checked to ensure that they did not contain judgments, suggestions or expectations of the researcher (Helfferich, 2011).

The interview guideline was continuously critically reflected and adapted to new findings and explanations that came up during the research process of constant comparison, due to Con GTM (Charmaz, 2014). Furthermore, changes and adaptations were made to the interview guideline by the researcher during the progress of each and every conversation.

Transcription of the Qualitative Interviews

The interview transcripts were typed up by the researcher, which allowed a first direct analysis of the interview content. As it is an interpretative procedure, there is – to a certain extent – always a loss of information. In this thesis the following transcription rules were applied (Kuckartz, 2016). A word-for-word transcription was executed. Grammar mistakes which are confusing while reading were corrected, since transcripts with correct sentences are easier to read and analyze. Furthermore, standard German/English was used, and the transcript was flattened. This means, dialectic or slang expressions or colloquial and vernacular language were changed to high German/English. Repetitions of the same words were left out, apart from where they were used to emphasize the importance of a statement. Furthermore, filler words which were used very often, like “think”, “we did”, etc. were also left out. Sounds made in the interviews, such as “ähm”, were not written down since they did not change the meaning of a statement. At some points laughter and pauses for reflection are noted in the transcription, as they seemed to be contextually important. Likewise, “okay” and “mm” as said by the researcher were also left out. Since it was not possible to conduct all the interviews in quiet places, sometimes background noises made the understanding of some words difficult. Words which could not be understood were replaced by “n.u.” (not understandable). However, this was rare and did not influence the statements' understanding (Kuckartz, 2016). To provide anonymity, names were not used in the interviews, and named persons or institutions were anonymized.

After transcribing, the documents were proof-read and saved as word files which could then be imported to the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA.

6.5 Methods of Data Analysis

In the qualitative data analysis following the Constructive Grounded Theory methodology (Con GTM), theories was used as a source of inspiration, understanding and interpretation to detect patterns in an abductive way (Charmaz, 2014) instead of questioning and testing theories (as in deduction). The theories were consulted through a three-stage literature review, following a strategy developed by Thornberg & Dunne (2019). The first stage is the initial literature review to understand and get in touch with the research topic and find gaps in the existing literature. The second step is the focused literature review during the process of analysis. In the third and final stage the results are underpinned with existing theories. “Memoing” was applied, which is a method used throughout the whole research to keep a record of one’s own thoughts, tentative interpretations and impressions that come up during the analysis process and while conducting the literature review. This method, together with reflexivity, allows the researcher to understand, compare, and follow the evolution of their own thoughts and helps to privilege raw collected data over existing theories (Charmaz, 2014).

The basic idea of abduction is to find or invent a hypothesis that expresses the collected set of data in a better way than other hypotheses (Thornberg, 2012). In practice this means that, for data collected during the research that questions the current interpretation, new explanations need to be invented and reviewed by re-analyzing already-collected data. The new data helps to gain new insights about the old data. This leads to a neutral debate, containing all potential explanations and theories of a phenomenon (Thornberg, 2012). The abductive way of data analysis combines an interactive and iterative process. The researcher and the collected data construct the actual research through interaction by participation (interactive process); and this process is repeated up to a saturation which can lead to new hypotheses (iterative process) (Charmaz, 2014). After participating in the last CSA, all the collected, analyzed data was assorted again, to make a logical link between them and to try to formulate an explanation for the studied phenomenon. The main methods for this process are initial and theoretical coding (Charmaz, 2014). The focused literature review took place during this process of coding and building categories out of the gathered data. Emerging themes that arose while analyzing the data were compared with existing literature to enrich the process (Thornberg & Dunne, 2019).

Initial and Focused Coding

The coding process starts with “open coding” of the first cases. Using “open codes”, each line or paragraph of text is read analytically by the researcher and new codes are defined. This process is described by Corbin & Strauss (2008, p. 106) as “fracturing the data”: to examine the words used by the participants to describe their worldview, their experiences and feelings, meanings, and the assumptions they attach to those experiences. During this process, there was a focus on openly following the participants’ data, while possible theoretical understandings were gained by developing tentative interpretations. New codes and findings were compared with existing codes, and frequently used related codes were organized into tentative categories (focused coding) (Charmaz, 2014).

The coding was done with MAXQDA (2020), a data analysis program for qualitative research.

Theoretical Sampling and Building of Core Categories

“Initial sampling in grounded theory gets you started; theoretical sampling guides where you go” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 197).

During the theoretical sampling the tentative categories were redefined, clarified, and distinguished, to understand patterns, regularities, and borders of categories. After this process, each core category was saturated by integrating all the data that fit into this category. This process was repeated until theoretical saturation was achieved.

7 Results

In this chapter, the results of the analysis of the gathered data of the eight CSAs in Germany and Austria will be presented. Each CSA is analyzed as an individual case regarding their organizational structure, finances, producers background, wellbeing and needs. Based on that, the ethical tendency of each CSA is presented following the theoretical framework of the four spheres. The results are presented following the core categories derived in the data analysis from the Con GTM-guided process of coding and theoretical sampling.

Table 1 Overview of the Eight Case Studies

CSA 1	Year founded Founded by Legal form Certification Size (land) No. of members No. of producers Volunteers Produce	2017 Collectively by producers and consumers Registered association None, developing participatory guarantee system ~10 ha 120 6 (full-time- minimal employment) ~ 1 Eggs, cereal, vegetables, mushrooms, fruits, preserves
CSA 2	Year founded Founded by Legal form Certification Size (land) No. of members No. of producers Volunteers Produce	2002 Collectively by producers and consumers Registered association Demeter 11 ha min 300 11-12 6 Vegetables
CSA 3	Year founded Founded by Legal form Certification Size (land) No. of members No. of producers Volunteers Produce	2011 Collectively by producers Registered cooperative Naturland 7 ha About 1700 ~ 33 0 Vegetables, beer, bread
CSA 4	Year founded Founded by Legal form Certification Size (land) No. of members No. of producers Volunteers Produce	2008 Collectively by producers & consumers (eco village) Registered association Organic certificated 12 ha 160 6 5-10 Vegetables, seeds, eggs, bread, grains

CSA 5	Year founded Founded by Legal form Certification Size (land) No. of members No. of producers Volunteers Produce	2017 Collectively by producers and consumers Registered association No official certification 6 ha 240 4 10-20 vegetables
CSA 6	Year founded Founded by Legal form Certification Size (land) No. of members No. of producers Volunteers Produce	2020 Collectively by producers Registered association?? No official certification, but transparent to members Unknown 40 3 1 Fruits and juice
CSA 7	Year founded Founded by Legal form Certification Size (land) No. of members No. of producers Volunteers Produce	2019 Collectively by producers Registered association and GbR No official certification, but transparent to members 6 ha 110 6 2-5 vegetables
CSA 8	Year founded Founded by Legal form Certification Size (land) No. of members No. of producers Volunteers Produce	2015 One producer as sole trader, 2020 became association Registered association No official certification, but transparent to members 1,3 ha 70 2 5-10 vegetables

Source: own

7.1 Results of Case 1

7.1.1 Overview

Case 1 is a CSA located in Austria. The CSA was founded in 2017 and has actual size of 100 shareholders. They aim to reach a size between 120-130 shares. They manage about 10 ha, which combines pasture, a vegetable garden, orchards, forest, and crop land. On this area five people produce a huge variety of products, which are eggs, cereals, vegetables, fruits, and mushrooms. The produce is backed in boxes and distributed every second week to about 20 different depots for the whole year, except a distribution break in January. There is the option between packed boxes and a “free- taking” on one depot, where all the produce is delivered and the consumers can take as much as they need, according to the available amount. Actual there are two producers working full time, two working half-time and two in a marginal position. Furthermore, two people engage voluntarily on a very high level since the beginning on. Other members engage as well, but not with the same long- term intensity. The legal form of the CSA is a registered association.

The CSA developed many agricultural branches at the same time, where a lot of different know how is needed. Currently they are thinking of changing their production line up, as the crop production is not very efficient due to missing machines and difficult soils (Case 1, Diary: 3).

7.1.2 Organization Structure

The CSA is self-organized, and most of the decisions are made in the farm-team, of the gardeners' team and the two main engaging volunteers. The decisions are made based on consensus. There is a quite **high fluctuation** on the producer side. As the team changes quite often, they are still working on their **responsibility** and decision-making structure. "There is not headquarter who pulls the strings, but there are different working areas with different responsibilities and plena for the coordination. Often information is lost in between them, because they are not passed through, or it is not sure who is responsible for it. And then things need to be done spontaneously, and that leads to stress and over times" (Case 1, Interview 2: 9). This unclear responsibility structure and legitimation areas lead to hidden **hierarchy** in a group that tries to work without hierarchies, this leads to a dissatisfaction in the team (Case 1, Diary: 6). "I also think it would be nice if there was more clearness about how things are done. I am doing things like this and how do other people to it, an agreement about it. So, everybody thinks that's the best way to do it and not only one person thinks that's the best way and tells other people how to do it, a common sense" (Case 1, Interview 1: 7). And further: "I think it would be good for the CSA to have another person which also know my tasks, for the case that I am away" (Case 1, Interview 1: 5).

Internal Communication and Supervision

In total, "there are many ideas, how to improve it. Improving the communication, clearer processes and rules who is doing what or to bunch responsibility" (Case 1, Interview 2: 15). But it is not easy to implement these ideas in a daily business that is already overloaded with tasks and interpersonal dynamics that already became a habit (Case 1, Interview 2: 16). The CSA has no **supervision or conflict mediation**. This year they had two meetings with an external person regarding teambuilding. One producer state, that they were good, but did not change anything in the daily business (Case 1, Diary: 13, 3). The communication in the team works various well, regarding the context." We have a very open kind of expressing our needs and our feelings we also try to speak very openly and be transparent in our budget, our income, our needs" (Case 1, Interview 1: 5). At the same time the critical reflection seems to be a challenge. "That is from main importance, to agree on the same aims and to be open to critically question what we are doing and how" (Case 1, Interview 2: 23). "On the interpersonal level I have the feeling it works well, but on the personal level, like who is doing what kind of work and does it make sense, we do not have a good communication culture. It is important to find a way to say something to somebody about their work or responsibility area without treading them on their toes" (Case 1, Interview 2, Pos. 25-26). "We are often talking about how to organize better, or how to get more members or money, but rarely about these fundamental questions" (Case 1, Interview 2: 19).

Member's Communication

The communication towards the consumer improved in the last year. "We did a quantum leap forward this season, as we have a monthly plenum with everybody who wants to attend, where we discuss topics where topics are discussed where we as the farm-team think the opinion of the consumers is important. Dominantly financial topics. There we also talk quite transparent about finances" (Case 1, Interview 2: 31).

7.1.3 Finances

Share Price and Budget

The current target price for a share is 106,-/ month. The consumers decide how much they contribute during the registration. Up to now there were no bidding rounds at the annual members meeting, where the budget is presented. If the budget was not reached the consumers were exhorted to pay more and to support the recruiting of new consumers. Overall, the adjusting screw for the budget is the number of the consumers (Case 1, Interview 1: 22-23). "The main problem is probably that the budget, that is decided in the beginning of the year, is decided for more members than we have, so of course we are always short of money. And I'm not sure why we are doing it like this. Because like this we always have the pressure of, oh we do not have enough money we have to find more people" (Case 1, Interview 1: 21). "There is no real budget planning, production costs and investments are put in one pot without being itemized. And then it is said, this is the budget, approximately. I do not understand this" (Case 1, Interview 2: 13). There are regular discussions about increasing the target price, but some people are afraid, that consumers would leave, because the target price is already quite high. "I think it is a big question to increase the share price, because it is not little money and it is still for very, very little part of humanity or of the inhabitants here" (Case 1, Interview 1: 25). The last years some "emergency rescues" (Case 1, Interview 2: 13), took place during the year, where the consumers were asked for more money or credits for investments. For some bigger investments, members were asked for pre- payments of the share price for the next years. This is a possible way to finance current important investments, but this money could miss in the following years (Case 1, Diary: 16).

Cross-financing

There are different opinions in the team towards cross-financing. "The founders' core of the team has a clear opinion. There is no question about doing anything else than hundred percent solidarity economy. Therefore, this discussion is not emerging" (Case 1, Interview 2: 19). On the other hand, a producer states, "Meanwhile I think there I no other way, to currently produce in an ecological, small-structured way and to pay fair wages and be socially sustainable. To sell something and use the profit not for a single person but for the project. I think there is a way to unite the contradiction between being solidaric and profitable or at least being able to finance the project" (Case 1, Interview 2: 17).

Wages

This CSA tries to implement a need orientated payment. But as the budget is always short, this works only in a certain frame. Due to that, a target wage settled down, which bases on 8h/ week get paid 200€ net wage/month; 16 h/week, 400€ net wage/ month and so on. A fulltime position (40h/month) gets 1000, -€ net wage/ month. This is underneath the minimum wage and furthermore the overtime is not calculated, which is quite high in this CSA. The main gardener works in an annual average about 60h/ week. As the payment moves in a legally grey area, the real earnings are not transparently communicated to the consumers (Case 1, Diary: 3). This topic is currently highly discussed in the CSA and a member meeting where they want to introduce the consumers to the challenge is planned. Critical voices to increase the wages and the share price are mainly coming from the volunteers in the Farm- team out of a political idealism to offer an alternative food source that is competitive to the current market. The finance responsibility in this CSA is assumed by a volunteer, who is the cashier. This is also the person who has a critical opinion towards raising the wages and therefore the share price.

7.1.4 Producers

Background and Motivation

One producer has a gardening education, the others have a lateral entrance, with some experience in gardening (Case 1, Diary: 12). "I really like working in a garden working with hands. First, I only wanted to do as much as I can and learn as much as I can and to get to know it and be a member and I also inscribed for a trial membership. And then I slipped into it (Case 1, Interview 1: 3). Due to the high variety of expertise fields in this CSA, the missing professionalism is a challenge. Some of the producers were driven by a strong idealism in the beginning. "When started here, I had another job and the choice of continuing this or working in the CSA and I thought it is a good entrance in the agricultural practice. And doing this in a frame where I thought that goes in a good economic direction. Because this drives me, the search for alternative economical business systems. In the beginning I was convinced, that a solidarity economy approach, counteracts the fundamental problem, which is the economic system that underlies agriculture and society." (Case 1, Interview 2: 3). This initial expectation changed over the time, "that they kind of economic system is only a manifestation of a winner- loser dynamic. A game theory dynamic, where you always have a winner and a loser. The market economy is also based on that, and CSA tries to leave it behind, but I think other characteristics of that like, we are better than the old system, are still there and this is a trap. Because if you are in this dynamic of, we are better, you stop reflecting critical, and then you start the same game again, and tries to win. I hope that a more dialectic-materialistic orientate perspective spreads, to focus on the current reality, the circumstances, what kind of resources do we have, to the best for us, the nature, and our members. How do we maximize the value for all participants? And based on that not trying to be better than something, but as good as possible for us and the community" (Case 1, Interview 2: 37).

Needs

Variety of tasks:

A huge variety of tasks makes the work interesting and offers many possibilities to learn and experience new things (Case 1, Interview 1: 5).

Mental & Physical health:

An awareness for personal, mental and health concerning limits is crucial. And the space to communicate them as well as the understanding for these limits from other producers (Case 1, Interview 2: 23).

Short duty:

On producer states, that if she lived there or lived closer to the CSA, she could, under some other conditions, imagine working there on a longer term (Case 1, Interview 1: 9).

Good communication culture and supervision:

„That there is always the openness to talk about things that could be improved or that are criticized. Of course, there is not always the time, but to be open for self-criticism " (Case 1, Interview 2: 23). Opening a room for open communication and consulting an objective person to counteract entrenched patterns and dynamics is important for all the producers.

Strong community and trust:

"If I was more involved. I think it also has to do with people. If I feel that the community is supporting me and the project and if I can feel how the community works, maybe it is because of the pandemic, but in generally I think this is the most important part of a CSA, that the community is there, that is carrying the project" (Case 1, Interview 1: 9). "I don't feel a lot of community. I think there a lot of people who appreciate it but there is not enough contact to share it" (Case 1, Interview 1: 11).

Appreciation:

Doing this kind of work with a high workload and overtimes, needs a huge amount of appreciation, and the feeling that the work that is done is seen by other producers and consumers (Case 1, Interview 2: 29).

Critical reflection:

A critical self-reflection regarding the actual work practices as well as regarding the overall CSA approach is essential for the producers. To reflect where are we? What are we doing and how can we improve this to get the best conditions for themselves, the environment, and the consumers? (Case 1, Interview 2: 37).

Team dynamic and Atmosphere:

Having a good dynamic inside the producers' team and an enjoyable atmosphere on the farm is for all producers fundamental (Case 1, Diary: 15).

Same overall aims:

Having the same overall aims in the CSA and to know where the project moves to is a need of producers. Furthermore, the commitment of the producers to work in the same direction according to these aims. "Based on this I think everything else can be easily discussed" (Case 1, Interview 2: 23).

Clear decision and legitimation structure:

"What is the frame we can move in, and make some decisions on our own, to decide this frame together..." and then establishing a well feedback loop, "...than I can work better for my own and do not have to ask again for ten times. That would satisfy me "(Case 1, Interview 2: 29).

Self-Realization:

To have the opportunity to do the kind of work each producer likes to do. As well as having the feeling, that the abilities everybody has are called to action and are appreciated. "If I have the feeling the work I like to do is not needed or needed but not seen and appreciated I could not imagine doing this longer. If it is the case, I could imagine it" (Case 1, Interview 2: 27).

Passion:

Passion for the agricultural work as well as to be able to perform tasks that go along with the personal passion counteracts other grievances (Case 1, Interview 2: 27; Interview 1: 3).

Workload:

Being transparent with the workload and not doing too many overtimes is crucial, as well as having the space to communicate personal limits regarding the workload is crucial (Case 1, Interview 2: 23).

Wages:

There are currently huge discussions about the earnings, as one of the founders and the earliest producer expressed, that she cannot work longer under these wage conditions (Case 1, Diary: 3).

Work Conditions and Well-being

The producers like the tasks they have and the huge variety of tasks. (Case 1, Interview 1: 5). At the same time the huge variety and not well-established organization and communication structure leads to a lot of overtime and self-exploitation.

“I have a personal need for relief, and it cannot be a permanent condition, that people so overtime every evening. And if they, do it is not handled transparent. The grievance stays hidden up to a level where people cannot hold it anymore. And then it becomes visible far too late. Actually, we have way too far to do for the working hours we have” (Case 1, Interview 2: 23). The strong initial idealism gives a lot of energy in the beginning that cannot be performed for a long term. “For the first month I did not realize it because it was all new and it was nice and I had a lot of energy to give it all to the project” (Case 1, Interview 1: 5). What is also desired from the producers is “an awareness for personal, mental and health concerning limits. That it is ok to say, I could do this, but honestly, I am not in the mood anymore, and I go home because it is already six at night and I can do it tomorrow instead of staying until nine at night, because it must be done” (Case 1, Interview 2: 23). A reason that leads to the huge workload is the time-consuming production of some of their produces. Besides the fact, that preserving food takes a lot of time, they do not have a proper infrastructure for it. Furthermore, filling the cereals and labeling the produce, as well as packing the boxes takes a lot of time. The free-taking depots aims to counteracts this, but about half of the consumers still prefer the boxes (Case 1, Diary: 3). “The money we have finances a certain amount of well-paid work and a lot of poor paid work. We can increase the number of consumers a little bit, we could increase the share price, but we also need to use our work time more efficient” (Case 1, Interview 2: 9). Another point of critic is the missing appreciation. „I think I accomplish a lot, and there is not so much coming back, but maybe it is only my personal perception” (Case 1, Interview 2: 29). Regarding the former named needs of the producers, 5 of the 14 mentioned needs are met to a certain degree. They have a high diversity of tasks in the daily work; the producers have passion for their work, but sometimes the feeling, that what they like to do is not needed or not appreciated; there seems to appreciation of the community, but it is not strongly palpable because of the distance; the communication culture differs, depending on the context; and the team dynamic is actually good between the producers, but the atmosphere often quite stressed.

7.1.5 Ethics

Social Idealism/Pragmatism

Case 1 does not always priorities social values in their decision- making. The needs of the producers are not higher than the needs of the farm, what can be observed in the wages and the current discussion about the wages, the regular overtimes and the untransparent communication culture towards the consumers about the wages. There seems to be not a lot room to communicate personal needs or limits. One producer state, that he does not have the feeling, that they have a common aim and there is not a lot of room for exchanging about it (Case 1, Diary: 17). This does not support the reliability and trust inside the team. Another value that is not met, is the feeling of social and/or financial safety. There is a strong financial insecurity, as the budget is always too short. Also, the social safety through a strong cooperation in the farm-team as well as in the whole CSA is missing (Case 1, Interview 1: 9). The feeling of appreciation is only given to a certain degree. They state that they have the feeling that their hard work is sometimes not seen by other members (Case 1, Interview 2: 29). All over the CSA aims to **protect the welfare of people in and outside the community**, focus **on equity** and **tolerating other opinions**, but trough their status quo of organization structure they meet these aims only to a certain degree. Summed up, the CSA meets 3 of the 8 social values, what results in a low medium idealism regarding the social sphere.

Political Idealism/Pragmatism

Regarding the political sphere this CSA has high initial visions and follows these values in their decision processes. They **set their own aims** in the initial process and follow them till this day. The CSA aims to **change the current capitalistic system** as the way of production and distribution is indefensible (Case 1, Diary: 18). They have a high focus on solidarity economy and are strictly against cross-financing, wherefore they **do not use tools of the current system**.

Furthermore, they are active in public relations like interviews in newspapers and radio shows as well as participating in political organizations (**influencing the current politics**) and do **educational work** through talks and guides about permaculture, solidarity economy and CSAs. They are working on the implementation on the model for participatory guaranteed system aiming to develop a framework that can be used from other CSAs as well (**building up a successful alternative**). An **economical invention** they try to implement is the need orientated target price of the share as well as need orientated wages (Case 1, Diary: 3). As they have cooperation with non-CSA farmers who produce for them, they are not independent from the current system. Based on that, the CSA follows 7 of 8 idealistic values regarding the political sphere and has therefore a strong idealism.

Ecological Idealism/Pragmatism

The CSA tries to have a focus on high ecological standards, but as the variety of agricultural branches is huge, they cannot meet these standards sufficiently on their farm (Case 1, Diary: 9). Regarding the vegetable garden they apply regenerative and sustainable cultivation methods. Due to missing knowledge, time, and fitting technic, this is not given for the crop cultivation and the chickens (Case 1, Diary: 3). They aim **to protect the surrounding ecosystem** through hedges and mulching of the pasture regarding the needs of a protected bird living there, but do crop cultivation on a half-bog, that should be protected through pasture instead of crop land. Through the diversity and the combination of animals, vegetables, mushrooms, fruits and the preserving of food, they are able to **close natural cycles**. Especially in the permaculture, vegetable garden, they **try new cultivation methods and experience** with different varieties and plant combinations (**high biodiversity**). Besides, they mainly use **seed-proof, locally adapted varieties**. They have a quite high number of external inputs like, chicken feed, plastic bags for the mushroom production, jars for preserves, flour and grains and mulching foil (Case 1, Diary: 19). Fossil fuel is needed for the machinery in the crop and pasture cultivation (tractor), in the garden (brush cutter, two-wheel tractor, water pump), work with the chicken (van) and mushroom cultivation (heating, ventilator). Summed up, they meet 5 of the 8 ecological values, what results in a high- medium ecological idealism.

Organizational Idealism/Pragmatism

Regarding organizational attributes this CSA has high initial aims but fails to a certain degree because of the undeveloped decision and responsibility structure. They want to offer **flexibility and self-determination**, but due to the unclear structure and communication it leads to a loss of information and stress (Case 1, Interview 2: 9). They strive **to include all members in some decision processes** and did a step forward in this direction, by starting a monthly CSA plenum where all members could attend (Case 1, Interview 2: 31). Through an active consumers communication and concept-based participation of the consumers, they try to **create a strong community**, even if this is not reached yet (Case 1, Interview 1: 11). Due to the participatory-guarantee system they currently develop, they strive to improve and stabilize the CSA organization structure through embedding of the consumers (**putting effort into the innovation of resilient organizational structures**). This results in a medium idealism regarding the organizational sphere as 4 of 8 values are met.

Case 1

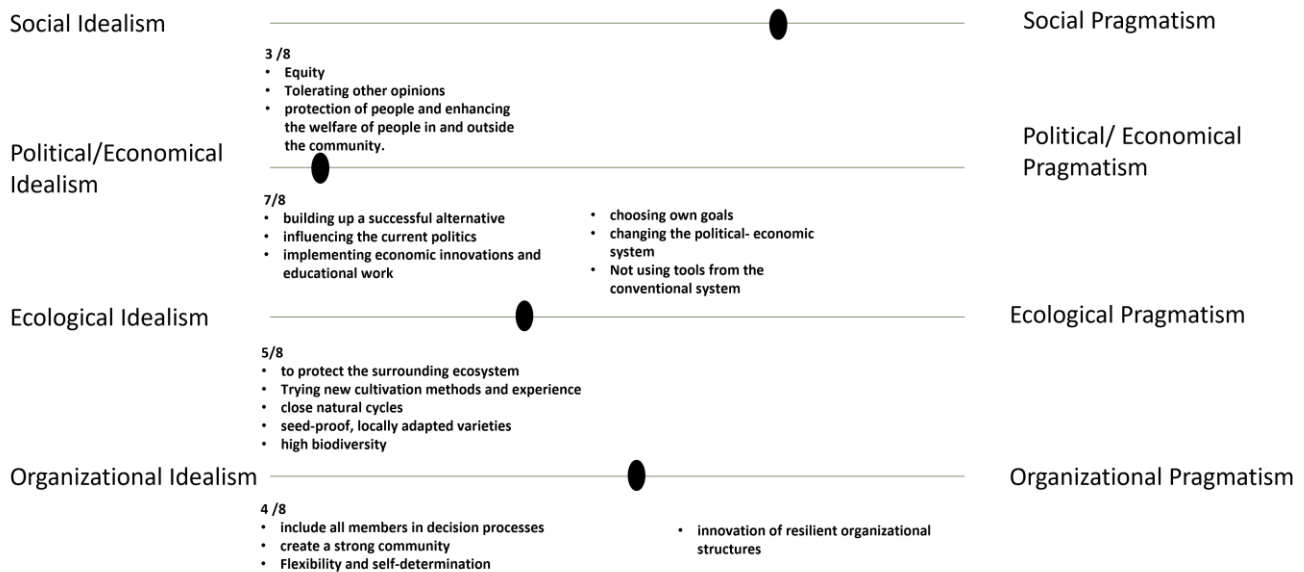


Figure 3 Positioning of Case 1 between Idealism and Pragmatism

Source: own

7.1.6 Overall Challenges

The overall challenges of this CSA are:

- No clear decision, responsibility, and communication structures, which leads to loss of information, conflicts, and inefficiency in the work procedures
- High fluctuation on the producer side
- Expertise and knowledge pressure, due to a high variety of production which all require a lot of time and effort
- Insufficient wages
- High share price
- High workload due to missing efficiency

7.1.7 CSA Network

The CSA developed out of another local CSA with the idea to offer complementary produce to the vegetables offered from the other CSA. Many of the consumers are part of both CSAs. This cooperation helped a lot in the beginning, and they still share the distribution of the boxes and cooperate with surpluses of their yields. At the same time there is some dependence and concurrency between both CSAs. The soil in the region of Case 1 is better for vegetable production than the soil of the other CSA, but they want to keep this diversification between the two CSAs. This counteracts to some degree a site dependent efficiency (Case 1, Diary: 14). Both CSAs are actively involved in building up a CSA network in the region (Case 1, Diary: 3).

Dynamics of CSA 1

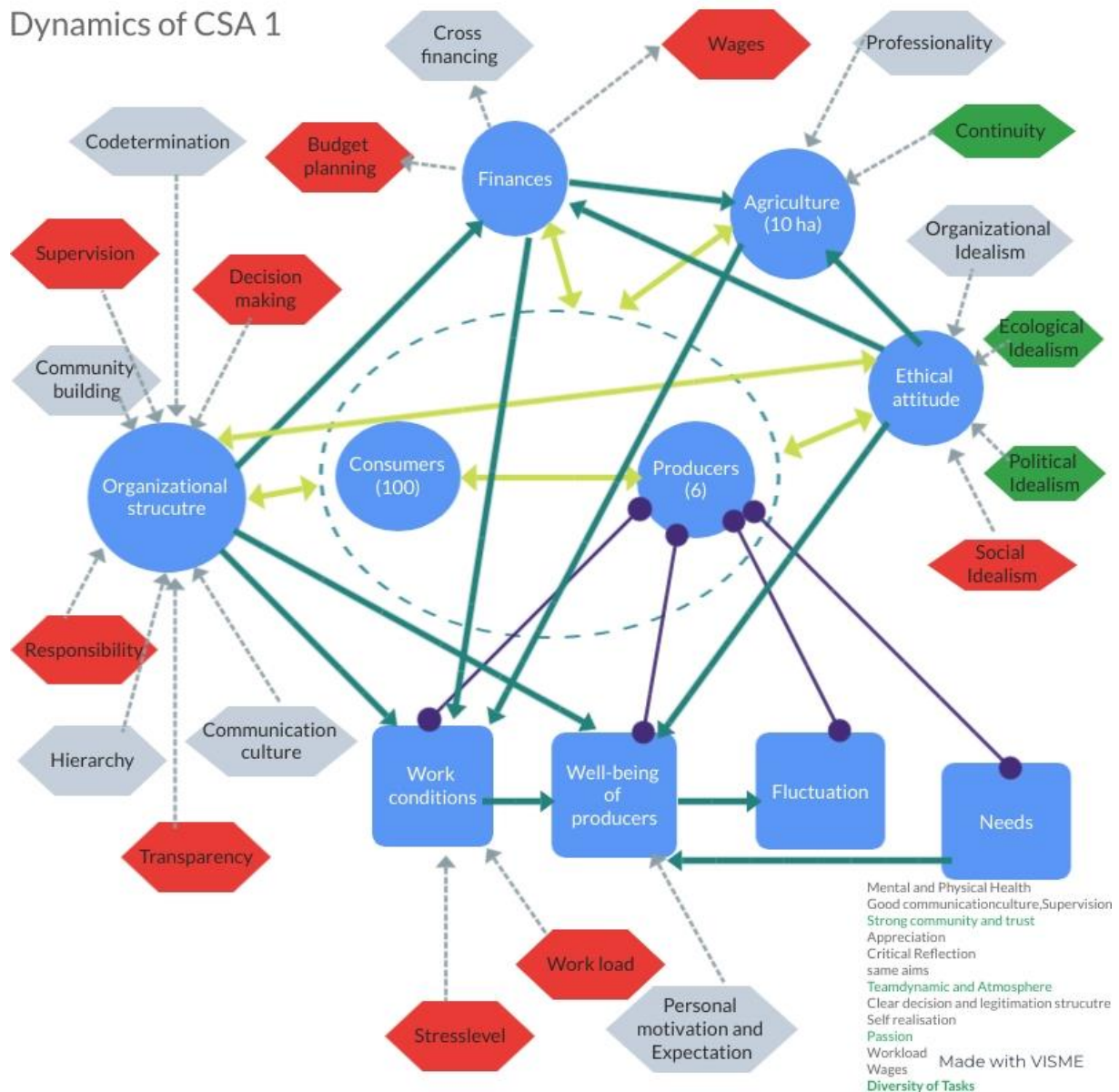


Figure 4 Strengthens and Weaknesses of Case 1

Source: own

1. Elements

Blue Circles: Structuring elements of dynamics in CSAs

Blue squares: Conditions in the context of CSA producers

Hexagons: variables with a potential influence on the dynamics and conditions in CSAs

Green hexagons: Strength of CSA

Red hexagon: Weakness of CSA

Grey hexagon: neutral variable

2. Connections

Yellow arrows: Mutual influence of CSA elements

Blue arrows: Influence of one element or condition on another one

Violet lines: Conditions connected to the element producer

Grey arrows: potential influence of variables on elements and conditions

3. Text

Text underneath the "Needs" square, shows all the needs state by the producers of Case 1, the needs that are met by the CSA are highlighted green (4/14)

- The size of the boxes has no meaning -

7.2 Results of Case 2

7.2.1 Overview

Case 2 was founded on an area that was cultivated by a Demeter-garden estate since 2002. Since 2011 the garden estate cultivated for the CSA that is organized in a registered association. Foremost 2018 the Demeter- garden estate and all the producers became part of the association. They provide vegetables, fruits and sometimes preserves for 300-400 households. Eleven producers cultivate on 11 acres. Furthermore, there are five volunteers that support to a high degree. They distribute packed boxes to 13 different depots once a week. Furthermore they offer a “free-taking” at one depot, where all the produce of the week is delivered and the consumers take as much as they need according to the available amount (Case 2, Diary: 2).

7.2.2 Organization Structure

The CSA is organized in a Farm- circle, that plans and discusses topics regarding the cultivation, a community circle that engages with non-gardening topics and the community and the CSA council that consist of at the members meeting elected consumers and producers who organize, plan, support and help to solve arising problems with a focus on reaching the aims of the project. All **decisions** that are made in the two circles need to be signed off from the council. Therefore, the consumers have a great say (Case 2, Interview 3: 31). There are often conflicts between the gardeners’ team and the members in the context of cultivation methods, structure, and finances. The communication between the two groups is diverse. Sometimes it works better sometimes worse (Case 2, Diary 1: 2). For instance, there are different opinions about this strong influence of the consumers in the decision processes. “As a consumer with no agricultural background you can trust that the people who work here understand more about it even if you have something to say. But there is also the opinion in the group, that the consumers should eat what is produced and the producers have always the last word. There are some frictions about that. But if a CSA developed with a huge financial contribution of the consumers, they often want to be part of the decision making. And this CSA only exists because of the money of the consumers” (Case 2, Interview 1: 23). The consumer side of the CSA is very stable over the years. “It plays a role that the consumers have a great say, that goes along with less fluctuation” (Case 2, Interview 1: 23).

Internal Communication and Dynamics

Otherwise, it is on the producer side, where the CSA has a **high fluctuation** in the last years. “People were really not getting along with each other and there was two people fired in summer 2020 so yeah it was really critical. I stopped working there for a while cause the dynamic was not endurable” (Case 2, Interview 2: 5). In this time some of the producers were close to a burnout” (Case 2, Interview 2, Pos. 12). “That was very stressful. And what I was really missing in that time was positive feedback. Everybody was so stressed out that nobody could focus on somebody else than themselves” (Case 2, Interview 2, Pos. 12). There was even the fear, that the CSA must quit. Now the **team dynamic** and mood on the farm is way better, wherefore also the decision processes and the **communication** improved a lot. Moreover, “It was the first time after a long time, that all the 300 shares were distributed before the mid of February. It was quite early. Usually takes more time and energy too keep looking for people. This year was much better. I think that’s also has something to do with how the team is and how people perceive us. As farm but also as people working there. I know that people have been talking about us in the last couple of months. Cause there were a lot of strange things going on and for some time people were not sure if the farm will continue or not. And in the last time things got better” (Case 2, Interview 2: 8). There is a knowledge and experienced based **hierarchy** in the farm-team. Something that might has influenced the difficult dynamics in the CSA among other things, is the change in the responsibility position for finances. Before this position was engaged by a consumer in voluntary basis.

Then it was taken over by an employed person, who has stronger connection to the producers. “I think I can connect this quite good. To have a focus on the money but also on the people it is about” (Case 2, Interview 3: 10). The main challenge between the last cashier and the farm team was:” In his opinion, it was not possible that the labor expenses increase every year. If the producers want to earn more, they must work less hours, getting more efficient. If the piece is only that big it needs to be shared between less producers” (Case 2, Interview 3: 38). Another reason for the conflicts and the fluctuation on the producers’ side might be the high **self-realization** expectations of producers with an academical background. “It seems, like people who studied have a high expectation of distinguish oneself and to put the theoretically learned things into praxis. But this is sometimes not possible in a collective association. And the money will always be the same in the end, even if you can improve the production about 50 %” (Case 2, Interview 3: 26).

Member’s Commitment and Communication

The **strong support** of the community helped a lot in the transition time, “having the community you can rely on, then it is ok if there are troubles sometimes” (Case 2, Interview 2: 36). About 30-50 of the consumers participate on a regular basis. “The ‘free-taking’ depot is managed by consumers, and we have boxes against coworking. So, people who come to the farm regular especially in spring and summer for their membership” (Case 2, Interview 3: 31). Towards the consumers they communicate in a very open way about the financial or harvest situation. “A lot of things are very openly communicated, that if we do not really hang on and get things done and try our best, we have to close down. And that was also what was communicated and what I heard about, is that there were quite a lot of members, I mean not the 450 members, but we got a lot of support. Financial support, human resources on a voluntary base, a lot of people getting more involved, so there was a lot of support on a broad range. And some people who have doing this since the beginning of the project. Which is quite nice” (Case 2, Interview 2: 28). “I think what is more difficult, if there were some troubles on the field like, if there is some frost or if something else. I think that’s more difficult to communicate.” Like the in literature called ‘hungry gap’. “The gap is when storages are empty and the vegetables in the field are still not ready to be harvest. That is a tricky thing and each year we try again to communicate as much as possible” (Case 2, Interview 2, Pos. 26). Furthermore, “we try to educate people. So really put a lot of information, without overwhelming them, trying to give them information what we think is needed to give them” (Case 2, Interview 2: 26). What is not **transparently** communicated towards the consumers and between the producers are the wages. They only communicate the percentage of the wage costs on the whole production costs (Case 2, Diary: 3-4).

7.2.3 Finances

Share Price and Budget

The current target price of a share is 122, -/ month. The budget is presented at the annual members meeting and the consumers determine their financial contribution in a bidding round. This year the needed amount was not reached.” I think 2000 € are missing. But I think that we can cover this trough aids and seedling sale during the year. And if it is not enough, I must freeze the production costs at the end of the year” (Case 2, Interview 3: 34). Since this year the budget is done by an employee instead of like the last years by a volunteer. “Earlier there was a fix target price and then the budget was adapted to it, no I do the budget out of experience factors. How much do we need, wages, investments, running costs, and then I calculate the target price out of it” (Case 2, Interview 3: 34). It seems like there is a target price level reached, where people are not very pleased to pay a lot more. The more consumers participate with the project, the more they understand how much work it is, and why the target price raises, wherefore it seems that they more bothered to pay according to their income (Case 2, Interview 1: 7). The wage costs are the biggest part of the budget and increases every year if you go with the average agricultural wage agreement contract. This is something consumers are not aware of (Case 2, Interview 3: 34).

Cross-financing

The CSA cross finances the project through an annual purchase of seedlings. Additionally, they did a crowd funding project last year to finance a new tractor. Which worked out well and might be repeated for other investments (Case 2, Interview 2: 32).

Wages

There is no transparent exposure of the wages. It is only communicated, that the wages are above the average agricultural wage agreement. As one volunteer states, "the question who earns how much and why, is utterly touchy and is not discussed openly up to now" (Case 2, Diary: 3-4) The wages were unfolded once beneath the producers, which led to a lot of fuss and discussions. That might be a reason why they communicate a basic wage for producers who join the CSA, then the wages increase depending on the experience, term of employment and responsibility (Case 2, Interview 3: 28). "I earn a little bit less than 10 €/hour when it comes to net wage. I mean, I get along with it and I can deal with it. So, for me it is fine. I have some savings and it's pretty ok. However, I know if I had a family or if I had to support someone else financially, I could not do the work. I have a position for 25 h/ week. And I earn 936 Euros a month. So, half of my salary is already for my flat. But I think you will not find anyone in CSA who really does not do it on an ideological base, because you really must want it. There are people working at our farm who are thinking to leave and are thinking to get another job. But in the end, they stay, and I think one thing is the good atmosphere and the good dynamic" (Case 2, Interview 2: 16). The CSA is aware of the bad agricultural wages and tries to increase them constantly, what is only possible to a certain level, as consumers are not willing to pay much more than the current share price (Case 2, Interview 1: 5). They tried to talk about need orientated wages but the discussion in the producers' team about earning is always very difficult and leads to a lot of dispute and bad mood in the team. "On the one hand it should be easy, because people know each other, but on the other hand it is deeply anchored, that people must fight for their income, and you never know if somebody else is telling the truth when it comes to needs (Case 2, Interview 1: 9).

7.2.4 Producers

Background and Motivation

The background of the producers is very diverse. Some have an agricultural or gardening education, some have an academical education with some practical experience and some have a lateral entrance with a bit or no practical experience. The CSA is an apprenticeship employer (Case 2, Interview 2: 3). Some of the producers have a strong idealism regarding their motivation to work in a CSA. "I have the feeling, that on an ecological, social and economic basis that capitalistic way of production gets more and more indefensible and that it is possible to do this production way better and efficient in a smaller frame and group" (Case 2, Interview 1: 3). Others are more interested on the social components of the work in a CSA, like fair wages, or better than in other agricultural businesses and a good company on the farm (Case 2, Diary 1: 5).

Needs

Strong community:

To have the support of a strong community and to trust, that they are there, even in hard, complicated times makes the work way more stress less and increases the innovative aspect and possibilities of a CSA (Case 2, Interview 2: 36).

Team dynamic and Atmosphere:

A good mood inside the team is an urgent need for producers and volunteers who support the CSA for a longer term. "There are people working at our farm who are thinking to leave and are thinking to get another job. But in the end, they stay, and I think one thing is the good atmosphere and the goo dynamic" (Case 2, Interview 2: 16). For people who do not get any monetary exchange the mood is even more important. "If these people recognize that the mood is very bad and that they do not get recognition for their work, they get sick of working there and really just do it because they have to do it more or less, that really affects people who work voluntary. And that is a very important point that you must keep in mind" (Case 2, Interview 2: 10).

Appreciation:

Appreciation is also a crucial point, that leads to a long-term commitment of producers and volunteers. "It is easier to see the positive work that is done at the farm, if people have a better attitude, a more positive attitude and more resources to acknowledge what is happening. And keeping more in mind, that positive feedback is a benefit for everyone and that it will come back to you one time" (Case 2, Interview 2: 12). In the recent years, where the situation was more difficult in the CSA, "people were sooner or later quit their job, even if they got a salary. Especially if they get no salary and then no recognition as well. They want to help, but at least after a year they will quit and say ok I am done with it" (Case 2, Interview 2: 10).

Short duty:

A short duty and the possibility to get to work by bike is an important factor for some of the producers (Case 2, Interview 3: 10).

Self-determination:

Being able to have a flexibility regarding working hours is especially for producers with family from high importance (Case 2, Interview 3: 10).

Meaningful work:

„It supports my personal satisfaction to have the feeling, that I do something meaningful. To contribute to a better world. In my earlier job I earned a bit more, but I delivered machines from a to b and never knew how they look like, if they reach their destination and so on" (Case 2, Interview 3: 4).

Work Condition and Well-being

After the intern troubles in the last years, the current situation on the farm is quite good. "It is a good team I think I have the perception that people are really confident, and that people get along with each other in the moment. It feels like a lot of friendships have involved in the last time. And it is really like the first time since these two years, since when I have been working there that I feel confident. There is usually a good mood, even if there are people I not such a goof mood it does not affect the rest of the team. We are not too stressed out, the workload is ok, there are no fears that the farm will stop running" (Case 2, Interview 2:7). Another producer states something similar regarding the present work condition:" For me it fits well, I am close to my workplace, can dispose my working times flexible and can work from home if I want. I like my colleagues and the mood on the farm is great. Of course, this changes with the people working here, but right now it is good" (Case 2, Interview 3: 10). Regarding the responsibility structure, there are producers in the CSA who want to take over responsibility and strongly participate in decisions and others who just want to do their work and go home afterwards. In the structure of this CSA both realities are possible (Case 2, Diary 2: 2). One challenge that is mentioned regarding the self-exploitation of producers in CSAs or in agriculture overall, is the addiction to the work.

When people define themselves with the work they do, what happens quite often in this sector, especially if it is caused by a strong idealism, people do not quit, make a break, or work less on their own terms if they are at the edge of a burn out (Case 2, Interview 2: 12). The current work conditions meet 4 of the 6 mentioned needs, which are a strong community, a good team dynamic, appreciation and a meaningful work. A short duty is given for some producers but not all.

7.2.5 Ethics

Social Idealism/Pragmatism

After some troubles inside the farm team, they reached a **mutual appreciation inside the team and the CSA community** as well as **reliability and trust inside the producer group** (Case 2, Interview 2: 16). Also, the feeling of **safety** increased a lot in the last year. "There are no fears that the farm will stop running. We have enough financial resources. We have enough of human resources. There are a lot of people who support us" (Case 2, Interview 2: 7-8). They aim **to enhance the welfare of the people** inside the community through a focus on fair and further increasing wages, a decision structure, that includes everybody who wants and members shares, that can be decided individually regarding the own income. Currently the producers have the feeling, that there is **space to communicate their needs** and that people take them serious (Case 2, Diary 2: 2). Due to the high fluctuation on the producers' side, it is cognizable, that the needs of the producers are not prioritized over the needs of the farm. Also, the tolerance towards other opinions is only given to a certain degree. If they do not go along with the main opinion of the community people with another opinion often left the community in the past. According to that, the CSA follows 5 of the 8 values, what goes along with a high-medium social idealism.

Political Idealism/Pragmatism

They CSA claims to **contribute to political and economic change**. The current political system is seen as a huge problem and the CSA concept as **an alternative and an innovation to counteract** this system (Case 2, Interview 1: 3). Besides that, parts of their land are owned by a foundation which aims to protect the basic of existence like land and make it available for people (commons) (Case 2, Diary 1: 10). As a quite consistent and participatory group of consumers and producer they **choose their own goals** and separate from people if they do not follow the same aims (Case 2, Diary 1: 2; Interview 2:7). They put some effort in networking locally with other CSAs, engage on a political level with organizations and institutions and try to increase their voice regarding agrarian politics (**influencing the current politics**) (Case 2, Diary 1: 2). Moreover, they try to **educate people** about the current agricultural situation, how agriculture works and social-economic challenges (Case 2, Interview 2: 26). They use a solidarity economy and a target for the share, wherefore consumers can pay according to their income (**implementing economic innovations**). As they do cross financing through seedling purchase, they are using tools of the capitalist system. This cross financing is accounted in the budget and contributes to the financial stability, and they have an official certification (Demeter), wherefore the CSA is not completely independent of the current system. Allover 6 of 8 values are full filled wherefore this CSA has a quite strong idealism towards the political sphere.

Ecological Idealism/Pragmatism

The CSA only uses **seed-proof, locally adapted varieties**, whereof many are multiplied by themselves (Case 2, Diary 1: 8). They cultivate over 70 different vegetables, herbs and fruits in a diverse crop rotation what shows a **high biodiversity**. They produce on a soil with less than 30 ground marks and try to regenerate it by fitting cultivation methods and an area for green manure and catch crops of more than one third of the whole area (**applying existing regenerative and sustainable cultivation methods, closing natural cycles**) (Case 2, Diary 1: 7). Trough the continuity of the land, as it is secured in a foundation, they can focus on a long-term cultivation system and perennial crops. This helps to build up a surrounding, where **ecosystems can be protected** for a long term.

As they use foil for their tunnels and mulch foil as well as some machinery for the work on the soil and the seeding, they use external inputs and fossil fuels. Besides that, there is no high focus on experiencing and innovations regarding agricultural technics and methods. Summed up, the CSA follows 5 of 8 ecological values and shows a high- medium idealism in this sphere.

Organizational Idealism/Pragmatism

The CSA has an organizational structure, that **gives all members the chance to be part of the decision processes**. As the CSA is founded by the members, they build a **strong and participatory community**, that seeks to be part of these processes, and gives the CSA a stability that helps in critical periods. "There is financial support, human resources on a voluntary base, a lot of people getting more involved, so there is a lot of support on a broad range. It is nice to feel, that there is that community behind, that is doing support and you can also feel this working at the CSA now (Case 2, Interview 2: 28). Trough the troubles in the last years, they try to improve some organizational topics, like giving the responsibility of the finances to an employee instead a volunteer, what is more resilient and objective (**innovation of resilient organizational structures**). The communication culture needs to be improved, especially between the consumers and the producers. There have been conflicts in the past and interpersonal crisis should be clarified earlier. The CSA has a hierarchy, which is shallow, but it is not anti-hierarchical. As the team is quite big, there are fixed working hours not a lot of self-determination, as everything is decided by the community. Besides that, it is noticeable, that some people have a greater say in the project, as they engage more and are more assertive than others (no equality off all members) (Case 2, Diary 1: 2). This results in a medium idealism because of 3 of 8 values which are prioritized by this CSA regarding organizational topics.

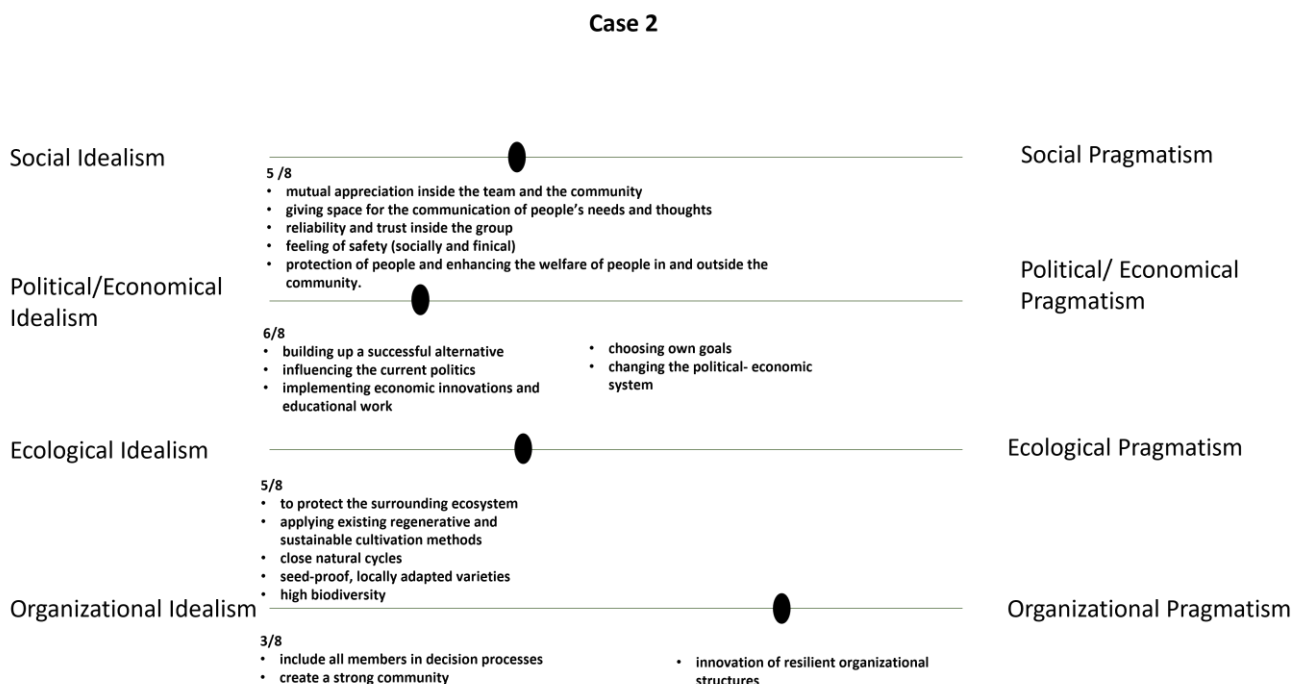


Figure 5 Positioning of Case 2 between Idealism and Pragmatism

(Source: own)

7.2.6 Overall Challenges

The overall challenges of this CSA are:

- A transparent exposure of the wages
- Stabilization the atmosphere and personal relationships
- High fluctuation
- Improving the self- estimation of consumers regarding the target price trough becoming more acquainted with each other (Case 2, Interview 1: 5)
- Increasing the wages further

7.2.7 CSA Network

The CSA is part of a group, that works on implementing a regional network for CSAs. They have cooperation with other local CSAs and supported other CSAs in their starting period. Besides that, they are part of the common's movement. Parts of their land is owned by a foundation (Case 2, Diary 1: 6).

Dynamics of CSA 2

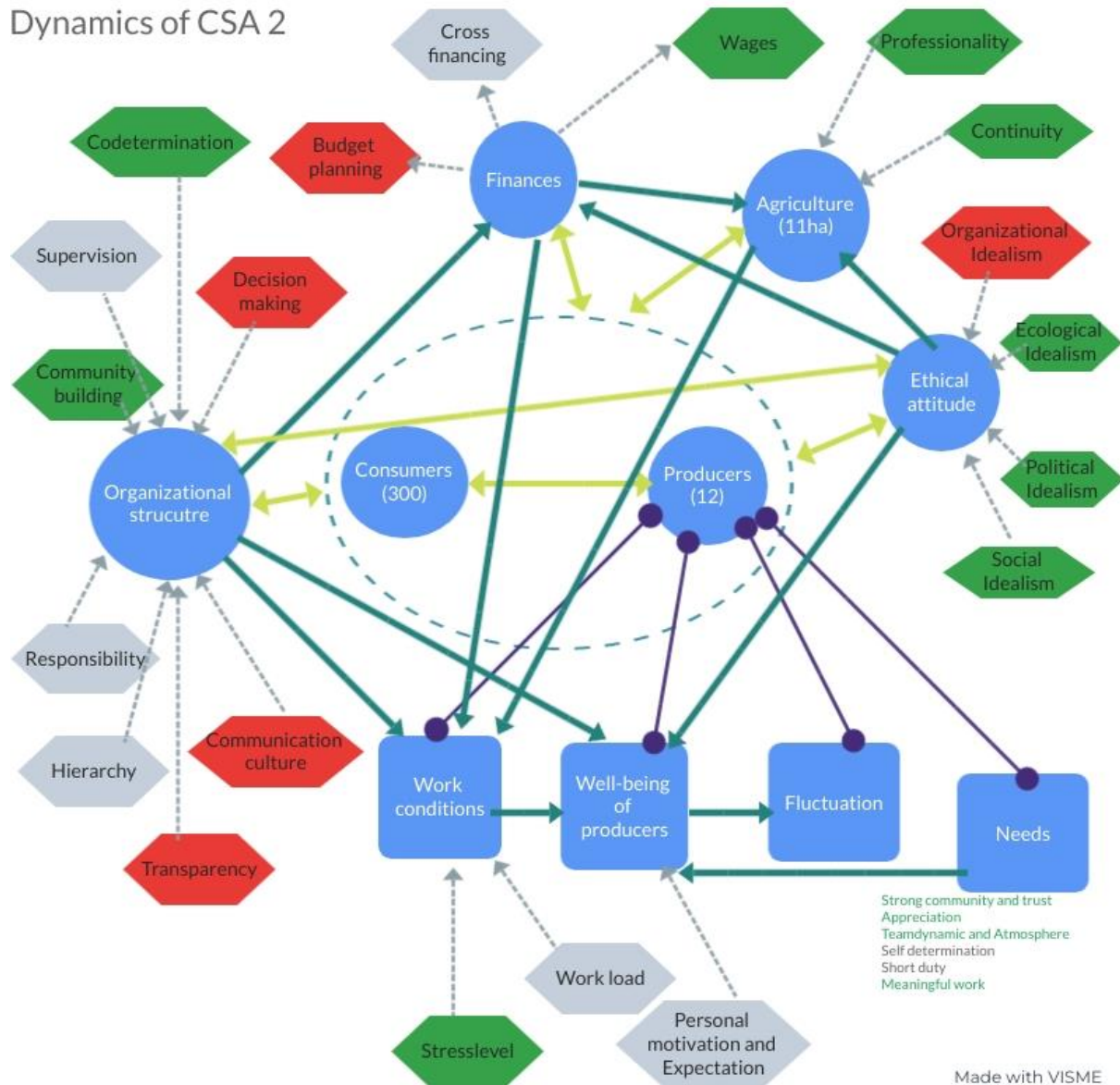


Figure 6 Strengthens and Weaknesses of Case 2

Source: own

1. Elements

Blue Circles: Structuring elements of dynamics in CSAs

Blue squares: Conditions in the context of CSA producers

Hexagons: variables with a potential influence on the dynamics and conditions in CSAs

Green hexagons: Strength of CSA

Red hexagon: Weakness of CSA

Grey hexagon: neutral variable

2. Connections

Yellow arrows: Mutual influence of CSA elements

Blue arrows: Influence of one element or condition on another one

Violet lines: Conditions connected to the element producer

Grey arrows: potential influence of variables on elements and conditions

3. Text

Text underneath the "Needs" square, shows all the needs state by the producers of Case 1, the needs that are met by the CSA are highlighted green (4/14)

- The size of the boxes has no meaning -

7.3 Case 3

7.3.1 Overview

Case 3 is a CSA located in Germany and was founded in 2012. Today the CSA victuals 1800 households and is continuously growing. “Currently growth is a big topic, as there is the possibility to buy new land and we decided to grow further” (Case 3, Interview 1, 5-5). They produce vegetables on an area of 21 ha. In their beginnings they produced in cooperation with other farmers or on their land, since 2017 they work and produce on their own land. They are legally organized in an incorporated cooperative. Each member depots 150 € when entering the cooperative. This money is used for investments. Furthermore, they founded a registered association for topics that do not directly interact with the cooperative, such as educational work and working out concepts for new, regional supply structures. They distribute commissioned vegetable boxes to their consumers. There is the possibility to spend more money during the registration for a “Soli-box”. If enough money is collected to offer a one-year vegetable-box for 50%, this share is offered to someone who registered for a Soli- box. For this purpose, people need to write a short statement, why they cannot afford a regular box from the CSA. “I do not know exactly how many Soli- subscriber we have, but I think there are 25.” (Case 3, Interview 2, 33). The way the producers of Case 3 reacted towards this research and my visit there was impressive. “People reached out to me very actively, and are impassioned by the topic of the research, as this is a currently highly discussed topic in the CSA. Furthermore, due to my neutral role, people come up to me and it seems like they have a huge need to talk about their sights, needs and conflicts in the context of the organization structure of the farm. They talk to me in a very transparent and trustful way.” (Case 3, Diary, 17).

7.3.2 Organizational Structure

Due to the size of the CSA and the speed of growing, the team of producers increases proportionally. At the time of the research, 30 people were working there. Two people are forming the board of directors, two people in a management position, four people as division managers (Glasshouse, Field cultures, Distribution, Commissioning). The other producers have basic positions, working on the field in the glasshouses or in the logistics. Volunteers are not budgeted in the work, so every additional/extra hand is welcomed/appreciated, but the CSA is not dependent on the participation of consumers. There is a high **fluctuation** on the producer site and several producers mentioned that finding new farmers is a challenge. Inside the team, there are different opinions about the **hierarchies** existing in this CSA. On the one hand, one of the producers stated that there is a “quite strict and clear hierarchy” (Case 3, Interview 3, 5); on the other hand, another producer stated that “we have a quite shallow hierarchy” (Case 3, Interview 1, 9). The observation showed that producers who are lower positioned in the team structure tend to hold the first opinion (strict hierarchy) and producers who are higher positioned tend to hold the second one (shallow hierarchy). **Decisions** are made by the two directors in accordance with the people who are **responsible** for this field. These decisions are tried to communicate to the rest of the team, but this internal communication between the people who make the decisions and the ones who are carrying these decisions into execution seems not to work untainted.

Internal Communication and Transparency

“We try a lot to improve the communication, and when I look at the structure it should theoretically work. We have a meeting of the small team (directors and managers) every two weeks, and the content is protocolled and available, and then every two month the big team (everybody) where things are discussed. The gardeners’ team (managers, division managers) meets once a month. But even though people do not feel proper informed. One producer state, that the directors are too far away from the gardeners. This involves their background as well as the geographical distance between garden and bureau.” (Case 3, Diary, 14).

None of the directors has an agricultural background. Some people in the team wish to be more involved. "This is a legitimate need, but often not constructive. Because when you update people about decisions, which they cannot use in practice, because it is just something mundane, it is quite laborious for the person who transmits. I mean it is good that it happens, but with this team size, it is hard to put it in practice." (Case 3, Interview 1, 32). Another challenge of the internal communication are the dispersed locations the team is working at.

There is the gardeners team working on the field, the logistic team has no direct contact to the gardeners' team as they just pick up the vegetable boxes early in the morning and the board of directors working in a bureau in the city. "To bring all the people together is quite hard." (Case 3, Interview 1, 33). This structural problem of the internal communication seems to have a connection with the fast growth and high fluctuation in the team as one producer states. "The problem is historically grown. Because we had so many restructurings, in terms of team set-up and who is taking over which part, that processes and structures could not establish in a sufficient way, wherefore communication path are not clearly defined, and a lot of information is lost." (Case 3, Interview 4, 15). Furthermore, this producer appeals to everybody in the team to show understanding towards other people in the team and towards the challenge of a growing team size and still evolving structures. When it comes to **transparency** in the context of internal communication, this producer also demands more understanding and benevolence of each single person in the team. "Transparency is often a topic, but for me it is not a problem. There are a lot of meetings of different groups, some of them are protocolled and some are not, and I think this is completely ok. Because it is not evil meant if people have a secret. There are secrets and this is ok if it counts for single cases. This mutual understanding is quite important for me." (Case 3, Interview 3, 17). Based on these findings, it is not surprising, that also the topic **codetermination** is a controversy. As one producer states, „what I know for sure, is that there are some people who want to be more involved and some who want to be left alone and just do their job." (Case 3, Interview 2: 10). This mutual interest is something producers from all positions notice and see it as a complicated situation to handle. A special frustration evolves from the producers who would like to be more involved, as they have the feeling that even if they are asked for their opinions or actively address a deficiency nothing changes, or it is waved aside as a petty. And „this does not make it pretty attractive to say something even if you have an impact. And I do not know why this happens." (Case 3, Interview 3: 40). The fact that this conflict exists could also correlate with the size of the team. "It is crazy to call for 22 people where they stay. I read somewhere, that the perfect team size are six people. With this size it is possible to be on one level. But 22 is far too many." (Case 3, Interview 1: 27). Another point that goes along with this challenge is the taking over and giving away of **responsibility**. The responsibility structure is also a currently highly discussed topic in this CSA, especially because of the new structures that need to be built up when they grow. "That is a great challenge, to do this in a good way. To develop the farm successful without getting to far into the two-class society...that is the question we must ask ourselves. If we want to increase this splitting, because if this is the case, we develop more and more to a conventional business structure" (Case 3, Interview 1: 11). Furthermore, the **conflict culture** is not well established. If there are conflicts, they are not addressed directly and not handled in a transparent way. This can lead to a strange mood, as things are in the wind, but nobody talks openly about it. A more open and honest communication about conflicts or confounding factors that could lead to a conflict is wished by some producers. "And then the people are pissed, but they do not say why, they just say nothing, and you have no idea why they are pissed. And this happens often, and if you address something people are offended very fast, because it is not normal to address something. It is normal to be friendly and nice and this leads to misunderstanding. Because you get the message everything is fine, but you can feel that it is not that way." (Case 3, Interview 3: 40). Conflict situations that came up during meetings are addressed during this meeting "but not thematized in a deeper, ongoing way" (Case 3, Interview 1: 23). There is an awareness about these structural shortcomings, but it seems to be not enough time and prioritization to counteract these increasing dynamics.

In the history of the CSA there were already some big conflicts, and some of them led to a split of single people. They never accounted to consult a **mediator** so far, but when a mediator was addressed by the researcher during the interview, one producer made a clear state full of hope: “For me this would be so valuable. Because when everybody puts so much from themselves into it, it is getting so emotional, that it gets impossible to talk about it. For me a mediator would be so great, one that is not only called in cases of emergency, but routinely checks the status.” (Case 3, Interview 1: 25).

External and Members Communication

The communication with their consumers is well established. Once a week there is a Din 4 page distributed to the consumers full of information about news from the farm, vegetables, plans and invitations or calls for participation. Furthermore, Sundays is the gardening day for the consumers when everybody can come and help. This is a place where a lot of appreciation and gratitude is transferred from consumers to producers. “When they see how much work it is, a lot of appreciation is coming back to us” (Case 3, Interview 1: 19). A topic that comes up while talking about the communication with consumers is the romanticization of agriculture as a whole and even more of CSAs. Consumers who visit the farm sometimes complain about the use of machines and the kind of cultivation, that does not fit to the picture they have in their head which is often shaped by a permacultural perception. “People have different visions from this project, and I do not know where they are coming from. And sometimes they are confused, like, I thought you are doing permaculture here...” (Case 3, Interview 3: 31). Why consumers have this imagination in their heads might be based in a lack of education and educational work about food and food production or the way the cooperative transmits information and knowledge to their members. “I think our external marketing is very good. But we are very mindful in using words. For example, we do not call it second quality vegetables but vegetables that are otherwise thrown away...e.g., so you can use different words to transport information, and this might also be a reason why some topics are seen from consumers in a certain way” (Case 3, Interview 3: 40). One producer state, that it would be very valuable if the association would inform the people more about the challenges of the agricultural sector. “To make another reality check and show people how it really is. They think: Oh, how beautiful and there are bees and flowers and butterflies, oh that is so nice...But that is not the way it is!” (Case 3, Interview 1: 31). Another topic that comes up while talking about the external communication is the way the CSA or consumers of the CSA talk, discuss about conventional agriculture. This is a point, where theory and praxis are clashing. The reality of life on the farm is dependent on a good local farming network. Working together with local farmers, independently from their certification (organic or conventional) is crucial for the daily work on the farm. They borrow machines, exchange knowledge and information, and build up a network for mutual support. “For me it is very inconvenient, to go on our Facebook page and see an event against conventional agriculture and how bad everything is they do. I mean yes, this is a huge problem, and especially on a political level important to talk about it and change it. But if you are dependent on a good network in a daily basis, this black and white thinking is contra productive” (Case 3, Interview 1: 31).

7.3.3 Finances

Share Price and Budget

In the starting phase of the CSA the share price was defined by 62 €, with the aim not to increase the price. Due to the purchase of the farm, the share price needed to be increased to 74, 50 €. They aimed to come back to the actual share of 62€, but that did not work out. Currently the adapted fix price is 74,50€/month but they still wish to decrease it (Case 3, Interview 2: 12). Every consumer pays the same price, but there is the option to pay more to support Soli-Boxes, which are offered with 50% less as soon as the money for one Soli -Box is collected. Currently there are about 25 Soli- Boxes (Case 3, Interview 2: 33). The budget is planned based on the experiences of the last years and an employee's key due to the size of cultivated land.

The adjusting screw to reach the needed budget, is not the price of the share, but the number of consumers. "If we do not reach it, we say hey ****, can you do 100 more besides?" (Case 3, Interview 2: 15). The wages are 65-70 % of the whole budget. Investments are possible through the deposit of 150 € per person that enters the cooperative. "If you had one or two shares you get the money one year after you quit. With higher amounts, it is a five-year rule" (Case3, Interview 1: 17). Other investments are financed by loans.

Cross-financing

The CSA is not using cross -financing.

Wages

All people working in this CSA are also employed. They all earn at least the minimum wage. The wages are not transparently communicated to the consumers and producers, but the consumers know that the responsible "gardeners earn 3000, - gross, which is ok for gardeners" (Case 3, Interview 2: 23). Overall, lower positioned gardeners get about 2500, -, gardeners about 3000, -, and managers about 4500, -. Furthermore, they developed a wage matrix that sets a frame and producers can see where they are approximately positioned. "And of course, they can always ask the others what they earn" (Case 3, Interview 2: 19). The reason for not being completely transparent is that they "are not up to the gossip" (Case 3, Interview 2: 21). "We would like to negotiate more wages individually, because there are people you really give everything and take over responsibility and for others the work is always hard. But for them it is also work, they do their best, nevertheless. So, it is hard to argue, and I do not want to say everybody earns the same, but on the other hand is it same work and especially same lifetime you spend." (Case 3, Interview 2: 21). At the same time, they are aware about the precarious agricultural wages. "It is horrific, how low gardeners' wages are, it is really, really little money, to show that is possible to earn more would be great, but we will see if this works out..." (Case 3, Interview 1: 35).

7.3.4 Producers

Background and Motivation

The background of the producers varies. The founders and directors have a more economic/business background. All the managers and division managers (gardeners) have a horticultural education, either derived from an external farm or from the CSA, but none of them had a lot of practical experience when starting at the CSA. The producers in the basic positions, are either in their educational years right now or have no educated background. As mentioned before, the directors have no gardening background and this is also palpable in their decision making, as one producer states (Case 3, Diary: 5). Also, the motivation for working in a CSA varies between the producers. There are producers who just love what they are doing and love to grow vegetables (Case 3, Interview 1: 3), and doing this in a way that is solidary and might help to change the system is a great bonus. Another producer claims the ethical issues as the main reason for his participation. "Short, local supply chains, softening the producer- consumer relationship, mutually risk- and cost sharing, less waste of food and to increase the appreciation for food are reasons for me." (Case 3, Interview 3: 4). Joining the CSA from the consumer side and then switch to a producer position is also a path some producers took. The community of the consumers is also one of the first to be addressed if the CSA is searching for new producers.

Needs

Good communication and supervision:

„It would be great to have a mediator, who is not only consulted when there are conflicts, but on a regular basis" (Case 3, Interview 1: 25). A good and open communication culture is important for all the producers.

Team dynamic and atmosphere:

The team dynamic and mood was mentioned by all producers as a factor that is crucial for their long-term commitment.

Appreciation:

Appreciation inside the team and from the consumers “increases the motivation, especially when the workload is high.” (Case 3, Interview 1: 19). This is sometimes missing inside the team due to the challenges mentioned regarding the organization structure.

Workload:

A better work/life balance is a need mentioned by producers in higher positions. Due to the controversy about responsibility, a high workload goes along with responsibility. “Working in this position takes a lot from your capacity. It would be nice to have more time for other things in life as well.” (Case 3, Interview 4: 5).

Wages:

Furthermore, a sufficient earning is a general need, but if the basic financial needs are covered, it is not the most important factor (Case 3, Diary: 17).

Strong community and trust:

An interesting point in the context of earning, is the trust in the community a CSA builds on. A producer stated that he could work for less money, but it has to do with trust, because he would become more dependent of the community. When the producer has less security through wages and insurances, there is a greater need to believe in the long-term existence of the community to feel safe. Furthermore, the producer needs to consider if he wants to be directly dependent from some people or from a scattered collective (Case 3, Interview 3: 26).

Diversity of tasks:

Another need mentioned is the diversity of tasks. In all levels of responsibility, they value a structure that offers to assume different tasks. Due to observations and interviews, this is only given for producers in the higher positions.

Self-determination and responsibility:

Taking over responsibility and being self-determined in a certain range is a need of all producers that were interviewed, but as mentioned before, not all producers working in the CSA have this need. Also, the factor hierarchy is not so easy to categorize, as people in lower positions want less hierarchy and the ones in the higher positions see the hierarchy a need of the CSA to organize the high number of producers.

Work Conditions and Well-being

Regarding the work conditions, the results show that there are similar differences in the perception of producers and in the category organizational structures. Especially the factor responsibility plays an important role. Two producers named carrying responsibility as a reason for their well-being on the farm. At the same time, they mention that it is a lot of responsibility what can lead to stress and burnout (Case 3, Interview 1 and 4). For some of the earlier producers, the responsibility topic was the reason to quit the job (Case 3, Diary: 14). “You do not stop thinking about it when work is off, but you engage with it all the time” (Case 3, Interview 4: 7). A Producer in a lower position would like to take over more responsibility and complains of the monotonous work they have to do every day, put notice at the same time, that some of the colleagues, are happy with just doing their work and going home at six, without having responsibility (Case 3, Interview 3:12). It is palpable that the desire exists to divide the responsibility on more shoulders, but at the same time it is a reluctant process due to the responsibility skills and consciousness of the people working there.

This is also feasible inside the team: “It is sometimes difficult to understand the different needs of people who carry responsibility. They complain that they must have everything in mind and then they complain if you do something they did not disposed. Sometimes you should think, sometimes not...” (Case 3, Interview 3: 20). Producers in responsibility positions also enjoy the “self-determination” (Interview 1: 7), “self-realization” and “self-affirmation” (Case 3, Interview 4: 5) that they get through their work.

A positive factor influencing the wellbeing that is mentioned by all four producers during the interviews and by other producers during the visit is the team dynamic. Besides the organizational challenges mentioned before, the mood inside the gardeners’ team is very good. Furthermore, the factor workload is differently perceived due to the position. Especially in the summertime the workload is high (< 50h) and as mentioned before the work does not stop when people go home. This leaves not much room for other activities (Case 3, Interview 4, 5). This is not such a problem for producers in lower positions, as they have fixed working hours and do not take the work home (Case 3, Interview 3: 38). Of the 8 mentioned needs are two met for all of the producers (team dynamic in the gardeners’ team and earning), and two more for the producers in higher positions (diversity of tasks and self-determination/responsibility).

7.3.5 Ethical Attitude Idealism/Pragmatism

The topic of this research is highly discussed in this CSA, especially in the context of growth.

Social Idealism/Pragmatism

Case 3 focuses **protects and enhances the welfare of the people in and outside the community**. They aim to increase the wages and denounce the extremely low wages in the agricultural sector and especially the exploitation of seasonal workers. “In comparison to other agricultural businesses the earning is ok, but still far away from what a person should earn. We pay everybody, hire no seasonal worker and are not dependent on volunteers. This is our aspiration, and I hope we will not miscarry.” (Case 3, Interview 2: 16-17). Moreover, they try to keep the share price low, to be affordable for everybody and have the vision to produce potatoes for the food bank (Case 3, Interview 1: 36-37). The producers feel **appreciated by the consumers** but inside the team it is missing (Case 3, Interview 1: 18-19). Through economic liberal mechanisms in the organization structure, like cross-financing through direct marketing and a wealthy community the CSA offers a feeling of **financial stability** (Case 3, Interview 3: 28). The CSA prioritize the needs of the foundation over the needs of the producers and does not offer space for the communication of needs and thoughts. This can be seen in the high fluctuation on the producer side and the challenge to find new producers (Case 3, Interview 4: 9). Through a strict hierarchy regarding responsibility and decisions, there is no equity in the CSA and no space for codetermination and other opinions (Case 3, Interview 4: 15). During the participation and the discussions with the different producers it was palpable, that there is no real reliability and trust between the producers (Case 3, Diary: 17). Hence, case 3 meets 3 out of 8 values regarding social idealism what goes along with a low-medium idealism.

Political Idealism/Pragmatism

Case 3 aim to offer a local food source in the local area that is affordable for everybody. For this reason, they have a fix share price that they do not want to increase. Besides that, they see their project as an attempt of **building an alternative that is successful**, which is worth to try even if it fails in the end (Case 3, Interview 1: 35). “In this area we could also find people who pay double, that is not the problem, but is this the aim? I do not think so. I like the experiment, to see if it works out, it is also for us the first time that we do this. We do not know if we can keep the price like this, but it is the aim. Our vegetables are not more expensive than the ones in an organic shop, but we have higher production costs, because we pay more wages and all wages, because we do not use illegal earnings, and our work processes are not the most efficient ones yet. I am really interested if this will work out.” (Case 3, Interview 2: 35).

They **choose own goals** to reach their aims of a political, structural change in the area, which are growth, low share prices and fair wages. "In comparison to other agricultural businesses the earning is ok, but still far away from what a person should earn. We pay everybody, hire no seasonal worker and are not dependent on volunteers. This is our aspiration, and I hope we will not miscarry." (Case 3, Interview 2, 16-17). As a compromise, they use tools from the conventional system, like direct marketing and growth and are not independent of the current system, as they only produce about 80 % on their own and purchase the other 20% from non-CSA farms (Case 3, Diary: 18). Through their size they have a wide range and tend to gain **influence in current politics**. Besides that, they try to have an **educational influence** on their consumers through information about agriculture and politics. Altogether, 4 of 8 political values are met and Case 3 shows a medium idealism.

Ecological Idealism/Pragmatism

To be able to produce vegetables for such a low share price, compromises need to be made in other contexts. From an ecological perspective, the CSA tries to **produce in an ecological, sustainable way** (organic, variety, flower strips), but they still want to offer good work conditions for their producers, wherefore cultivating vegetables for 1800 people without machines, for example would not work out. As one producer state: "We try to produce in the best way we can on this area and with the number of producers and knowledge we have, but even if it is not the ecologically best way, we do it, it is still way better than what you get on the market." (Case 3, Diary: 8). They aim to **protect the surrounding ecosystems** and other ecosystems through a selective choice of purchasers (Case 3, Diary: 19). Summed up, Case 4 meets 2 of 8 ecological values of CSAs. The CSA shows a pragmatic attitude towards ecological topics.

Organizational Idealism/Pragmatism

The size leads to the next compromise of this CSA regarding the organizational structure. A quite hierarchical and untransparent organizational structure, which might be necessary to organize such a big team. They do not strive for an inclusion of all members in the decision processes as well as they do not put effort in innovating new resilient organization structures. Furthermore, the different wages of producers are not communicated in a transparent way. The consumers only now approximately what the gardeners earn (3000€, gross) and the producers among themselves do not exactly know what they earn, especially not what the people in the other responsibility levels earn (management, directors)." We are not up to this tattle" (Case 3, Interview 2: 21). In the higher positions (main gardeners, managers and committee people have room for **self-determination** in a certain range (Case 3, Interview 1: 21). Regarding the organizational sphere, Case 4 meets 1 of 8 values of CSAs which refers to a pragmatic attitude.

Case 3

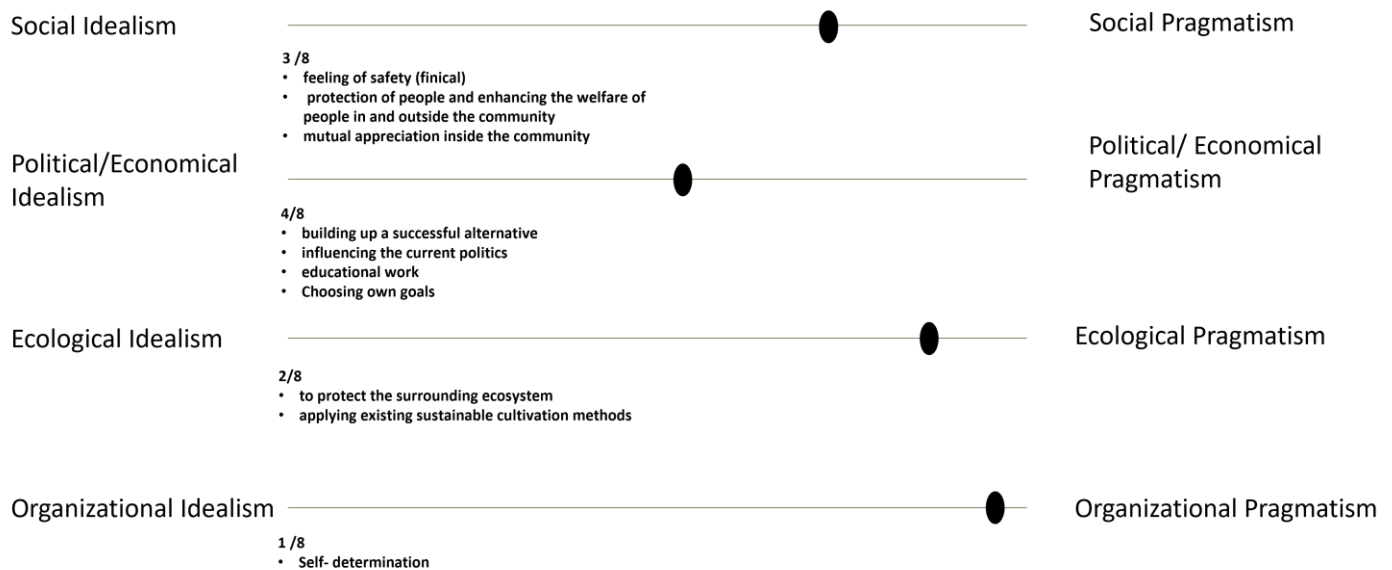


Figure 7 Positioning of Case 3 between Idealism and Pragmatism

(Source: own)

7.3.6 Overall Challenges

The overall challenges of Case 3 are:

- A high fluctuation on the producer side
- A challenge to find new producers. According to the producers, “the market of gardeners in *** is almost empty” (Case 3, Interview, 1: 50)
- Improving the communication inside the team
- Structure of responsibility and decision processes
- Hierarchy which leads to disfavor of the producers
- Controversial sights about codetermination, responsibility sharing and transparency in the team
- Controversial opinions about growth inside the team
- Challenge to handle growth and a good team dynamic and responsibility structure (two class society)
- A sufficient responsibility division. “We work like we are self- employees but are employed.” (Case 3, Interview 3, 21)
- Difference between commitment of producers in the starting time of the CSA and actual producers. (Generation change)
- Adjusting screw of the budget is the numbers of consumers-> growth
- Romanization of agriculture and CSAs

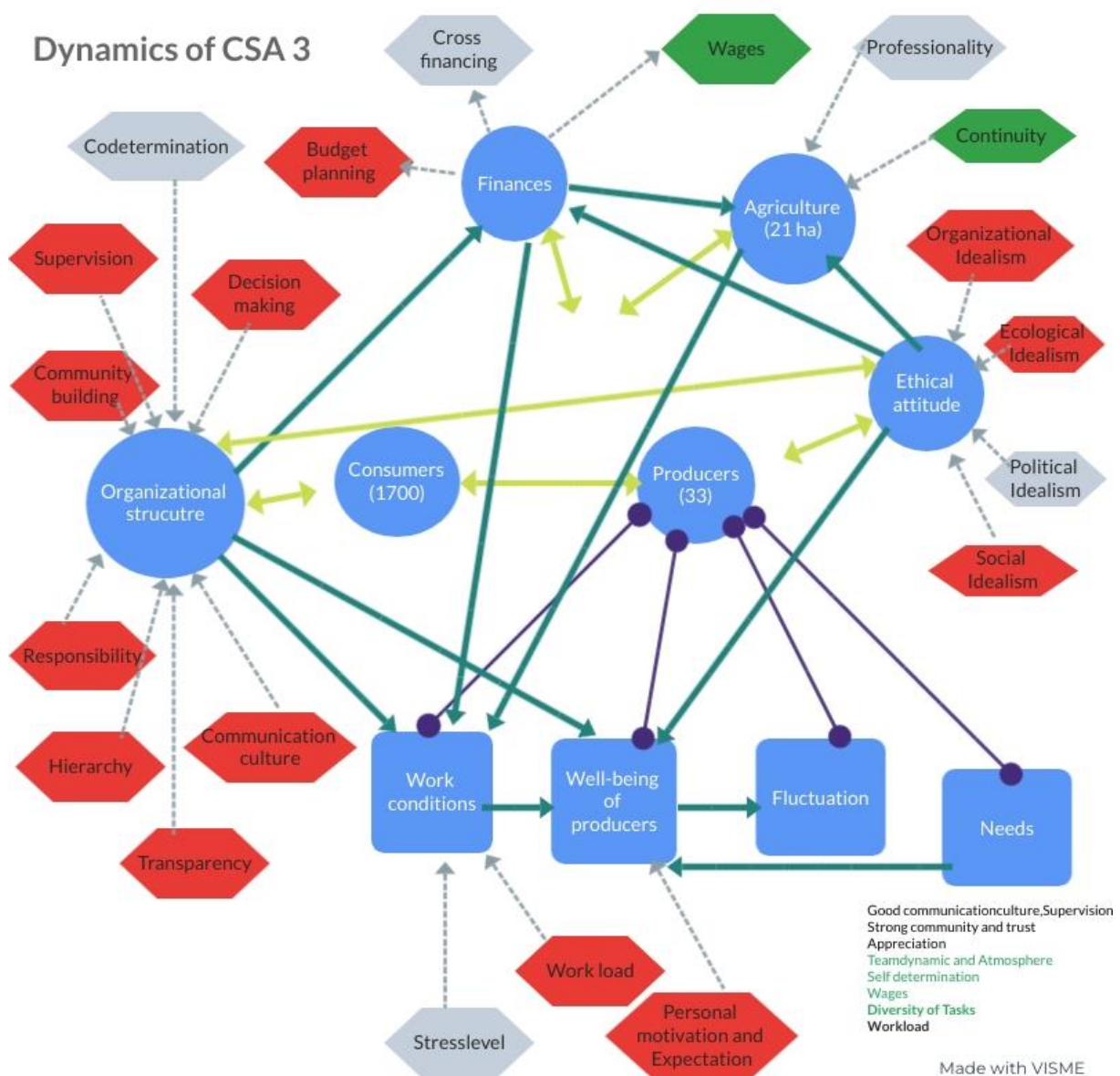


Figure 8 Strengthens and Weaknesses of Case 3

Source: own

1. Elements

Blue Circles: Structuring elements of dynamics in CSAs

Blue squares: Conditions in the context of CSA producers

Hexagons: variables with a potential influence on the dynamics and conditions in CSAs

Green hexagons: Strength of CSA

Red hexagon: Weakness of CSA

Grey hexagon: neutral variable

2. Connections

Yellow arrows: Mutual influence of CSA elements

Blue arrows: Influence of one element or condition on another one

Violet lines: Conditions connected to the element producer

Grey arrows: potential influence of variables on elements and conditions

3. Text

Text underneath the "Needs" square, shows all the needs state by the producers of Case 1, the needs that are met by the CSA are highlighted green (4/14)

- The size of the boxes has no meaning -

7.4 Case 4

7.4.1 Overview

Case 4 is a CSA embedded in an Ecovillage. About ten people (sharing five full time positions) produce, vegetables, grains, and eggs for the ecovillage (120 people) and for additionally about 40 “external” consumers. Furthermore, they do seed multiplication (aided), seedling production and educational work (tours). Currently, there are four plant managers, two apprentices and one intern. They produce on 32 ha of land, whereof 3 ha are for vegetable cultivation. The rest divides in an eatable forest garden (mainly for educational work), extensive arable land, grassland, and orchards. Currently they are planning an agroforestry system, that will be implemented in the next years. The land is owned by a foundation and leased by the cooperative. The CSA started in 2011 to feed the ecovillage and was transferred and extended to the current producers in 2013 (Case 4, Diary, 1-3). The CSA is a well-known place for education about market gardening and regenerative agriculture, therefore they have many requests for internships, seminars, and guides (Case 4, Diary, 3).

7.4.2 Organization Structure

The **responsibility** and decision structure in this CSA is very **transparent**. There is a **hierarchy** which is dependent on knowledge and experience and performed in a shallow and open way. “What I experience here is a climate of mutual trust and appreciation. There is a very shallow hierarchy and a good cooperation, as we are on one level.” (Case 4, Interview 1: 18). Decisions are made by the main responsible gardeners, but others can always suggest ideas and opinions which are included in the decision processes. The gardeners appreciate the value of the people and their knowledge in the community and consult them whenever it is needed (Case 4, Diary: 5). “Once a year there is an impulse evening, where we share our ideas and plans for the next year, e.g. the agroforestry system or keyline design. There are many people in the village with expertise, their feedback and support help us a lot (Case 4, Interview 2: 27).

Internal Communication and Supervision

All producers are enthusiastic about the communication culture and thankful for the possibility to learn and get room for personal reflection and growing (Case 4, Diary: 31). There is not only room for sharing personal needs but responded to them. Emotional check-ins are included in every meeting, and once a month there is one afternoon only for personal topics and needs (Case 4, Interview 2: 23). Important for a fluent communication is a good functioning communication tool (Case 4, Diary: 27). A focus is also put on a transparent and open culture of failure. To learn and improve constantly room is given to make own mistakes, as they are handled in a positive way (Case 4, Diary: 5). A positive influence of the ecovillage community is their support in intern processes and conflicts through a regular supervision. Whenever conflicts arise, educated people in this field can be conducted. “To have the possibility of supervision so close is a huge financial and organizational advantage.” (Case 4, Diary: 31).

Community and Members Communication

The strong ecovillage community brings other advantages as well. The proximity of CSA and community brings a lot of trust and appreciation which leads to a stability regarding finances and continuity. This fosters room for education, mistakes, and experiments. On the other hand, a lot of time is needed for this kind of community and communication. Living in a community will never give you the time to work 50 h/ week in agriculture (Case 4, Interview 1: 3-5). The continuity of this CSA is supported by the ecovillage community, the continuity of the main gardeners, which are also part of the ecovillage and the land that is leased from a foundation for a long-term period (Case 4, Interview 1: 8). A weakness of this CSA is their communication with the external consumers. As they are further away than the ecovillage community, they do not get the same focus (Case 4, Interview 2: 30).

Furthermore, they reduced the assistance of consumers on the field, as it needed more time and energy to introduce the people than it helps (Case 4, Diary: 4).

7.4.3 Finances

Share Price and Budget

The reference price for „external“ consumers is 90,-, the one for the consumers from the ecovillage 153,-, as it includes bread, honey and eggs (Case 4, Diary: 9-11). So, everybody can pay as much as they can according to their financial resources. Last year they had a bidding round to reach the needed budget for the first time. It worked out very well and they reached the needed budget. The consumers were actively included to this event (moderating, auction) to counteract the consumer-producer separation (Case 4, Diary: 8).

Cross-financing

The CSA uses cross financing to finance proper regenerative agriculture and research in this direction. They have the CSA (~ 50% of the revenue), direct marketing through a farm shop, aided seed multiplication, seed/ seedlings selling and educational work (~50% of the revenue) (Case 4, Diary: 7, 15). The agroforestry system is also aided by a foundation, wherefore the time that is needed for the planning of this system is paid by this foundation as well (Case 4, Interview 1: 6-7).

Wages

The gardener earn approximately 14,50€/h total labor cost. The wages differ due to the needs and the state of knowledge of the single producers. They are fixed through single and afterwards group discussions. Except of the apprentice, all gardeners earn at least 9,50€/h (Case 4, Diary: 13). „I earn 1800,- net wage for 32 h. There is space to improve, but it is more than in other businesses, and I can work half time in a manager position, that is not self-evident. But in this position, I have a lot of responsibility and even though I do not buy a new car or phone, I have to live very thrifty and need to think twice if I buy an almond butter for 10 € or not“ (Case 4, Interview 1: 24). A challenge is the huge earning difference between the work as gardeners and as facilitator in seminars and guidance. Two of the main gardeners facilitate educational work where they earn approximately 40,- /h. „The money from the educational work is not going in the CSA, but to the people who facilitate the course. And the difference of the hourly wages is extreme, what you get for educational work and what you get for keeping the business and the garden running. It is not cool for me when I give a seminar and earn 600,- per weekend, and the gardener who is on duty gets 12,-/h.“ (Case 4, Interview 2: 17-19).

7.4.4 Producers

Background and Motivation

All the producers have a practical agricultural background and experience in this field. The four main gardeners are all trained gardeners. One of them had an own CSA before and knows about the advantages of a collective founded and led CSA in comparison to a solitary one (Case 4, Interview 1: 14). „For me it was important to build up something on my own, that was the challenge I needed to prove that I can do it and to be able to work the way I want it.“ (Case 4, Interview 1: 14.) „There is a more relaxed attitude in a community than in a one-man- business. I needed to take care that everything works out, also in the economic way“ (Case 4, Interview 1: 3). The starting motivation of the gardeners to work in a CSA was idealistic. „I want to know the consumers I cultivate for. The connection in this contactless world. To have the opportunity to do good work on different levels. Not only producing healthy food in a sustainable way but raising awareness. But also, what I get back as producer: there is a huge difference between an anonymous wholesale and the appreciation and energy that comes back from a community“ (Case 4, Interview 2: 3). Another producer states, that the CSA model was the opportunity to do agriculture in the idealistic way this producer was aiming for before starting the agricultural apprenticeship.

During the apprenticeship the previous idealistic idea of the work was de-romanticized. “When I thought about what I really want to do, I came back to the point, what I wanted before my apprenticeship, then I came in contact with CSA and thought this is maybe a concept where I can do what I want without the pressure and the waste of produce and energy” (Case 4, Interview 1: 12).

Needs

Stability and Continuity:

A financial and social stability offers room to do agriculture in the way the producers want to do it. It offers room for learning and experimenting and takes away the pressure (Case 4, Diary: 32). This stability is supported by a continuity of the land and the people. Stability through continuity offers reduction of distress and room for well-being on many levels (Case 4, Diary: 5).

Good Communication culture and supervision:

A transparent and open communication improves the well-being of the producers, helps to meet the individual needs and one of the main factors that was mentioned as a reason for a long-term commitment. Furthermore, the regular and easily accessible supervision is crucial for this dynamic. (Case 4, Interview 1: 16; Interview 2: 23; Diary: 6).

Diversity of tasks:

“The diversity of tasks, which come along with a small-scale agricultural business that is organized in a solidaric way, is accounts for me. It does not happen often, that I have the same tasks for a couple of days” (Case 4, Interview 2: 9).

Self-Determination:

„I love to work self-determined and support this in the team as well. We tell each other when we are working and when not, but there is a great flexibility for everybody” (Case 4, Interview 2: 9).

Room for experimenting and mistakes:

„To have the possibility to play and experiment on a field. The room to invent and make mistakes. This possibility is great and offers a lot of space for self-realization” (Case 4, Interview 2: 9).

Self-Realization:

Another important factor is having room and the stability for building up something for a long-term and realize visions (Case 4, Diary, 32). For one producer, the self-realization was the reason for starting an own, solitary CSA, which brought a lot of pressure. Having the possibility to implement own visions and ideas in a more stable surrounding is one of the reasons for working in this CSA now (Case 4, Interview 1, 17-18).

Social Idealism:

„I desire, that the solidaric aspect on the social level is taken more serious in CSAs” (Case 4, Interview 2: 32). “That the need of the people comes before the needs of the business was the crucial factor for me to work here” (Case 4, Interview 1: 16). “Not working isolated but having a close contact to people and nature has a high quality for me” (Case 4, Interview 2: 9). For producers who live in the ecovillage is an important factor to not only be the gardeners but seen as persons with a lot of different abilities and characteristics (Case 4, Interview 2: 24).

Agricultural branch:

The way how agriculture is done as well as the agricultural knowledge and skills of a CSA and the possibility to improve its own abilities is also an important factor (Case 4, Interview 1: 16).

Appreciation:

The mutual trust and appreciation support a good handling with each other, allows a shallow hierarchy and a flexibility in working time and tasks (Case 4, Interview 1: 18). Furthermore, the appreciation and trust from the community supports the well-being of the producers and counteracts the pressure of work peaks during the summertime (Case 4, Interview, 1: 28).

Strong community and trust:

The support and stability of the eco village community supports the long-term commitment of the producers. Especially if they are living in the eco-village, they tend to be part of the whole community (eco-village and CSA) with a long-term focus.

Wages:

Getting a sufficient wage is an important factor for all the producers in this CSA. For this reason, they talk transparent about this topic, where they stand right now and what they aim to reach. "I have children and I want to be able to have a good live from my earning. I cannot accept, that we make such an important work and earn so little. As we are also an educational enterprise, it is sometimes hard, as the gardening is standing lower from the earning perspective. But this is something we try to find solutions for. But it is an ideal for me to not turn around every euro before I buy something" (Case 4, Interview 1: 23-24). "For me the live quality is more important than the earning, due to the community, I get many things for free I would normally pay for, like cultural events or cloth, but I do not want to overthink if I can go on holidays or by an almond butter. This is important for me" (Case 4, Interview 2: 17).

Passion:

On producer states during a discussion, ideology is not equal passion (Case 4, Diary: 20). What he meant with that, is that there can be a lot of ideology and idealism in a project, but if there is no passion for the agricultural work it does not help in the end.

Work Conditions and Well-being

The current work conditions in CSA 4 are meeting the needs of the producers quite good. This might be because the needs of the producers are higher prioritized than the needs of the business. The workload is adapted to the individual gardeners, the security and stability of the community and the long-term commitment of the producers offers the possibility to focus on human conditions and gives room for learning and experimenting (Case 4, Interview 1: 16). They still have the possibility to grow but do not need and want it right now (Case 4, Interview 1: 28). "The communication culture is good, to speak open and honest with each other, of course it is not perfect yet, but way better than with other people. I can learn a lot from that" (Case 4, Interview 1: 16). The appreciation of the community and the other producers is also a crucial factor for the well-being of the producers in this CSA. This appreciation is given for the food, but also for the shaping of the living environment (Case 4, Interview 2: 4-5). In Case 4, 11 of the 12 mentioned needs are fulfilled. The earning is ok for the producers but should be further increased through finding a solution for the challenge of the huge difference in education work and agricultural work.

7.4.5 Ethics

„For me this is a sticking point, the balance between pragmatism and ideal and many CSA fail because they cannot handle it" (Case 4, Interview 1: 30). As this topic is a known challenge, the producers of this CSA reflect a lot about it in the context of their own CSA as well as in the context of the whole CSA movement.

Social Idealism/Pragmatism

Case 4 has a high focus on social topics. The **needs of the producers** are in the foreground. They aim to have a **strong and stable community**, what is given by the community of the ecovillage and leads to a feeling of **safety** (Case 4, Interview 1: 16).

Personal and social topics are prioritized as there is a lot of **room for personal needs, exchange, and feedback**. A supervision is consulted from the beginning on and arising conflicts are observed and reconciled as soon as possible. Furthermore, these conflicts are seen as something constructive. (Case 4, Diary: 25; Interview 1: 16). As they are aware of the challenge of self-exploitation in agriculture, they actively approach it by a good workload and payment. “In earlier years the earning was not important for me, that was a quite strange idealism I would say in retrospect. I was close to quit as I earned so less that I could not even pay the repair costs for my car. Now this is way more important for me” (Case 4, Interview 1: 23-24). Nobody there works 40h and they earn more than an average gardener. At the same time, they are aware of the bad potential earning situation in agriculture and the huge discrepancy between gardeners work and educational work. For this grievance they try to find and implement solutions (**protection of people and enhancing the welfare of people in and outside the community**) (Case 4, Diary, 7: 34). “I want to adjust this or put all the money in one pot. I do not want to make a difference between people facilitating and people sorting the yield” (Case 4, Interview 2: 17). There is a high level of **trust and reliability inside the group and from the community** of the ecovillage and a fair contact with each other (**equity**) (Case 4, Interview 1: 18). There is very shallow hierarchy, which is knowledge and responsibility dependent, but all the producers are involved in decisions and can communicate their thoughts and ideas whenever they want (**tolerance towards other opinions**). Regarding the social sphere, this CSA fulfills 8 of 8 values and shows a strong idealism.

Political Idealism/Pragmatism

Regarding the political sphere, Case 4 puts some effort in **educational work** in the context of cultivation methods, CSAs, and community building. Moreover, they communicated transparently about their finances and the solidarity economy. The CSA **chooses own goals** and, they **try to implement economic innovations**, like finding a solution for the huge earning difference, between agricultural work and educational work (Case 4, Interview 2: 17). As they use different ways of cross-financing, they are not independent and use tools from the current system to be able to finance a strong ecological idealism (Case 4; Diary: 17). The CSA does not strive strongly towards changing the system or influencing the current politics in a direct way. They claim that idealism is good, but it needs to adapt to the daily live on a farm (Case 4, Diary, 26). Altogether, the CSA meets 3 of 8 values of the political sphere, what results in a low-medium idealism.

Ecological Idealism/Pragmatism

As mentioned before, this CSA uses cross-financing methods to subsidize a **focus on agricultural regenerative methods and opens a room for experimenting and innovation**. They are a pioneer farm for regenerative agriculture and market gardening. They produce in an extensive, holistic, and **circular flow** orientated way (Case 4, Diary: 42). Through the financial and social stability, they have the possibility to experiment, try and invent new methods of sustainable agriculture. Offering and keeping this playroom to invent and go further than only producing food in a solidaric way is a main concern (Case 4, Interview 2: 9). They work with a keyline plough and abstain from using deep ploughs and use compost teas with effective microorganisms (Case 4, Diary: 39). They **protect ecosystems** by focusing on landscaping, like a diverse structured area with an agroforestry system (Case 4, Diary: 42). As the land is in a foundation, they have the safety to invest in long-term cultivation systems, what helps to protect ecosystems and fosters a high biodiversity. Through the own multiplication and production of seeds, they only use **seed-proof, locally adapted varieties**. Through the ecovillage and the variety of different branches, they use as **little external material inputs as possible**. But due to their selection of machinery and functional technic, they need a certain amount of fossil fuels. On the ecological sphere, this CSA has a strong idealism with 7 of 8 fulfilled values.

Organizational Idealism/Pragmatism

Trough the closeness of the ecovillage community, this CSA determinates the consumers quite strong **(creating strong and participatory communities)**. They have a very shallow hierarchy which is knowledge and experience dependent (Case 4, Diary: 25). One producer states, how great it is to have this huge scope for experiencing and faults, which are always going along with it **(fault tolerance)** (Case 4, Interview 2: 9). The main responsible gardeners are aware of the individual expertise of the people in the community and appreciate and use this huge source of knowledge. Even if decisions are made by the main gardeners, everybody working there can come up with ideas and take over responsibility if they are eager to do so **(equality of all members)** (Case 4, Interview 2: 21). Due to their **open communication culture**, their organizational processes are flexible and changeable due to the needs of the people working there **(flexibility and enabling self-determination)**. According to that, they focus on values, that underpin organizational idealism. One of the main aims of the ecovillage is community building and organization of such, wherefore they **put effort into innovation of resilient organizational structures**. This results in a quite strong idealism with 6 out of 8 values regarding the organizational sphere.

Case 4

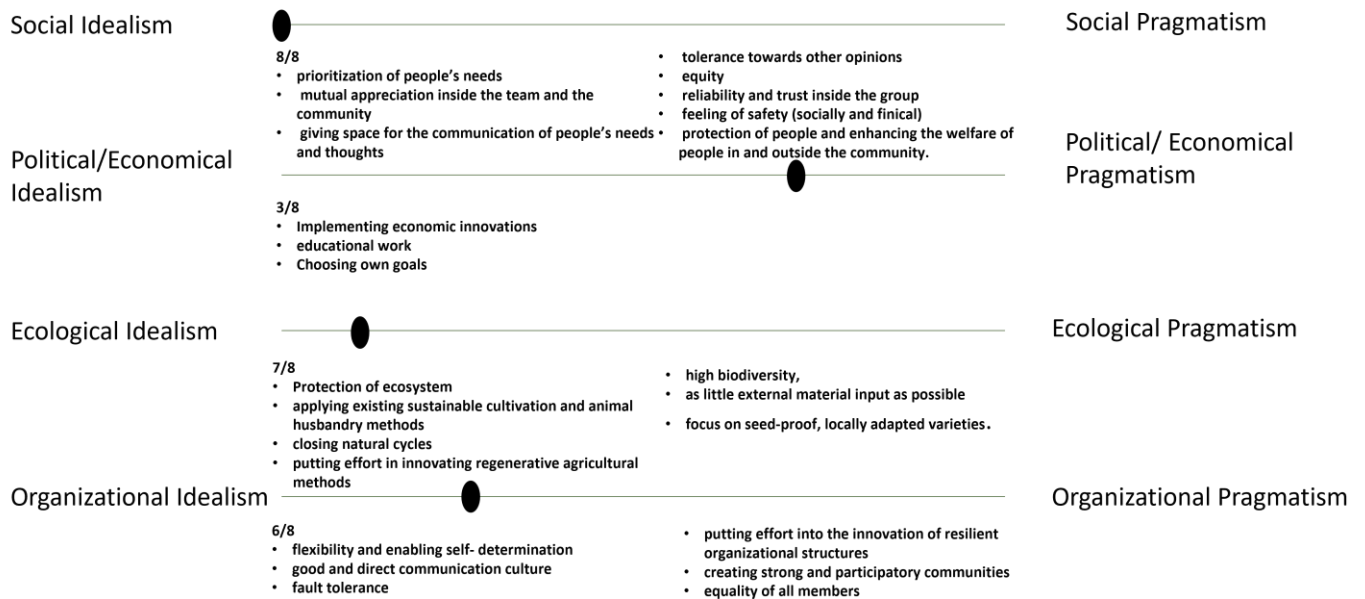


Figure 9 Positioning of Case 4 between Idealism and Pragmatism regarding the four spheres

(Source: own)

7.4.6 Network

The national network is a great support, especially when you start a new CSA. It offers a lot of help and connects CSAs to exchange and improve the whole movement. It also supports research in this direction (Case 4, Diary, 35). This CSA was confronted with a kind of concurrency, as a CSA started in the next village and did not accept any help of the existing, stable CSA. “It was strange, they wanted to do everything on their own, even if we had surpluses. Maybe it was a kind of proud or the fear to lose themselves in our stable structures, I do not know, but know there is a new gardener, and a nice cooperation is evolving” (Case 4, Interview 2, 32-34).

7.4.7 Overall Challenges

The overall challenges of Case 4 are:

- The difference between the earning in the educational sector and in the gardening sector
- The external marketing, as the focus is still on the community of the ecovillage
- The communication with the external CSA members
- Not losing the focus and expertise due to the huge variety of branches (Case 4, Interview 2: 14)
- The integration of new long-term gardeners. To be able to keep the good communication nevertheless new gardeners are integrated (Case 4, Interview 2: 15).

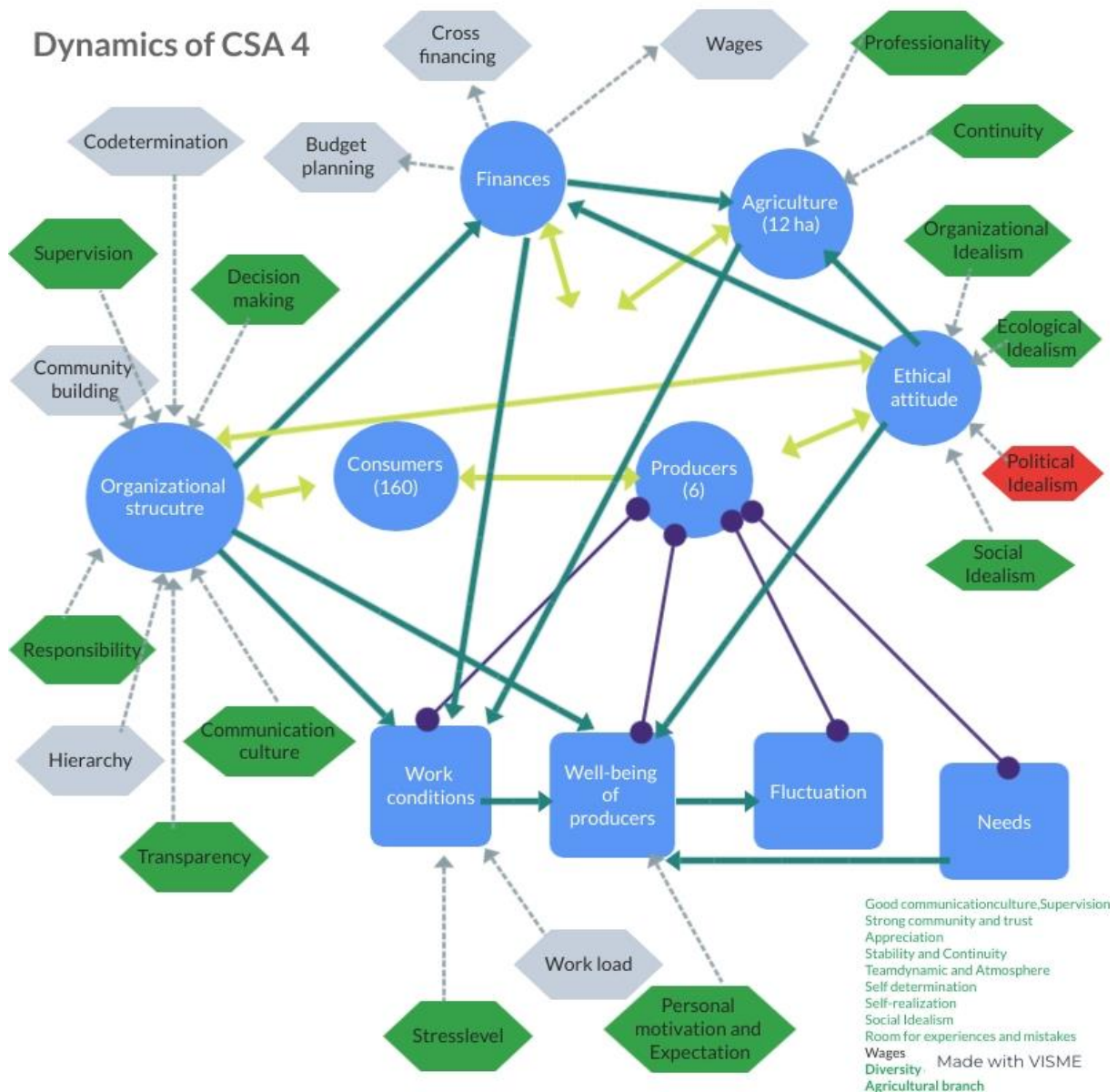


Figure 10 Strengthens and weaknesses of Case 4

Source: own

1. Elements

Blue Circles: Structuring elements of dynamics in CSAs

Blue squares: Conditions in the context of CSA producers

Hexagons: variables with a potential influence on the dynamics and conditions in CSAs

Green hexagons: Strength of CSA

Red hexagon: Weakness of CSA

Grey hexagon: neutral variable

2. Connections

Yellow arrows: Mutual influence of CSA elements

Blue arrows: Influence of one element or condition on another one

Violet lines: Conditions connected to the element producer

Grey arrows: potential influence of variables on elements and conditions

3. Text

Text underneath the "Needs" square, shows all the needs state by the producers of Case 1, the needs that are met by the CSA are highlighted green (4/14)

- The size of the boxes has no meaning -

7.5 Case 5

7.5.1 Overview

Case 5 is a vegetable CSA with 2,4 ha leased land wherefrom, 1,4 ha are cultivated with 45 of different vegetables. They try different cultivation systems, e.g. market gardening. They implement lean management for efficient work structures. The CSA was founded in 2017. One producer had the idea, put up a concept and founded a registered association to start the project. As this person has an organization background the concept had a high focus on structures, working time, earnings, efficiency, short work ways. The initial concept was improved over the time, always with a focus on best practices and efficiency to build up a farm, that is economical stable and offers good working conditions for the gardeners there (not more than 30 h, sufficient holidays, ability to survive with a family). Every member depot 400 euros by entering the CSA and becomes a stakeholder of the area and the operating funds. This money is used to start the CSA and to develop with the help of investments (Case 5, Diary: 10-11). Currently there are 240 members in the association. The vegetables are delivered once a week, to different depots. The vegetables are not distributed in boxes but brought to the different depots in a loose form and the division between the single consumers is organized by the different depots. All vegetables are distributed nevertheless, they are twisted or very small. The vegetables are only cleaned superficial, what was decided together with the members. (Case 5, Diary: 2).

7.5.2 Organization Structure

This CSA has clear areas of responsibility, based on the expertise of the different producers. To be able to occupy these areas, enough people are needed. "There are tasks which are always there, nevertheless the size, and if you are too small this can get stressful. On the other side are over 350 people too anonymous, so we decided to get a size around 240 members" (Case 5, Interview 1: 7). They count one gardener for 60-70 shares. The concept of the CSA included from the beginning on a strong community with codetermination of the consumers, supervision, fair income for the gardeners and a sufficient workload. "I think an important point was, that in the founding period many people were active, that worked here later. They stood up for their needs, and on these needs the group developed and grew. Remain constant with this initial concept brings people together who also value these visions" (Case 5 Interview 2: 19).

Decision Processes

The CSA is organized in a gardener's team, a support team (supports the gardeners with tasks like logistic), an Orga- team (representatives from gardeners, support team and consumers) and working groups organized to deal with different topics. Except of a member meeting twice a year, the Orga- team is the main decision- making committee. Gardeners and support team get a scope of action. The decisions are made consensus based. There is a high trust between the different responsibility groups, wherefore not everybody needs to know everything. **Transparency** is highly valued and all protocols, the budget and business data are accessible for the members (Case 5, Diary: 33-44). "At the members meeting we try to give as many people as possible a chance to speak. We talk transparently about finances and what is needed for the next year, also if something is broken or the yield might be less, this is communicated" (Case 5, Interview 1: 14).

Communication and Supervision

They have a supervision four times a year, in the gardeners' team and in the organization team. "It is not easy to turn a conflict in something constructive, but that's why we invest in a constant supervision, as conflicts and different opinions are a normal thing in social groups. We dug deep for this support, but it is worth it, going out of the daily business and taking over the bird perspective" (Case 5, Interview 1: 9).

Furthermore, they use conflict mediation they can make demands on as soon as a conflict arises. “Of course, there are conflicts, and this is good, life is not conflict free, even if we wish so. It is important that the project is not disassembled because of it. If it does not fit with someone it is ok to split, but it is important to do it in a good way. Not everybody fits to every project” (Case 5, Interview 1: 11). The communication in the gardeners’ teams is open and need orientated. “We are four fix gardeners, and we can discuss everything, about needs, working times and so on. That helps me a lot to stay motivated, being self-determined, of course to a degree where it is capable for the business. But by means of that, I decide how much I work and when” (Case 5, Interview 2: 11). Up to now there is no **fluctuation** in the gardener’s team. With the members and extern people they try to use a positive way of communication. “We emphasize what we are standing for and what we do instead of differentiation and what we do not want. We want to reach all kind of people. Not only the once which are already in the bubble. An if we define ourselves trough differentiation from the agrarian industry and Monsanto and so on, this is a negative first dynamic and can discourage people” (Case 5, Interview 1:12). Besides the two members meeting, there is a yield mail with information for the members every week, the depots are an exchange and information platform and the coworking day, where members come to the farm and help, supports the communication (Case 5, Interview 1: 14). The coworking day is clearly defined as a social day do get to know each other and build up trust, that leads to stability. It is more about interconnection and exchange with the members than about high efficiency on the field. “We make it nice for the people, organize a big breakfast and create with our comfort logistic a space where we bring people and food production together. And therefore, we get some help, that is not always a relief but nevertheless an enrichment. Some of the people who visit us on these days even decided to work in this direction. That is great!” (Case 5, Interview 1: 12). To strengthen the community and offer space for social needs, they invest in a “comfort logistic”. This is according to one producer “to have a kitchen, a bureau, a lounge, and a nice place to sit together outside. We have a wagon where people can sleep and so on and so on. That makes a big change, and it is important to take some money in the hand in the beginning for this comfort logistic” (Case 5, Interview 1, 7). The member’s community is quite stable and supportive. Many members engage on a voluntary base and get an expense allowance for their work (Case 5, Interview 2: 22-23). Besides that, there is a lot of knowledge and expertise in different fields in the Orga-team which is consulted by the gardeners (Case 5, Interview 2: 24-25). They have a long list of people waiting for a membership and need no time and energy to search for new members (Case 5, Interview 2: 26).

7.5.3 Finances

Share Price and Budget

The reference price for a small share (1-2 people) is currently 60, -/ month. The big share (3-4 people) is 100, -/month. Everybody can pay as much as possible according to their financial situation. If the budget for the next year is not reached a bidding round is started until the needed amount is reached. The coop is not keeping house in profit orientated way and all surpluses are reinvested (Case 5, Diary: 12).

Cross-financing

Surpluses of the yield either donated or distributed to the members, so there is no cross financing (Case 5, Interview 1: 25). But they get some additional money through guides and seminars (Case 5, Diary: 69).

Wages

They aim to pay above the average wage agreement to appreciate the gardeners for their work. The social security trough pension, social contribution and the workers compensation board are ensured (Case 5, Diary, 46-48). “I get 16,20€/h net wage, that is ok, but I work 70% and I have family, so it sometimes gets short. I have a side job as well” (Case 5, Interview 1: 20).

“For my actual live situation, it is ok, but if it would be different, if I had children for example, I think it would be not enough. It depends on who you compare with. In comparison to other gardeners and other CSAs we have a good earning, but for my college who has children it is not very exuberant” (Case 5, Interview 2: 7). “We already had discussions about a need orientated wage, a solidaric wage model, but we never finished this discussion. To change the status quo and to talk about money is not always easy” (Case 5, Interview 1: 9). The CSA is aware of the double burden of producers, who are paid workers on the one hand and volunteers in the association on the other hand. The time spend for voluntarily work, like meetings in the Orga-group, is paid half (Case 5, Interview 2: 8).

7.5.4 Producers

Background and Motivation

The founder of the project, who had the idea, put up the concept and founded the registration, has an academical agricultural background with some experience in practical work. During the planning process he visited different CSAs to collect knowledge and best practices from them (Case 5, Interview 1: 5). “After my studies I got to know CSA and that was inspiring. That was close to my ideal idea of agriculture, great range of vegetables, a community, people with a lot of idealism and a will to tackle, I liked that a lot” (Case 5, Interview 1: 3). Due to a personal strength of the founder in organizational topics, the concept is thought out regarding good working structures, efficiency, people’s needs and logistic (Case 5, Diary: 2). The other gardeners have a practical agricultural education. „I learned on a purchasing farm. There I noticed the high workload and self-exploitation, especially for apprentice. And I realized that this is not the way I want to do agriculture. If agriculture looks like this, this is not the way I want to live and work. And then I got in touch with CSA. Actual, workload, working times and wages, are part of the basic concept of this CSA, which fascinated me and was the reason to make an application” (Case 5, Interview 2: 3).

Needs

Self-determination:

Self- determination is an important factor for the people working here. On the agricultural base that is given in this CSA (Case 5, Interview 2: 3). On the organizational base not that much, due to the collective structures. Because of that, one producer thinks of founding a new, own project (Case 5, Interview 1: 20).

Short duty:

Another factor mentioned, is the duty stroke. Being able to use a bike to get to work and not needing more than 30-40 min is an urgent need. “I commute over an hour to the farm, that means that I am sitting one day per week in the car, that does not go along with anything I stand for and want” (Case 5, Interview 1: 20).

Good Communication culture and supervision:

The transparent and need orientated communication in this CSA is a reason for producers to work here and to do so for a long- term. “In the team we can talk about everything, according to our needs, that helps me a lot to stay motivated” (Case 5, Interview 2: 11). Additionally, the regular supervision from the beginning on significant factor for a constructive exchange and exposure to conflicts (Case 5, Interview 1: 9-11).

Diversity of Tasks:

The diversity of tasks in the daily business makes a lot of fun and keeps the motivation high (Case 5, Interview 1: 20).

Strong community and trust:

A stable community and this “safe” field where they can move, work and experience are important factors for some producers (Case 5, Diary: 6).

Team dynamic and atmosphere:

A good mood and together on a personal level in the team is crucial and a base for trust and motivation (Case 5, Interview 1: 20).

Workload:

A sufficient work/life balance is a need of the producers in this CSA. “I would say this is a main factor, that needs to be fixed from the beginning on. The wages and the working hours” (Case 5, Interview 2: 20-21).

Wages:

Being able to have a good live from the earning is important for all the producers. Even though they already pay more than in other agricultural businesses and CSAs, the financial standing is not the best for one producer who has family. This is also a reason why he might orientate himself away from the project (Case 5, Interview 1: 20; Interview 2: 7).

Appreciation:

The appreciation as well as the trust of consumers and team colleges makes the work and time spend on the farm valuable. This dynamic gives space to act self-determined and motivates to improve and innovate the agricultural practices (Case 5, Interview 1: 20; Interview 2: 15).

Passion for agriculture and gardening:

An important factor seems also the passion for agricultural work. If this passion is given, producers want to work in this area even though other circumstances might be in need to be improved (Case 5, Diary: 68).

Work Conditions and Well-being

Especially the flexibility regarding working times and communication, and the self-determination are factors that are valued by the producers regarding the work conditions. “I do not like to be said what I have to do. In the gardener’s team everybody is treated equal in the beginning, and then we see regarding the abilities how we organize. What everybody can fetch. Through this I have a big scope to design. That is a huge factor, besides the fact, that everybody works half time and get a more or less fair wage” (Case 5, Interview 2: 5). To improve the efficiency and decrease the workload, they work with lean and quality management. “When people work together collectively it is urgent that everything has its space and that there are clear rules, otherwise there is a huge chaos. Another thing are the routes and workflows, to take a deep look at them and see what is needed and what not and where they can be improved. We have three tool walls on the field, for the most important tools. Regarding the commissioning, we use boxes on roles and each box is maximum 10 kg, to not destroy our bodies. It makes sense to invest some energy and time in these things” (Case 5, Interview 1: 8-9). From an organizational perspective, there are different opinions in the team regarding the decision processes in the community. A lot of time is needed for plena and decision making in the Orga- team. One producer has the feeling, that a kind of sluggishness came over the years, as the first very energetic stage is over where people spent a lot of energy into the project, now a kind of stability is reached, therefore new ideals and visions are not accepted and adopted in the same way than in earlier years. Especially if new people come with ideas there is often a skeptical attitude towards it (Case 5, Diary: 5). Other producers like this stability and this “safe” field where they can move, work and experience.

Especially with an agricultural focus there is a lot of room and space to experience and try new things. It is more the organizational part of the CSA where it gets harder to implement change. (Case 5, Diary: 6). “I would like to decide more on my own, that is sometimes hard in collective structures. The decision making takes time and seems to get more sluggish” (Case 5, Interview 1: 20). Another producer states, “There is a huge trust towards us from the Orga- team. And we are also part of it on a voluntary basis, so we bring have of the time to account and have of the time is voluntary. It is a suspenseful structure, to include the consumers to the farm and the decisions. It is all one and that is something I like. It meets my ideal, and at the same time we work specialized, to be pragmatic” (Case 5, Interview 2: 14-15). Allover, 9 of the 10 needs of the producers are met in Case 5. The two needs that are not fulfilled for everybody are a short duty and self-determination. This need is met for producers who are more interested in the agricultural topics, but for producers with a focus on organization, the sluggishness of decision processes in a collective might be difficult.

7.5.5 Ethics

Regarding the balance between idealism and pragmatism, one producer state: “Better start pragmatic and look afterwards how much room there is for idealism. Be sure that can pay good wages, and the cultivation works from the beginning on and then you can concentrate on the rest. In agriculture you always notice that there are two sides, and there is no right or wrong. Every year is different and every situation. There is not one solution for everything! ” (Case 5, Interview 1: 25).

Social Idealism/Pragmatism

According to that, values of CSAs that correlated with a strong social idealism are: prioritization of people’s needs, mutual appreciation inside the team and the community, giving space for the communication of people’s needs and thoughts, tolerance towards other opinions, equity, reliability and trust inside the group, feeling of safety (socially and finical), protection of people and enhancing the welfare of people in and outside the community.

The **needs of the people are prioritized** in Case 5, as well as offering space to **communicate these needs and personal thoughts**. Fixed working hours and sufficient wages from the beginning on are part of the initial concept (Case 5, Interview 2: 3). The community of consumers was embedded from the beginning on. They invest in a “comfort logistic”, to offer a surrounding on the farm that invites people to come, co-work, discuss and relax (**protection of people and enhancing the welfare of people in and outside the community**). Through the strong community and the clear concept from the beginning on there is a feeling of **safety socially and financial**. What can also be seen through the low fluctuation on the producer side. Inside the whole group exists trust and reliability whereby legitimation and flexibility are possible (Case 5, Interview 1: 15). Regarding **equity**, one producer state: “When you start here everybody is treated with equal rights and we all look together what are everybody skills” (Case 5, Interview 1: 5). Besides that, there one overall aim of the CSA is: Letting the diversity of the individuals regarding their live experience, knowledge and beliefs flower and scoop out of the great difference of the people in the group (Case 5, Diary: 50-56). The **mutual appreciation inside the team and the community** is high (Case 5, Interview 2: 20), as well as the **tolerance towards opinions**. But the CSA does not distinct from separating from people, if the opinions are too far away from each other, and as the community has a great say, it is sometimes difficult to be heard regarding organizational topics (Case 5, Interview 2: 11). The overall tendency of Case 5 regarding the social sphere is a strong idealism with 8 of 8 values.

Political Idealism/Pragmatism

Case 5 strives to be a platform that bring agricultural topics and topics regarding society to the public. They offer guides and seminars about CSAs, and **alternative economical models (educational work)**. Moreover, they want to offer room for the **development of innovative economy models** and discussion and exchange about it, as well as mutual support and help (Case 5, Diary: 58-61).

The CSA **chooses their own goals** but wants to be competitive with other businesses what shows that they do not tend to a self- dependency of the current system (Case 5, Diary, 54). Through the guides and seminars, they offer, there is some additional income. Summed up, the CSA fulfills 4 of 8 values and has a medium idealism towards the political sphere.

Ecological Idealism/Pragmatism

The ecological idealism is lower positioned than the social and organizational. Talking with the producers about machines, seeds, or the use of plastic material on the fields, the efficiency and less workload stands in the foreground. Nevertheless, in this scope, they produce as ecological as possible (Case 5, Diary: 7). The CSA strives to **close natural cycles**, by using a “farm-door” balance, that accounts inputs and outputs and compares them. They use compost, mulch and green manure and try therefore to **minimize the external inputs**. They have a high focus on professionalism in the cultivation and **apply existing regenerative and sustainable cultivation methods**. As a lot of the organizational responsibilities are taken over by the consumers community, the gardeners can focus on the agricultural part, this offers space to focus on **protecting the ecosystem**, with the help of flowering stripes, damp biotopes and bees as well as increasing continuously the **biodiversity** in and besides the cultivation (Case 5, Diary: 19). They do not have a main focus on seed-proof, locally adapted varieties, and due to machinery, foil tunnels and mulching foil, some input of fossil fuels. Summed up the CSA fulfills 5 of 8 values what goes along with a high-medium idealism regarding this sphere.

Organizational Idealism/Pragmatism

Organizational wise, the producers enjoy a high level of **flexibility and self-determination** regarding their tasks and working hours. This is given by a trustful, **strong, and participatory community** and a **good communication culture** and atmosphere inside the team. The trust and stability from the community offers a **fault tolerance**. This is supported by the regular supervision. Through their structure of Orga- team and gardeners’ team, the **consumers** have a great say in the CSA and are **included in all decision processes as equal members**. By means of responsibility distribution based on knowledge and abilities, there is **no hierarchy** in the team. They spend time and energy on lean management and quality management (**resilient organization structures**), for more efficient structures and a well-arranged organization on the farm that enables a collective working (clear labeling of tools the workshop, e.g.) (Case 5, Interview 2: 8-9). Hence the CSA follows 8 of 8 values that underly a strong idealism.

Case 5

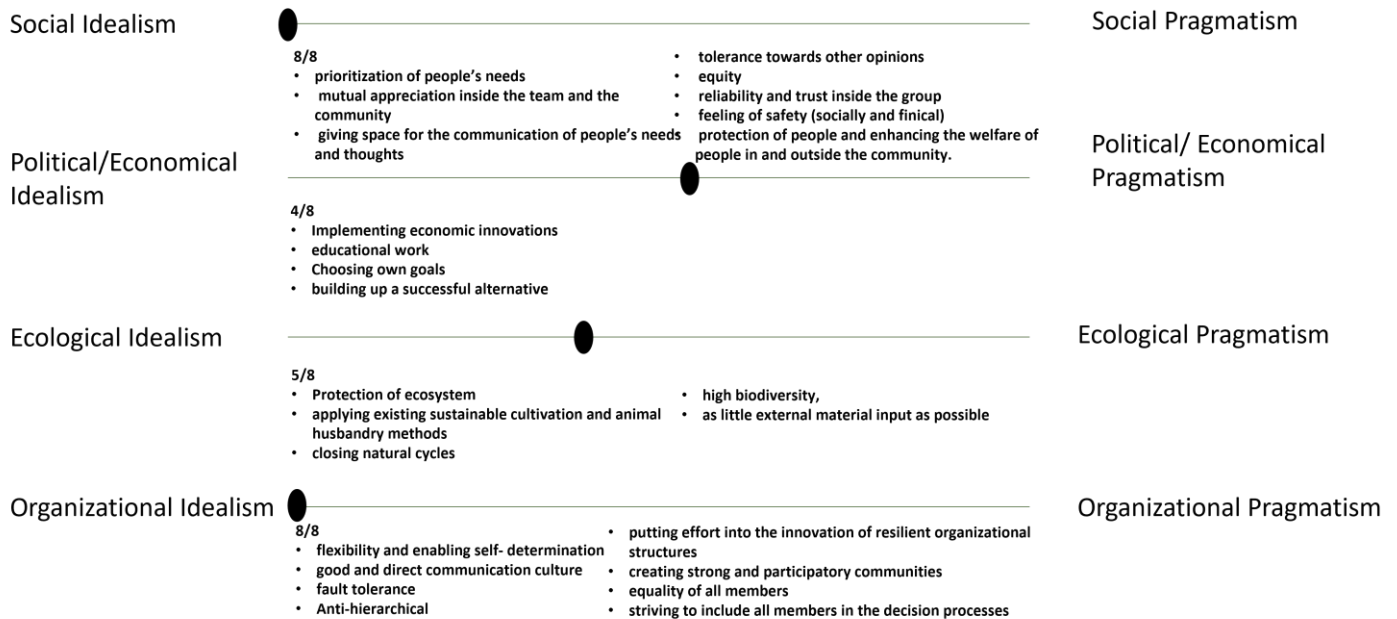


Figure 11 Positioning of Case 5 between Idealism and Pragmatism

(Source: own)

7.5.6 Overall Challenges

The overall challenges of Case 5 are:

- Finding the balance between the stability and the sluggishness of the community regarding decisions
- Improving the wages to offer good work conditions for the producers in all live situations
- As the founder thinks of starting a new project, there will be a future challenge of keeping the circumstances by integrating new producers

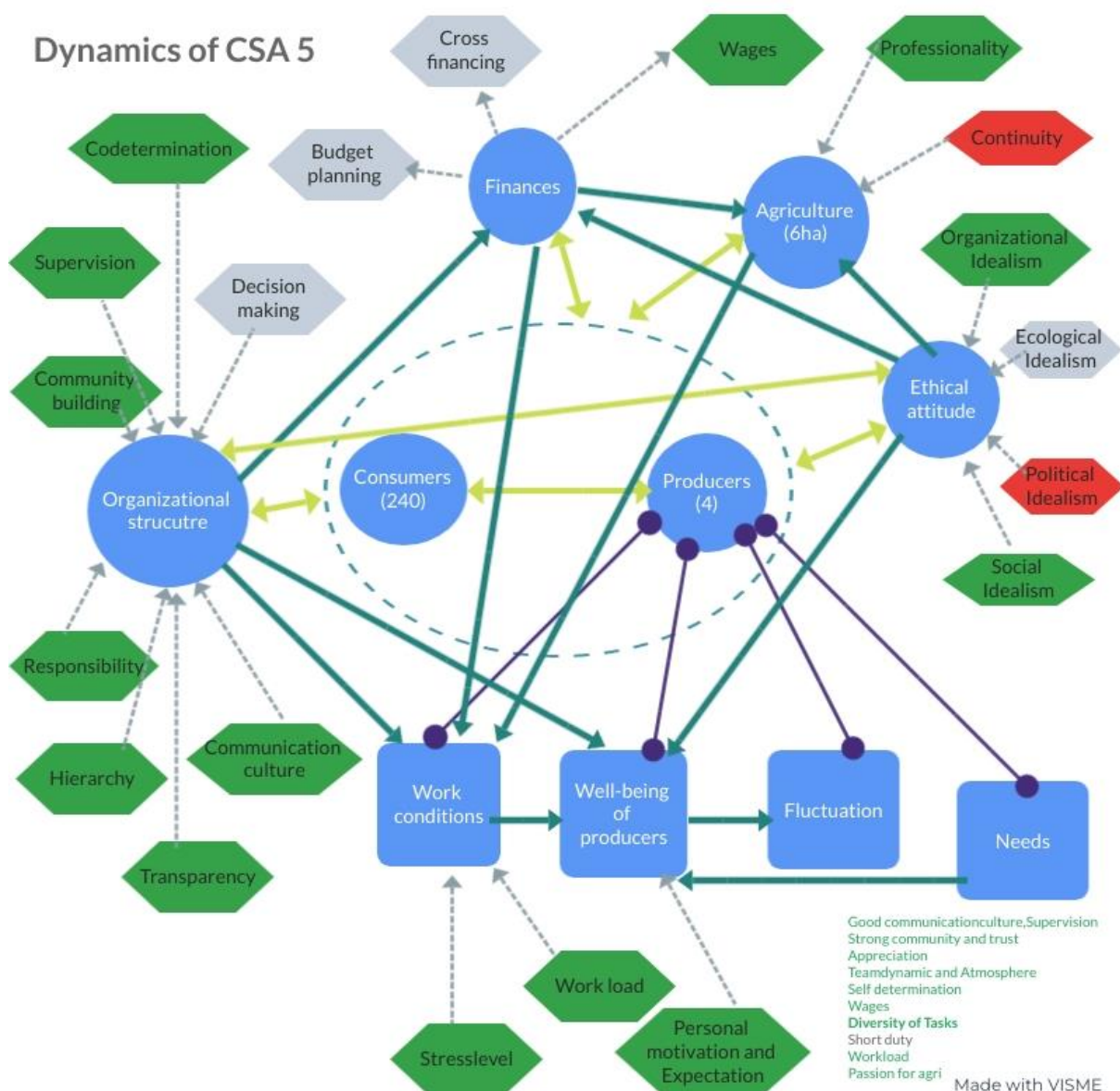


Figure 12 Strengthens and Weaknesses of Case 5

Source: own

1. Elements

Blue Circles: Structuring elements of dynamics in CSAs

Blue squares: Conditions in the context of CSA producers

Hexagons: variables with a potential influence on the dynamics and conditions in CSAs

Green hexagons: Strength of CSA

Red hexagon: Weakness of CSA

Grey hexagon: neutral variable

2. Connections

Yellow arrows: Mutual influence of CSA elements

Blue arrows: Influence of one element or condition on another one

Violet lines: Conditions connected to the element producer

Grey arrows: potential influence of variables on elements and conditions

3. Text

Text underneath the "Needs" square, shows all the needs state by the producers of Case 1, the needs that are met by the CSA are highlighted green (4/14)

- The size of the boxes has no meaning -

7.6 Case 6

7.6.1 Overview

Case 6 is a fruit CSA. It was collectively founded in august 2020. It was started by four people, wherefrom three are still active. Currently they have 40 shares a work therefore approximately three days per week, which they share between the three of them. They just started to write down there working hours to be able to count their real time spent and the earning they get per hour. They maintain orchards and trees and get the fruits as exchange. They harvest apples, pears, plums, and cherries. The fruit harvest is strongly weather dependent, wherefore they try to increase their variety of fruits and areas where they can harvest. Most of the trees are high strunks. For commissioning and storage, they use the synergy with another CSA from where they also got most of their consumers. Before starting they send out a request, how many people might be interested in a fruit share. As they got about 40 responses, they started quite intuitively. They are organized as an association. (Case 6, Diary, 3, 9; Interview 1, 5). "As we could use the storage and the infrastructure, it was a good and fast start. We did not have to build up that much." (Case 6, Interview 1, 5). They aim to reach a size of 100 shares, what seems to be possible with three producers (Case 3, Interview 1: 32-35). Currently they are still searching for more consumers (Case 6, Diary: 10).

7.6.2 Organizational Structure

As the start of this CSA was quite spontaneous, building up a structure is now a continuously process. "I think it would have been good to spend some more time in the beginning to build up a structure, but at the same time I am not sure if we would have implemented our idea then. There was a lot of power in starting practically and not spending the energy on planning" (Case 6, Interview 1: 6-7). Up to now there is no real division of labor and decision making, as everything is discussed together. They aim to work together with less hierarchy as possible (Case 6, Diary: 4). "There are some responsibility areas, like contact to certain persons, but we mainly discuss everything together (Case 6, Interview 1: 30-31). "We could be more efficient if we distribute tasks and responsibilities, but this is not so easy in a collective. And for me it is important that not one person decides something, and the others must do it. Especially in this starting period it is important and difficult at the same time to decide how we want to do this and how we communicate. Where do we act as collective and where, as single persons" (Case 6, Interview 1: 27)? What works well is the need oriented working hours and the freedom they can give each other through trust and good communication (Case 6, Interview 1: 9). As there are already some conflicts arising in the producer team, they would like to consult a supervision, but there is no money available for it (Case 6, Interview 1: 52-55). But they have the position of arbitrators in the association and can talk to them if needed. "Maybe the point will soon come, where we consult them, maybe... (Case 6, Interview 1: 48-51). To reach more continuity and financial security one main topic are good, long- term usable areas with a high variety of fruit trees (Case 6, Interview 1: 36-37). In the future they would like to integrate the consumers more into the decision processes. "I think it would be great to share this responsibility. It would increase the exchange with the consumers and increase their feedback" (Case 6, Interview 1: 44-45). For the consumers it is not compulsory to help on the farm but offered and pleased. Positions in the association are filled by consumers and producers. Except of that it is not sure how supportive the community will be in the future. (Case 6, Diary: 11).

7.6.3 Finances/ Budget

Share Price and Budget

The current share price is 240€ per season. The share price is a target price. Before the last season, they tried to calculate a budget from the gathered data, but the data was not complete. "We often forget to write it down. Especially all the bureaucracy staff.

Often you do not write the working hours if you sit down for 15 minutes and do something. But summed up this is a lot of time in the end. We calculated 15 €/h, that was important for us, but in the end, we calculated way to less hours, especially for cutting the trees, bureaucracy and finding new areas" (Case 6, Interview 1: 23-24).

Cross-financing

To do cross financing or not is a discussed topic in this CSA. Last year they sold a surplus of apples to friends, what they did because of a financial shortage. And this year they produced apple juice where high production costs accrued which were not calculated in the budget. What was calculated in the budget is distributed to the consumers, and the rest is sold. "This is a suspenseful topic, basically I would say everything that is produced should go to the consumers, but sometimes there are financial shortages and then it is good to have the chance to get some money on this way. At least not selling with a fixed price but donation based, to keep up the solidaric idea. For the juice we have a target price of 1-2 € per bottle" (Case 6, Interview 1: 40-41).

Wages

As the calculation of the working hours failed last season, they do not know yet how much they earn. Currently every person gets around 300€/ month, but they cannot say for how many hours of work (Case 6, Diary: 3). "It feels a bit like I would not get any money for the work I do, but It makes fun and I get experience. And I do some other projects as well, where I earn some money. Right now, I need everything I earn and cannot save anything, but this is ok for me right now (Case 6, Interview 1: 57). The producers are not employed by the association but write invoices, as it is less bureaucracy (Case 6, Interview 1: 11). The topic need orientated wages was shortly addressed but never to a sufficient degree. "We never took the time to discuss is completely and then just decided to divide it through three. But it is an interesting topic, and hard to answer for myself, what do I need and what do I want, do I want to save money or not..." (Case 6, Interview 1: 57).

7.6.4 Producers

Background and Motivation

The producers have different access to agriculture and orcharding, but they all have an education in tree cutting and do maintenance of fruit tree plantations. (Case 6, Diary: 4). "The first time I heard of CSA was quite early, when I was still in school. I found it interesting and wanted to know more about it. And the next time I got in touch with it was during my studies. I became part of a CSA, and that was nice, to be part of a group, to know where the vegetables are coming from and what I consume. And then 1,5 years ago we had the idea of a fruit CSA, but we were not sure if this would work, a CSA only with fruits, we doubt if this would be financially sustainable. But then we focused on the concept and asked people if they were interested. And as we got a lot of positive feedback we just started, and somehow it worked out (Case 6, Interview 1: 3).

Needs

Wages:

„If I would like to do this for a long-term something must change regarding the earning. Better calculated, or increasing the awareness of the consumers, that we only distribute for a season, but work the whole year " (Case 6, Interview 1: 19).

Appreciation:

"I need the feedback of the consumers. The cooperation. To not stress out and to know that everything is ok the way we do it. I could imagine, that this increases over the years. Then it is also ok, to have a basic group of people we get feedback from" (Case 6, Interview 1: 21).

Fun:

One producer state, that the work in this CSA makes a lot of fun and that she feels comfortable, and this is also necessary for a long-term commitment (Case 6, Interview 1: 57).

Communication culture and supervision:

„To improve the cooperation in the team, in the collective. To get a better social exchange. And to build up a structure, to solve conflicts if it clashes” (Case 6, Interview 1: 19).

Stability and continuity of the land resources:

“What I would need basically is a better structure of the area we are maintaining and harvesting and a security, that we can use them for a long-term” (Case 6, Interview 1: 19).

Work Conditions and Well-being

As the project is still in its initial period and there is no clear structure yet, it is not easy to evaluate the work conditions regarding working hours, wages, and structure. The missing organizational structure decreases the efficiency, and the communication is sometimes hard, as the three producers are not working together most of time. As there is a lot of additional organizational stuff to do, there is a shortage in taking the time for plena (Case 6, Interview 1: 12-13). But the mutual trust and understanding counteracts this shortage (Case 6, Interview 1:9). What is missing for the producers is sufficient feedback of the consumers. “I miss the support and the saying, hey nice that you do this. The feedback, also to know if they are happy with the produce or not” (Case 6, Interview 1: 15). The team dynamic is basically good, but there are some interpersonal conflicts that arise and are sometimes not directly addressed what can lead to tensions (Case 6, Interview 1: 51). Until now the producers like their work because they can shape it regarding their needs, but they are also aware, that has also to do with the initial energy and that there is still a lot they have to find out for themselves, regarding work conditions and organization structure. Currently, two of the five mentioned producers’ needs are met by the work conditions, which are fun and a good, direct communication culture in the team. They are aware, that a supervision would be helpful to keep this communication culture, and counteract disputes early enough, but cannot afford it right now. Nevertheless, they implemented the position of conflict mediators in their consumers community (association), which is a first step.

7.6.5 Ethics

Due to their short existence, their unstructured start and the not established organization, responsibility and decision structures, the positioning of Case 6 between the two poles is quite difficult. The founders have some individual and some common aims and tendencies, but do not clearly know yet to which degree they follow them in their decisions regarding the CSA.

Social Idealism/Pragmatism

The fruit CSA, Case 6 has a high level of **trust and reliability inside the producer group and tends to work need orientated**. This is grounding in their aim to give space for the **honest and open communication of needs and thoughts** (Case 6, Diary: 4). It is sometimes a challenge for them to open and hold this room, but they are aiming for it. Besides that, all the producers are **equal**, and they observe the consumers in the same way. They would like to embed them more in the future. As they do not have a clear concept yet, they are **open towards other opinions and ideas**. There is no feeling of social or financial safety yet in the team. As well as it is not clear if the needs of the people or the need of the business is prioritized. Constructed on these findings, Case 6 fulfills 5 of 8 values and shows a medium idealism regarding the social sphere.

Political Idealism/Pragmatism

The producers of Case 6 have other jobs as well, wherefore they are not self-dependent from the current system and use tools from it to survive (Case 6, Interview 1: 57). Up to now they do not have the aim to change the current system or take influence on politics. But they want to **choose their own aims** even though they do not exactly know what these aims are on a political level and want to show an **alternative to the current food system** (Case 6, Diary, 6). Through the target price which offers consumers to pay regarding their income and solidarity economy, they implement **economic innovations**. Allover, the CSA meets 3 of 8 values regarding the political sphere. Up to now, they show a low-medium idealism.

Ecological Idealism/Pragmatism

Regarding the cultivation of the fruit trees and orchards, the producers pay attention to **regenerative and sustainable methods**. Especially the maintenance of old orchard meadows, which were not taken care of by anybody before, **protects valuable ecosystems** offers a natural habitat for a **high biodiversity** of plants, insects, birds, and mammals (Case 6, Diary: 7-8). Because they do not want to use any **external input**, they count on **resilient, seed proof varieties** (Case 6, Diary: 9). Except of the fossil fuel, they use for delivering the fruits, they use as **little fossil energy as possible**. This leads to 6 of 8 ecological values that are met, hence the CSA shows a quite strong idealism regarding this sphere.

Organizational Idealism/Pragmatism

The producers of CSA 6 have a high level of **self-determination and flexibility**, what is an important value for them. They work **anti-hierarchical** and have a **good and direct communication culture** in the team, which could be improved through a supervision and gets sometimes to short due to the different working hours of the producers. As they are at the beginning and all producers still in a learning period, there is a high **fault tolerance** in the team. In the future, they would like to create a stronger members community, and include the members more into decision processes as well as working on resilient organization structures. But therefore, they need to get over their initial experimenting and structuring period. On the organizational level, the CSA fulfills 4 of 8 values and shows a medium idealism.

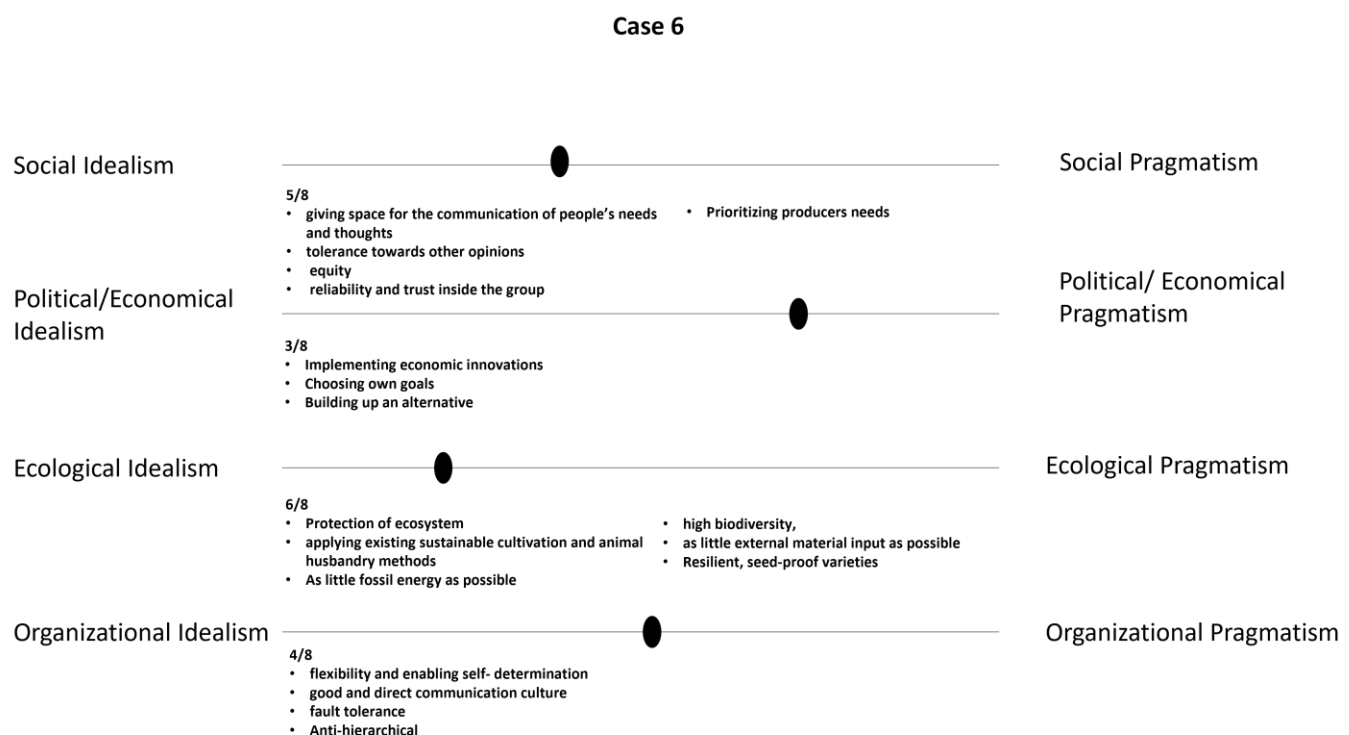


Figure 13 Positioning of Case 6 between Idealism and Pragmatism

(Source: own)

7.6.6 Overall Challenge

The overall challenges of this young CSA are:

- Improving the organizational and communicational structure
- Integrate the consumers to decision processes and responsibility tasks
- Establishing a sufficient budget
- Reaching fair wages
- Creating the space, that every producer can claim its freedom on the same level. For some characters it harder to speak openly about needs and taking of a day than for others (Case 6, Interview 1: 51)
- Talking about arising conflicts early enough

7.6.7 CSA Network

The local CSAs support each other and cooperate on different levels. That strengthens the whole movement and helps to establish new CSAs (Case 6, Interview 1: 6-7). The national CSA network also offers different forms of support for new CSAs. They offer different coaching for collective structures and self- organization. But as it costs money, it is hard to afford for CSAs, especially in the starting period. It would be helpful to establish a structure, where a couple of free supervision can be consulted from starting CSAs to help in this critical time (Case 6, Interview 1: 52-55).

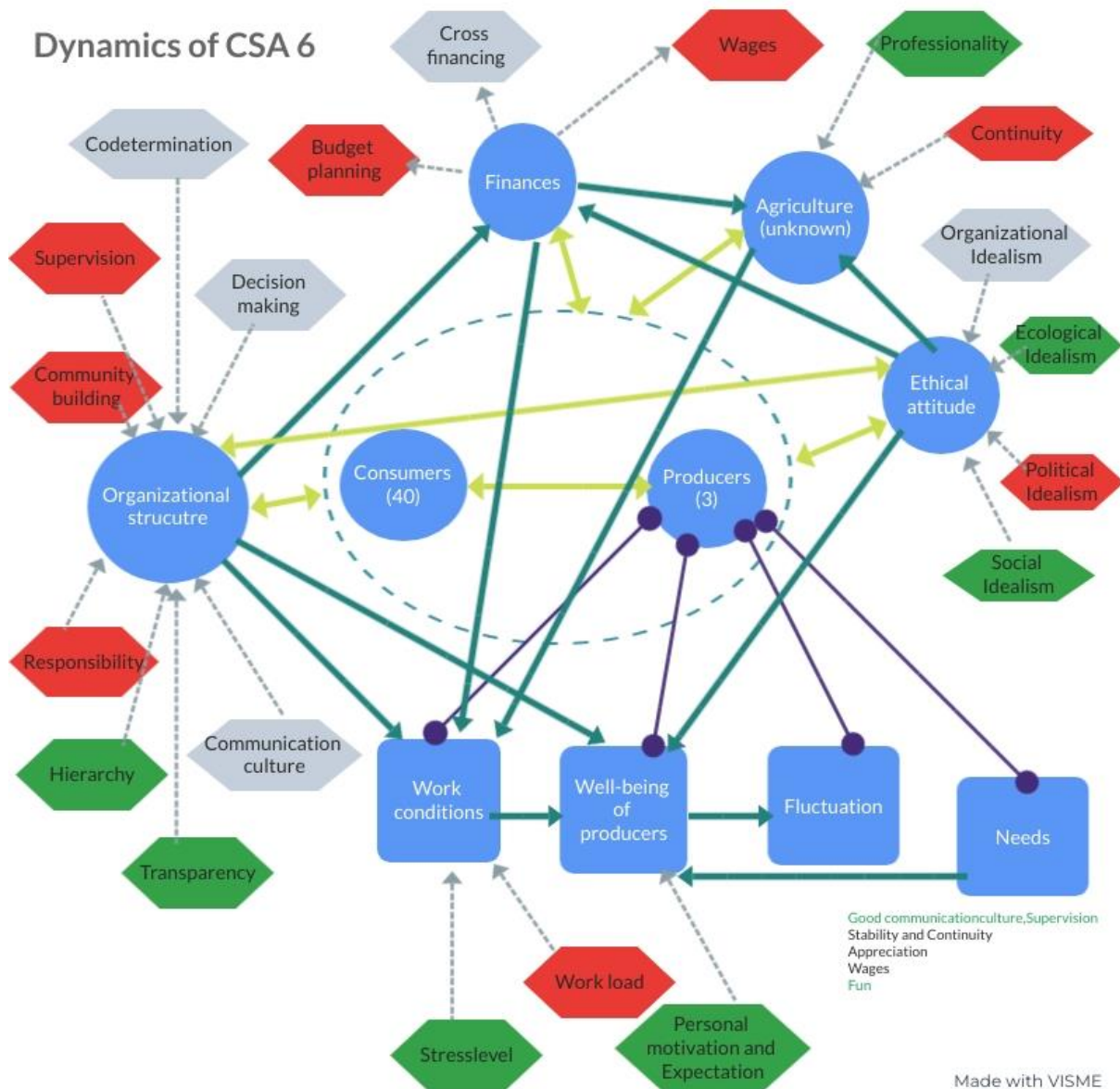


Figure 14 Strengthens and Weaknesses of Case 6

Source: own

1. Elements

Blue Circles: Structuring elements of dynamics in CSAs

Blue squares: Conditions in the context of CSA producers

Hexagons: variables with a potential influence on the dynamics and conditions in CSAs

Green hexagons: Strength of CSA

Red hexagon: Weakness of CSA

Grey hexagon: neutral variable

2. Connections

Yellow arrows: Mutual influence of CSA elements

Blue arrows: Influence of one element or condition on another one

Violet lines: Conditions connected to the element producer

Grey arrows: potential influence of variables on elements and conditions

3. Text

Text underneath the "Needs" square, shows all the needs state by the producers of Case 1, the needs that are met by the CSA are highlighted green (4/14)

- The size of the boxes has no meaning -

7.7 Case 7

7.7.1 Overview

This CSA vegetable CSA that produces on six acres, whereof 3 acres of field and fine vegetables and 1200 square meters of tunnel, for currently 111 shares. The CSA was established in 2019, and 2020 was the first season, where vegetables were distributed. They aim to increase their number to 200 shares. That is the number they can produce with their current team size of six producers and two FÖJ people (gap year taken to do voluntary work in the environmental sector). In the annual average they work 30-35h/week. They are still searching for new consumers. The CSA is organized as an association for the consumers and a civil law association for the producers. For the agricultural infrastructure a limited liability company was founded by the consumers and producers' association (Case 7, Diary: 2; 28-32). The purchase of the land was conducted by a group of fifteen people and a national wide registered cooperative that aims to secure agricultural areas for a long-term. Out of this group, the group of the six producers evolved (Case 7, Interview 1: 4-5). They cultivate 40 different crops and 120 different vegetables. On one acre they laid an orchard. They have no official organic certification but are bonded to cultivation criteria trough the lease agreement of the registered cooperative. The produce is distributed to different depots which are self-organized by the consumers. There is no waste, as all the vegetables are distributed nevertheless their condition (Case 7, Interview 1: 38-39).

7.7.2 Organizational Structure

The separation of consumers and producer trough the legal forms are wanted, to have a bigger scope of action in the gardeners' team (Case 7, Diary: 2). The gardeners are organized as a collective and the decision making is consensus based. They aim to work with as less hierarchy as possible (Case 7, Diary: 19-21). The communication in the team and the decision-making works good up to now. Of course, it takes some time and there are conflicts arising due to different opinions and ways of communication but thanks to a regular supervision twice a year they handle these differences quite good (Case 7, Diary: 2). "What I think helped, was a long preparing period, where we as a team had time to get to know each other. We are not from the same circle of friends, but mixed and found a good handling with each other. We work together for four years and now we have the first change because one person moves away. And the supervision is an important point. To speak about things early enough" (Case 7, Interview 1: 13) They are organized in different responsibility areas and these areas are rotating to reach a similar level of knowledge about the different areas. "What we noticed is that we do not work together a lot. The common actions are missing, where we can exchange and see what is happening in the other responsibility areas. Just yesterday we had the proposal to introduce fixed days where we all work together in one area" (Case 7, Interview 1: 8-9). What could be improved is the integration of the consumers. Coworking of the consumers is not compulsory but three days/ year desired (Case 7, Diary: 50-51). "It already improved a bit, there are some consumers who cooperate a lot, especially in certain projects, like software development" (Case 7, Interview 1: 16-17), but "the consumers should be more integrated from the beginning on. We noticed that it is hard to catch up in retrospect. The consumers organize the depots, but I think a platform where they can communicate and self- organize would be great" (Case 7, Interview 1: 13). "I think some people just do not read the mails and then it is hard to get enough people for cooperation days. But this might be a basic challenge of CSAs, that the expectation is high and not met" (Case 7, Interview 1: 14-15). The communication with the consumers about finances and the situation on the farm is very transparent communicated on the general members meeting and on inquiry (Case 7, Interview 1: 28-29). Due to an unlimited leasing agreement a continuity is given for the area and there is the possibility for additional independent leaseholders for areas (Case 7, Diary: 22-27).

7.7.3 Finances/ Budget

Share Price and Budget

The current target price of a share (2-3 persons) is 86€ per month. In March the budget is represented in the general members meetings and in a bidding round the consumers determine their contribution. Consumers who start to attend during the season pay a fixed share price of 86€ (Case 7, Diary: 3-4). Up to now, investments were enabled through private credits, donations, and subsidies (Case 7, Diary: 36-38).

Cross-financing

“In our statute we fixed, that the members are always have precedence. We have a project group that makes preserves out of surpluses. It is ok for us to give this away for projects, congresses, and events, but always donation based. We have surpluses right now, as we produce for 200 people but only 111 shares are allocated. Sometimes we give it to the food bank. But this is an extra, it is not calculated in the budget. And it would not be ok for us to sell it in an Organic market for a price per piece (Case 7, Interview 1: 40-41). Furthermore, one producer state, that some parties were organized on the area last summer for a donation, as the area is solitary location with no direct neighbors (Case 7, Diary: 79).

Wages

Currently they have two full-time positions, which are not fully paid yet (1200, -/month pre-tax). Four people are paid by the job center. They divide all for it through six and get in the end 800, -/month net wage per person. They aim to earn 1200, -/month net wage for 30-35h/ week in an annual average. “Right now, I’m financially well situated, as I only need to finance myself and pay relatively little rent. But this is no capable permanent situation and I notice that I spend a lot of time here. This year we started to write down our working hours, to be able to compare bit. Nevertheless, we want to work need based, it is ok if one person works a bit less or more. And we want to get away from the job center money. This is an unsecure dependence...right now it is ok for me, but I do not dare to calculate my hourly wages...” (Case 7, Interview 1: 23). The consumers now about the financial situation of the producers and it seems like there are open to pay more to increase the earning of the producers, but if the shares are not restocked, they do not want to increase the target price (Case 7, Interview 1: 28-29). “The cultivation improves, the structures will get more efficient, so I think we still have some adjusting screws to improve the situation” (Case 7, Interview 1: 30-31).

7.7.4 Producers

Background and Motivation

All of the producers have a lateral entrance to agriculture. Two of them took part on developing the self-organized CSA education program and were part of the first group who conducted it (Case 7, Diary: 2). “I got to know CSA from the consumer side first. During by agricultural studies, I noticed that I prefer gardening. And then there was the idea of the group to buy a piece of land and a group was needed to cultivate it. And then I got into the process more and more” (Case 7, Interview 1: 3). “None of us ever started a business. In the beginning when we stand in front of the land there was a bit of an overburdening, like how many people can we feed with this land, and to build up all the infrastructure needed”. (Case 7, Interview 1: 5). Another challenge was the weed pressure on the land. “In the beginning we should have seed cover crops. But we are learning from that. We cannot make it retrogressive” (Case 7, Interview 1: 18-19). The motivation to work in a CSA is based on working in a collective, not having a boss above, the proximity to the consumers, not having a certification and being more flexible in the work (Case 7, Interview 1: 3).

Needs

Communication culture and Supervision:

An open, transparent, need orientated communication is basic for the work in a collective and the wellbeing of the people in this group. Continuously improving of the communication culture and building up structures, that support the daily exchange and feedback loops is crucial. A regular supervision facilitates this aims and brings an objective perspective into a group (Case 7, Diary: 2; Interview 1:10-13).

Team-dynamic and atmosphere:

A good mood in the team and a mutual benevolent handling is crucial for a long-term commitment. A supporting factor is a team that is more than team of working colleagues, but friends (Case 7, Interview 1: 23).

Self- determination:

Having the freedom to self- determine working hours and working tasks, as well as self- realize ideas is counteracts to some degree even an insufficient earning (Case 7, Interview 1: 23).

Wages:

The current earning of 800, - is not sufficient for the producers. The 1200, - net wage they aim for is the minimum they can imagine working for and live from. It is still not a lot but at least more than then average in agriculture and gardening (Case 7, Interview 1: 23-25).

Work Conditions and Well-being

The communication and organization structure of the CSA is need orientated and therefore the producers aim to create work conditions that fit to their individual needs. Even if the earning is not sufficient yet, they enjoy the self-determination, flexibility, and freedom they have in their work. "I can self-determine my working hours, I can start in the morning whenever I want" (Case 7, Interview 1: 23). Another positive factor is the team-dynamic, and the political orientation of the place. "I'm in a great Team here. That is more than a workplace. That is important. It is a political place; it is a place where we sit together with friends and sleep in the summer. That is important for me, that I have fun at work. At the same time this can sometimes be a lot, if I cannot switch of my head" (Case 7, Interview 1: 23). Another producer verifies this statement, as that self-organized work is very stressful, having so many things in mind and never be able to switch of the head or to hope that somebody else takes over the task or remembers what is to do (Case 7, Diary: 78). They hope that it gets better after this initial period and that more structure helps to decrease the workload and increase the earning. Regarding their four mentioned needs, the current work conditions meet three of them. The only need that is not met yet is a sufficient earning.

7.7.5 Ethics

Social Idealism/Pragmatism

According to that, values of CSAs that correlated with a strong social idealism are: prioritization of producer's needs, mutual appreciation inside the team and the community, giving space for the communication of people's needs and thoughts, tolerance towards other opinions, equity, reliability and trust inside the group, feeling of safety (socially and finical), protection of people and enhancing the welfare of people in and outside the community.

As the producers' team of Case 7 had some preparation time to get to know each other before they start, there is high level of **reliability and trust inside the group**. As well as the consumers show **appreciation and trust towards the gardeners' team** (Case 7, Interview 1: 13). They work without hierarchies and show a high level of **equity** in the team.

Through a regular supervision from the beginning on they built up a structure, that **gives space for the communication of people's needs and thoughts** and built up an attitude, that **tolerates other opinions**. On their area they created a place, that is more than a working place. It is a political place, a place where parties take place and a community place for people from inside and outside the CSA community (**protection of people and enhancing the welfare of people in and outside the community**). Because of the land tenure there is a continuity regarding the land that gives a **feeling of safety**. An additional safety feeling comes from the stable producers' team. On the social sphere the CSA follows 7 out of 8 values and shows a strong idealism.

Political Idealism/Pragmatism

The CSA has no official certification. Furthermore, two of the gardeners co-developed the independent CSA apprenticeship and founded meanwhile the CSA. One of the current apprenticeship groups visited the CSA during their education time (**choosing own goals, educational work**) (Case 7, Diary: 2). They put effort in public work and give talks about agricultural and social topics. They are active in a local working group for CSAs and have a connection to the commons movement through their land purchase with a foundation that bases on the commons idea (**self-dependency of the current system, influencing the current politics**). The producers have a strong political attitude and tight connections to other political projects and movements in the city. They contribute to a **change of the political- economic system**. With the money they get from the government agency they currently use tools from the system to survive. With their share price that is self-determined by the consumers and their use of solidarity economy they **implement economic innovations** and try to **build up a successful alternative**. It results in 7 of 8 values, which goes along with a strong idealism regarding the political sphere.

Ecological Idealism/Pragmatism

Regarding CSAs principles that indicate a strong ecological idealism are: applying existing regenerative and sustainable cultivation and animal husbandry methods, protection of ecosystems, closing natural cycles, putting effort in innovating regenerative agricultural methods, high biodiversity, as little external material input as possible, as little fossil energy as possible and using seed-proof, locally adapted varieties.

The CSA increases the **biodiversity** and **regenerates ecosystems**, by regenerating fallow land, in a surrounding area of maize and wheat cultivation, and planting hedges. They only use **seed-proof, locally adapted varieties** (Case 7, Diary: 20). They apply **existing regenerative and sustainable cultivation**, like a diverse crop, rotation, cover crops, compost, and no mineral inputs and try to **close natural cycles**. (Case 7, Diary: 8). Besides that, they try to **minimize the input of external material**. Regarding the ecological sphere this CSA meets 6 of 8 values, what refers to a quite strong idealism.

Organizational Idealism/Pragmatism

Case 7 works **anti-hierarchical** in the team. They have a high level of **flexibility and self-determination** in the team. This offsets for some producers the current low wage (Case 7, Interview 1: 23). They have a **good and direct communication culture**, that is supported by a supervision from the beginning on. They put time and energy in their collective anti hierarchical teamwork where to **build up a resilient structure**. They change their responsibility areas every second year to increase the collective knowledge and support the resilience of the gardeners' team. As the whole team has a lateral entrance they are learning and experiencing together and have a well-established **fault tolerance**. There is a deliberated separation between producers and consumers, wherefore the consumers should not be part of all decision processes and are not equal to the producers. Summed up, this CSA meets 5 of 8 values and shows a high-medium idealism towards the organizational sphere.

Case 7

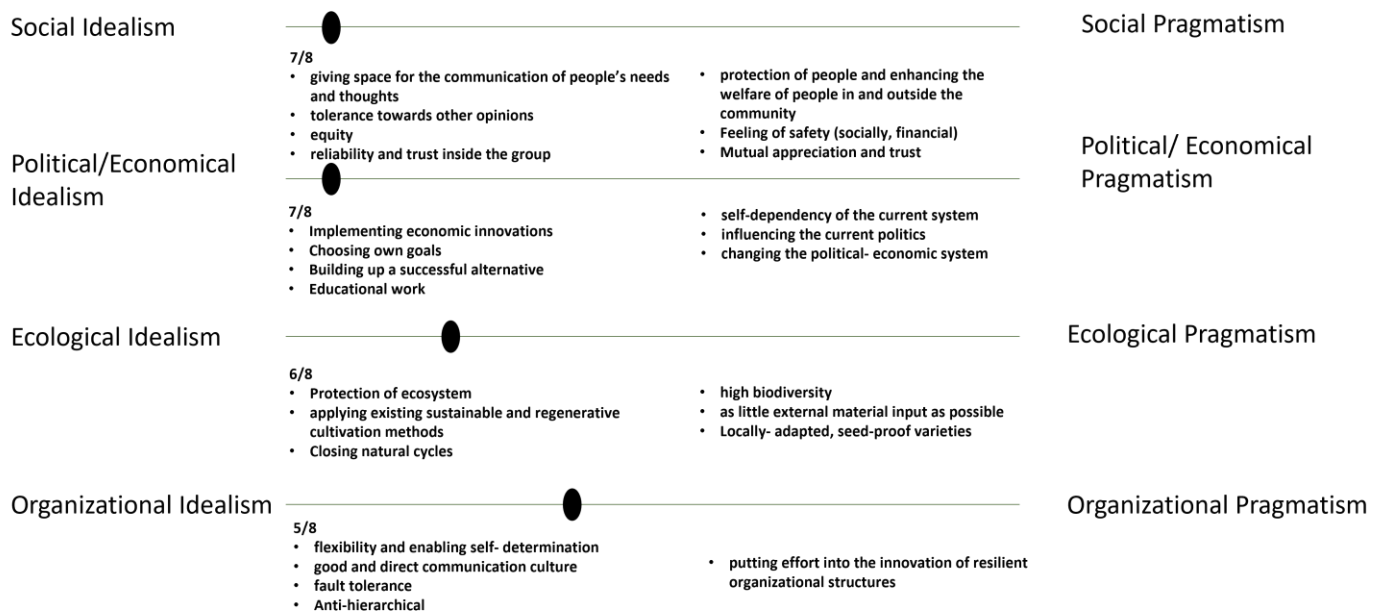


Figure 15 Positioning of Case 7 between Idealism and Pragmatism

(Source: own)

7.7.6 Overall Challenges

The overall challenges of Case 7 are:

- Reaching a sufficient earning
- Getting away from the dependency of the government agency
- Improving the integration of the consumers
- Better communication with the consumers and underneath the consumers, self-organization of the consumers
- Creating a job for bureau work and public work (Case 7, Interview 1: 19)
- Increasing the number of common assignments in the team for a better overview of the status quo in the different responsibility areas
- Finding enough consumers to fill up the available shares

7.7.7 CSA Network

This CSA is embedded in an area with a strong local CSA network and of other different self-organized projects. In a surrounding of 20 square meters, there are three other CSAs. “I think it is a huge luxury situation we have here. With two CSAs we have a tight cooperation regarding machines, produce and distribution. There is a good exchange and help, that helped us a lot in the beginning. To borrow the machines, but also to know that there is support if we need it and to get along with each other and just meet” (Case 7, Interview 1: 32-33). One CSA grew very fast in the last years and did a lot of advertisement. This might also be a reason, why this CSA did not reach the aimed 200 consumers yet, but “they address different clients as well. They have their depots for example in supermarkets and address another group of people. There are CSAs with different concepts in this area and I think we all can reach the number of consumers we need” (Case 7, Interview 1: 35).

Dynamics of CSA 7

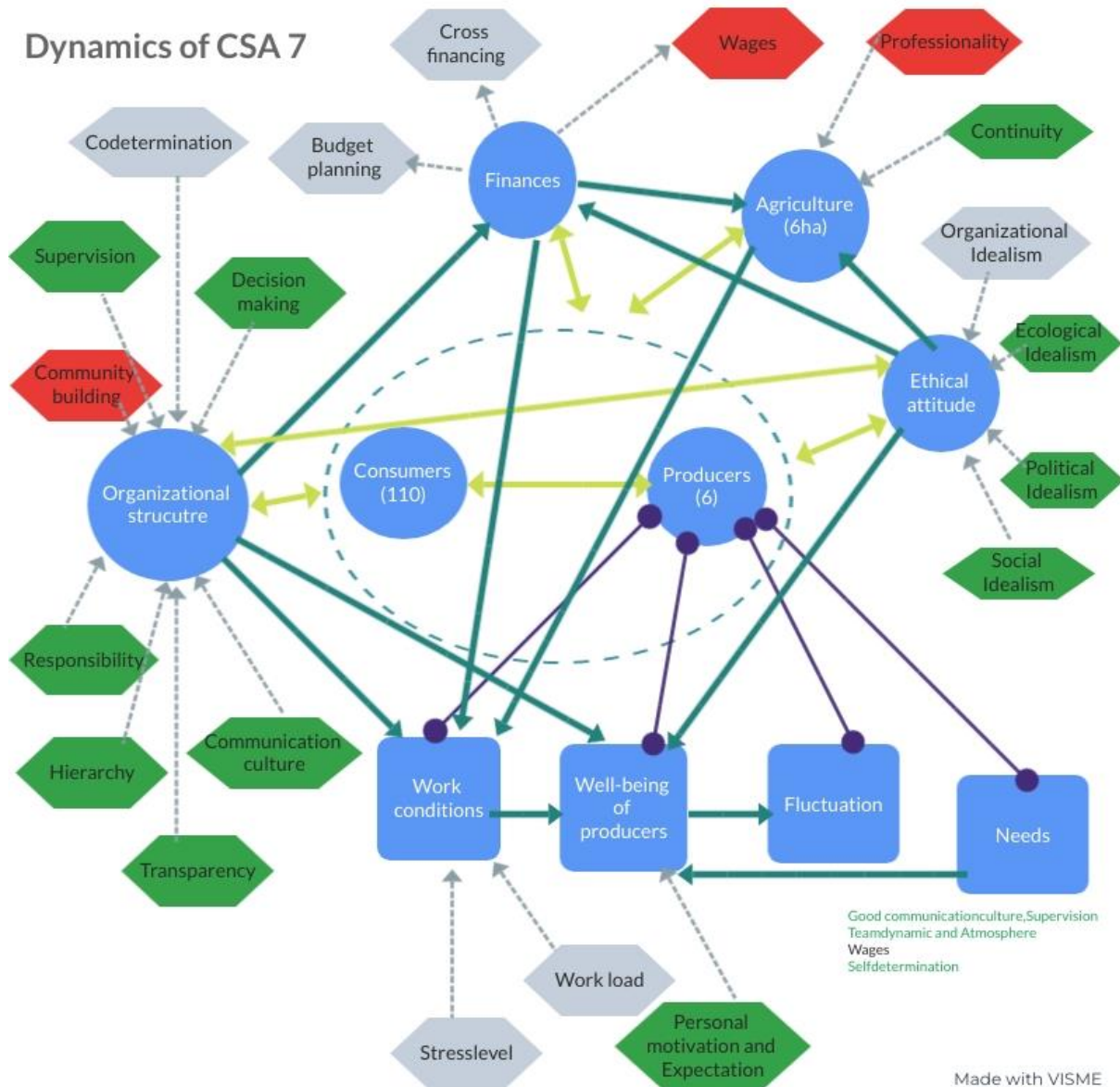


Figure 16 Strengthens and Weaknesses of Case 7

Source: own

1. Elements

Blue Circles: Structuring elements of dynamics in CSAs

Blue squares: Conditions in the context of CSA producers

Hexagons: variables with a potential influence on the dynamics and conditions in CSAs

Green hexagons: Strength of CSA

Red hexagon: Weakness of CSA

Grey hexagon: neutral variable

2. Connections

Yellow arrows: Mutual influence of CSA elements

Blue arrows: Influence of one element or condition on another one

Violet lines: Conditions connected to the element producer

Grey arrows: potential influence of variables on elements and conditions

3. Text

Text underneath the "Needs" square, shows all the needs state by the producers of Case 1, the needs that are met by the CSA are highlighted green (4/14)

- The size of the boxes has no meaning -

7.8 Case 8

7.8.1 Overview

This CSA produces vegetables, fruits, herbs, and flowers on 1,3 acres for currently 68 shares. They aim to reach 80 shares. The CSA was founded in 2015 by one person as an individual company. The planning period took half a year. Since 2020 it is organized as a registered association which is sustained by the members (Case 8, Diary: 95-105). The vegetables are distributed to depots once a week in the summer and every second week in the winter. They are not certified but are transparent about their cultivation methods. This CSA works without any mechanization and tries to renounce the use of synthetic material, like tunnels. (Case 8, Diary: 32-48). Currently there work two producers for an annual average between 25-35h/week and one person for 8h/week.

7.8.2 Organizational Structure

This self-organized association exists of different responsibility areas, and they can make decisions by them own. "This is explicit wanted. The plena are to inform about decisions and to decide about topics where more people should be included. And we have a financial upper limit. Above 500 € expenses need to be discussed in the plena. This mainly concerns the garden area" (Case 8, Interview 1: 13). The plena are monthly, where consensus decisions are made by all members of the association. There are groups for the administration of the memberships, the finances, the public work, the intersection for the weekly mails, the electricity and for different temporary projects. All the tasks are taken over by consumers on a voluntary basis. "There is a strong community" (Case 8, Interview 1: 15). "The volunteers do not get any monetary exchange, but it might be interesting to think about it, to give the people an incentive to take the tasks serious. Like accounting stuff and applying for grants. It is annoying if deadlines are missed and we do not get grants because somebody does not take it serious" (Case 8, Interview 1: 16-17). A challenge of the different responsibility areas are the things that need to be taken care for on the farm side but are not in the gardeners' responsibility. "For example, our access road. For 1,5 years a person should take care of it. But as this person does not see it every day and is affected by it in the daily work, this person is not aware of it. I guess this task should be taken over from us as gardeners' team, even if I am not in the mood to engage with this topic" (Case 8, Interview 1: 11). At the same time, another producer states, that the founding of the association increased the feeling of responsibility of the consumers, as well as the participation (Case 8, Diary: 108). The communication in the gardeners' team works well, as there are only two main gardeners, and they have a goof dynamic and daily exchange. But of course, "the communication can always be improved. In the gardeners' team, to the members and the other way around. What I desire is better feedback. About the vegetables, what they want and like. But maybe my I demand too much, and if there is no feedback, they are happy" (Case 8, Interview 1: 11). Up to now there is a continuity in the gardeners' team, as the initiator did it on his own up to last year, when a new gardener's position was created. Currently the initiator will quit, as he wants to move to an own farm with his family and starts a new project there (Case 8, Diary: 111).

7.8.3 Finances

Share Price and Budget

The current target price of one share is 95,50 (Case 8, Diary: 109). Once a year there is a bidding round at the members meeting to reach the annual needed budget (Case 8, Diary: 3-6).

Cross-financing

There was a clear decision in a plenary assembly of the association, that everything is distributed to the members, and nothing sold or given away donation based. A kind of cross financing via private credits, donations or subsidies is used for special investments, like building a well or a solar energy system (Case 8, Interview 1: 23).

Wages

There is a strong focus on fair, need orientated wages, also regarding purchases (Case 8, Diary: 22-24). One producer works 35 h for 1485 €/ month net wage, one 25h for 1222€/ net wage and one 8h for 450 € (Case 8, Diary: 107). “Last year we as gardeners decided a minimum of 15€/ h pre-tax. Now as a new person will start, the topic arises from some people, if this person might want to have less out of pure idealism, in my opinion this is pure brazenness. But the main tendency goes in the direction to raise the wages further” (Case 8, Interview 1, Pos. 19-22). To reach better wages, they seek to increase the group size and a holistic budget planning (Case 8, Diary: 25-26).

7.8.4 Producers

Background and Motivation

One of the producers has a practical agricultural education, the other an academical background but practical experience in gardening and agriculture. “I did not search for a CSA, but contacted all gardening businesses in this area, and this CSA answered that they need somebody. The first year I did not get money as they could not offer a paid position, so I let the government agency pay for my work here. Then the CSA grew and was able to finance a new position. So, I stayed” (Case 8, Interview 1: 3). The motivation to work with a solidaric concept are for both producers the social aspects on the producer side. “To say what does the producer side needs for living. To get away from the self-exploitation. It is not about the question how much a carrot does cost, but about what does the people who produce this carrot need to be able to finance a living. The solidarity between the members is something, I did not think about a lot, I got to know it through the work here” (Case 8, Interview 1: 5). “I really like this work. I did not start here with an idealism to save the world. I was aware of the reality as a gardener, doing a lot of overtime in spring and summer, and therefore less in the winter” (Case 8, Interview 1: 27).

Needs

Self-determination:

To be able to decide autonomously in the daily work is essential factor for the producers of this CSA (Case 8, Interview 1: 7).

Mental and physical health:

Both producers state, that work conditions that enable a long-term mental and physical health are crucial and the only way agriculture can be sustainable (Case 8, Diary: 112).

Appreciation:

The appreciation of the consumers is very high, and that supports the well-being, good mood, and strong solidarity between all the members of the association (Case 8, Interview 1: 7).

Passion:

To do this work for a long-term, passion for gardening and agriculture is a main point. “You need at least to like working on a windy field on your own, otherwise you will not do this job for longer than a year. In my opinion it is too short-sighted to only start with an idealism to save the world and destroy the capitalistic system” (Case 8, Interview 1: 27).

Wages:

Due to the opinion of the producers, a sufficient wage is crucial and should be focused by other CSAs as well. As a producer states, “for me the CSA idea is about the producers and how much they need to finance a living” (Case 8, Interview 1: 5). Furthermore, they state, that people who are satisfied with a little earning because of idealism endanger the whole agricultural profession and support the existing grievance (Case 8, Diary: 115).

Work Conditions and Well-being

The gardeners have a high focus on their needs and stand up for towards the members. To work in away, that they can be fit on a mental and physical basis is important and sustainable for them (Case 8, Diary: 112). "I am very satisfied. It is summer now, and this is always stressful, and I work a lot. But I am really happy. A reason for this is, that I can work very autonomous in the daily work. It is a good mixture, as we work as we were self-reliant and at the same time, we are social insured and well paid" (Case 8, Interview 1: 7). As they are a small team the communication works well, and they built up their working structures and conditions the way they want it. There is no hierarchy between them and in decision processes regarding the gardening work are uncomplicated and constructive. They present their arguments and discuss them. In the end the opinion, that makes more sense is implemented. It is supported by a good personal relationship between them and the same kind of humor. (Case 8, Diary: 116). "Sometimes it is frustrating, as P. is often addressed in topics I care for or I did. Because he is here since the beginning. But this has something to do with awareness. But sometimes I think, come on I am here for two years now, and we share everything 50/50 so you could have noticed that already. But this is sometimes more annoying and sometimes less" Case 8, Interview 1: 7). The gardeners see their leisure time as worthwhile and part of their payment (Case 8, Diary: 113). All the five mentioned needs of the producers are met by the current work conditions.

7.8.5 Ethics

Social Idealism/Pragmatism

All the producers of Case 8 stated that the **needs of the producers** are in the foreground. "The solidarity concept has interested me from a producer's perspective. I value the attitude to look what the producers need to survive. To get away from the self-exploitation "(Case 8, Interview 1: 5). Even if other voices come up from the consumers side, the producers stay strict to their value. They do not only protect the current wellbeing of the members of the CSA but raise their voice to **increase the welfare for all (consumers and producers)**. The organization structure of the CSA gives space for **communicating needs and thoughts**, from a producer and consumer perspective. The CSA is quite small and there is a lot of personal contact between the producers and the consumers, this enhances a **mutual appreciation** as well as **reliability and trust between the members**. In the association as well as inside the gardeners' team everybody is **equal**. Through the small, supportive community that sticks to common values, there is a **feeling of safety** in the CSA. Resulting, the CSA sticks to 7 of 8 values regarding the social sphere, what shows a strong idealism.

Political Idealism/Pragmatism

Regarding the political sphere the focus of this CSA is on eco-political topics. They aim to do **educational work** regarding, regenerative vegetable gardening and local food systems. Except of educational work, they do not follow values regarding the political sphere (Case 8, Diary: 67-75). This results in a pragmatic attitude with 1 of 8 values met.

Ecological Idealism/Pragmatism

The focus on this CSA is on ecological values. They cultivate mainly by hand and do not use any machinery, plastic inputs (foil -tunnel, mulch foil, e.g.) (**as little external material input as possible, as little fossil energy as possible**). The distributed in cooperation with other local CSAs and a cargo bike. Therefore, they produce mainly in the summer. They minimized the eternal watering and have a huge percentage of pasture for green manure. Only **seed-proof, locally adapted varieties** are used. They are self-sufficient regarding energy, trough solar panels) (Case 8, Diary: 32-48). They strive to **close natural cycles** and **use regenerative cultivation methods**. Besides that, they value **experimenting and innovation of new methods**, as well as using traditional cultivation and storage methods (Case 8, Diary: 83-91). By cultivating a high variety of vegetables and herbs and through flowering stripes and compensating areas, they **protect ecosystems** and increase the **biodiversity**.

Based on that, Case 8 fulfills 8 of 8 values, regarding the ecological sphere. The CSA shows a strong idealism.

Organizational Idealism/Pragmatism

Due to the small size and **the integration of the consumers community in all decision processes**, they created a **strong and participatory community**. Because of the strong idealism towards ecological values, the community is quite selective (for people with similar values), what creates a team spirit. There is a high **mutual appreciation and equality of all members**. The gardeners enjoy a high level of **self-determination and flexibility** in their daily work thanks to the trust of the community and a small team. This also supports a **tolerance towards faults**. Inside the **non-hierarchical** gardeners' team is a **good and direct communication culture** based on mutual, personal and knowledge- based appreciation. This results in 7 of 8 values that are met, what refers to a strong idealism regarding the organizational sphere.

Case 8

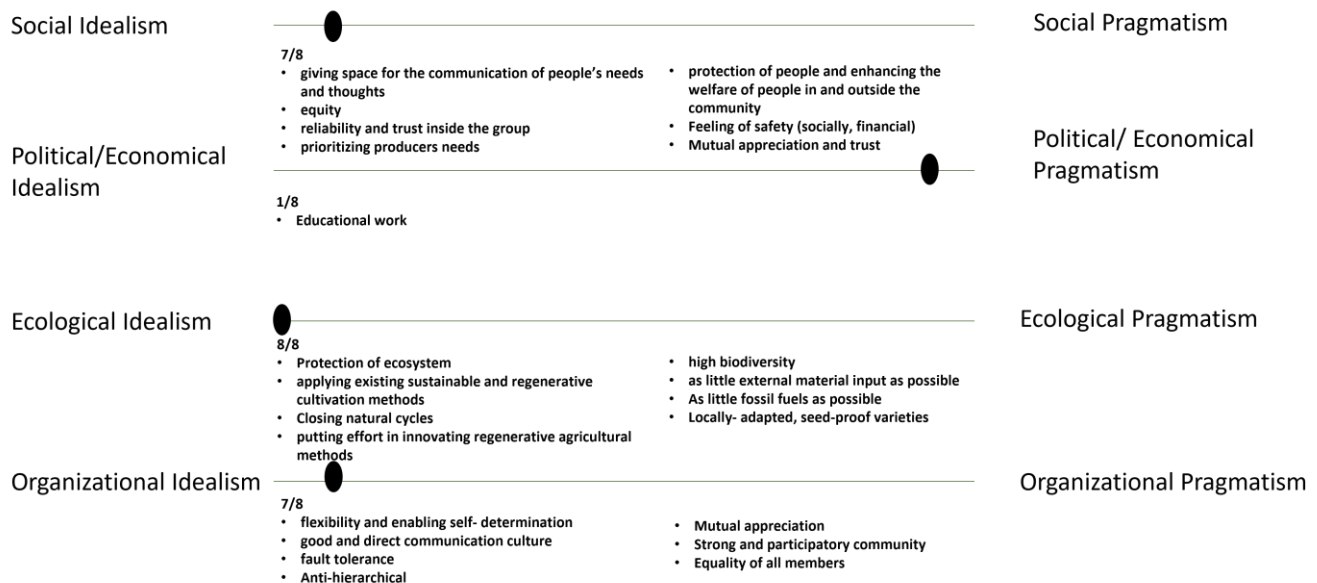


Figure 17 Positioning of Case 8 between Idealism and Pragmatism

(Source: own)

7.8.6 Overall Challenges

The overall challenges of this CSA are:

- Increasing the wages further
- Finding a fitting gardener taking over the position of the initiator and manage a fluent transfer

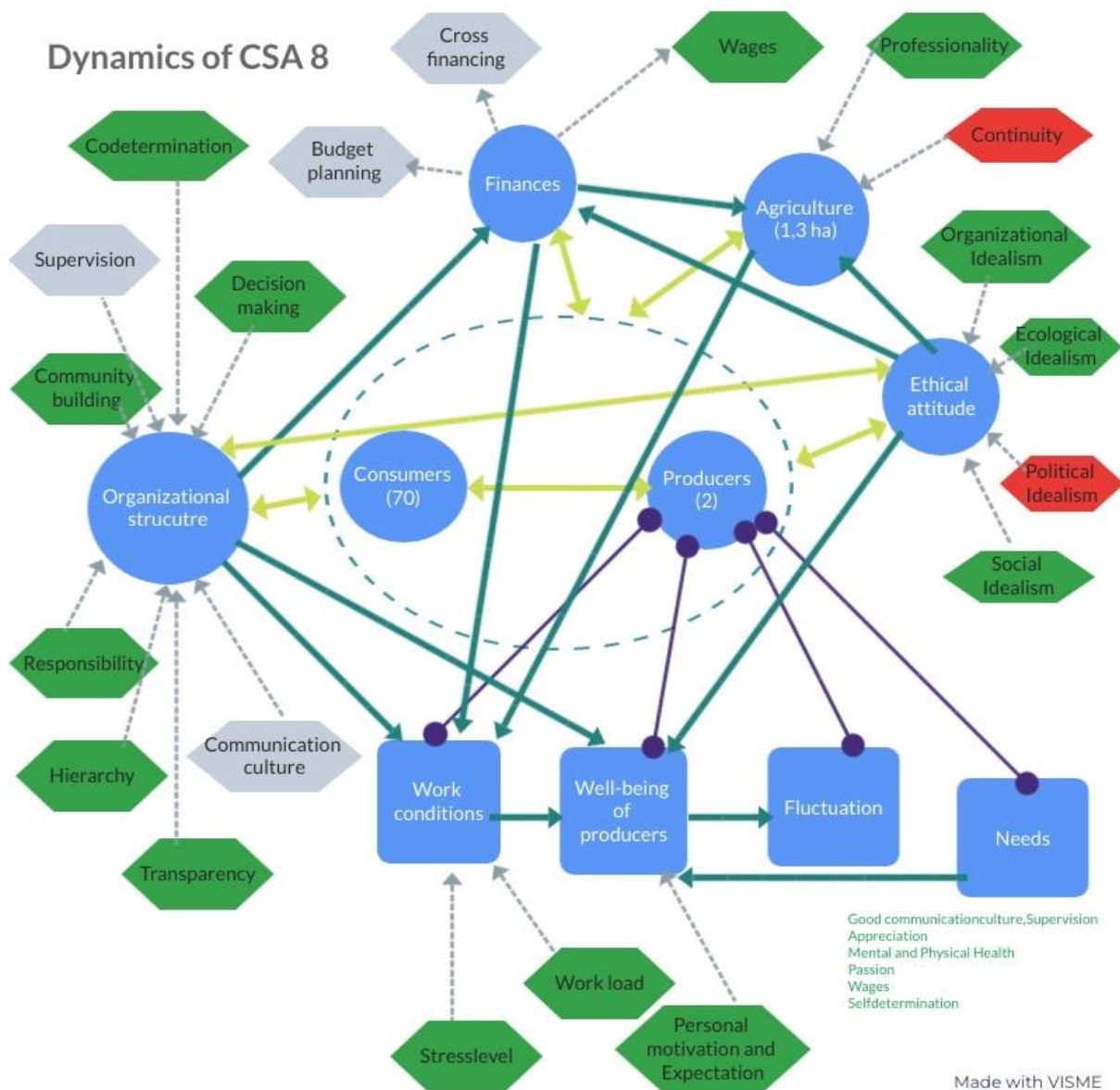


Figure 18 Strengthens and Weaknesses of Case 8

(Source: own)

1. Elements

Blue Circles: Structuring elements of dynamics in CSAs

Blue squares: Conditions in the context of CSA producers

Hexagons: variables with a potential influence on the dynamics and conditions in CSAs

Green hexagons: Strength of CSA

Red hexagon: Weakness of CSA

Grey hexagon: neutral variable

2. Connections

Yellow arrows: Mutual influence of CSA elements

Blue arrows: Influence of one element or condition on another one

Violet lines: Conditions connected to the element producer

Grey arrows: potential influence of variables on elements and conditions

3. Text

Text underneath the "Needs" square, shows all the needs state by the producers of Case 1, the needs that are met by the CSA are highlighted green (4/14)

- The size of the boxes has no meaning -

8 Discussion

Within this chapter, the results with regards to factors that influence the well-being of the producers as well as attitudes and practices that can advise CSA in their starting period or times of trouble will be discussed. The aim is to formulate a grounded theory, based on the understanding, that:

“A theory states relationships between abstract concepts and may aim for either explanation or understanding” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 228).

8.1 Reflection on the Personality and Subjectivity of Producers

Before starting the main discussion of the results, a factor will be discussed that clearly influence the whole research and is therefore treated in a reflective way during the whole research process following Con GTM. This factor is the individual personality and subjectivity of the producers that were interviewed and talked to during the participatory visits

The statements of the producers, as well as their needs and their feeling of well-being is subjective and closely linked to their personal limits and preferences regarding tasks, responsibility, self-determination, stress, and pressure. In CSAs seems to be a difference between producers in the context of how much workload, stress, and responsibility they can tolerate regarding their personal well-being. It is obvious that people have different limits regarding work pressure and different needs regarding responsibility and self-determination. This is a fact that underlies the whole research and should always be considered while talking about needs and well-being of people. Especially in CSAs with a higher team size (Cases 2 and 3), it can be observed that there are producers who are eager to take over responsibility and be part of decision-making processes, and producers who are happy to do their instructed work and not take-home thoughts regarding the work at night (Case 2, Diary: 2). “Here are many people who would like to be more engaged, and there are people who do not want to be bothered” (Case 3, Interview 2: 10). To meet the needs of all producers in bigger teams seems therefore to be a challenge.

But the influence of different personal limits can also be observed, as in Case 7, where one producer stated: “I can self-determine my working hours, I can start in the morning whenever I want, I am in a great team here. That is more than a workplace. That is important. It is a political place; it is a place where we sit together with friends and sleep in the summer. That is important for me, that I have fun at work. At the same time, it can sometimes be too much, when I cannot switch off my head” (Case 7, Interview 1: 23). For another producer of the CSA, the point where it might become too much is already a bit closer as he mentioned that the self-organized work is very stressful, having so many things on his mind and never being able to switch off or to hope that somebody else will take over tasks or remember what there is to do (Case 7, Diary: 78).

8.2 Influences on the Satisfaction and Well-being of CSA Producers

In the following part the different influences on the satisfaction and well-being of producers in Germany and Austria, that were named in the results will be discussed.

8.2.1 Producers Needs and Current Working Conditions

The results identified 21 needs of producers from the perspective of the producers regarding their work in CSAs (Table 2). Many overlaps from the different cases can be observed.

Table 2 **Overview of the 21 mentioned needs of the producers**

(Source: Own)

The number in brackets is the number of CSAs where this need was mentioned by one or two of their producers

Appreciation in the team and in the whole community (8)
Sufficient earning (7)
Good team dynamic and atmosphere (6)
Good communication culture and a regular supervision (6)
Self-determination (5)
Strong community and trust inside the team and the CSA (4)
Passion for the work (3)
Adequate workload (3)
Stability and continuity regarding land resources, producers and consumers (3)
Short duty stroke (3)
Diversity of tasks in the daily work (2)
Securing mental and physical health (2)
The possibility for self-realization (2)
Same overall aims in the team and in the community (1)
Critical reflection (1)
Clear decision-making and legitimation structure (1)
Fun at work (1)
Room for experimenting , culture of failure (1)
Agricultural branch (1)
Doing meaningful work (1)
Strong social idealism (1)

Appreciation is a need mentioned by producers from all eight CSAs. This appreciation refers to team colleagues as well as to consumers. A high degree of appreciation even seems to counteract exhausting work conditions and seems to count for a good team dynamic and atmosphere at work. Likewise, a sufficient earning is mentioned by most of the producers, even in CSAs where the earning is higher than what an average gardener earns. None of the producers' stated that the earning is the most important thing, or that they would quit because of it, but they all want to be able to afford a good life regarding their current life situation (single, family) and they all denounce current average agricultural wages.

Self-determination is a need that depends on the personality of producers. There are some producers, who desire self-determination and name it as one of their most important needs and others who are fine with working in a more hierarchical structure with less self-determination.

A strong social idealism as a need was explicitly mentioned by just one producer (Case 4), but it includes some of the other mentioned needs like, appreciation, workload, mental and physical health, fun, earning, team dynamic, trust and communication culture. Some of the mentioned needs are rather subjective and depend on the person and their personality, which are fun at work, a short duty, the fitting agricultural branch and the feeling of doing meaningful work.

There is a visible tendency, that the well-being of producers in CSAs is higher in those CSAs where all or almost all their needs are met than in CSAs where only some of the needs are met. In Case 3 only four of the eight mentioned needs are met, and the producers show a lower satisfaction with their work than producers in Case 4 where 11 of the 12 mentioned needs are fulfilled.

8.2.2 Ethical Tendency Regarding the Four Spheres

Regarding the tendency of the different Cases in their attitude and decisions, it is noticeable that they often must make a compromise or choice between spheres. Figure 12 visualizes the results of the different ethical tendencies for each analyzed CSA. None of the CSAs has a strong idealism in all spheres. There is often a connection between a strong idealism in one sphere and therefore a medium- low idealism in another sphere. It seems to be impracticable to follow a strong idealism in all four spheres. Their sights must be lowered in some decisions. Each CSAs decides for their own, on which sphere they have their focus. A strong idealism in the social sphere is often connected to a strong idealism in the organizational sphere (Case 4,5 and 8). However, a strong idealism in the social sphere seems to stand in contrast to a strong idealism in the political sphere (Case 1, 4, 5, 6, 8). As well as between the political and ecological sphere (Case 4, 8). Case 4 has a low-medium idealism in the political sphere and a strong idealism in the ecological sphere. They decided to use cross-financing (tool of the conventional system, not independent from the current system) to afford time and space for innovations in regenerative methods, like establishing an agro-forestry system (Case 4, Diary, 17).

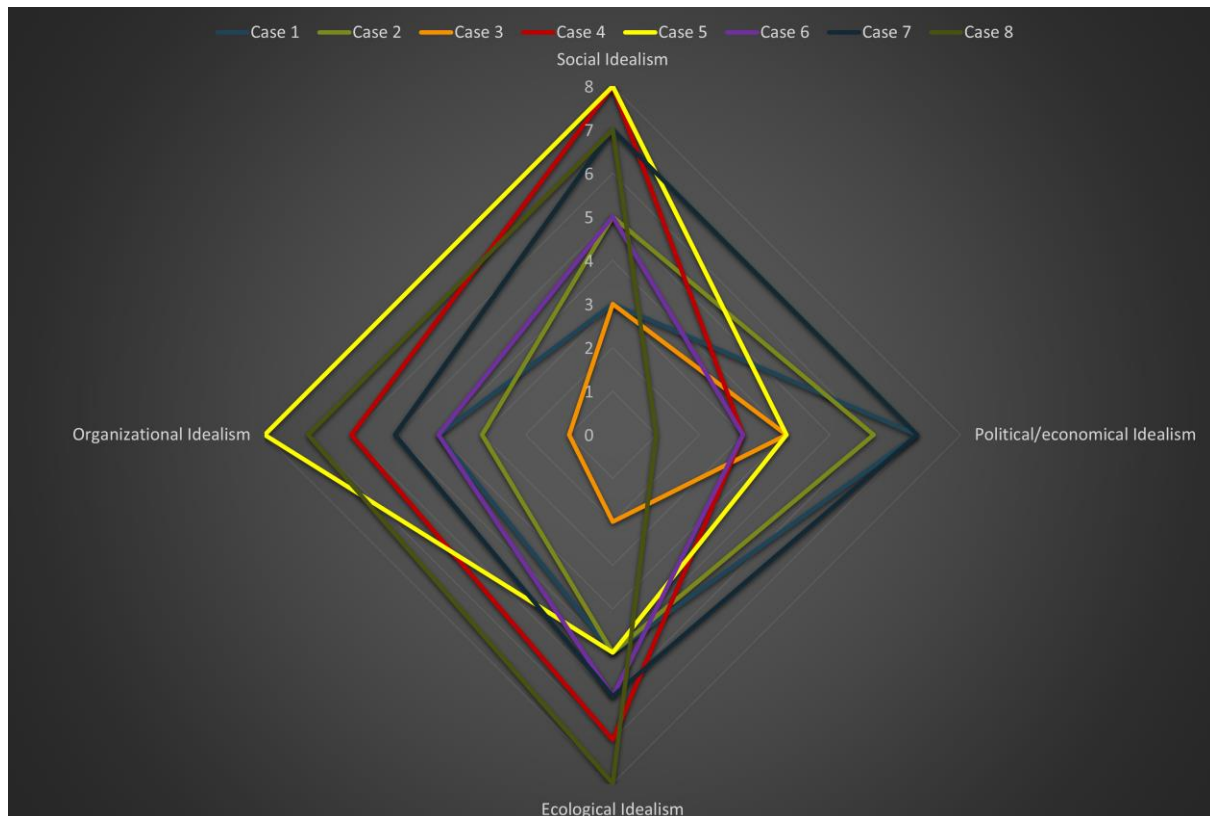


Figure 19 Comparison: Ethical Attitude of the 8 Cases

(Source: own)

The diagram shows the results of the ethical tendency of the 8 CSAs regarding the four spheres social, political/economical, ecological and organizational Idealism in a direct comparison.

A compromise between the ecological sphere and the social/ organizational was mentioned by a producer of Case 5 (ecological 5/8 and social 8/8), wherefore, the ecological idealism is lower positioned in their decision making than the social and organizational. Taking about machines, seed selection or the use of plastic material on the fields, the work efficiency and less workload for the producers stands in the foreground (Case 5: Diary: 7).

However, a connection can be observed between the social and the organizational sphere. In none of the cases is a higher difference than two fulfilled values between these two spheres. In two Cases (Case 5 and 8) they even show the same strong idealism regarding social and organizational topics.

Comparing the ethical attitude of the eight CSAs with the well-being of the producer, it can be observed, that producers working in a CSA with a strong social idealism in their decisions and overall attitude, tend to be more satisfied with the work conditions than in CSAs with a medium idealism (Case 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8). Besides that, it can be observed that in all CSAs with no or low fluctuation (Case 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) on the producer side, decisions are made with a strong idealism regarding the social sphere (except of Case 6 with a high- medium idealism, but due to their current state of development it is not comparable to the same extent).

Case 1 has a low-medium idealism regarding the social sphere and a high fluctuation. A producer state: "I have a personal need for relief, and it cannot be a permanent condition, that people so overtime every evening. And if they, do it is not handled transparent. The grievance stays hidden up to a level where people cannot hold it anymore. And then it becomes visible far too late. We have way too far to do for the working hours we have" (Case 1, Interview 2: 23).

Whereby Case 8 has no fluctuation until now, a strong social idealism and meets all the mentioned needs (5/5) of the producers. One producer state: “I am very satisfied. It is summer now, and this is always stressful, and I work a lot. But I am really happy. A reason for this is, that I can work very autonomous in the daily work. It is a good mixture, as we work as we were self-reliant and at the same time, we are social insured and well paid” (Case 8, Interview 1: 7). As the social sphere focuses on people’s needs, this result goes along with the understanding that well-being comes from the compliance of personal needs (Goldman, 2018).

As the organizational sphere and the social sphere are strongly connected it can be assumed that a focus on organizational topics has also a positive influence on the well-being of the producers (Case 4, 5 and 8). This could be the case, as the fulfillment of idealistic organizational values supports values of the social sphere. For example, flexibility and enabling self-determination (org. value) supports a focus on producer’s needs, as self-determination is mentioned by 5 out of the 8 CSAs as a need from the producer’s sight. A good and clear communication culture and fault tolerance (org. value) braces, the social value “giving space for the communication of people’s needs and thoughts” as well as “reliability and trust inside the group”. Moreover, creating strong and participatory communities supports the feeling of safety on a social and on a financial basis.

Another interesting point is that Case 8, where all producers needs are met and the producers are satisfied with their work, shows the most pragmatic attitude in the political sphere. This tendency can also be observed in other cases. Cases 4 and 5 have a low-medium and medium idealism regarding the political sphere and meet at the same time most of the needs mentioned by their producers (Case 4: 9,5/10 and Case 5: 9/11). “I do not like to be said what I have to do. In the gardener’s team everybody is treated equal in the beginning, and then we see regarding the abilities how we organize. What everybody can fetch. Through this I have a big scope to design. That is a huge factor, besides the fact, that everybody works half time and gets a more or less fair wage” (Case 5, Interview 2: 5). In Case 4 producers mentioned regarding their well-being, that the workload is adapted to the individual gardeners, the security and stability of the community and the long-term commitment of the producers offers the possibility to focus on human conditions and gives room for learning and experimenting (Case 4, Interview 1: 16).

8.2.3 Personal Motivation and Expectation

The results of the data analysis show that it is likely that there is a coherence between the personal motivation and expectation of CSA producers and their satisfaction regarding the work. A high expectation of self-realization might lead to a lower satisfaction in established collectively leaded CSAs, as the opinion and aims of an individuum are usually lower positioned as the aims of the collective. “To distinguish oneself or built something up is not given in our case, as there is an existing concept, a defaulted one” (Case 2, Interview 3: 26). Something similar can be observed in Case 5, where the founder who realized one of his visions in the CSA seven years ago and has a passion for organizing, searches for a new challenge now, where he can decide more self-determined and realize his new visions, as the current decisions processes in the community are a bit too sluggish for him (Case 5, Interview 2: 20). Coincidentally, another producer of Case 5 values the collective structure for the room and time it gives producers to focus on agricultural instead of organizational work.

Another factor that might lead to decreased satisfaction in the work is a high, unrealistic political idealism as well as the romanticization of the work in a CSA. Two producers who both have no agricultural background or experience and idealistic expectations towards their work, state: “at that time I was convinced, that the solidarity economy approach is the ultimate and the solution for the current problems” (Case 1, Interview 2: 3) and the motivation, “to change something, the risk-sharing, collective work-structures” (Case 3, Interview 3: 6), realized later that many tasks are “really hard and monotonous” (Case 3, Interview 3: 10), as well as “less changing” than expected (Case 3, Interview 3: 7) and that the concept is “not matured yet” and should be a bit more flexible and pragmatic to be financially secured (Case 1, Interview 2: 5).

Oppositely, producers who show a great passion for the actual agricultural work, as well as an agricultural background and therefore more realistic expectation of the work, tend to a higher satisfaction and wellbeing. “To save the world and destroy the capitalistic system is too short-sighted for me. This does not make the work enjoyable. You should like working alone on a windy field, otherwise you will not do the job longer than one year.” (Case 8, Interview 1: 27). The same producer state “I really work a lot, but I’m satisfied” (7). A producer from Case 4, who did an agricultural apprenticeship and had a solitary led CSA before, where he “broke his horns” (Interview 1: 16), enjoys the need orientation, safety of the community, the communication culture, and the space to focus on innovative agricultural practices (Interview 1: 16). Something similar is observed by the cashier of Case 2 who stated that producers who did an apprenticeship seem more satisfied to her in comparison to producers who studied (Case 2, Interview 3: 26). ‘Interest’ as one of the main factors regarding the satisfaction of employees was already perceived by Kovach, (1995), as well as this interest differs between people. Besides that, the connection between expectation and satisfaction was also detected by Pacheco & Webber, (2016). Thus, an influence on the job satisfaction through variables that embrace ego motivations (people who think that they can achieve something) and task significance (people who have passion for the work or a highly interested in the tasks) exists.

8.2.4 Decision and Implementation Structure of a CSA

It always should be considered, who makes the decisions in a CSA, or rather, who is in a responsibility position and has a greater say because of that. In two CSAs (Cases 1 and 2) it can be observed that it makes a difference on the attitude towards producers’ wages, who is responsible for the finances. In Case 1 a very participative consumer is responsible for the finances. In the discussion about sufficient producers’ wages that was animated by the primal producer of the CSA this year, the cashier took the opposite position. This position showed a strong political idealism, wherefore the share price cannot be increased, because then the CSA would not be an affordable alternative to the conventional system anymore (Case 1, Diary, 20). Something similar happened in Case 2, where the cashier position was also executed by a consumer the last years. Now it is taken over by an employee who states that there were conflicts between the old cashier and the team, as he had the opinion that the efficiency must be increased and if people want to earn more, they need to work less (Case 2, Interview 3: 38). Having a look on the needs of the people and the business seems to work better for an employee who works on the farm and has a daily contact with the producers, as well as a more neutral perspective (Case 2, Interview 3: 10). This observation aligns with the findings of Danziger et. al. (2012), whereof the psychological distance influences how people mentally assess situations and come to decisions. People with a higher distance tend to more idealistic attitudes, than people who are physically closer to the place where the decision is put into practice.

Besides this ethical drift, who decides what is implemented regarding the daily tasks also seems to influence the wellbeing of the producers. If there is a difference in who decides what is to do and who puts these decisions into practice, producers tend to be less satisfied with the work conditions. This tendency increases if the decision makers do not have any agricultural background and never do the basic works on the farm. This can be observed in Case 3, where the chairman makes the decisions and the gardener must put it into practice, and in Case 2 which had several discussions between the consumers, who are strongly integrated into the decision processes and the gardeners. Even if some producers are satisfied with just doing the work and do not contribute in decisions or want to take over responsibility, this finding aligns with a statement of EurWork (2016). They state that it is widely assumed, that the participation of employees affects their welfare strongly, as well as increases work satisfaction, self-development, and well-being. This is also detected by Pacheco & Weber (2016), whereof participatory decision making (PDM), has a strong influence on the job satisfaction (JS).

Overall, it can be said, that it makes a difference how the decision and responsibility structure in a CSA is set. Apart from the former named challenges it seems to be beneficial to have a clear, determined structure to avoid information and efficiency losses (Case 1, Interview 2: 9). This is also mentioned in the Urgenci farmers to farmers booklet (2019), stating the importance of clear operating and decision system which define functions and responsible areas for each CSA member. This allows the creation of space for different actions, like cultural exchange with other projects and models. The performance of the decision and responsibility structure is closely linked to a good and transparent communication culture.

8.2.5 Transparency

Solidarity economy, that is pursued by CSAs, is a form of holistic, transparent, personal, and direct economic relationship between the people in the solidary community. Therefore, transparency is a crucial attribute of CSAs (White, 2015). White connects missing transparency with CSAs who tend to highlight the ideals and image of the CSA model instead of sharing realities that might sometimes be dysfunctional. This can lead to economic mythologies surrounding CSAs and lead to high expectations on producer and consumer side (White, 2015). This tendency can be fostered by Case 1,2 and 3. The CSAs have no transparency regarding the earnings of the producers and at the same time they show a high political idealism and the lower social and organizational values than the CSAs who act completely transparent. As mentioned above, there is a possibility that the high expectations of producers developed through the mythologies about CSAs lead to frustration and quits. To improve the CSA model and find solutions for the challenges, it is important to discuss transparently about the existing dysfunctional realities. Especially for desired long-term producers it seems crucial to have a realistic view on the current situation. This is the case also for the consumers, who should know exactly what kind of work conditions they support.

Transparency in the working processes and responsibilities seems to have an influence on the satisfaction as well, as it contributes to a feeling of security and stability when the project is independent from single individuals. It enables people to change between different working tasks easily and decreases the knowledge loss if people quit. Case 1 is challenged by a high fluctuation and information loss because of it, wherefore, the CSA still struggles with their organization and responsibility structure. As one producer stated, “I think it would be good for the CSA to have another person which also know my tasks, the mill for example in case I am away, in case I have my exams for example like next week or when I am ill, there are several examples” (Case 1, Interview 1: 5). Case 7 has no hierarchy and no fluctuation until now and prevents knowledge loss through a rotation in the responsibility areas “it is always rotating after a year. One producer stays in the area, and one changes to another” (Case 7, Interview 1: 9). Reaching stability through transparency in the working processes was also observed by Ganci (2013).

8.2.6 Communication Culture and Supervision

An open and direct communication culture is a need mentioned by producers from 6 CSAs (see chapter 6.2.1). Furthermore, it was observed during the data analysis that this factor has an influence on the well-being of the producers. The influence of communication in social communities is nowadays widely acknowledged (Hui et al., 2009; Morreale et al., 2000).

As CSAs are communities, overall success factors for communities, such as communication and conflict ability (ability to handle conflicts in a constructive way) also account for CSAs (van Elsen & Kraiß, 2012). In the context of sustainable activism the influence of the way things are communicated as well as the chance to increase the sustainability by mediation and supervision is mentioned by Cox, (2019). External supervision opens a room for people communicating their needs and thoughts as well as an objective handling of personal conflicts and frictions. Regarding the analyzed CSAs, there seems to be a connection between the fluctuation of producers and a regular supervision. “We have been together as a team for 4 years, and now we have the first change in the team.

And this is induced because the person moves away. I think the supervision had an influence on that, what was really good. That we addressed things always early enough “(Case 7, Interview 1: 13). Moreover, Case 4 and 5 have no problems with fluctuation and both conduct/contract? external persons for supervision on a regular basis since the beginning. On the other side, it was mentioned by producers of Case 1 and 3 that they miss a supervision and think that it would be worthwhile for their CSAs (Case 1, Diary: 3; Case 3, Interview 1: 25). Both CSAs struggle with a high fluctuation on the producer side.

8.2.7 Working Hours

Time is valuable and being able to work half-time to 35 h/week was mentioned by many producers as an important factor for their well-being (Case 2, Interview 2; Case 3, Interview 1 & 3; Case 4, Interview 1; Case 5, Interview 1 & 2; Case 7; Interview 1; Case 8, Interview 1). Moreover, not noticed and appreciated overtimes that becoming a daily routine is a factor that decreases the well-being (Case 1, Interview 2). Fixing the working hours from the beginning on and recording them continuously to be able to keep an eye on them is crucial. Valuing the time of people should also foster a focus on the urgency of tasks. As there are many things to do on a farm, having a clear plan that separates tasks in those that need to be done immediately and those that can be done if there is spare time, is beneficial. As one producer of Case 8 state during a discussion: this saying, there is always something to do on a farm should be forbidden, if we do not set limits between what must be done and what can be done, it leads to a self-exploiting system we want to distinct from (Case 8, Diary, 117). These points are also mentioned by Urgenci, (2019) as a tool for personal sustainability.

To sum up, it can be said, that there seems to be an influence of the ethical attitude of a CSA on the well-being of their producers, as well as on the fluctuation. Whereby, a strong social idealism tends to a higher wellbeing and lower fluctuation of producers. Overall, it is observable, that CSAs need to do compromises between the different spheres, as they cannot have a strong idealism in all four spheres. Another influence on the wellbeing has the personal motivation and experience of producers. Producers with an agricultural background and a realistic expectation of the work, tend to a higher well-being than others. Besides that, seems the structure of decision processes and implementations influencing the wellbeing, as well as the transparency regarding wages and organizational structures. Further factors that effects the well-being are a good communication culture including a regular supervision and sufficient working hours. Above increasing the well-being of producers, to strengthen CSAs, other attitudes and practices might also have a positive influence on the success of CSAs. Attitudes and practices like this, that are considered by CSAs producers during this research will be presented in the next part.

8.3 Promising Attitudes and Best Practices that Keep a CSA Running

During the interviews and participation on the farms, producers were asked for the best practices, approaches, and requirements they experienced during their work in the CSA to reach good work conditions, financial stability, a sufficient yield, and a strong community. The analysis of the data accounts 13 practices that were mentioned as successful in the context of the named fields. These practices were grouped and approximately subordinated to the three spheres social, organizational, and ecological.

8.3.1 Focus on Organizational Parameters

A fixed consumers group and decent wage from the beginning on

There are different forms in which people start a CSA. Either they find a group of people that carries the mutual production, sharing costs from the beginning on, or they start on their own and find people as soon as the system has stabilized, and a sufficient yield is given. The producers in this research, experienced that it works better to find people who finance the setting of the CSA first (decent wages, investments). The other way around might lead to frustration and revision (Case 4, Diary: 23; Case 5, Interview 1,2; Case 1, Interview 31).

Regarding the decent wages, one producer stated that, starting with a lower wage with the aim to increase it is always harder than defining a sufficient one in the beginning. Otherwise, it needs to be explained to the consumer why the wage increases and talking about money is never easy. There is a risk that people quit because the share price rises, but when it is clear from the beginning on, people are not surprised later and if it is stated as a main focus of the CSA, consumers attend who also value this aspect (Case 5, Interview 1: 19). Another challenge regarding the wage is the double burden of labor work and voluntary work most of the producers carry. A possibility to reduce this burden, is to pay half of the time, producers spend on voluntarily work.

Choosing a fitting site and legal form for the CSA concept

Time should be spent to find the fitting site for the concept. "It is relatively important to be close to a city. In a rural area it is harder to find members and get help through them. And the accessibility through public transport is important to get the people to the field" (Case, Interview 1: 12). Access to land is difficult nowadays. Hence, finding a suitable site for a CSA often needs compromises. Nevertheless, the concept must fit to the site conditions and should be critically reflected and adapted.

Regarding the legal form, it is helpful to consider which legal form (association, foundation, mixture of two forms, etc.) fits to the CSA concept and supports the aims of the CSA in the best way. "To have it clear from the beginning on. It is a great fuss to disentangle this now after two years. All the contracts and statutes, this is a bit annoying. We learned from it, but I think it is better to get some external advice about it before you start and have the fiscal provision in mind" (Case 7, Interview 1: 13).

Fixed size and modular, organic growth

A slow, gradually modular growth is a success factor for the long-term existence of cooperatives (Lawless, 2003). Organic growth in a sufficient speed as a success factor for CSAs was also observed during this research (Case 4, Diary: 30). In two cases, a correlation between a not modular growth and struggles in the organization structure, stability and well-being of the producers could be observed. Case 1 grew very fast regarding their different branches (chicken, vegetables, fruits, mushrooms, grains) and had no time to build up experience and knowledge in all the fields. The CSA struggles with overtimes and sufficient efficiency and professionalism in the branches. Especially because of the high fluctuation they often had to start from the beginning and producers spend a lot of time for initial skill and adaption training. This might among other things lead to the fact, that the CSA still struggles with a sufficient organizational structure. In comparison to that states a producer of Case 5: "you should not start to idealistic and aim to do everything and start many projects at the same time but focus on one thing first" (Case 5, Interview 2:7). This CSA reached financial and social sustainability through a strong community, decent wages and need based working hours.

A similar tendency to the one in Case 1 can be observed in Case 3, but regarding the size of the CSA. The CSA grew very fast in the last years and wants to grow further currently even though they are challenged by a high fluctuation, no high satisfaction of the producers, problems to find new producers and struggles in their decision and responsibility structure. Instead of focusing on a stable team and communication structure to reach success they grow further. That there could be a correlation between the team size and the existing conflicts was also remarked by a producer: "It is crazy to call for 22 people where they stay and respect their needs. I read somewhere, that the perfect team size are six people. With this size it is possible to be on one level. But 22 is far too many" (Case 3, Interview 1: 27). In their book about Teams and Team dynamics, Hofert and Visbal (2021) mention a number between 5-9 people per team to work effectively.

Additionally, a producer of Case 5 states: “I experienced, that CSAs that are too small have often a high burden for the 1-2 producer who work there, because many tasks are there independently of the size. Like the legal form, the taxes, administrative tasks like members care, distributing vegetables, cultivation, harvest and so on. On the other side exists the experience of some CSAs that it gets anonymous over 350 members, and difficult to have a real community. So, if it is too big you do not know the people and their needs and if it is too small it is hard to get a good work division and efficiency. This should be considered for the individual CSAs” (Case 5, Interview 1: 7).

A decent budget planning

To achieve a financial sustainability, a decent budget planning should be kept. Therefore micro economic tools can be used like an income statement (loss and profits account), a cash-flow statement and a balance sheet (Urgenci, 2019). That CSAs have financial struggles because of an unclear budget can be seen in Cases 1 and 2. “The budget, that is decided in the beginning of the year is, has been decided this year and also last year always for more members than we have, so of course we are always short of money” (Case 1, Interview 1: 21). Or “In the last years there was a target price of the share and then the budget was adapted to it. Last year I did it the first time in a decent way (Case 2, Interview 3: 34).

Quitting perfectly washed vegetables and packed boxes

A lot of time can be saved during the washing and packing process of the produce. Not packing boxes but delivering the commissioned produce to the depots, where it is weight and distributed, gives space to focus on other things (Case 5, Interview 2: 23). This way of distribution can be observed in CSAs with less stress and higher well-being in the producer teams (Case 5, 6, 7, 8).

Building up resilient structures’ trough standardization and transparency

To make the CSA independent from individuals by building up resilient organizational structures, takes away the pressure and stress of single producers and might support a long- term stability of a project, as it can continue even if single persons quit, or are absent for a time.

Transparency regarding the working processes is crucial for this resilience. Trough transparency, producers and volunteers can change between different working tasks more easily and knowledge is not lost to the same extent (Ganci, 2013).

The positive influence of standardization of processes in this context was mentioned by a producer of Case 5. They also use methods of the lean-management approach to standardize procedures in the garden work, the bureau, and the tool barn as well as they label everything to make the order understandable for everybody (Case 5, Interview 2:7). The producers in Case 7 change the responsibility area every second year to build up collective knowledge and increase their stability (Case 7, Interview 1: 8).

Transparency about finances, labor expenses, savings, organizational realities and dysfunctional realities towards consumers and future producers also supports the resilience. As it supports the involvement of people who have a realistic attitude towards the current condition of a CSA and tend therefore more to a long- term commitment than people who do not know about it and have unrealistic expectations.

Decreasing the information loss through too many transfers points

Building up a clear operation and decision system decreases information loss, loss of efficiency and uncertainties beneath the members (See chapter 6.2.4.). Besides that, might the proportion of people who work fulltime (take over full responsibility) and people who work half-time (only take over some responsibilities) have an influence on the information flow. “We have many handovers and spots where information is lost or forgotten to be transferred” (Case 1, Interview 2: 15).

8.3.2 Focus on Social Parameters

Communication culture (conflict management, supervision)

A clear and open communication culture was mentioned by all the producers as one of the most important factors regarding the organizational structure, the team dynamic and the personal well-being. Room should be given to communicate personal needs and thoughts. If conflicts arise they should be detected early enough and used in a constructive way instead of a destructive one (Case 4, Diary: 31 ; Case 5, Interview 1: 9; Case 7, Interview 1: 13). What is crucial for a constructive dealing with conflicts is a neutral supervision from the beginning on. "To go out of the daily business and take over the bird perspective. To have room to think about the topics we are actually engaging with and do not have the time in the daily business to think and talk about. It is costing quite an amount, but it is worth us." (Case 5, Interview 2: 9). Moreover, "to notice with single persons that it does not fit, and I cannot find what I am searching for in this project. So, to separate from people, but in a way that is ok" (Case 5, Interview 2: 11).

Another factor supporting the communication is an efficient communication tool that is used by all the producers and maybe also one to communicate with the consumers and the consumers underneath each other (Case 4, Diary: 27; Case 7, Interview 1: 13)

Comfortable working/ community area

Putting effort in a comfortable area on the farm for the community and also for the producers supports the positive/good atmosphere on the workplace, as well as it supports consumers to participate and spend time for exchanging with the producers. "Having a kitchen, a lounge, a nice place to sit together. That changes a lot" (Case 5, Interview 2: 7). Moreover, it is important to decrease the expectation towards consumers regarding their co-working on the field, while taking these co-working days to strengthen the community and give the consumers time and space to feel appreciated and involved in the project. Therefore, a comfortable community area is helpful (Case 5, Interview 2: 7). The opposite can be observed in Case 1, where the farm itself is not a place where you want to spend a lot of time, what seems to have effects on the community building and the feeling of appreciation in the CSA. "I do not feel a lot of community. I think there a lot of people who appreciate it but there is not enough contact to share it" (Case 1, Interview 1: 11).

Social Idealism

„Honestly, more transparency would benefit many CSAs. Not only on the economical level, but on the social" (Case 4, Interview 2: 32). To prioritize the needs of producers and furthermore the needs of all people included in a CSA, over the needs of the business would help CSAs to increase the social well-being, the stability of the community and the long-term commitment of all participants what can support social and financial security (Case 4, Diary: 30).

Passion and a realistic attitude

Passion for the actual agricultural work is an attribute a producer should have to do this work for a longer period. As founder of a new CSA or person who wants to attend a CSA, people should ask themselves if there is mainly the motivation to do something alternative and have an input in changing something, or if there is also a realistic expectation about what work in the agricultural sector means and passion for some of the daily, sometimes monotonous, and physically hard, work tasks. In the analyzed CSAs there is an observable tendency, that producers who have experience and a realistic initial motivation and expectation tend to have higher satisfaction in the work, and the CSA where they work tends to be more successful regarding financial and social sustainability (Case 8, Interview 1; Case 4, Interview 1,2; Case 5, Interview 1).

Furthermore, it increases the motivation of producers if they can contribute with their passion and abilities and if their attributes are appreciated and needed in the CSA (Case 1, Interview 2: 23; Case 5, Interview 1: 5). One producer of Case 5 state, that the passion is higher than some other needs, what

keeps the motivation high and that he can endure a lot if he can do what he likes to do (Case 5, Diary: 68). This influence was also found by Ganci, (2013), who state, that it increases the motivation if people can choose in which field they want to work.

Working hours and holiday times

To avoid self-exploitation of producers it is an important tool to record the working hours from the beginning on. As well as determining a fixed number of working hours according to the producers needs from the beginning on. This might of course vary due to the seasons and different workloads, but the average predetermined working hours should be stuck to. To suppose the lifetime of the producers as something valuable seems to increase the feeling of appreciation, as well as it sustains their mental and physical health (Case 1, Interview 2; Case 5, Interview 1, Case 6; Interview 1; Case 8, Interview 1). Recording the actual working hours also helps to increase the efficiency of working processes and to focus on the important tasks.

Continuity regarding the community

Continuity in the whole CSA community is a success factor mentioned by several scholars (Freedman & King, 2016; Ganci, 2013; Groh & McFadden, 1998; Samoggia et al., 2019; van Elsen & Kraiß, 2012). That a strong consumers community gives the feeling of safety which supports the well-being of the producers and the whole atmosphere in the CSA is mentioned by several producers during this research (Case 1, Interview 1; Case 2, Interview 2; Case 3 Interview 3; Case 4, Interview 1,2; Case 5, Interview 1; Case 6, Interview 1; Case 7, Interview 1). Trust between consumers and producers seems to influence the support and stability of the community. "In fact, people donate or pay for nothing they do not know about. You need the trust" (Case 2, Interview 2: 36). As well as the feeling to work towards a common aim (Case 1, Interview 2: 23). These assumptions are encouraged by Pirker (2015), who proposes that it needs, besides mutual trust, a common understanding and belief regarding the purpose of the initiative to build up a strong community.

Moreover, the continuity of the main gardeners is a factor that brings a lot of stability and enables the possibility to build something up in a sustainable way and to achieve visions (Case 4, Diary: 32). In the example of Case 4, the community of the ecovillage is a supporting factor that imposes a strong community and attracts gardeners who can imagine staying for a long-term and become part of the ecovillage (Case 4, Diary: 33).

8.3.3 Focus on Agricultural/Ecological Parameters

Standardisation of cultivation processes

To orientate on cultivation systems and methods that are proofed and experienced in the starting period seems to be a helpful advice. After a certain stability in the cultivation and production is reached, new methods and innovations can be tested and applied. Furthermore, a standardization on the field to increase the efficiency: "all the beds have the same width and length, in a rotation this makes it easier if all the mulch nets and watering hoses have the same length. Also, with the rows. We start with 2 and 3-rows in the beginning, even if we waste a bit of space, but it is easier for the hoeing technique. There are some points where you can start pragmatic and still have the chance to say later, ok it works good so we can also do a 5-row cultivation now" (Case 5, Interview 2:7).

Decent mechanization and well adapted cultivation techniques

Depending on the concept of the CSA, as well as on the site, there should be a decent site-adapted cultivation plan including the produce, the methods, the techniques, and the rate of mechanization. If mechanization is wanted and needed, it supports the success if it is accessible from the beginning on and if the mechanization perfectly supports the chosen cultivation techniques and methods (Case 5, Interview 2: 7).

A tractor with the right equipment can support the cultivation to a great extent (Case 2, Case 4, Case 5) whereof it can interfere if equipment and cultivation system do not fit together (Case 1).

Continuity regarding the land

Besides the continuity of the community, the continuity of the land that is cultivated is a factor that can lead to stability. To know that the land can be cultivated by the CSA for a long period increases the motivation to put effort into building up a sustainable regenerative system, like agro-forestry systems (Case 4, Interview 1: 8). It also increases the motivation of the producers as they know that the energy, they give into the project is transferred in something that persists. As regenerative cultivation methods tend to show higher yields after a couple of years of regenerating the land it can also influence the produce and workload (Case 6: Interview 1: 36-37). This continuity can be given through the cooperation with a foundation and seems to support to implement ecological values that support the biodiversity and long-term protection of ecosystems (Case 1, 2, 4, 7).

Agricultural professionalism background and experiences

An agricultural background is not of necessity, but it might support the efficiency of the cultivation and counteracts bad harvests and a lot of overtime (Case 4, Interview 1: 26). At least the awareness, that agriculture is a profession and the willingness to learn and to increase the experience should be given (Case 4, Interview 1; Case 8, Interview 1). As well as a realistic expectation about how much must be learned and that it might make sense to follow advises of people that have the know-how and start with ways of cultivation that were already experienced by others (Case 5, Diary, 63).

8.4 Future and Overall Challenges of the CSA Movement

Some overall challenges of the CSA movement emphasized during the research and will be shortly discussed in the following part as a basis for following research. Figure 13 summarizes the main challenges the 8 CSAs of this research face currently. Some of the challenges are overlapping. These are, fluctuation of producers which leads to instability, finding appropriate long-term producers, increasing the wages, an improved communication culture, the influence and financing of supervision and creation of a strong, participatory community.

Overview Main Challenges

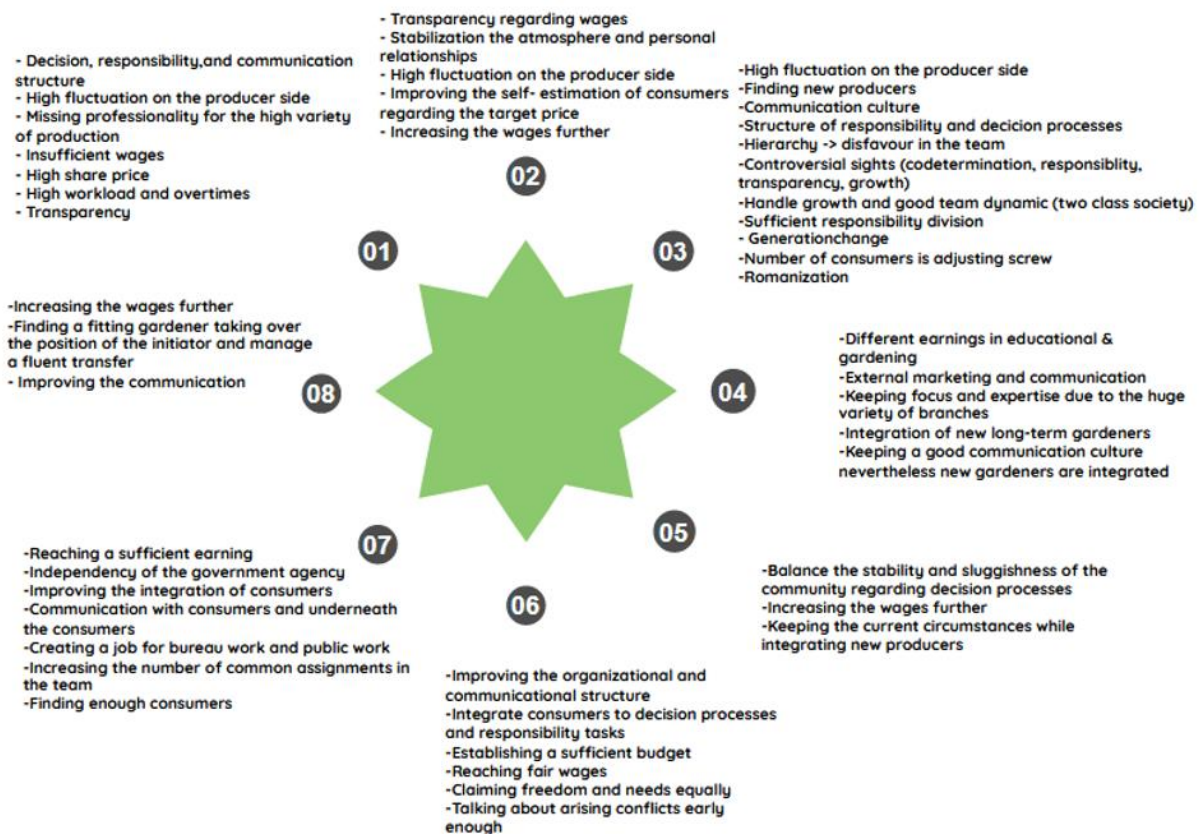


Figure 20 Overview main challenges of the 8 Cases

(Source: own)

The figure shows a summarize of the main challenges each of the 8 CSAs face currently. The challenges were state by the producers of the cases.

8.4.1 Wages

Although some CSAs pay their producers wages that are higher than the current average agricultural wages, these are still far from fair wages (Case 3, Interview 2, 3; Case 4, Interview 2; Case 5, Interview 1; Case 8, Interview 1). The reasons for this include a poor appreciation of food, super low food prices and therefore horrific low average wages in agriculture (Case 2, Interview 2: 16). “As long as people get their turnip or cabbage for 20 cent in the supermarket, it is not surprising, that they do not want to spend 12 €/month for some vegetables” (Case 2, Interview 3: 40). Another challenge mentioned in Case 4 is the huge difference between the earnings received from actual gardening work compared with that from educational work. However, the gardening work creates the basis for the guides and seminars they offer, such that the educational work would not exist without the work of the gardeners (Case 4, Interview 2: 17). The wage challenge is one that needs to be approached by the whole CSA movement and as one producer in Case 8 states, the acceptance of a too low income because of idealism, endangers the whole agricultural business and counteracts the initial idea of the CSA movement (Case 8, Diary: 115).

8.4.2 Educational Objectives/ Work Towards the Consumers

To overcome the challenge of wages, educating people about realities in the agricultural work is essential. Even though CSAs try to inform and educate their consumers through weekly letters and mails (Case 1,2,3,5,7), blogs and direct discussions on the field or during the distribution (Case 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8), there is often still a lack of understanding about the daily realities on the farm. “In literature it is called the hungry gap, we do not have leftovers from the wintertime, storable vegetables. The gap is when storages are empty and the vegetables in the field are still not ready to be harvest. That is a tricky thing and each year we try again to communicate as much as possible. I think there are some people who are surprised by it. And some people think they will not continue after this phase” (Case 2, Interview 2: 26). As well as strong political idealism of consumers that is sometimes hard to combine with the daily tasks: “There is often this we against the conventional agriculture. That is important somehow, but our reality of live here on the farm is closely connected with local conventional farmers. For me it is awkward, if these farmers go to our Facebook page and see an event about the horrible conventional agriculture out there. It is important on a political level, yes, but concerning the reality here it is difficult. We are dependent on a good local network, and then it is sometimes counteractive if the members have a black-white thinking” (Case 3, Interview 1: 31). Educational objectives towards the consumers and other people as well should be continuously increased to achieve understanding, trustful communities.

8.4.3 Romanticization

Another challenge that might also be overcome by education and transparency is the romanticization of agriculture as a whole, and more explicit for CSAs. As mentioned before, this has also an influence on people who want to work in CSAs or start a CSA. “To make another reality check and show people how it really is. They think: Oh, how beautiful and there are bees and flowers and butterflies, oh that is so nice...But that is not the way it is!” (Case 3, Interview 1: 31). It seems like some people have the idea of CSAs who produce everything with permaculture, not using any machines and having little work, due to the permaculture concept. “Some people come here and are confused, like oh I thought you do permaculture here, and I do not know how they get this impression that we can produce this amount with permaculture. This is partly up to the people, but I also think part of how the marketing works. No to address some topics directly” (Case 3, Interview 3: 40).

8.4.4 Diversity of Consumer Group

Most of the actual consumers of the CSA are from a high educated, well- situated group of people, which seems to be the group that tends mainly to a membership in a CSA (Chen et. al., 2019). This condition is also observed by most of the CSA in this research, and desired to be counteracted. In CSAs who offer target share prices, where every person independent from their income could attend face this challenge (Case 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) as well as Case 3 who grows rapidly to be able to keep a fixed price below 70 €/ month and aims to reach people with different social backgrounds. What combines all CSAs regarding this challenge, is that there is mainly not enough spare time and energy to put effort in acquiring people and do additionally educational work in schools or other social institutions.

8.4.5 Access to Land

A challenge for new CSA initiatives is the access to land. “If the access to land would be easier and if there would be reasonable furtherance for young gardeners to cover all the investment costs it would be way easier. If you get land, I think the marketing is not the problem, that is manageable somehow” (Case 3, Interview 1: 39). Working together with foundations from the common’s movement might help regarding the costs, but to find available land is very difficult and a huge future challenge for an agrarian change. The challenge of access to land regarding CSAs is extensively discussed by Ast, (2017).

8.4.6 Professionality

A certain degree of professionalism regarding agriculture and organization increases the chance that a CSA succeeds without exploiting humans or nature. As many collectively founded CSAs are founded by people with a lateral entrance practical and theoretical learning is a daily task (Woods et al., 2009). As CSAs are an innovative concept, even people with an agricultural background need to further increase their knowledge and practice every day to be able to endure the challenges. This is an even higher burden for people with no or little experience (Case 4, Interview 1: 26). A strong network between CSAs helps to transfer knowledge and experiences between CSAs, as well as transparency about cultivation methods and best practice of existing CSAs can support projects in their starting period.

8.4.7 Transparency

That the handling and implementation of the principle of transparency is a challenge and chance for the whole CSA movement was sufficiently discussed in this research.

8.4.8 Generation Conflict

A challenge that could be observed during the research is a 'generation conflict' between founders of CSAs and new members that join a CSA. That can happen, when a CSA reaches a kind of stability after some years and new members join with new ideas, a lot of energy and the desire of self-realization. It is comprehensible, that 'old' members appreciate the acquired stability and at the same time it is understandable that the new members want to bring in their innovative ideas. This can also be seen in the difficulty of founders to shift and provide responsibility. As CSAs are an innovative concept that still needs to grow and improve, it is urgent that new members and ideas get their space to experiment and implement and at the same time well established structure should not be confound unreasonable this could endanger the existence.

These challenges concern the whole CSA movement, and some of them even the whole agricultural sector. To overcome them, a wide range of practical and theoretical approaches is needed, to indicate the most auspicious one. As most of the challenges are very holistic and differ between different CSA initiatives, it is likely, that there is not one solution for them, but many different ones.

8.5 Methodological Discussion

Due to constructive grounded theory (Con GTM), the initial motivation and subjectivity of the researcher are consciously reflected during the research. As mentioned at the start, this research was developed from my personal experiences working in CSAs, as well as from the experiences of friends and colleagues. Wherefore, the whole research is from a producer perspective, even if this was critically reflected during the whole research process. To differ between the own thoughts and ideas and the objective result of the qualitative analysis is a challenge. Supportive for this process are critical discussions with colleagues and external persons, as they can bring in another perspective to the own explanations. Regarding my initial assumption that one underlying idealism could, in some cases, challenge the well-being of the producers as well as the success of a CSA, displayed as too short-sighted, as the research shows, that different kinds of idealism (social, political, ecological, and organizational) seem to drive CSAs. As no CSA can be strongly idealistic in all four spheres, they need to make compromises according to their prioritized values. Each CSA can decide as a group where they want to make compromises. The awareness in CSAs about this phenomenon and how it can be integrated and used in the decision-making processes should be examined further, as the results from this research bases mainly on observation and single producer statements.

A factor that challenged my personal attitude and demanded reflection is the initial expectation and initial idealism, that led me to work conditions with a lot of responsibility, overtimes, stress, and insufficient earning. My ego regarding this topic was confronted by statements like: “insufficient earning because of idealism endangers the whole agricultural profession (Case 8, Diary: 115) or “when I look at the self-organized groups that come here for a visit, they often only do it out of an idealism, to save the world and destroy the capitalistic system. I think this is too short-sighted” (Case 8, Interview 1: 27). Even if I have a high passion for the agricultural work, I realized that a more realistic attitude is crucial. Besides that, there were two factors emphasized during the analysis that I assumed initially as very important and determining for other factors as well, which are transparency and need orientation.

9 Conclusion

The results of this thesis offer an impression/overview of the dynamics in CSAs in Germany and Austria, as well as their strength and weaknesses from the perspective of their producers. To understand these dynamics and their influence on the ethical attitude (Idealism/pragmatism), a theoretical model was constructed, that shows the idealistic and pragmatist tendency of CSAs in decision processes regarding social, political/economical, ecological, and organizational spheres. An influence of the ethical attitude and organizational structure of CSAs, as well as the personal needs and expectations of CSA producers on their well-being was presented. Besides that, an analytical framework, regarding best practices and attitudes was established to support new or struggling CSA initiatives. In the context of the future growth and development of the whole CSA movement, challenges, advice as well as ideas for future research are stated.

Based on the analyzed data from interviews and participation on eight CSAs in Germany and Austria it can be said that there seems to be an influence of the way a CSA initiative is structured, regarding organization, decision, and responsibility processes on the ethical attitude of a CSA. As well as it appears that the ethical attitude of a CSA has an influence on the well-being of the producers.

There is an observed tendency of the positive influence of a strong social idealism, as well as the compliance of producers needs by the CSA, on the well-being of their producers. Additionally, a lower fluctuation on the producer site and higher social and financial sustainability can be observed in CSAs with a higher well-being of producers.

Moreover, the analysis shows that transparency regarding producers’ earnings, the financial situation, overall functional and dysfunctional realities, the organization, and the daily work concluding all challenges and solutions in CSAs can have an influence on the well-being of producers, the trust and commitment of the members and the further growth of the whole CSA movement.

Besides this understanding, some recommendations can be given regarding the increasing stability and success of CSAs.

The personal motivation and expectation as well as the personality of producers seems to have a strong influence on their well-being and satisfaction at work. Even though CSAs have no impact on this factor, a good match between driving values of the producers and the CSA initiative can support the well-being for both sides. Therefore, a transparent handling of realities is important. Furthermore, an appropriate match between producers and tasks, where passion and abilities are needed and expedient is promising.

All the observed attitudes and influences require a good communication culture and interpersonal dealing, as well as a continuous reflection of the own position and acting of each participant. To counteract to intense subjectivity as well as destructive conflicts, some form of supervision is of great advantage. As this support is a high financial burden for CSAs, especially in the starting period it might be reasonable to work on establishing a model for a national supervision network for CSAs.

This research lay a foundation for further research in the direction of social sustainability of CSAs. Quantitative research is needed to either support, disprove or adapt the established grounded theories. Moreover, participatory and field research is needed, that represents the perceptions and lived experiences of CSA producers and fills the gaps between academical theory and reality to be able to find realistic and practicable solutions.

10 Literature

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