Community Supported Agriculture: Towards a Flourishing Movement in Europe

Jonathan Hoenninger
Lucas Costamilan
Miyuki Ochiai

Blekinge Institute of Technology
Karlskrona, Sweden
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Abstract: As a response to the growing global sustainability challenges related to industrial agriculture, alternative approaches of food production and distribution are emerging. One approach that fosters direct consumer-producer relationships and sustainable local food production is known as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). This study explored how the CSA movement can be supported strategically towards a flourishing movement in Europe. A qualitative research approach was chosen with a comparative element of the two countries with contrastive characteristics in terms of the degree of successfulness of the movement; with France being successful and Sweden having less success in terms of the number of CSAs. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 21 CSA farmers, network members and researchers. The results revealed barriers and enablers for a flourishing movement under five overarching themes: (1) Definition, structure and operation (2) The direction of the movement (3) Social aspects (4) Knowledge and communication, and (5) Country-/region-specific aspects. Crucial factors and contrastive features between countries were identified and discussed in relation to how they hinder or enable a flourishing movement. Based on the findings, strategic guidelines were developed with the aim of contributing to CSA practitioners and leaders in Europe.

Keywords: Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), alternative food systems, Local Food Networks (LFN), industrial agriculture, strategic sustainable development.
Statement of Contribution

It was a long journey but we were able to navigate through it as gently as possible. Our vision for this project was to deliver a work that we can feel proud of. Our intention was to be slow, small and beautiful. Each of us representing a different continent, from Brazil, Germany and Japan, we had challenges of difference in culture, absence due to personal trips, and communication. We were able to overcome them with our diversity as an expression of complementarity. This happened in such a strong way that when one of us was not there, we could feel that there was a quality missing. We took our breaks as serious as our work and were able to balance lightness and effectiveness throughout out project.

Jonathan is the one who proposed the topic and a driving force in our group. The commitment, resilience and the amount of energy he put in our work is amazing. He is a detail-oriented person and at the same time never loses the big picture, which guided us in moving forward with a strong structure. We appreciated the lightness and sense of humour he brought to the group. He is self-reflective, and always open to listen. He leads gently but effectively.

Lucas is the one who collaborated to keep the harmony to the group. He has a very clear systems perspective on how things are interrelated, understanding details and relating them to the bigger picture. He inspired us by reminding the purpose of doing research that matters to us. He worked hard without forgetting to take care of himself and the group. It helps us to get out of this notion of “just get things done” and to make the whole project profound and beautiful.

Miyuki is the reflection of kindness. She brought an exquisite quality to our work. With her academic background, she contributed with precise writing and profound knowledge on research methodology. Miyuki has a very clear view on details and their importance for the stringency for the larger picture. She is a really good listener and a skilled harvester. She is really intentional in everything she does, and brought focus, lightness and harmony to the group. She is a master cook and we also had the privilege to enjoy the most delicious fikas.
Acknowledgements

We want to express profound gratitude to everyone supporting us on our journey.

First of all, we want to express gratitude to our primary advisor Rebecca. Bekki’s kindness, patience and support throughout this process allowed us to flourish with this work.

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Special thanks to all the farmers, CSA members, researchers in France and Sweden in supporting our work with their time and contribution to this work. Thanks to all the interviewees that have inspired us with their perspectives and new insights.

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Changes in the food system in the last decades increased yields. However, industrial agriculture created many new challenges regarding sustainability. As a response to the global sustainability challenges of the food sector, such as biodiversity loss or pollution, new modes of agriculture have been developed in Europe. Alternative Food Systems (AFS) investigating alternative models of food production such as local food initiatives and a change in consumer-producer relationships are of an increasing interest. An approach that fosters direct consumer-producer relationships and sustainable local food production is known as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA).

CSA differs from conventional farming in that it puts emphasis on sustainable and diverse regional and local production, close and solidarity-based consumer-producer connection with a high interest in social and ecological sustainability. Examples of possible contributions of CSA to a more sustainable food system are as follows: first, because it stimulates local production, it leads to the reduction of the burning of fossil fuels, carbon emissions and dependence on transportation. Second, smaller food chains require less packaging and are correlated with less food losses and waste. Third, agroecological farming practices, which is part of the CSA principles, stimulate biodiversity and refrain from using chemicals and fertilizers that contaminate soil, water sheets and rivers.

While CSAs provide a promising alternative to current models of agriculture, the movement still remains marginal. In the last decades, the concept of CSA spread fast around Europe with considerable differences amongst the European countries. However, in some countries the numbers of CSA farms are insignificant, whereas other countries such as France have over 2000 CSAs (European CSA Research Group, 2016).

Therefore, the aim of the study is to do a comparison between two countries on both ends of the spectrum in order to bring out the enablers and barriers that contribute to this development. France and Sweden were chosen as two examples, one for a flourishing movement (France) and the other for a movement that is not yet flourishing (Sweden). This study aspires to offer strategic guidelines as to how CSAs and the movement can flourish in Europe.

In designing the study, the researchers employed the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD) (Broman and Robert 2017). It was designed by a multi-disciplinary group of scientists to address the complex sustainability challenges we face and strategically move towards sustainability. It provides a comprehensive model and a common language for planning based on systems thinking, which has been used widely and constantly tested and developed. In addition, it offers a unifying, operational definition of sustainability consisted of eight Sustainability Principles (SPs), which function as boundary conditions for the society’s transition towards sustainability.

Based on the definition of sustainability from the FSSD and the European CSA Declaration, the researchers created a vision of success of the flourishing CSA movement:

A flourishing movement…
1.) … is a driving force in the transition towards an alternative food production system
2.) … lives up to its values, CSA principles, definition and the European CSA Declaration
3.) … consists of economically viable CSAs and a strong coalition of networks operating within
a principled definition of sustainability (Broman and Robèrt 2017).

**Research Questions**

Primary research question: How can the CSA movement be strategically supported to flourish in Europe?

Secondary research questions:
SRQ 1. What are the conditions that hinder and enable the CSA movement to flourish?
SRQ 2. Why is there a flourishing CSA movement in France and not in Sweden?
SRQ 3. What recommendations can be made to support the CSA movement to flourish in Europe?

**Methods**

This study applied a qualitative approach because it is the most appropriate for the scope of this study, namely to explore the current reality of CSAs by looking at experiences and perceptions of people working in the field. A descriptive-analytical approach was combined with a prescriptive approach. In order to offer strategic guidelines for CSA movement in Europe to flourish, an investigation of two cases was conducted on CSAs in France and in Sweden. Taking an in-depth look at the contrasting, context-specific cases revealed a detailed description of enablers and barriers for a flourishing CSA movement.

To answer SRQ1 and 2, the total number of 21 semi-structured interviews were conducted; 15 with French and 6 with Swedish CSA experts. Semi-structured interview was chosen over other types of interview to stay on topic and guide the direction of the conversation while allowing the researchers to explore different topics regarding the current reality of CSA. The interview questions touched upon the general situation of the CSA farm that the interviewee was involved in and the barriers and enablers that they saw on an individual CSA level as well as the movement level. The participants were found by reaching first to the CSA network in France and Sweden via email and phone, followed by snowball sampling where the researchers asked for contact information of any other potential interviewees.

The data was analysed through qualitative content analysis, which is an approach for the investigator to understand the meaning of texts and recognize the significance by allowing themes to emerge out of the data. Thematic analysis was employed to guide the data analysis procedure. Through open coding process, the researchers identified barriers and enablers, and then classified the quotations from interviews into four categories: barriers on farm level, enablers of farm level, barriers on movement level, and enablers on movement level. At the same time, each element was labelled with a code (e.g. “product variety,” “work overload” etcetetet). Then, repetitive themes were sought for and named as unifying or dominant ideas in the data. All the three researchers participated in this iterative process of searching for themes, discovering patterns and eliminating redundancies. As a result, codes were organized into five overarching themes.
Finally, crucial factors were identified among barriers and enablers and discussed in relation to the definition of flourishing movement. To answer SRQ 3, strategic guidelines were suggested in order to support European CSAs to flourish.

It is acknowledged that there are a few issues that might have limited this study, such as the limited number and diversity of participants and the narrow scope in terms of locations. Attempts were made to increase the trustworthiness of the study.

**Results**

The results section presented barriers and enablers that were identified from the data. Those were presented through five overarching themes: (1) Definition, structure and operation (2) The direction of the movement (3) Social aspects (4) Knowledge and communication, and (5) Country- and region-specific aspects.

First, barriers and enablers under the theme of *definition, structure and operation* were presented. The data revealed questions around unity and coherence as a movement, disagreement on the CSA definition, the distortion of the CSA model, which was discussed in the following chapter. In relation to that, building a shared mental model was identified as an enabler, such as the national CSA charter in France. Many barriers came along with the structure and the operation of CSAs such as little flexibility, and little or no product choices for consumers in most cases, and the large commitment needed to participate. However, enabling factors were also mentioned such as financial security, solidarity and community building.

Second, barriers and enablers under the theme of *the direction of the movement* were presented. The role of CSA as a movement, the role of networks, and external factors such as political and legal aspects were mentioned in the interviews. In addition, a theme around awareness on the sustainability challenges emerged. This theme was also connected to the demand for alternatives, which was seen as an enabler for the movement that led to an interest in agricultural alternatives like CSA.

Third, barriers and enablers under the theme of *social aspects* were presented. The interviewees mentioned topics related to community engagement such as the importance of community and its impact on individuals. External aspects such as partnership with organizations came up as both enablers and barriers. Another conspicuous theme was trust and solidarity. Creating trust was mentioned as a challenge, whereas eroding trust in agro-industry was identified as an enabler for the increasing demand for alternative food production and distribution systems like CSA.

Fourth, barriers and enablers under the theme of *knowledge and communication* were presented. Knowledge- and skill-intensive aspects of CSA operations and missing communication between CSA farmers and customers came up as significant barriers. Different factors that could help enhance the communication flow such as sharing tools, transparent communication, education and research were identified as enablers.

Fifth, barriers and enablers under the theme of country-/region-specific aspects were presented. This section focused on the particularities in Sweden and France emerged from the data. Themes around cultural, legal and political aspects stood out in the interviews: the culture in importance of food, agriculture and local production, as well as legal aspects and political engagement. In France, there were enablers regarding food, culture, and political engagement,
and barriers in legal aspects and trust building. In Sweden, there were enablers regarding mobilization and capacity to follow trends, and barriers related to the awareness on the quality of food or where food came from.

**Discussion**

The discussion was structured according to the definition of a flourishing movement. First, in relation to the CSA movement as a driving force for transition towards an alternative food system, a plurality of understandings on where to go as a movement was revealed and discussed. Although there are shared definitions for CSA and a European CSA Charter, the study showed challenges to define a direction and common ground. The movement seems to be standing at a bifurcation between being an open, grassroots movement or professionalizing itself more. There is a risk for the CSA movement to lose space for competing models and its original intention due to mainstream pressure. There is also an opportunity of engaging more actively with networks and politically. This will be an essential aspect for the movement in the following years.

Second, related to values, CSA principles and definition, questions around the core elements of CSA have been discussed, also in relation to the diverse application in practice. The discussion illustrated that elements for a clear definition of CSA and CSA principles do exist, such as in the European CSA Declaration. Some studies argued the necessity of adapting CSA principles by stating “that the reality of dominant food system context and site-specific influences on CSA development compels us to rework our attachment to early idealized ‘model’ traits” (Feagan and Henderson 2009, 203). It has been argued in the interviews that execution of the ‘ideal CSA’ is crucial in order to contrast from other models and to keep the core of CSA. It can be concluded that these questions can have strong implications for CSA’s sustainability performance. From the literature, it became evident that the French AMAP shares more features of a ‘transitional CSA’ rather than the ‘ideal CSA.’ Whether or not these models are considered CSA will be an important question for the movement to be asked in the future.

Third, the findings suggested that CSA faces internal, structural and operational challenges. These findings was discussed in relation to literature. Examples of the challenges that emerged from the findings were the high workload, volunteering and participation, and finances. Some of these challenges and discussion seem to be reported and discussed repeatedly. These themes mentioned by interviewees seem to be strongly related to the high commitment needed by members and farmers such as workload, financial support and community engagement. These challenges can give hints as to why the model is adapted towards a more ‘transitional CSA,’ for example with less community activities due to high workload. These challenges around the structure of CSA can become a barrier to a flourishing movement. General conclusions or solutions are hard to draw due to the plurality and diversity of CSA executions within the movement.

Fourth, the findings were examined from the lens of the Sustainability Principles (Broman and Robert 2017) to discuss CSA’s possible contributions to a sustainable food system. The findings demonstrated the complexity of a sustainable CSA with all its facets and the challenge of balancing social, ecological and economic sustainability within CSA. To illustrate, the interrelation between risk sharing and the advantages for financial security for farmers, which can be an enabler for organic farming and sustainable farming practices as explained earlier. However, it can also create pressure for farmers to hold up to the expectations and the trust of
members. Therefore, risk sharing can possibly lead to the risk of work overload and self-exploitation of farmers, or the challenge for farmers to ask for risk sharing in the actual situation, not wanting to disappoint the customers. Nevertheless, CSA’s potential for social sustainability contributions from the data and literature was clearly recognizable.

Fifth, a comparative analysis between France and Sweden was conducted. It revealed four key contrastive features: Relationship with food, Localization, Trust, and Political engagement. More crucial factors that enable the flourishing movement were identified in France such as gastronomic food culture, advocate for localization, and positive political engagement. However, the variations in definitions and operations of CSA raised a question: is France actually a case of success? What emerged from the findings was the distortion and adaptation of original, ideal form of CSA going on in France. In addition, the possible influence of culture- and context-specific elements have been demonstrated from the literature.

From these crucial factors, strategic guidelines were deduced to support the flourishing movement of CSA: (1) to build stronger alliances with the agroecological and food sovereignty movement, while getting closer to the local political environment, (2) to preserve the core elements of CSA, and (3) to keep using participatory processes with the aim of creating a common vision.

**Conclusion**

This study examined the CSA movement in France and Sweden, and overall, the results revealed barriers and enablers for the CSA movement to flourish. Important questions on the core elements of CSA and the further direction of the CSA movement have been described and discussed. The importance of these core elements was demonstrated in this study in addition to the challenge of balancing social, ecological and economic sustainability within CSA. Some decisive questions for the movement have been raised throughout this research: What would be a distortion of the model? Does the CSA movement want to grow? What kind of partnerships should be fostered? And how political should the movement be? To contemplate on these questions will be essential for the flourishing of the movement in the following years.
List of Abbreviations

AMAP: ‘Association pour le Maintien d’une Agriculture Paysanne’- CSA in France

AFNs: Alternative Food Networks

AFSs: Alternative Food Systems

CSA: Community Supported Agriculture

LFN: Local Food Networks

MIRAMAP: Interregional movement of AMAP in France

SPs: Sustainability Principles

URGENCI: International Network for Community Supported Agriculture
Table of Contents

Statement of Contribution ........................................................................................................ ii

Acknowledgements ................................................................................................................ iii

Executive Summary ................................................................................................................... iv

Introduction ............................................................................................................................. iv

Research Questions ................................................................................................................ v

Methods .................................................................................................................................. v

Results ..................................................................................................................................... vi

Discussion ............................................................................................................................... vii

Conclusion ............................................................................................................................... viii

List of Abbreviations .............................................................................................................. ix

Table of Contents .................................................................................................................... x

List of Figure and Tables ......................................................................................................... xiii

1 Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 1

1.1 The Sustainability Challenge ............................................................................................ 1

1.2 The Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD) .................................. 2

1.3 Food Systems .................................................................................................................... 3

1.3.1 Changes in the food system ......................................................................................... 4

1.3.2 Impacts of industrial agriculture on the ecological and social system .......... 4

1.3.3 Alternative Food Systems and Networks ................................................................. 6

1.4 The CSA Movement ......................................................................................................... 6

1.4.1 The definition of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) ................................. 6

1.4.2 The CSA movement in France .................................................................................... 7

1.4.3 The CSA movement in Sweden ................................................................................ 8

1.4.4 CSA and the Sustainability Challenge ...................................................................... 8
1.4.5 The definition of success for the CSA movement........................................... 9
1.5 Research Gap ........................................................................................................... 10
1.6 Scope and Audience ................................................................................................. 11
1.7 Research Questions .................................................................................................. 11

2 Methods ......................................................................................................................... 12
2.1 A Qualitative Research Approach ............................................................................ 12
2.2 Research Design: Comparative Approach ............................................................. 12
2.3 Phase 1: Data Collection .......................................................................................... 12
2.4 Phase 2: Data Analysis ............................................................................................. 13
2.5 Ethical Considerations .............................................................................................. 14
2.6 Limitations and Strengths ......................................................................................... 14

3 Results ........................................................................................................................... 15
3.1 Definition, structure and operation ......................................................................... 15
   3.1.1 Definition of CSA ............................................................................................... 16
   3.1.2 Structural aspects of CSA ................................................................................... 17
   3.1.3 Operational aspects of a CSA ............................................................................. 18
3.2 The direction of the movement ................................................................................. 20
   3.2.1 Future of the movement ...................................................................................... 21
   3.2.2 Advocating the movement .................................................................................. 22
   3.2.3 Demand for alternatives ..................................................................................... 25
3.3 Social Aspects of CSAs ............................................................................................ 26
3.4 Knowledge and Communication ............................................................................ 28
   3.4.1 Practical knowledge and skills ............................................................................. 29
   3.4.2 Communication flow .......................................................................................... 30
3.5 Country-/Region-specific Aspects ............................................................................ 31

4 Discussion ...................................................................................................................... 33
4.1 Defining the role of the CSA movement in the transition towards an alternative food system ................................................................. 33
4.2 Definition, CSA Principles, Values and Charter ........................................ 35
4.3 Economically Viable CSAs and a Strong Coalition of Networks Operating within a Principled Definition of Sustainability ................................................................. 38
   4.3.1 Economically viable CSAs and a strong coalition of networks ............ 38
   4.3.2 CSAs Operating within a principled definition of sustainability .......... 40
4.4 Comparison of France and Sweden .......................................................... 43
   4.4.1 Key contrastive features ............................................................... 43
   4.4.2 Is France actually a case of success? ............................................. 45
4.5 Strategic Guidelines ............................................................................... 46
4.6 Reliability and Validity ........................................................................... 47
4.7 Further Research .................................................................................... 47

5 Conclusion ............................................................................................... 49

References .................................................................................................... 51

Appendix 1: Comparing some feature of “traditional” and “modern” food systems ..... 61
Appendix 2: European CSA Declaration .......................................................... 62
Appendix 3: The definition for success for the CSA movement ......................... 64
Appendix 4: A description of each interview participant’s background ............. 66
Appendix 5: Interview guide ........................................................................ 67
Appendix 6: Structural and operational challenges that CSAs face .................... 69
Appendix 7: The findings on the alignments and misalignments with SPs .......... 70
List of Figure and Tables

Figure 3.1 Definition, structure and operation......................................................... 15
Figure 3.2 The direction of the movement............................................................... 20
Figure 3.3 Social aspects......................................................................................... 27
Figure 3.4 Knowledge and communication............................................................. 29
Figure 3.5 Country- and region-specific aspects...................................................... 31

Table 1.1 The ABCD Strategic Planning Process..................................................... 3
Table 4.1 CSA models (Adapted from Bobulescu et al. 2018)................................. 37
1 Introduction

Changes in the food system in the last decades increased yields. However, industrial agriculture created many new challenges regarding sustainability. As a response to the global sustainability challenges of the food sector, such as biodiversity loss or pollution, new modes of agriculture have been developed in Europe. Alternative Food Systems (AFS) investigating alternative modes of food production such as local food initiatives and a change in consumer-producer relationships are of an increasing interest. An approach that fosters direct consumer-producer relationships and sustainable local food production is known as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). In the last decades the concept of CSA spread fast around Europe with considerable differences amongst the European countries. While in some countries the numbers of CSA farms are insignificant, other countries such as France have over 2000 CSAs (European CSA Research Group 2016).

Therefore, the aim of the study is to do a comparison between two countries on both ends of the spectrum in order to bring out the enablers and barriers that contribute to this development. France and Sweden were chosen as two examples, one for a flourishing movement (France) and the other for a movement that is not yet flourishing (Sweden). This study aspires to offer strategic guidelines as to how CSAs and the movement can flourish in Europe.

1.1 The Sustainability Challenge

Currently our society is facing a global sustainability challenge, meaning that the ecological system (Steffen et al. 2011) and the social system are systematically eroding due to the cause of human activity with strong impacts for society and the environment.

Major sustainability challenges are climate change, biodiversity loss (Rockström et al. 2009), and current food production system (Ericksen 2008). Climate change can become an increasing threat for food production and food security (FAO 2017). Research stresses that water scarcity is increasing (Mekonnen and Hoekstra 2016) and that two-thirds of the global population faces severe water scarcity at least 1 month a year. Furthermore, biodiversity loss is increasing to a rate never witnessed (Rockström et al. 2009).

The social system faces severe challenges. The world’s population in 2017 was 7.6 billion people, and by 2050, will be almost 10 billion (UN 2017). This means there will be a growing food demand on a global scale by 2050 the global food production needs to increase by 50 percent in order to meet food demands (FAO 2017). On a global scale, increased hunger was observed in 2017 for the third year in a row. It reached the level of 10 years ago: 821 million people (FAO 2018a). While failing to address hunger on a global scale, about one-third of the food along the food chain ends up as food waste (FAO 2017).
1.2 The Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD)

The sustainability challenge discussed above is urgent to address at the time when the Earth’s functions and resource availability is decreasing while the demand on Earth systems resources is increasing. Moreover, it is complex with many different social and ecological systems which are interconnected. Taking a systems perspective is essential in addressing the complexity of the sustainability challenge and in navigating strategic actions toward sustainability. However, oftentimes the discussion of sustainability is based on an ambiguous definition that are open to various interpretations. For instance, the Brundtland Commission provides a concept of sustainable development as follows: “Sustainable development is a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987). Although it is one of the most generally accepted definitions, there is still room for confusion from different understandings of broad and vague terms. A rigorous, scientific definition can help to begin a discussion.

This need for a definition of sustainability is the first rationale for the researchers to employ the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD) (Broman and Robért 2017). The FSSD was designed by a multi-disciplinary group of scientists to address the complex sustainability challenges we face and to strategically move towards sustainability (ibid.). It provides a comprehensive model and a common language based on systems thinking, which has been continuously tested and developed. In addition, it offers a unifying, operational definition of sustainability consisting of eight Sustainability Principles (SPs), which function as boundary conditions for the society’s transition towards sustainability. It serves as a science-based, universally applicable definition of sustainability that covers different aspects of the complex nature of the sustainability challenge. It is a design principle and intentionally non-prescriptive; rather, it defines what sustainability is not, in order to enhance creative and innovative actions in redesigning for sustainability (Broman and Robért 2017). The first three principles are related to ecological sustainability and the other five are related to social sustainability:

In a sustainable society, nature is not subject to systematically increasing:
SP1) concentrations of substances extracted from the Earth's crust,
SP2) concentrations of substances produced by society,
and SP3) degradation by physical means.

Furthermore] In a sustainable society, people are not subject to structural obstacles to
SP4) health,
SP5) influence,
SP6) competence,
SP7) impartiality,
and SP8) meaning-making (Broman and Robért 2017).

Potential sustainability contributions of CSAs that were identified from literature will be discussed in relation to the SPs in Chapter 1.4.4.

Second, a strategic planning process from the FSSD was employed in designing this study in order to ensure strategic support that this study aims to offer to the flourishing CSA movement. Specifically, the study used backcasting approach, which is at the core of the FSSD (Broman
and Robèrt 2017). Backcasting is a planning procedure that starts with creating a vision of success, which is not limited by the current situation or what is realistic at the moment. Then planners ask themselves: What is the gap between current reality and the vision, and what do we need to do today to reach the vision? One contrasting approach is forecasting, where people make predictions based on current reality in an attempt to solve problems. According to Broman and Robèrt (2017), it is not an appropriate approach in complex systems because the cause of problems itself could lie in the dominating trends. Such an approach could lead to unintended consequences, although it could be combined with backcasting to develop concrete, short-term actions as stepping stones to the desired goal. The researchers concluded that backcasting is most appropriate to the scope of this research because CSA is located in complex systems involving ecological, social and financial systems (see Chapter 1.3). Furthermore, a practical approach to sustainable development is most suitable for the aim of this research, which is to strategically support the flourishing movement of CSA.

Finally, the FSSD comes with the ABCD Strategic Planning Process, an operational procedure to systematically apply backcasting approach from sustainability principles. It was designed to support organizations to shift towards sustainability effectively. One of its advantages is in strategic planning from a systems perspective. In creating a vision, a principled definition of sustainability can contribute to an alignment of the actions towards a long-term goal within the boundary conditions for sustainability. Another advantage is its room for flexibility that allows planners to adapt the plan in the course of navigating in complexity (Broman and Robèrt 2017). The ABCD process consists of four steps:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Awareness and Visioning</th>
<th>Building a shared mental model within a sustainable society that complies with SPs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Baseline Mapping</td>
<td>Assessing the current reality and finding the gaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Creative Solutions</td>
<td>Brainstorming actions to close the gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Decide on Priorities</td>
<td>Prioritizing possibilities from the C-Step into a step-wise plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the purpose of developing strategic guideline to support the CSA movement, the researchers employed this generic strategic planning process to achieve long-term goals without compromising in short-term perspective. Specifically, there was a need for a method to create a concrete vision to backcast from. Therefore, Step A, Awareness and Visioning, was used in this study as a way of defining and describing how a flourishing CSA movement looks. The vision crafted by the researchers will be explained further in Chapter 1.4.5.

### 1.3 Food Systems

This research takes the perspective of systems thinking and thus locates the CSA movement in the food systems. In fact, one of the sustainability challenges that inspired the CSA movement is industrial agriculture and its unsustainable ways of producing and distributing food. Given the focus of this study, CSA in relation to food systems will be discussed in greater detail in this section.
1.3.1 Changes in the food system

Pathways of the food system have been described as socially, ecologically and economically unsustainable (e.g. Lutz and Schachinger, 2013; Friedman 1993). Changes in the food system have been described in recent literature. For instance, Erickson (2008, 235) mentions “[…such as the marked intensification of food production, the tremendous growth of processing and packaging of food products, corporate concentration in retailing and distribution, and the rising influence of large numbers of urban consumers. “ He further notes “a trend to larger farm sizes with hired labour globally, accompanied by increasing fragmentation among marginalized small holders”” (ibid.). Agriculture is defined as the farming of crops and livestock to meet human needs (Castree et al. 2013).

The changes in features of the food system from more ‘traditional’ towards a ‘modern’ food system have been described by Maxwell and Slater (2003), which is summarized in Appendix 1. They describe that the main employment field in the food sector transitioned from food production itself towards the food processing, packaging and retail industry which has strongly expanded towards more globalized markets (Maxwell and Slater 2003). There is also a trend from more local and short (or traditional) supply chains towards longer supply chains often with long food miles (Pretty et al. 2005). Erickson (2008) also describes an increase in supermarkets and their position in the food system and a concentration in their ownership, for example in the case of South America (Reardon et al. 2002). The diversity of ‘traditional’ food production systems decreases towards a predominance of small crop variety and intensive and high inputs. Maxwell and Slater (2003) also describe the trend from small family-based farms towards large and industrial production, which also leads to decreasing employment in the field. The phenomenon of rapidly decreasing number of farms in Europe is continuing, not as a new phenomenon but for over many decades now. Between 2010 and 2013, farms decreased around 11.5% in Europe, while the average size of agricultural operations of the EU-28 increased from 14.4 hectare in 2010 up to 16.1 hectare in 2013 (Eurostat Statistics 2015).

Increasing control of the agricultural input and an increased corporate concentration along the food supply chain have been described by Erickson (2008). Multinational companies continue to drive the privatization and patenting of knowledge and seeds in an unparalleled way, that creates monopolies (IAASTD 2016). Therefore, the farming sector become increasingly dependent on large corporations. Mainly in industrialized countries there is payment for certain commodities such as for production or exports. However, as stated by the IAASTD it is mostly the large agricultural, large trade and processing corporations that benefit from these subsidies (IAASTD 2016). The importance and effects of agricultural policy have been described (Pretty et al. 2005) as well as related policy challenges for a sustainable food system especially for small-scale farmers and the need for policy changes have been described (IAASTD 2016).

1.3.2 Impacts of industrial agriculture on the ecological and social system

As mentioned above, current industrial agriculture faces enormous challenges (Foley et al. 2011). Industrialized agriculture is defined as the application of industrial techniques, technologies and labor relations to farming. The farm is described as factory with inputs (capital, machinery, chemicals, and labor) and outputs (aiming to maximize yields, productivity, and profits). It can make use of monoculture, chemicals or standardization of varieties. (Castree et al. 2013). Challenges mentioned by Lutz and Schachinger (2013) are fossil fuel dependency and accounting for about 40% of all CO2 emissions, its energy intensive
production and its negative impact on soil fertility and biodiversity. Similarly, Foley et al (2011) states that "Agriculture is now a dominant force behind many environmental threats, including climate change, biodiversity loss and degradation of land and freshwater" (Foley et al. 2011, 337). These challenges have also been described elsewhere (FAO 2017; Rockström et al. 2009). Foley et al. (2011) describes two major drivers of tremendous impacts that are caused by industrial agriculture: one by agricultural expansion and the other by agricultural intensification.

Agriculture accounts for about 30-35% of the global greenhouse gas emissions (Foley et al. 2011). Major contributions are due to tropical deforestation (Galford et al. 2010, DeFries 2010), livestock and rice cultivation leading to increase in methane emissions and the fertilization if soil to nitrous oxide emissions (Foley et al. 2011). In general, an increase for energy demand can be witnessed throughout the food production sector (Erickson 2008).

Yields have strongly increased due to intensification of practices based new scientific and technological development, such as use of chemicals and fertilizers, irrigation and mechanization and the high-yielding crops (Matson et al. 1997). The use of chemicals and fertilizers in industrial agriculture (Bernhardt et al. 2017) is dramatically increasing; for example global fertilizer use has increased by 500% (Foley et al. 2011). These intensification practices lead to increasing pollution and water degradation (e.g. Diaz and Rosenberg 2008). The agricultural intensification can be related to increasing soil erosion, decrease in soil fertility as well on a regional level lead to ground water pollution and eutrophication of rivers and lakes (Matson et al. 1997).

New croplands lead are replacing forests, especially tropical forests, which has strong impacts on biodiversity and key ecosystem services and leads to an increase in carbon emission (Foley et al. 2011). One of the major drivers is global meat production which has significantly increased in the last five decades (84 million tons in 1965; 319 million tons in 2015) and will as predicted further increase (IAASTD 2016). Foley et al. (2011, 338) summarizes that “worldwide agriculture has already cleared or converted 70% of the grassland, 50% of the savanna, 45% of the temperate deciduous forest, and 27% of the tropical forest biome [...]”

There is a global increase in pressure on fresh water resources (Zwart et al. 2010), since agriculture is the biggest user of freshwater due to irrigation. According to the Water Framework Directive (WFD) the agricultural sector is therefore also one of the main polluters of water. The Report summarizes that there is insistently evidence of the agricultural sectors high pressure on surface water as well as ground waters in terms of quality and quantity (Dworak et al. 2010).

It has been pointed out that the current pathways of our food system come along with increasing social inequality, increasing hunger in the global south (Lutz and Schachinger 2013), increasing poverty, inequalities and disparities among different people (the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005). The markets are increasingly open which is forcing medium and small-scale farms to compete with global market prices and the agro- industries, leaving farmers vulnerable (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005).

Agriculture contributes to many health-related issues on a mental, physical and emotional level. Changing diets not only have increasing effects on the environment but also leading to concerns of nutrition such as malnutrition and obesity (Erickson 2008). Insufficient working conditions (FAO 2017), high pressure and financial burdens on farmers have increased. Research shows
that across all sectors the sector of agriculture has the highest mortality rate and as research shows farming was identified as one of the most dangerous industries. Suicide rates amongst farmers are high around the globe. It has been stated that the wide range of physical biological and chemical that the farming sector across cultures is facing (Behere and Bhise 2009). Farming has been described as a stressful and dangerous work, also increasing due to “changing farming practices and various regulations governing it have compounded stressors traditionally associated with agricultural production.” (Behere and Bhise 2009, 243). Therefore, they conclude: "Although there are social and geographic variations, farmers' suicide is a global problem that needs detailed evaluation.” (ibid.). Effects of the globalized food system have been described (Jaffee and Horward 2010) such as weakening of food standards or increasing monopolies of multi-national companies (Shiva 2004).

1.3.3 Alternative Food Systems and Networks

There is an increasing interest and demand for sustainably produced food especially in local and regional food supply systems and their possible benefits for social and environmental sustainability (Pretty et al. 2005). Also, it has been pointed out that consumer awareness is increasing such as trends of food reconnection based on more ethical and sustainable principles (Rossi 2017).

This transition towards sustainability based on the example of food systems is also subject of academic research. In the last decades an extensive body of literature has developed on alternative food systems (AFS) or alternative food networks (AFN). Tregear (2011, 419) describes theme as “forms of food provisioning with characteristics deemed to be different from, perhaps counteractive to, mainstream modes which dominate in developed countries.” Alternative agri-food systems have often been presented in academia as oppositional to mainstream or conventional. However, this has been pointed out as an artificial boundaries that in reality these systems are intertwined and influence each other (ibid.).

Lutz and Schachinger (2013) point out that there is “a huge variety of local food networks are emerging in Europe and across the globe[...]”. There is a broad range of models and concepts in the AFN with concepts such as short food supply chain and localization or farmers markets or community gardens (Tregear 2011) but also concepts such as food democracy (Hassanein 2003), direct marketing (Feagan 2008) food sovereignty, and grassroots innovation (Rossi 2017) are of increasing interest. Grassroots innovations for food practices arose as worldwide forms of resistance to the predominant agricultural system by actors searching to build alternatives to the current trajectories (Rossi 2017).

1.4 The CSA Movement

1.4.1 The definition of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

As a reaction to the impacts of industrial agriculture, from the 1970s, new agricultural trajectories have been explored in Europe such as certified organic production, local food systems, and new concepts for direct relationships between consumers and producers. One approach that arose from this time is the CSA (Schlicht et al. 2012). The first CSAs were independently developed in Japan, Germany and Switzerland around the same time. From the 2000s, it was possible to observe the movement growing and spreading around Europe. In 2015
there was 2,783 CSA farms in Europe supplying food for 474,455 eaters (European CSA Research Group 2016).

The model of CSA comes with different definitions and ways of expression. In 2015, based on a collaborative process a new definition was developed organized by the European CSA Research Group: “CSA is a direct partnership between a group of consumers and one or several producers whereby the risks, responsibilities and rewards of farming activities are shared, through long-term formal or informal shared agreement. Generally operating on small scale, CSAs aim at providing quality food produced in an agroecological way.” (European CSA Research Group 2016, 8). The researchers base their work on this definition of CSA. This definition is shared by the national CSA network (URGENCI), however different countries share also other definitions that vary in form and content as the example of France and Sweden illustrates (see CSA movement in France and Sweden). Thus, there is a shared definition it is pointed out that each CSA is unique and can vary in many ways. CSA differ in size, production or their member participation. Some produce vegetables, others also offer animal-based products. CSA vary in member size, the application of participatory elements such as volunteer work (European CSA Research Group 2016).

The variety of expressing CSA is also reflected in literature. While some literature highlights similarities, others point out differences in the model (Bobulescu et al. 2018). An important distinction for this study is the work by Bobulescu et al (2018), differentiating between an ‘ideal CSA’ and ‘transitional CSA’ and a conventional form of agriculture. The ‘ideal CSA’ emphasizes core elements such as community building and risk sharing and sustainable practices, while the ‘transitional CSA’ only partially shares these elements (see Chapter 4.2 for detailed description and discussion). Main characteristics of the model allow direct partnerships between farmers and consumers, the sharing of benefits and risks and small-scale farming. It has been pointed out by Solyom (2016) that CSAs must share at least four common characteristics of partnership, proximity, solidarity and balanced relationship between consumers and producers. Partnership is the mutual commitment. The farmers will produce the food and the consumers buy it for the whole season. Proximity means local and with no intermediary actors. Solidarity is manifested through risk, responsibility and reward sharing. The balanced relationship is based on trust and personal interaction (Solyom 2016).

Agroecology as part of the definition of CSA and is defined by the Association of Agroecology Europe as “Agroecology is considered jointly as a science, a practice and a social movement. It encompasses the whole food system from the soil to the organization of human societies.” And further on “[...] As a movement, it defends smallholders and family farming, farmers and rural communities, food sovereignty, local and short marketing chains, diversity of indigenous seeds and breeds, healthy and quality food’ (Wezel et al. 2018, 2). Agroecology is a bottom-up approach that seeks to develop local and contextualized solutions based on the studies of ecological processes and their application in the field of agriculture. According to the FAO, “agroecology is an integrated approach that simultaneously applies ecological and social concepts and principles to the design and management of food and agricultural systems” (FAO 2018b, 1).

1.4.2 The CSA movement in France

The biggest national association of CSAs in the world is the French AMAP. AMAP can be translated as “association for maintaining small-scale family farming” (European CSA Research Group 2016, 34). According to the European CSA Research Group (2016), AMAP,
the French CSA model, is included in their definition of CSAs. The intention of the AMAPs is to provide local consumer support to the producers and therefore angel small businesses to survive. Therefore, risk sharing is an integral part of AMAP in the form of contracts that are signed between producer and consumer with a duration from several months up to a year. Another form of organizing prepayment is the use of “chèques,” which enables secured monthly payments for the producers (ibid.).

France has a national CSA Charter which was written first in 2003 by the first AMAP pioneers and then revised in a two-year interactive process (ibid.). The Charter not only emphasizes a sustainable form of agriculture but also the engagement in an economy that is based on solidarity. Furthermore, in its essence, the AMAPs should enable small scale farming, increase the resilience of the farms, and support the transition towards a sustainable agriculture in France (Schlicht et al. 2012).

The national Network of France called Miramap was founded in 2010 with the aim of creating a common ethic amongst AMAP to concentrate experience and to unite the representation of the movement across the country (Schlicht et al. 2012). As pointed out in a study by Schlicht et al. (2012), there is a great variety of regional and national networks that have developed much faster than the other countries of comparison.

1.4.3 The CSA movement in Sweden

In Sweden, the national CSA network is called Andelsjordbruk, and they define CSA as “a direct partnership based on the human relationship between a group of consumers and one or several producer(s), whereby the risks and rewards of farming are shared, through a long-term, binding agreement” (European CSA Research Group 2016, 102).

The CSAs in Sweden share the following three general characteristics: being locally produced from one farmer for its members and subscribers, payment in advance, and delivering or having the customers picking up or self-harvesting weekly or biweekly (European Research Group 2016). The first CSA in Sweden started in Ramsjö Gard in 2001, and the Swedish CSA network was founded in November 2015. The name in Swedish, Andelsjordbruk, can be translated as shared agriculture. Sweden does not have a national charter. The association was founded with the expectation of bringing more communication and consistency to the movement.

New initiatives are expected to be carried by young farmers. Most CSAs in Sweden are in the countryside. The tendency is that the new farms will be closer to bigger cities, to take advantage of the higher demand of urban centers, which can generate momentum and influence newcomers (European Research Group 2016). The researchers could not find primary scientific literature conducted specifically in Sweden. However, several master thesis exist (e.g. Svensson 2018; Nilsson 2016).

1.4.4 CSA and the Sustainability Challenge

As discussed in item 1.3.2, industrial agriculture is related to many of the challenges that society is facing regarding social and environmental degradation. CSAs in Europe share principles that can potentially address some of these challenges. CSA fosters mutual collaboration and solidarity, through direct connections and shared risk between farmers and consumers and foster agroecological farming practices, supporting biodiversity and disapprove the use of genetically modified organisms (GMO). High quality, safe food that is accessible to as many
people as possible with prices that are negotiated and fair to producer and consumer. (European CSA Research Group 2016).

CSAs can contribute in many ways to a more sustainable food system. First, according to Lutz and Schachinger (2013), Local Food Networks (LFN) avoid food waste, long distance transportation and non-environmentally friendly food packaging. In addition, they promote agroecological production methods that stimulate biodiversity and refrain from using chemicals and fertilizers, hence avoid contamination of soil, water sheets and rivers (FAO 2019). Additionally, small scale farms with their focus on diversity of crops and manual labor, are more land and energy efficient than industrial agriculture and are based in more resilient distribution and production systems (IASSTD 2016).

Regarding the social system, CSAs can help addressing social sustainability challenges related to the food system. Lutz and Schachinger (2013) indicate that CSA producers receive higher prices than they would from supermarkets. Payment in advance and risk sharing between members and farmers can increase financial stability (Bobulesco et al. 2018). Lutz and Schachinger (2013) found that producers have gained control over what and how they produce, being able to dialog and have a direct more equitable relationship with the consumer. It was also pointed out that the cooperation between farmers, and farmers and consumers is often reflected in farmer's higher quality of life (Lutz and Schachinger 2013). According to Rossi et. Al. (2017), there is perceived value not only on the relationship between the consumer and farmer but also in the fresh food prepared at home instead of processed and as Sundkvist (2005) states, increased understanding on food production. It has been documented that being a member of CSA can change food purchasing behavior and increase interest in nutrition, which has been proven to bring positive self-reported health outcomes (Rossi et. al 2017). To sum up, as stated by Lutz and Schachinger (2013), LFNs such as CSAs can strengthen socio-cultural aspects of communities and can create a healthy, regenerative and resilient natural environment.

It should be acknowledged here that some existing studies question the benefits that CSA can possibly bring to its participants and the society (see for example Brown and Miller 2008; Macias 2008; Slocum 2006). However, considering CSA’s potential contributions to dealing with sustainability challenges, the researchers assume that the CSA movement is worth being supported towards a flourishing movement.

1.4.5 The definition of success for the CSA movement

In order to take a backcasting approach introduced in Chapter 1.2, it was essential to have a concrete vision of success to backcast from. How does a flourishing movement look like? This section presents the vision of success for a flourishing CSA movement crafted by the researchers based on the European CSA declaration (see Appendix 2) and the FSSD (Broman and Robert 2017). The aim of taking a backcasting approach was to analyse barriers and enablers with respect to this definition of success, which became the basis of developing strategic guidelines.

Since the vision was the basis for backcasting approach and the strategic guidelines, it needed to be as concrete and comprehensive as possible. Therefore, two additional success criteria were employed, as Broman and Robèrt (2015) recommend: one is core purpose and the other is core values. Core purpose is the organization’s reason for being. According to Collins and Porras (1994, 69), it is “a raison d’être, not a goal or business strategy.” Core values are “a small set of timeless guiding principles” that are of intrinsic importance to the members of the
organization (Collins and Porras 1994, 66). It should be noted here that these two criteria are originally designed for a specific organization. However, by looking at their definition, the researchers concluded that they were general enough to be applied for a success definition of a movement. A flourishing movement as a success definition was crafted based on the European CSA Declaration as foundation. Since the CSA Declaration states that it “aims to lay down the common ground for this CSA movement to flourish.” (European CSA Declaration, 1), the word flourishing was used. In addition, a principled definition of sustainability was used as a criteria to assess the potential contributions of CSA to creating a sustainable society. The definition of flourishing movement consists of three parts (see Appendix 3 for detail):

A flourishing movement…

1.) … is a driving force in the transition towards an alternative food production system
2.) … lives up to its values, CSA principles, definition and the European CSA Declaration
3.) … consists of economically viable CSAs and a strong coalition of networks operating within a principled definition of sustainability (Broman and Robèrt 2017).

1.5 Research Gap

The current reality of the CSA movement in Europe remain relatively unexplored. Attempts have made to identify the factors affecting successful CSAs such as the negative effects of competitive pressure on CSA farmers in pricing their products (Galt et al. 2016), struggles to be a financially viable CSA farm (Brown and Miller 2008), and factors affecting consumers’ participation to CSA (Vassalos et al. 2017). In addition, a study was conducted to describe farmer’s perception of barriers and opportunities in relation to viability and sustainability of CSA (Grover and Gruver 2017). However, those studies were conducted outside Europe. In addition, the role of CSAs in transitioning food systems tends to be discussed in a bigger context of alternative food initiatives (e.g. Kneafsey 2013; Tregear 2011). As researchers such as Grover and Gruver (2017) suggest, there is a need for more localized attention.

Several studies have been conducted in the European contexts, mainly from qualitative research perspective. For example, there is an in-depth series of case studies on CSA and land use in Europe, which points out that access to land is one of the biggest issues for CSA farmers (The European Access to Land Network 2017). There are some other case studies whose focus is on supply chain development in Romania (Dovlea and Balasescu 2017). Balázs et al. (2016) suggest that the direct producer-consumer relationships that CSAs create could let people rethink about alternative food supply systems through a study conducted with produces and consumer-members of CSAs in Hungary. They argue that the main challenge lies in scaling up or scaling deeper the movement. Schlicht et al. (2012) provides an overview of various CSA projects and different approaches within the CSA movement in France, Germany, Belgium and Switzerland. By combining the data from literature review with a comparative analysis, they show the societal, political and institutional framework where CSA operates within.

It is important to note that Schlicht et al. (2012, 9) further point out that the discussion regarding the role CSA as an alternative food production and distribution approach tends to be “ideological and polemic” rather than scientific, and insist that there is a need for a better understanding of how CSA functions in what context. Specifically, Feola and Nunes (2013) insist the need for better understanding of both internal and external factors that hinder and enhance the success of the movement. Furthermore, Bobulescu et al. (2018) point out the need
for more investigation on social, economic, cultural and environmental contexts within which CSAs operate, since they discovered that CSA models, when they travel to different countries, are characterized by different cultural frameworks. Overall, the questions remain as to the current realities of successful and relatively unsuccessful CSAs in Europe and factors affecting the success of the CSA movement.

1.6 Scope and Audience

Since CSAs have different operational definitions among European countries, it was necessary to narrow the scope to a specific region. Two contrastive countries were chosen, namely France and Sweden. France has been showing an outstanding expansion of the CSA movement. According to European CSA Research Group (2016), 2,783 CSAs were operating in Europe in 2015. Among them, 2,000 were in France, followed by Belgium with 138 CSAs. It is clear that CSA is currently flourishing most in France among European countries, and we can assume that taking a closer look at France will reveal the factors enabling a flourishing CSA movement. On the other hand, Sweden is reported to have 12 CSAs as of 2015 (European CSA Research Group 2016). Although Sweden ranks first in the European Union (EU) in consumption of organic foods (Swedish Institute 2015), CSA movement itself seems to be failing to flourish at the moment. Choosing Sweden is also due to geographical accessibility and language accessibility, since the all researchers are international students in Sweden who speak English.

Looking at both the successful and relatively unsuccessful case will enrich the data for this study, rather than just focusing on the successful case. France and Sweden are at the opposite ends in terms of the number of CSA farms at a national level. Geographically, Sweden is located in northern Europe, while France is considered partly in Southern Europe and partly in Western Europe; hence, there are specific local contexts for each country. However, they are both part of the European Union, and therefore share many rules and regulations with other countries in Europe. In addition, the researchers designed the same interview questions for both countries so that they could identify some patterns or repeated themes in the data. For those reasons, the researchers believe that the results of this study can be generalized analytically for other European countries. The audience of this study will therefore be CSA practitioners and networks in Europe who are involved in the field and seeking how to strategically contribute to the flourishing CSA movement.

1.7 Research Questions

This study will answer the following research questions:
Primary research question: How can the CSA movement be strategically supported to flourish in Europe?
Secondary research questions:
SRQ 1. What are the conditions that hinder and enable the CSA movement to flourish?
SRQ 2. Why is there a flourishing CSA movement in France and not in Sweden?
SRQ 3. What recommendations can be made to support the CSA movement to flourish in Europe?
2 Methods

2.1 A Qualitative Research Approach

The researchers chose qualitative approach because of its emphasis on context and detailed account of human behavior (Bryman 2016). It is regarded as “a strategy that tries not to restrict areas of enquiry too much and ask fairly general rather than specific research questions” (Bryman 2016, 397). Since the research questions of this study is exploratory rather than concrete in nature, qualitative approach is most appropriate to investigate the current reality of CSAs by looking at experiences and perceptions of people working in the field. A descriptive-analytical approach (Savin-Baden and Major 2013) was combined with a prescriptive approach. In order to offer strategic guidelines for CSA movement in Europe to flourish, an investigation of multiple cases was conducted on CSAs in France and in Sweden. Taking an in-depth look at the contrastive cases would reveal a detailed description of enablers and barriers of flourishing in a country-specific context.

2.2 Research Design: Comparative Approach

Comparative design involves an investigation of two contrasting cases through mostly identical procedures, making it possible for the investigator to provide descriptive detail of social behavior within different contexts (Bryman 2016). It was chosen for this study to understand the CSA movement better by comparing meaningfully contrasting situations of two different countries, namely France and Sweden.

2.3 Phase 1: Data Collection

To answer SRQ1 and 2, the total number of 21 semi-structured interviews were conducted; 15 with French and 6 with Swedish CSA experts. Semi-structured interview was chosen over other types of interview to stay on topic and guide the direction of the conversation while allowing the researchers to explore different topics regarding the current reality of CSA. The choice was also based on the assumption that there would be occasions where we benefit from asking further questions and encouraging the interviewees to elaborate. Interview guide was prepared to have consistency between different interviewers. The interview questions touched upon the general situation of the CSA farm that the interviewee was involved in and the barriers and enablers that they saw on an individual CSA level as well as the movement level (see Appendix 5 for detail). The participants were found by reaching first to the CSA network in France and Sweden via email and phone, followed by snowball sampling where the researchers asked for contact information of any other potential interviewees (Bryman 2016). This procedure enabled the researchers to interview a diversity of farmers, network members and researchers with a good overview of CSAs, not just on the farm level but on the movement level.

It is important to note here that the researchers do recognize the imbalance in the number of participants from France and Sweden. However, due to limited access to participants, time limitation and geographic constraints, the total number of 21 was as many as they could reach. However, considering the huge difference in the number of CSAs in France and Sweden, the researchers believe that it was difficult to avoid this imbalance.
The interviews were conducted in person, over the phone or through communication devices such as Skype or Whatsapp between March 8 and March 25, 2019. Those devices are used due to the physical distance and time limitation in addition to ensure the quality of the audio recording. Each interview lasted approximately half an hour. The interviews were recorded in password-protected computers and transcribed using Temi, which is a GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) compliant software that automatically recognizes speech and transcribes the text. This is because of the limitations in language skills; all of the researchers are non-native speakers of English, and many of the interviewees spoke heavily accented English, which required extensive work and time in the transcription procedure. The choice was made to reduce the workload and spare time for the later process of research, namely data analysis and discussion. To ensure the same quality and rigor as manual transcription while using transcription services, the researchers conducted a thorough review of the transcription in terms of accuracy, word by word. The data was stored in a password-protected software or computer, and securely disposed after processing. The names of the individuals and farms were anonymized in the text so that they cannot be identified.

2.4 Phase 2: Data Analysis

The data was analysed through qualitative content analysis, which is an approach for the investigator to understand the meaning of texts and recognize the significance by allowing themes to emerge out of the data (Bryman 2016). Thematic analysis was employed to guide the data analysis procedure. According to Savin-Baden and Major (2013), it is considered the best way of analysing patterns in the data. The researchers concluded that it is most appropriate for the comparative nature of this study to identify and report emerging patterns.

First, open coding was conducted, which involves applying codes that are emerging from the text. Open coding rather than pre-determined categories was chosen because precise pre-determined categories were not available in existing literature, possibly because of the missing the solid scientific research basis around CSAs in Europe. The researchers concluded that open coding procedure was most precise and fit to the current situation of CSAs in specific contexts, making it possible for the researchers to identify and cluster the crucial factors as they emerge. The researchers identified barriers and enablers, and then classified the quotations from interviews into four categories: barriers on farm level, enablers of farm level, barriers on movement level, and enablers on movement level. At the same time, each element was labelled with a code (e.g. “product variety,” “work overload” etceteta) (Savin-Baden and Major 2013). This resulted in a descriptive table of quotes and codes with a total of 258 codes.

Second, repetitive themes were sought for and named as unifying or dominant ideas in the data. The emergent categories were combined to subcategories, followed by identification of central explanatory concepts (Strauss and Corbin 1998). All the three researchers participated in this iterative process of searching for themes, discovering patterns and eliminating redundancies. As a result, codes were organized into five overarching themes. They will be presented in Chapter 3 with associated concepts.

Finally, crucial factors were identified among barriers and enablers and discussed in relation to the definition of flourishing movement. To answer SRQ 3, strategic guidelines were suggested in Chapter 4.5.
2.5 Ethical Considerations

In conducting the research, the following ethical aspects from Savin-Badden and Major (2013) was followed: informed consent, privacy and confidentiality. For all the interviews, the participants were informed about the aim of study and how their answers would be used through consent form that they were required to sign in. Their participation was voluntary, and they did not need to answer all the questions. The participants’ privacy and confidentiality were respected as much as possible. Interviews were conducted in a private setting. The interviewees’ personal information such as names and identifying characteristics were anonymized in the text. However, there remained the possibility to identify the participants in reports and publication because of the role they play, which they were informed about in advance. The data was stored on a password protected computer and on OneDrive, a secure server. Regarding the use of the transcription service, the researchers confirmed in advance that the data will be deleted from the software itself when we deleted it from our own folder.

2.6 Limitations and Strengths

It is acknowledged that there are a few issues that might have limited this study. One is the limited diversity of participants. Interviews were conducted with farmers, network members researchers of CSAs, excluding customers or external stakeholders such as regional or national policy makers. In addition, the participants were chosen in terms of accessibility rather than their background such as farming experiences and positions that they held in the networks. Hence, the participants were different in the depth of knowledge about CSA on a movement level, which might have affected the quality of data. Moreover, the researchers had access to English-speaking participants only, since they did not speak French or Swedish. This could have limited the access to participants. However, the researchers managed to reach network members and researchers as well as farmers. This makes the data still worthwhile because it covered different internal stakeholders who would affect the movement.

Another limitation is the narrow scope of focusing on CSAs in two specific countries rather than Europe as a whole. For these reasons, the research findings do not illustrate the entire picture of the situation CSA movement in Europe. The researchers are aware of possible barriers, enablers and key factors for a flourishing CSA movement that were not identified in this study.

However, the context-dependent nature of this study might as well be a strength. Among the list of the quality criteria for qualitative research (Bryman 2016, 387), “impact and importance” suits the most to this study because it has an impact and significance on practitioners and the community of CSA where this study was conducted. Such an approach is of value in building a basis of empirical knowledge for a flourishing CSA movement.

Furthermore, the “thick description,” or detailed report in the specific context that this study aims to provide could be another strength because it could offer robust foundation for future studies (Bryman 2016, 384). For example, the findings have potential contribution for further quantitative analysis of CSAs in a broader context. From this perspective, this study entails the possible transferability of finding to other circumstances.
3 Results

This chapter presents the results in five subsections that correspond to the overarching themes that emerged from the data: (1) Definition, structure and operation (2) The direction of the movement (3) Social aspects (4) Knowledge and communication, and (5) Country-/region-specific aspects. Subthemes for each section are summarized at the beginning of each sections in Figures 3.1-3.5. In referring to interviewees, the name of the country and number were used to identify the speaker while anonymizing the interviewees (e.g. France 15, Sweden 21). The country and roles of interviewees are summarized in Appendix 4.

3.1 Definition, structure and operation

The subthemes and concepts related to the first overarching theme, definition, structure and operation will be described below. Figure 3.1 is the overview.

![Diagram of Definition, Structure & Operation](image)

*Figure 3.1 Definition, structure and operation.*
3.1.1 Definition of CSA

A category around the definition of CSA was identified from the data. Related to that were the two main themes of definition of CSA and CSA principles. This section will first elaborate on the barriers following the enablers related to the category.

**Barriers for definition of CSA.** Barriers related to the definition of CSA and its principles were discovered with a question of *what defines a CSA*. Interviewee 15 (France) raised the question whether the AMAP in France is even comparable with the CSA. The interviewee shared the perspective that it was clearly not comparable because the French AMAP model often employs paying per basket scheme, while the ‘ideal CSA’ includes paying in advance, risk sharing and long-term relationships between consumers and producers (France 15). The same interviewee also pointed out that although there were many similarities between both models such as agro-ecological principles and sustainability, CSA is clearly more than just selling organic food. Mentioned related to that was the *distortion of initial idea of CSA* and the importance to include basic elements like risk sharing as a concept. It was pointed out by a French Interviewee that if the risk sharing aspect is no longer applied, it can no longer be called a CSA and should be called something else. The French interviewee (15) emphasized risk sharing as “the essential element of CSA” and criticized the fact that risk sharing is rare in the French AMAP. A related concept was addressed by two other interviewees, talking about a strict CSA definition. A strict CSA definition as a barrier was mentioned in the French context because the CSA model with its community tasks and shared responsibilities can be a barrier for producers who want to bring only one product to the AMAP, such as a honey producer in this case. A French interviewee mentioned the strict definition of CSA, in this case based on the French CSA charter as an enabler in order not to distort the French AMAP model. At the same time, however, a strict understanding of the CSAs is also a barrier because a smaller audience will participate in the model (France 11).

**Barriers for CSA principles.** Concepts around misalignment with CSA principles such as *non agro ecological practices* (e.g. use of hybrid seeds and non-organic production) and *distortion of the principles* (e.g. people don't stick to the principles and trade-offs) emerged from the data. The tradeoff between reaching a broad audience and risking distorting the principles of the movement was mentioned by two interviewees such as “while the movement is growing, maybe the principles are less respected, so there is some kind of compromise between the values and the capacity to change the society.” (France 9). Furthermore, the challenge was mentioned on how to keep the values and principles of the movement while at the same time opening up to a larger audience such as students engaging in CSA, since this new and broader audience is often more in a consumer role rather than an activist role (France 9). Interviewees also mentioned that there is misalignment with principles such as non-organic production, people don't stick to the principle, and the use of hybrids. In the French context, it was mentioned that not all of the AMAP’s produce organic products. Some French interviewees spoke about the risk of losing culture during the season, and therefore they spray chemicals on certain plants (France 6). The fear of not getting enough contracts for the farmer seemed to lead to not sticking strictly to the CSA principles such as non-organic production (France 14). Related to the principles and the distortion of the original model, a French interviewee mentioned another barrier to the movement to flourish regarding the use of hybrids. The interviewee pointed out that when the ‘ideal CSA’ was not applied (also for the basket scheme in AMAP), farmers had to choose hybrids for certain varieties, which is not the case in the ‘ideal CSA’ since there is no pressure
to deliver on a certain date. According to Interviewee 15, “hybrids, they're unethical. There are totally unacceptable.” (France 15)

**Enablers for definition of CSA.** As an enabler, the concept as a role model was mentioned as an ultimate reference and role model for other movements “in terms of supporting small scale family farmers doing things in agro-ecological way” (France 11). Furthermore, a shared mental model was mentioned as an enabler which can unite the people participating in the CSA in how they want to care about the earth. Far more than just a partnership around producing vegetables, CSA could unite them with a shared vision on the country and how they want to work with the land (France 15). While the distortion of the initial idea of a CSA was mentioned as a barrier to the movement, there is also evidence from the data that working according to the initial idea of a CSA is an enabler for example by enabling lower risks for farmers and consumers by producing a variety of vegetables that will reduce the risk of a loss of harvest (France 15). At the same time risk sharing and paying upfront, like in the ‘ideal CSA’ was mentioned as an enabler within the CSA structure and as a basic idea of CSA "So by, by, by asking people to pay in the beginning of the year, that's actually risk sharing. And that's the whole idea of this. That's the, that's one of the basic ideas of a community supported agriculture is that we are in this shit together.” This will ensure when things do not work out the farmer will not be in enormous debts. At the same time interviewee 15 pointed out that were the ‘ideal CSA’ is properly applied a flourishing movement such as in Flanders in Belgium can be observed.

**Enablers for CSA principles.** Furthermore, the charter as a reference was mentioned as an enabler to the movement, so even if there is less strong individual leadership in the movement, referring to the AMAP charter can enable an understanding of what the movement is about and what its principles are and can be an enabler for personal leadership (France 11).

### 3.1.2 Structural aspects of CSA

Throughout the data analysis, a category around the structure of the CSAs has been identified. The category is connected to a variety of four main themes coded as structure of CSA, product variety, and size of CSA.

**Barriers for structure of CSA.** Not only lack of flexibility (pick-up) was mentioned as a challenge for customers but also the time constraints for farmer regarding the little time to communicate to the customers and educate on farm issues was mentioned as a challenge (France 2 and 6). The structure of a CSA mostly with its constraints around flexibility for the customers was mentioned as a barrier such as that the customer needs to be at a certain pickup point every week (Sweden 16 and France 2). A related barrier that was mentioned, pointing out that other models allow more flexibility for the customer and a more specific choice for products (Sweden 17). A barrier for the customer was not to know what the weekly basket will include which makes it hard to plan in advance. Also mentioned was that there is a need for behavior change to become a CSA costumer. The amount of vegetables, time intensive preparation, leading to so some families trying CSA for some months and then leave again (France 9). The structure of the model itself was described as a barrier and enabler itself in this context, a barrier, because it is quite complex and needs planning, however the structure enables also more flexibility for the producer compared to delivering to a supermarket (Sweden 21).

**Barriers for product variety.** The challenge for demand for choice and the demand for variety was mentioned in the French context from four interviewees (France 3, 6, 7 12). It was mentioned that there is a demand for a choice from the customers side and less openness
towards not knowing what products the customer will get and regarding eating unknown vegetables. It was mentioned that consumers are used to choose their products because of the way capitalist society is built currently (France 6). Interviewee 3 (France) pointed out the challenge that the demand for specific products, not according to the season also increases the need to use chemicals. It was also pointed out by Interviewee 6 (France) that CSA should provide products according to the season and the weather, according to the organization and the culture. Also mentioned was the challenge to grow a great variety as a single farmer (France 1 and 3) because of the amount of work but and that it would be financially more attractive to only do 5 products. Interviewee 3 (France) explains “one guy that have to make all the vegetables and that's very hard. That's the barrier that many farmers that I want to, to go through. Because it's too many things to do. Too much job.” At the same time it was also mentioned that there is a demand for a great variety of different products (France 7).

**Barriers for size of CSA.** A challenge around the scale was mentioned, that was coded as in between scale. The challenge here is that the farm is too small mechanize but a also too big to do everything from hand (Sweden 18). Also, the barrier of finding the right tools for the size of the farm was mentioned (Sweden 21). Related to that was mentioned a barrier around the challenge to apply for subsidies because the investments fall through the categories of the ministry of agriculture. As well as the challenge of being small scale and doing vegetables (Sweden 16). On a farm level barriers have been mentioned regarding the size pointing to the barrier of being too small scale to be financially viable (France 15 and 16; Sweden 21), so they disappear after some years again and that this is a fact that is seldom reported in scientific research so far (France 15). Also mentioned and related to the larger topic of the structure and operational aspects is the location. It was mentioned that CSAs are more successful nearby cities and less successful in rural areas. A challenge was also pointed out around customers live far away which brings problems to the distribution for farmers or the pickup for the customers (France 15). Also, the regional differences have been mentioned by two interviewees (Sweden 17; France 12).

**Enablers for structure of CSA.** More flexible structure for the farmer compared to selling to supermarkets (Sweden 21).

**Enablers for Product variety.** The variety of vegetables will also increase security for farmers if some of the varieties won’t work. “So if it doesn't work out with certain vegetables, no worries. There's enough vegetables left (France 15)” Also, it was pointed out by Interviewee 14 (France) that a product variety also increases the customers interest to stay in CSA group.

### 3.1.3 Operational aspects of a CSA

The barriers in the ongoing operational aspects of a CSA often strongly related to the structure of CSA was identified from the data.

**Barriers for Human Resources.** The pressure and workload were mentioned several times. The pressure to deliver because of the variety of things needed to be done was mentioned (France 2). As a barrier, the workload was mentioned, especially when starting a CSA the work hours and salary were mentioned (France 6). Barriers around Starting a CSA were mentioned as well, such as finding the right people. Interviewee 2 (France) pointed out the challenge to find volunteers as part of the structural barriers for a CSA that “there is still the problem of finding people willing to spend some time to volunteer (France 2).” Also mentioned was the challenge for the farmer to manage the complex tasks with the volunteers. From various interviewees
came commitment as a barrier to the movement to flourish. It was pointed out that participating in a CSA needs commitment such as the weekly pick up as well as obtaining to the regulations of the CSA (Interviewee 11, 13 France, Sweden 17). Also, the long-term commitment was mentioned and little flexibility for the customers (France 1 and 14; Sweden 18) as well as a different position of the people involved less as consumers but more as participants (Sweden 16). Finally mentioned from four interviewees as a barrier is the challenge around volunteer work and the challenge of finding people that work on a voluntary basis because CSA participants often don’t have the time for it (France 11,12,13, Sweden 20).

**Barriers for finances and technology.** The little income for farmers when the farmer is not able to make a salary from his work as well as the high level of knowledge and work however with a low income makes it a barrier for people to start a CSA farm (Sweden 21). Because of the investments there is less salary for the farmers, as Interviewee 6 (France) mentioned as well as the challenge to increase the turnover (France 1). Subsidies were mostly seen as a challenge, often because subsidies are decreasing or there are no subsidies at all in some regions while in order to support organic farming or payment farming and in order for farmers to change their practices there would be the need for subsidies. This also increases the need for new ways of financing networks (France 9). Therefore, it was also mentioned as a challenge for the farmers to pay the network (France 4). The challenge of lack of financial support for networks was mentioned explaining that more financial support for the networks could enable more activity of the network (France 9). The low food prices in the food market have been mentioned as another barrier because sometimes pay much for the CSA vegetables (Sweden 20). In Sweden a barrier regarding the finances was mentioned by Interviewee 21, claiming the expensive hiring costs for workers in Sweden. Finally, regarding technology also a slow response of the CSA’s to technical development such as the use of credit cards was pointed out as a barrier to the movement (France 5).

**Enablers Human Resources.** A concept around starting a CSA was identified. There is an interest from producers side to sell their products in the French AMAP system (France 5) and also from the consumer side an increasing awareness and interest. Also for young people to become farmers was pointed out “the incredible dynamic with the people wanting to become farmers, especially people like us with no, you know, we're... that have no parents that were farmers” (France 5) The commitment from CSA participants was also mentioned as an enabler. Interviewee 11 (France) mentioned new CSA participants are seen that are willing to engage and commit to the CSA. Also mentioned was the choice to be in a CSA and actively participate “You know, it's you already have this pre-selection of people when you do this kind of stuff. It's not like you have the same, same people as in the supermarket. People choose to be here. This, it's a very active, eh, choice they make (Interviewee 18, Sweden).” Another interviewee points out to the strong willingness and engagement of people joining the movement and making things happen and securing the farmers income and helping to find solutions together with the farmer (France 5).

**Enablers for finances and technology.** The CSA models capability of enabling financial stability and security was pointed out (France 1, 3, 7; Sweden 17) "economically, CSA of course are better for farmers and all of them thank us for our solidarity [...] and that the more secure system for them. “ (France 4). As well as the profitability of the model compared to other models (Sweden 16). Also farmer creating an external income was mentioned by two Interviewees (Sweden 18 and 19). Both in France and Sweden existing subsidies were found as financial enablers.
As an enabler technology became apparent as a main theme. New technologies were seen as an enabler in order to simplify the processes of the CSA’s as Interviewee 13 points out “We are already working with some digital tools, uhm, but I think they have to be developed, and for instance today we have those tools to make the contracts. We can think about the payments using credit cards and something like this. It’s coming, I am confident in this.” (France 13). As well as pointing out that technologies like the internet helped the movement to spread and empower itself (France 12). As well as social media as an enabler for the farmers to connect to each other has been mentioned (Sweden 17) and for farmers to communicate their story and processes through social media (Sweden 20). The need for improving the operations in terms of flexibility, modernization and more digitalized was also described by interviewee 18, Sweden.

### 3.2 The direction of the movement

The second overarching theme identified was *the direction of the movement* with the three sub-themes as indicated in Figure 3.2.

![Figure 3.2 The direction of the movement.](image-url)
3.2.1 Future of the movement

Barriers for external aspects. Concerning the big picture of the food system, Interviewee 19 talked about the fact that 6 big companies are the main players of the food sector, and that for them is interesting to keep functioning in the same way, because they are earning a lot of money. According to interviewee 8, the CSA movement is still small, in the sense that has limited influence to change habits of food consumption and how society perceive agriculture, which is a challenge.

On the concept decreasing recognition it was referred that the number of AMAPs is still growing, but there is also some AMAP groups disappearing in France, by interviewee 11. Interviewee 9 mentioned that when there is a change in the regional council authority and the former authority leaves debt, this can serve as an explanation to stop subsidizing the movement without clear reasoning. This is related to change in politics in a national level too, in which the movement is less recognized than before. Interviewee 3 said that the movement is not developing and progressing anymore due to the growth of other alternative models.

Which relates to the concept brought up in interview 8, cooperation with other movements. It was mentioned that the CSA movement will not at all be able to do it by itself. It would require articulating together with other movements to be part of something bigger, a bigger whole.

Enablers external aspects. Around theme cooperation with other movements according to interviewee 11, there is two big movements related to CSA's in France. The organic movement which is tending to transform into agro-ecological movement, and the food sovereignty movement, which was part of the beginning of the AMAPs. Further on it is mentioned that the organic and agro-ecological movement are good, but they might limit the growth of the CSA movement, "because the involvement, the commitment by the consumers will take different forms in different shapes." (France 11). Which is complemented by "maybe there is a space or time also for other local solidarity based partnerships which can take different shapes.", and closes stating that AMAP is a core part of bigger movement that is growing tremendously. Interviewee 8 raised the question for the future on how should they coordinate and cooperate with with those different models that are arising?

Interviewee 4 states that the CSA movement must be political, and create change in society. It mentioned the big picture of food system, the connection between food, agriculture, politics, the environment, and the big positive impact that CSAs can bring to society.

Barriers for internal aspects. From the perspective of interviewee 9, on independent grassroots vs structured movement, the difficulty is to find a common agreement and consensus between people. Interviewee 13 adds on by saying that the CSA movement in France is "diverse, with people with strong ideals and it is an issue for the movement to keep in mind the main objective". In Sweden, Interviewee 15 pointed out a discussion within the movement on the criteria and definition of a CSA and the obvious disagreement on how professional the movement and therefore the farmer are supposed to be. He was advocating for a more professional movement and more strict criteria. But around three, four years ago, the people in the board of his network decided that they wanted an open movement.

Enablers internal aspects. Interviewee 11 talked about scaling up but sticking to the principles. On creating a shared definition and strategic plan, the interviewee 8 mentioned the creation of a national charter around 2002, which served as basis for the consolidation of a national network

21
in France, AMAP, around 2010. Further on, in the same interview, it is mentioned that this has strengthened the CSA movement:

   And I think that consolidated the movement itself, the understanding of the people who participate in the movement of what is expected of that movement, what it is for, why it's [inaudible], you know, and also it was designed or understood as a tool of empowerment. So easily accessible, easily understandable, easily spreadable because it also was the ownership of those who made it. And those made it were, the people who participated in the movement precisely. And, so I think that has strengthened, the movement a great deal.

The same concept came up in the interview 8, it was pointed out that the AMAP does yearly action plans. But for the first time, they are working on defining how to work together to produce a strategic plan with a five-year perspective.

With respect to independent grassroots vs structured movement, Interviewee 9 mentioned the efforts to re-write the original French charter around 2013 through workshops around different cities and regions in France. The intention was of understanding what is the definition of AMAP and the difficulties they were facing. It was said that the process created insights, trust but also expressed the challenge of unifying the movement. Another interviewee pointed out the challenge of having such independent unique farms and communities, and bringing everyone to work together in a same movement: "Well, CSA is always torn between two aspects, that is the CSA are based on a relation between a group of human beings and farmers, personal relations which are close, local, and all those things. And is a good aspect of it. It's very independent and it adapt to each situation. And then we have this wish of getting all the CSA together, have a movement." He further explained why this is a challenge:

   but the thing is, especially for, with the French mind, an issue to get all the CSA which each of them have a specific identity, to get all of them together to work together and develop and flourish, while at the same time in France we have [inaudible] culture. We have this idea of getting everybody working the same way. This is what I mean. So it is a paradox of the, the CSA I think it is. (Sweden 19)

On the theme momentum of the movement, it was mentioned by interviewee 18, and 21, that it seems like the right time to gather momentum around the movement. Interviewee 9 shared that there is a new generation of CSA farmers, and they are going to be educated young, that were not happy in their jobs, and are willing to change their way of living. Interviewee 21 argues that one of the reasons why people in general go back to farming might be awareness around climate change.

### 3.2.2 Advocating the movement

The results for the third category, advocating the movement through collaboration and support, will be presented in relation to networks and political and legal aspects. The associated concepts for each theme are summarized in Table 4.2.

**Barriers for networks.** Although vivid networks are key to the flourishing movement, not participating in networks was identified as a barrier. For example, Interviewee 9 mentioned that there are only few people in the national network. Interviewee 13 even pointed out that there are actually many CSAs who are not part of the networks. Interviewee 7 raised this theme as one of the major internal obstacles to a flourishing movement. According to his description,
currently there are people who do not want to participate in AMAP. In addition, some of the AMAP networks are isolated and they work only within particular villages. Although it enhances local economy, he emphasized that it is not enough for the flourishing movement: “we have to act local and think global, you know. So these people, these AMAP, these farmer act local very well, but don't think global” (Sweden 17).

*Lack of resources for networks* was pointed out as another barrier for strong networks by a French farmer. She mentioned that people’s effort is missing because they are busy taking care of their farms, money is missing to organize events such as educational workshops, and leadership is missing because they are still looking for a person who can be the president of the network she belongs (France12).

*Challenge for partnership with CSA farmers* was also identified as a barrier. As Interviewee 13 illustrated, different farmers take different approaches in delivering products:

*some farmers leave the mud with the carrots for example. Uh, the other guy, another farmers always clean the cabbage everywhere and each one thing is a good way when we say it like this with CSA, you leave the mud because it's from the farm and uh, and the other guy with him, no, you have to be very clean, carrots. And all those little things make it hard to share because everyone have his own way in quality. (France 13)*

He further pointed out that French farmers tend to be very proud of themselves and even “think that we do a better quality than the other. And so it's hard to share (France 13).”

*Enablers for networks.* The importance of vivid networks was pointed out mainly by French farmers. Interviewee 11 suggested the need for an “umbrella network” in order to put together different groups, and Interviewee 8 adds to that perspective by stating that the role of networks is “giving some coherence to the movement as a whole, knowing very well at the same time that the situation from one territory region is very different from another.” Interviewee 9 explained how networks are helping “to agree on what they can do together, at wide scale, or general or national scale.” The local network that Interviewee 4 belongs is even more active than the national networks, with 320 groups of AMAPs. One Swedish farmer talked about the national conference where over 150 people gathered, and he saw it as an indication of growing interest in CSA in Sweden (Sweden 17).

Another enabler that stood out was *Partnership*. Interview 1 suggested the movement could be more active through partnership such as exchanges between producers. The data revealed some evidence of partnership among farms. Interviewee 3 exchanged certain vegetables with nearby farmers, and Interviewee 5 collaborated with farmers of other products such as honey and herbal tea, increasing the product variety of his CSA. In addition, partnership with other organization was encouraged. For example, interviewee 4 mentioned how their partnership with NGO help expand their farm by working together in finding and training new farmers. Interviewee 19 was wondering how he could work together with organizations such as Red Cross in order to seek the possibility to contribute to social welfare system as a farmer.

Farmers that belong to networks got *support from networks* in many ways. According to Interviewee 1 and 12, they got financial support and insurance from the network. Interviewee 5 and 12 found networks valuable in promoting CSA and finding vegetable producers. Other French farmers emphasized more frequent meetings in order to strengthen the network. For example, a platform where members could exchange “experiences, uh, knowledge, programs,
documents, testimonies, stories, news” was created recently in the network which Interviewee 8 belongs. Interviewee 14 spent weekends with national network members and learn from each other, which gives him confidence and sense of unity as a group.

Some key elements were emerged for the networks to be more effective in supporting the movement. In the general assemblies of the network, they have the opportunity to discuss and clarify those directions such as water use and organic seeds. The last is advocating for the transition, which means “to try and influence policies at local, regional and national level (France 5).” Interviewee 7 further pointed out that networks could be a tool to create change in society.

Bars for political and legal aspects. A French farmer mentioned strict rules in France about the use of cash. The regulation does not allow cash exchange on the product distribution site, making it impossible for Interviewee 2 to sell his products to new, spontaneous customers who have not signed the contract.

Another theme, lack of support for small-scale farmers, was seen in challenges to get support from the government or municipality. For example, although regional organization have money to distribute to farms, the procedure was very complicated for a small farm to handle: Interviewee 21 described that it might need “a full-time person just doing the administration.” Interviewee 9 stated that EU subsidy goes to large farms and small-scale farms are not supported fully, or even not supported at all. Interview 16 was struggling to apply for a subsidy because her farm was too small to apply for it. Two Swedish farmers mentioned their struggles for small-scale farms to get organic certification. Applying for a label was too expensive and therefore they could not call their product organic, although their farming processes were actually organic.

Insufficient infrastructure came up from a Swedish farmer. The farm of Interviewee 16 was in a rural area where a good public transportation service was not available, making it hard for her to invite volunteers and interns.

Enabler for political and legal aspects. Although Interviewee 13 mentioned less interaction with government as an enabler, nearly half of the participants mentioned support from the government and municipality as helpful. One example is Community Agricultural Policy (CAP), the EU agricultural policy that provide subsidies. Not only that, different regions support CSA farmers in different ways. Interviewee 9 pointed out that regional governments were “giving them [farms] advices and in helping to fill the form for subsidy or strategy, for finding subsidies or developing partnerships with them.” Interviewee 13 stated that in the south of France the regional government sent farmers to help farms. Interviewee 14 talked about the government supporting organic farming by paying for a training offered by farming experts. In addition, the support from the government made it easier to collaborate with schools in bringing organic meals to school lunches. On the municipal level, Interviewee 2 received a more practical support: the municipality provided a corporate marketplace where the farmers could distribute products, and it also provided resources such as mailbox and electricity. Interviewee 21 reported a case in Gothenburg where the municipality rent out land to willing farmers. Overall, some advovate attitude of the political and legal realm was witnessed.

Need for legislative change was pointed out by a few Swedish farmers. Interviewee 16 talked about employment: since the tax was very high to employ people in Sweden, it was difficult for her to hire people. She noted that if the employment gets easier for even a small-scale farmer,
the workload would be reduced significantly. Interviewee 21 suggested that if the government policy was changed and they stopped importing food, it would be an opportunity for Swedish food market.

3.2.3 Demand for alternatives

A category under the overarching theme direction of the movement was identified from the data around the demand for alternatives. Alternatives mentioned were mostly related to alternatives around food production such as the CSA model, however also around alternative model or concepts on food production but also on finances or politics. Barriers around this category were mainly related to the increasing competition around alternative food production, enablers were mostly around an increased awareness around these topics and increasing demand and interest.

Barrier for competition. It was mentioned by many interviewees in France (11 interviewees) and Sweden (4 interviewees). The concept around increasing competition appeared in France and in Sweden. Interviewee 8 said that the demand has raised strongly in favour of the movement. It has been mentioned several times that since the movement is growing and getting more popular, similar models are appearing. These new ways of acquiring organic food are sharing similar aspects, however they also clearly differ from the CSA model in some aspects. Interviewee 11 (France) pointed out that CSA position can shrink because of the many models emerging. Interviewee 9 (France) described that there is increasing competition in France. Another challenge around the influence of big supermarkets in France or international companies such as Amazon buying whole sale foods (organic food, USA) and digitalizing the organic food market, which can become a barrier for alternative movements like CSA movement (France 11). This fact was also mentioned as a barrier by a Swedish interviewee (19), saying “I think that that CSA, will have a difficulty, because now we're going digital. Amazon just bought whole foods in America, the only ecological, organic, you know, now they are lowering the prices and now it's much more a tech company distributing food”. Related to that was also coded a concept on conflicts with supermarkets (France 4, 12), because there were conflicts with the CSA movement in France some years ago. Another concern was because of more similar options people would make less effort to buy directly from farmers because they can also find it somewhere else (France 2). The competition with more commercial models was mentioned, and therefore the need of the CSA movement to explain more its specifics of the model, which at the same time was seen as a way for CSA’s to adapt (France 13). Also mentioned was the good marketing strategy of competing models to the public, however these models then often pay far less to the farmers (France 14).

Barriers for awareness. It was mentioned 6 times in total (4 France; 2 Sweden). One example is that the CSA movement reaches only specific audience and that “it's not the main stream, it's not for everybody” (Sweden 19). Around demand for alternatives it was suspected that the movement has reached a certain level of saturation was mentioned by Interviewee 8 (France).

Enablers for awareness. Awareness as an enabler has been mentioned by eight French Interviewees and by five Swedish Interviewees. Increasing awareness as a concept has been mentioned as an enabler. Increasing awareness in general has been mentioned as an opportunity “Yeah, just the growing awareness is a, the whole thing is, it's a great opportunity.” (Sweden 18) Climate change and environmental issues have been mentioned as enablers. “Um, I would say also, of course, everything connected with environmental issue like climate change and so on is really among the enablers [...]” (France 11). Not only the customers increasing awareness was mentioned but also the farmers increasing awareness has been mentioned. The growing
public debate around agriculture and climate change as well as increasing media interest has been mentioned (Sweden 20). Increasing awareness on health issues has been mentioned in France (14,11). Also mentioned was the increasing awareness on local food, organic food and the quality of food. The increasing awareness on social issues, on the role of citizens and the need of supporting the local infrastructure and creating a sustainable economy Interviewee (Interviewee 19, Sweden). A societal trend towards a transition in society has been mentioned that is increasing in the pace of change (France 9). It was mentioned in both countries the positive demand for CSA’s (France 7, 8, Sweden 17) at the same time the challenge for some farmers to find enough customers. A demand for high quality products and local, organic food was mentioned (Sweden 17) as well as the demand for direct sales and closer connection to the farmers (France 7). Also mentioned was the momentum to build up these connections between consumers and farmers (France 11). In particular, the demand for AMAP in France was mentioned (France 7 & 14), as by Interviewee 14 “in France at the moment AMAP they are are very much in demand.” (France 14). Also the models ability to create resilience in case of a (food) crisis was mentioned by a Swedish Interviewee and also described as an opportunity to revitalize rural areas economically (France 11). An increasing concern on health and diseases from industrial food and therefore increasing consciousness around this theme was mentioned by France 7, in the context of eroding trust in agroindustry and food system described further on item 3.2.

Enablers for location. CSA’s that boarder cities was mentioned as an enabler and also that nearby cities it is easier for new CSA’s to start (France 15) as well as that there is a high demand around cities (France 10) and that CSA’s are more successful around cities (France 6). Regarding the distribution Interviewee 15 also pointed out as an enabler the farmer needs a situation where he can focus on growing veggies rather than having to deliver products and sell on markets, which then enables him to focus on growing the vegetables. Therefore, farms should border the cities, so the people can cycle to the Farms and do self-harvest (France 15).

3.3 Social Aspects of CSAs

The third overarching theme that came up was Social Aspect of CSAs. Two main themes were identified: community engagement and Trust and solidarity. The associated concepts for each theme are summarized in Figure 3.3.
**Figure 3.3 Social aspects.**

*Barriers for importance of community.* appeared in France but not in Sweden. The two concepts that emerged from the interviews were *community building* and *relationship between farmers and consumers*. Regarding the first, Interviewee 13 mentioned that without a strong social life in the organization, people do not stay in the CSA model. About the latter, the same Interviewee mentioned that it requires commitment from both sides, and that does not work if the farmers are not are not able to relate to the consumer in both personal, and professional level.

*Barriers for trust and solidarity.* Trust also appeared as a barrier in France, as seen in the following quote, "And sometimes, some farmers, they bring the products to the local market, and ah, sometimes, some people have the feeling that farmers bring to AMAP what they couldn't sell to market." (France 6)

*Enablers for importance of community.* The data revealed a few concepts related to the importance of community for a CSA to flourish such as *strengthening social fabric, community building, social events, relationship between farmer and consumer.*

Interviewee 13 from France describes it as a condition to success: "in my experience, CSAs which are working well and developing in time and are stable, are the CSAs with a very strong social life which can make that people come get the vegetables, or fruits, or cheese or meet and they have a good moment."

Interviewee 12, 13 from France, and 20 from Sweden mentioned the importance of *social events* such as barbecues and yearly visit to the farm, where people sharing the same producer get together and connect to each other. "And I think it's always so nice when you see that people meet each other through our CSAs that they make friends because they both have vegetables from us." (Sweden 20)At least half of the interviewees (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 12, 14) from France and one (17) from Sweden pointed out the importance of a close relationship between farmers and consumers. Related to that, direct feedback between consumers and producers also emerged as an enabler for the CSA movement to flourish.
Enablers for impacts on individuals. Concepts appeared regarding regaining power and control over their life, allowing meaning making, and personal engagement. It has been said that, it allows to put food in bigger context, and value it in a different way. Interviewee 13 (France) also stated that the model is related to the creation of meaning: "We have a society which is in a deep need of having meanings. And the meaning around food is very essential today." (France 13). The same interviewee talked about CSAs being a way to help people that lives in cities, to reconnect to farming and nature. Interviewee 5 spoke about how the CSA movement allows people to regain their power in a global context where it is hard to influence the food, clothes, systems, and contamination of air and water. The CSA model was identified as an enabler to live up to personal principles by combining social, ecological and economic sustainability as pointed out by Interviewee 19 (Sweden): "people will say hello, you know, we normally, they wouldn't know why was otherwise if I was a normal farmer. So I think that the CSA, and for me, the CSA is very much along my business idea, economic and ecological sustainable and development of the two farms that I have from a social point of view with a large portion of social responsibility (Sweden 19)."

Enablers external aspects. There were themes related to partnership with organizations, such as mentioned by interviewee 11, that part of the movement should concentrate in niches such as local food for schools, which implies a different logistical approach.

Enablers trust and solidarity. An enabler for new alternatives that was related to the foundation of AMAP, is the concept of eroding trust in the agro-industry. It has been mentioned five times in the French context (France 4, 5, 7, 9, 11). Eroding trust was due to food scandals that have taken place over the last decades such as contaminated milk and false meat. Interviewee 9 (France) talked about a big doubt on the capability of agroindustry to be transparent. As a consequence increased the demand for quality food from safe sources and the desire to regain control over food production (France 11). These food scandals led to an increasing concern around health and awareness (France 7).

Interviewee 9 also identified after being involved in the national organization in France for several years that trust between farmers, consumers and different people is an important factor for the CSA to work. Interviewee 7 described that there is a relationship of mutual trust between consumers and farmers that allows good quality of life and welfare to farmers. It was also mentioned that they are well known and have good recognition in France. Solidarity appeared explicitly in the interviews 12 and 14, regarding the importance to help each other and the commitment to long term contracts as a way to uphold local small farmers.

3.4 Knowledge and Communication

The fourth overarching theme that came up was Knowledge and communication. Two main themes were identified: Practical knowledge and skills and Communication flow. The associated concepts for each theme are summarized in Figure 3.4.
3.4.1 Practical knowledge and skills

**Barriers.** Nearly one-third of the interviewees mentioned the knowledge- and skill-intensive aspects of CSA. The examples of lack of knowledge in CSA operations. Interviewee 4 explained the need for knowledge in “how to handle, how to create a CSA, how to handle a hectic situation.” More specifically, the operation of CSA requires knowledge not only around farming practices but also around delivering the products and building relationship with customers. Interviewee 14 emphasized the importance of sharing this kind of knowledge and skills because people did not learn these at farming schools.

This lack of knowledge seems to lead to challenges of young farmers without farming background (France 15), ecological farming as a challenge, (Sweden 20), and a challenge to build complex agricultural eco-systems as vegetable farmers that is “better for environment and for consumers” (France 9).

In addition, lack of knowledge as a barrier was seen in the customers’ side, as Interviewee 16 pointed out: “one of the most regular questions that I get from people who are interested in becoming customers. They tell me, but is it a lot of vegetables and, I don't know if I will be able to eat, if I will have the time to cook all of this vegetables. People are like really, they are not used to planning (Sweden 16).”

**Missing information on CSA networks** was identified as a barrier regarding the internal communication among CSA networks. Interviewee 4 noticed that not every farmer knew that the network exists and therefore missed the opportunity to receive advice and trainings. Interviewee 7 (France) witnessed a case where a farmer was not informed that there was a network and failed to participate.

**Enablers.** To fill the gap in knowledge, sharing tools came up as an enabler. The following is a concrete example from a Swedish farmer:

*We brought with us from Belgium, something that's called the in Swedish [inaudible], which is a basically an excel document for group of vegetables, stating then per vegetable when you should sew it, when you should plant it, when you should harvest it, etc. What are like the whole planning for the year and that document we adapted to the Swedish situation. (France 15)*
3.4.2 Communication flow

Barriers. One of the most conspicuous barriers in relation to communication was missing communication between CSA farmers and customers. Interviewee 17 (Sweden) pointed out the lack of communication about the CSA model as a whole and how it works. As for communicating to the customers, Interviewee 9 (France) mentioned that there is a need for external, public communication for the movement to spread widely. He recognized the challenge of being clear and explicit about what CSA is, and was struggling to create advertisement to attract potential customers.

Interviewee 10 (France) pointed out the importance of talking to customers directly. One example that highlights this aspect was seen on the distribution situation. Interview 10 raised the issue by talking about farmers who just leave the boxes of vegetables on the pickup site, not being involved in conversations with customers there.

Enablers. Interestingly enough, communication between CSA farmers and customers was identified as an enabler as well, mirroring barriers. Interviewee 13 (France) illustrated the importance of being able to explain the work as a farmer: “how he works and why his projects are like this, why this year tomatoes are a success, why this year the salad are not good, what is happening, about the farm, how it is working all those things. So, communication, and explaining your work is essential. It's, it is very, very important aspect of it.”

Transparent communication was pointed out by two French interviewees (10 and 15) and one Swedish interviewee (18) as an enabler. The three of them communicated explicitly about how the harvest goes, and it helped them to be transparent about pricing as well as the farming processes. Interviewee 18 even emailed customers when the harvest was low in the summer and suggested refunds.

As for the means of communication, two French interviewees (10 and 15) emphasized that written form could be helpful in conveying detailed information about farm operations. He published newsletters regularly and wrote about how the harvest was like on the farm, what was planted, and what their plans were for the next month. Interviewee 17 (France) created a brochure with information on “what CSA is, what's cool, what have you good parts of it, positive part for producers and for consumers, and also information on how much it costs and so on,” and it helped expand the number of customers to 160 in three years. Another means of communication that emerged from the data was customers spreading words about CSA, suggested by Interviewee 20 (Sweden) as an enabler for establishing the good reputation of CSA.

Two farmers, one French and the other Swedish, mentioned journalists as authority for communication to potential customers. Interviewee 4 (France) reported that journalists and radios talked about CSAs and it helped the farms spread the words “without too much effort or too much money” when they did not really have projects on marketing. Interviewees 9 and 11, from France, talked about CSAs having big space in media in France for more than 12 years now, as an enabler. Interviewee 14 commented that people knowing and trusting the CSA model in France is not an issue any more, but it might be in countries where there aren't many, such as in Sweden. In the opinion of interviewee 9, there might be an opportunity for the CSA movement to grow within less economically advantaged population, that does not know the movement and does not have fresh vegetables as part of their diet yet.
Education was another theme that came up in relation to external communication. Interviewee 13 (France) suggested that CSA as an organization could play a crucial role in public education. Interviewee 7 further pointed out the possibility of CSA providing an education opportunity about health and food.

Finally, the theme research emerged as an enabler. Interviewee 9, a French farmer, pointed out the distance between practitioners and research. He mentioned the need for advisors such as mediator or public authorities who can provide diagnostic information about the farm operation, referring to it as a potential enabler for the movement. In addition, Interviewee 17, a Swedish farmer, gave a different perspective by stating that it was helpful for them to refer to scientific research as an authority when communicating about CSA’s positive impact on environment and society such as energy efficiency. Overall, there seems to be a need for a flow of information in between academic researchers and farmers so that CSA can be benefitted by experts for a better operation of farms as well as by a solid scientific background for farmers to rely on.

### 3.5 Country-/Region-specific Aspects

The fifth overarching theme that came up was country-/region-specific aspects. The themes were divided by country: France and Sweden. The associated concepts for each theme are summarized in Figure 3.5.

![Figure 3.5 Country- and region-specific aspects.](image)

**Barriers in France.** In France, concepts such as challenge to trust and legal aspects were identified. The challenge to trust was expressed by interviewee 9, saying that people in France, generally do not trust who they do not know. Legal aspects emerged from interviewee 15, that in France taxes, and the transmission of the right to own a land, is more complicated than in Sweden, and can take until 6 months.

**Barriers in Sweden.** In Sweden, topics emerged about food not being an important part of the culture and little localization. Interviewee 16 mentioned that the value of food in Swedish society is not important as in France. It is seen as nutrition but not as part of the culture. It was mentioned by Interviewee 20, Sweden, that in opposition to France, there is not a culture of a real farmers market with local producers, and direct sales between farmer and consumer, which is a barrier to the farmer reach the consumer. According to her, the Swedish local markets usually sell groceries from all around the world. It is mentioned that for some reason, Swedish farmers lost the pride of what they produce.
**Enablers in France.** The ideas that emerged about the particularities of France were *importance of food and gastronomy in the culture*, the *valorization of agriculture*, a *growing movement*, a trend for local products, and political engagement.

On *growing movement,* Interviewee 9 mentioned that the CSA movement has been growing in the last two to three years. Interviewees 4, 7 and 12 from France, and even 19 and 20 from Sweden, mentioned the *importance of food and gastronomy* in France. Interviewee 12 said that the word consumer is not used in the CSA context: they use “consumactor” instead, which means that consumer owns responsibility for what they buy.

Regarding *valorization of agriculture,* Interviewee 4 mentioned that France is a big agricultural country and described *local agriculture as a trend* in France.

There was also concepts around *political engagement.* Interviewee 11 talked about the existing political culture of French citizens, while Interviewee 4 described France as a revolutionary country and pointed out that there is a cultural aspect of questioning things, such as the origin of their food.

*Enablers in Sweden:* The latter relates somehow with what was identified by interviewee 18 in Sweden, that there is a culture of mobilization and *culture of following trends* that can benefit movements like CSAs to flourish.
4 Discussion

In this chapter, crucial factors were identified from the findings and will be discussed in relation to the definition of a flourishing movement (see Chapter 1.4.4). Then, a contrastive analysis between France and Sweden will be presented, followed by a suggestion of strategic guidelines.

4.1 Defining the role of the CSA movement in the transition towards an alternative food system

Four major themes appeared from the results regarding how the movement should grow to become a driving force towards an alternative food system. First is the tension between being autonomous grassroots and being more professional as well as strategic. Second is about the rise of competing alternative models. Third is how much the CSA principles can adapt to specific realities without losing the connection with the movement. Fourth is about the political role of networks.

First, regarding the direction of the movement, Interviewee 19 (France) described a paradox between being grassroots, thriving locally and diversely as CSA farms, and being part of a unified movement. Related to the latter, two different stories emerged from the findings. Some interviewees talked about the need for a five-year strategic plan for the movement, while others mentioned the need for a more professional approach for CSAs. Grassroots movements often appear in the literature as grassroots innovations, and are described as "networks of activists and organizations generating novel bottom-up solutions for sustainable development" (Seyfang and Smith 2007, 585). In other words, the solutions are local and aligned with the values and needs of the community involved.

The CSA movement as defined by the European CSA declaration understands itself as an open grassroots movement by stating that "CSA is not a static model. Like a garden it is dynamic: it evolves and grows through daily care. Each CSA partnership has autonomy... We are a grassroots movement: we believe that the power of CSA is in pragmatic, everyday action and face-to-face relationships." (European CSA declaration n.d., 1-2). Feola and Nunes (2013) show the challenges related to grassroots innovations. First, they often struggle to sustain commitment and participation. Second, there are limitations in the potential to bring change and innovation to the community due to reliance on volunteer as a working force. Third, they frequently operate with low levels of financial resources. Finally, they do not always represent the diversity of local communities and therefore struggle to connect with the surrounding wider community. On the other hand, cooperation with local and global networks can support the success of the movement through niche building.

Second, there is a rising demand in more sustainable food (Rossi 2017), and CSAs could take advantage of this situation by potentially going hand in hand with an increasing number of other models, which were witnessed in the findings as well as literature (e.g. Lutz and Schachinger 2013). Some examples are REKO Ring in Sweden, big chains of supermarkets selling organic products, and tech companies engaging in food business such as Amazon buying Whole Foods in the USA. Each of these initiatives carries its own particularities, and they don't share the same principles of CSAs such as direct relationship with the farmer, risk sharing, and long-term agreement. Although it could be argued that they do share the agroeological practices depending on the definition of agroecology, the question remains as to how the CSA movement...
wants to relate to it. Should it join forces with other movements? As expressed in the European CSA Declaration, should it join forces with the agroecological and food sovereignty movement to become a driving force towards a more sustainable food system? Or should it focus on deepening their current relationships with the consumers? A shared understanding on how the movement should grow was not clearly seen in the data.

Third, one of the themes that arise from the previous discussion is around how flexible the CSA principles can be until the movement loses its essence, namely the CSA principles. According to our results, the CSA models varied from place to place and the CSA principles were not always fully applied, although the declaration emphasizes farmers to implement the principles (European CSA declaration n.d.). This revealed a gap between what the European CSA Declaration emphasizes and the actual daily practice. Another aspect of it is whether its specificity could limit partnerships with other movements and organizations. This brings questions around what kind of partnerships needs to be done for CSAs not to be a niche (Rossi 2017) but to become a driving force towards sustainability? What are the core elements of a movement in the food system that allows it to be a driving force towards sustainability? Literature has raised the concern about the direction of alternative food movements: they could be subjected to institutionalization, entering dynamics of power, competition, and eventually lose the initial intention, such as seen in organic and fair trade examples (Rossi 2017; Jafee and Howard 2009).

Fourth, regarding the political role of CSA networks, a question rose as to how political is the movement and what is its role in the transition towards a sustainable food system? There has been an emphasis on its political influence and its ability to present a driving force towards a sustainable food production system. Seyfang and Smith (2007) mention the risk aversion of policy makers towards innovation as a challenge for grassroots movements. They state that this is an experimental process and requires openness to learning from failure. Furthermore, the policy culture is not mature enough to see innovation as a fruitful process and usually punish it by withdrawing resources. This was experienced by one of our interviewees in our study. Therefore, the challenge is to provide support mechanisms for these initiatives to overcome obstacles in the tough times, and create a culture of keeping and diffusing lessons learnt. "Whilst continued funding of failure can be difficult to justify, it seems unreasonable to cut funding from initiatives willing to adapt activities, overcome earlier problems, and continue experimenting. This is the lifeblood of innovation" (Seyfang and Smith 2007, 597).

The CSA networks relate directly to the political discussion. According to the results, they act as an important intermediary not only for the movement to organize itself internally but also externally in order to express its interests and advocate for them. Hassanein (2003, 85) claims that "there are times when organizations must enter into strategic coalitions to build citizen power that they cannot achieve on their own." However, as previously explained, there is a debate on the movements role in the larger system, which is also reveled in the debate on the role of the networks. Thus, the inconsistent role and understanding of networks became obvious in the data. Whereas some highlight the importance of the networks, others complain about the missing support, communication and willingness to participate in them not only by consumers but also by the farmers.

To conclude, there is plurality in the understanding on where to go as a movement. Although there are shared criteria, definitions for the CSA and a European CSA Charter, the study showed challenges to define a direction and a common ground. The movement standing at a bifurcation
between being an open and alternative movement or being strategic and professionalizing itself more. There is a risk for the CSA movement to lose space for competing models and its original intention due to mainstream pressure. There is also an opportunity of engaging more actively with networks and politically. This will be an essential aspect to define the flourishing of the movement in the following years.

4.2 Definition, CSA Principles, Values and Charter

The results suggest a theme on CSA model(s) and the core elements of CSA, which is also mirrored in the current literature. From the data, questions around the core elements of CSA have been raised, reflected in the diverse application in practice. Several questions can be asked: what can be considered a CSA? What are the core elements of CSA? What defines CSA? What needs to be part of the CSA activities? To illustrate the discussion and challenges, examples on risk sharing and the agroecological principles will be presented from the data, describing the plurality of understandings of CSA.

First, the European CSA declaration explains risk sharing as follows: “Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a direct partnership based on the human relationship between people and one or several producer(s), whereby the risks, responsibilities and rewards of farming are shared, through a long-term, binding agreement.” (European CSA Declaration n.d.). Multiple studies regard risk sharing as a core part of CSA. For example, the European Handbook of CSA (Bashford et al. 2013) states four characteristics as a common basis of CSA partnership, solidarity (sharing risk and sharing benefits), local and consumers and producers- tandem. Solyom (2016) points out that only if all four of these elements are respected and implemented the farm can be considered as CSA. While there are many ways to perform CSA, Balázs et al. (2016) refers to three unifying characteristics of CSA: short distance between farmer and consumer, sharing risks and rewards of farming and fostering a local and socially just food system. As mentioned earlier the European CSA Declaration also dwells on the independence of each CSA and emphasizes the CSA’s dynamic and adaptive characteristic rather than a static model as well as the autonomy of each CSA partnership (European CSA declaration n.d.).

The importance of risk sharing for the farmer has been pointed out by a French interviewee, emphasizing risk sharing as the essential element for CSA: “So risk sharing is for me the essential element of CSA. From the moment [...] that you have within the network organization, even like in Sweden, you have discussions that, it yeah but really, we cannot really ask this from people that they do that etcetera. you're away from the CSA concept. I'm really, really straight, really square in these kind of things and it doesn't matter. Then call it something else.” (France 15). Further highlighting the importance of advanced payment, which enables security for farmers: “So, by asking people to pay in the beginning of the year, that's actually risk sharing. And that's the whole idea of this. That's one of the basic ideas of a community supported agriculture, is that we are in this shit together. So if it doesn't work out with certain vegetables, no worries. There's enough vegetables left. If the whole harvest doesn't work, no worries. It's not the bankruptcy for the farmer. It's, we share the risk altogether.” (France 15).

The discussion around risk sharing is related to the French AMAP which is generally considered to coincide with CSA by strong support from consumer groups for farmers, where risk sharing is ensured through written contracts for several months or even a year. Another part of risk sharing is included in a pre-payment system to secure monthly payments from consumers (URGENTCI n.d.). However, different applications of risk sharing within the movement became
apparent from the data. A French interviewee claimed that risk sharing was not always applied in practice:

 [...] like theoretically speaking, and this model is about risk sharing and risk sharing can be understood in a new, very extensive ways. So, for example, the, dairy producer, we have, she had, some big problems with her goats, [...] and, she didn't really dare to ask for help or, but you know, in theory we should have been paying an empty share, in a way, we should be committed to her on a full year time which is not the case. So personally, both, I thought that's, okay, maybe you, maybe it's not so easy actually to do really like your 100% risk, risk sharing because in the reality it's impossible to ask 15 families to keep paying for nothing. (France 11)

The same interviewee states that although there is no full risk sharing and the principles are not always fully applied, CSA is still the most advanced model in order to support small scale farmers. A Swedish CSA farmer was not doing risk sharing due to the fear of losing his customers, since he only had limited training in farming. He was concerned about the lack of expertise leading to a bad harvest and owned a high responsibility towards the customer. The Interviewees solution was filling up the baskets with products from other places (Sweden 21).

Second, related to the agroecological principles, it was evident from our data that not all the AMAPs are working according to the agroecological principles. For instance, the reasoning for the use of pesticides was related to the risk for the farmer: “No, it is not all organic. Vegetables are not organic, fruits are not. [...] For the product, they say, that, it is too risky, to do organic culture because there are sometimes during the year were, they say it is very, very risky to get some disease. “(France 6). This example illustrates how the use of chemicals can be related to risk sharing and how risk sharing can enable the farmer to farm more ecologically without bearing all the risks alone.

Challenges with risk sharing, paying in advance and the agroecological principles have been described. The challenge of a clear definition around core elements of CSA was apparent from the data and resonates with findings in current literature illustrating different interpretations of CSA. The European Research Network (2016) also points out that “a clear-cut definition of CSA is still a work in progress and there remain many gaps in knowledge. One of the methodological difficulties of this study lies in determining which initiatives within the wide alternative agricultural movement can be considered to be CSAs “ (European research Network 2016, 10). Bobulescu (et al. 2018, 5) explain that it is impossible to have a “[...] monolithic CSA model, but a patchwork of CSAs conditioned by different cultural frameworks.[...] The idea of CSA travels abroad and adapts to different social, economic, cultural, and environmental contexts, by transforming them in exchange.” Similarly, Feagan and Henderson (2009) explain that over time the original or early CSA was variegated. Not only their study but also other studies describe that CSA is adapted and modified to the specific circumstances. These circumstances are many and diverse. Therefore, they conclude that “The ‘model’ CSA does not likely exist, and though in some ways still esteemed as a long-term objective, successful CSA at this point in time may actually evolve best by accounting for the specific real-world conditions which frame their operation, while working toward more comprehensive CSA organization and potential.” (Feagan and Henderson 2009, 216).

This diversity of CSA is reflected in academic research. CSA has been investigated from a variety of different theoretical and disciplinary approaches in the academic research field. Balázs et al. (2016, 102) identified a broad range of theories and frameworks, pointing out that
“the focus of studies differ[s] in what main motives they identify behind CSAs.” Some examples are the approach of non-representational theory (Hayden and Buck, 2012), using transition theory (Brunori et al. 2012), or a socioeconomic perspective on the connections between farmers and consumers (Hinrichs 2000; Holloway et al. 2007) or ethical consumerism (Thompson and Coskuner-Balli, 2007).

To illustrate the variety of CSA, different categorizations and distinctive features of CSA will be presented. Baláz et al. (2016, 102) refers to four types of CSAs: (1) producer-led or subscription-based, (2) the community-led or co-operative, (3) the collaborative, producer-community partnership, and (4) community-owned farm enterprises.

Another way to describe CSA is reflected in the work of Bobulescu et al. (2018), distinguishing between ‘conventional farming’, ‘ideal CSA’ and ‘transitional CSA’ (see Table 4.1). While the ‘ideal CSA’ fully applies the element of risk sharing, the ‘transitional CSA’ is only considered to do partial risk sharing. The ‘ideal CSA’ based on a Belgian self-harvest study (Bloemmen et al. 2015), strongly emphasizes risk sharing, trust between farmer and consumer, strong community engagement and building, obtaining to the agro-ecological principles of farming. The ‘transitional model’ on the other hand shares some aspects of local, community building, partially risk sharing and quasi-market. The ‘transitional CSA’ combines features of both models (Bobulescu et al. 2018).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agricultural models / Holistic microeconomic agent's behaviour</th>
<th>Conventional</th>
<th>&quot;Transitional&quot;CSA</th>
<th>&quot;Ideal&quot; CSA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic behaviour</strong></td>
<td>Market-driven Global No-risk sharing Commodification and standardization</td>
<td>Quasi market Local Partial risk-sharing</td>
<td>Non-market Local Risk-sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social behaviour</strong></td>
<td>No community</td>
<td>Some community participation</td>
<td>Strong community, conviviality, cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natural behaviour</strong></td>
<td>Unsustainable</td>
<td>Sustainable, concern for food safety and security</td>
<td>Biodynamic, organic, permaculture, food democracy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, Feagan and Henderson (2009) developed a concept to describe the plurality of CSA organizing the spectrum of CSAs between the collaborative model (emphasis on community and partnerships between farmers and consumers) on one hand and the instrumental model (economic arrangement between farmers and consumers without any community elements) on the other hand. The functional model is a middle ground that fosters the relationship between farmers and consumers however only partially applies risk sharing. It is also mentioned that the collaborative model is not applicable for all the farms. Feagan and Henderson (2009, 215) point
out to the confusion around CSA witnessed in academic research as well as in their study, concluding that CSA is “[...] a complex and contingent food production and consumption experience leading to partial and often conflicted beliefs, views, and practices.”

Another dynamic worth mentioning, is the exclusion of certain similar models from the CSA movement such as non-farm based box schemes. Parot (2015) concludes that “even if the movement is highly creative and diverse, there are attempts to set boundaries and keep clear from purely business driven model. [...] there is an urging feeling to act in order to prevent “non-farm based aggregated box schemes” from calling themselves CSA. [...]” (Parot 2015, 20-21). Similarly, an interviewee stated “Paying for basket has nothing to do with CSA.” (France 15) therefore advocating that this model should not be called CSA.

As illustrated in this discussion, elements for a clear definition of CSA such as the European CSA Declaration, with a definition of CSA and its principles exist. While some research argues on the necessity of adapting CSA by stating “that the reality of dominant food system context and site-specific influences on CSA development compels us to rework our attachment to early idealized ‘model’ traits” (Feagan and Henderson 2009, 203) it has been argued in the interviews that execution of the ‘ideal CSA’ is crucial in order to contrast from other models and to keep the core of CSA. Differences in the way CSA is applied and interpreted became evident from the data. It can be concluded that these questions can have strong implications for CSAs sustainability performance. From the literature it becomes evident that the French AMAP shares more features of a ‘transitional CSA’ rather than the ‘ideal CSA’. Whether or not these models are considered CSA will be an important question for the movement to ask in the future.

Based on the experience of this research, the risk can be indicated of CSA adapting to given circumstances or customer demand that can lead to CSA losing its core and its strength to transform the current food paradigm. A distortion of the original model can probably enable growth of the movement in the short term; however, the question remains how the adaption of the model will affect the movement in the long run. How CSA will relate to its core values will be highly important for its future direction. Bobulescu et al. (2018, 30) concludes that “CSAs future and especially their transformational power will depend on the CSA commitment to the original values.”

### 4.3 Economically Viable CSAs and a Strong Coalition of Networks Operating within a Principled Definition of Sustainability

#### 4.3.1 Economically viable CSAs and a strong coalition of networks

The findings suggest that CSA faces internal, structural and operational challenges as presented in Appendix 6. These findings are discussed in relation to literature in this section. Examples of the challenges that emerged from the findings were the high workload, volunteering and participation, and finances. Some of these challenges and discussion seem to be reported and repeatedly discussed: workload and work-overload (Galt 2013; Lutz and Schachinger 2013), finances and risk sharing (Tegtmeier and Duffy 2005; Lass et al. 2003; Bobulescu et al. 2018, Galt 2013), as well as volunteering and participation (Feagan and Henderson 2009; Pole and Gray 2012; Ostrom 2007; Bobulescu et al. 2018).
In many cases the high workload was mentioned as a challenge in the findings. The high workload was related to CSA producing a large product variety. For instance, when one farmer grows a large variety of different vegetables, it is way more time intensive than growing only a small variety: “20 or 30 products on a basket AMAP basket, to produce 30 lines of products, it takes much more time than just for three or four products.” (France 7). Also, the difference when selling on a market was pointed out by a French interviewee: “if the farmer goes to the local market, she, just has to sell what she has and if there is more, one week it may be possible, to manage to sell everything, there is that, it is okay. But in an AMAP, you need to give a basket to everybody for every week. So it is a strong constraint from the side of the farmers because they need to support a lot of variety, a content volume of products for the whole year.” (France 6). The challenge of increased workload due to product variety has been mentioned in literature, referring to the importance of cooperation amongst members of Local Food Networks in order to prevent self-exploitation (Lutz and Schachinger 2013). Galt (2013, 341) points out the risk of self-exploitation for CSA farmers “because of farmers’ strong sense of obligation to their members.” High workload was also described as barrier to participate in network activities and engage in other activities such as political engagement or advocacy for the movement.

Furthermore, CSA operations were also related to financial challenges, not only for individual CSAs but also for the CSA networks. On a CSA farm level, the challenge to be finically viable was mentioned, and it seems that a CSA needs to have a certain size to be financially viable. Little income for farmers was mentioned several times, also as a barrier for new farmers to start engaging in a CSA. In literature inadequate wages and farmers lamenting unfair wages for the share prices paid by the members has been described as challenge in the US (Tegtmeier and Duffy 2005). Farmers’ dissatisfaction with their financial security such as health insurance or retirement plans has been reported in a study conducted in California (Galt 2016). The theme of finances also showed the crucial role of risk sharing, which, if not applied, can increase the risk of uncertainty and debt for the farmers.

As presented in the results, challenges around volunteering and participation such as finding enough volunteers and including them in the work were apparent. It was pointed out that CSA demands high commitment from its participants, not only from farmers but also from customers. The element of volunteering is debated within the literature: “The property of voluntary work and participation has received criticism from CSA organizers and researchers alike.” (Bobulescu et al. 2018, 22). It has been reflected in literature that the motivation to participate in CSA is food, not community (Pole and Gray 2012) and that there is a variety of beliefs and ways of executing the element of volunteering and member participation (Feagan and Henderson 2009; Bobulescu et al. 2018). Challenges to get members involved (Ostrom 2007) and a decline in the CSA core group (Lass et al. 2003) has been documented as well.

The themes mentioned by interviewees are strongly related to the high commitment needed by members and farmers such as workload, financial support and community engagement. These challenges can give hints why the model is adapted towards a more ‘transitional CSA’ for example with less community activities due to high workload. These challenges around the structure of CSA can become a barrier to a flourishing movement. General conclusions or solutions are hard to draw due to the plurality and diversity of CSA’s within the movement. However, from the interviews an opportunity in use new technologies and the digitalization as a way to make operations and administrative resources less time demanding and more effective was described several times. The use of online contracts, managing of the orders and communication can facilitate and simplify the process for consumers and might also make it
easier for farmers to collaborate. In fact, online communication has been pointed out as a significant factor that influences the likelihood of consumer participation in CSAs (Vassalos et al. 2017).

4.3.2 CSAs Operating within a principled definition of sustainability

In this section, the findings are examined from the lens of the Sustainability Principles (Broman and Robert 2017; see Chapter 1.2) to discuss CSA’s possible contributions to a sustainable food system. Before describing the findings, it should be pointed out that each CSA describes individual features in terms of size, products and practices etc. This can impede generalizing CSAs regarding their sustainability efforts. Balázs states that “each successful CSA project reflects the needs, talents, and resources of its farm and community without a one-size-fits-all prescription to sustainability” (Balázs et al. 2016, 102). It should also be pointed out that literature on CSAs and sustainability is limited in Europe. This study often makes use of US literature were most of the studies were conducted until now. The findings on the alignments and misalignments with SPs is summarized in Appendix 6.

The location was pointed out as a crucial factor for CSA. A long distance between producers and consumers increase the need for transportation therefore creating misalignments with SP 1 (systematic increase of substances extracted from the Earth's crust). Urban areas allowed less transport or even self-harvest from CSA members on the farm, while more rural locations tend to have increased need for transport and distribution challenges, increasing most upstream the need for extraction for fossil fuels from the earth’s crust. Literature suggests LFN potential (such as CSA) to reduce transport and mileage (Lutz and Schachinger 2013). As pointed out by an interviewee, ideally CSA’s would border cities enabling the members to cycle to the farm and do self-harvest, while in more rural areas the number of CSAs should increase for better spacial coverage.

Organic food and agroecological production in CSAs are strongly related to SP 2 (systematic increase of substances produced by society). Per definition CSA are supposed to work in accordance to agroecological principles permitting the use of chemicals and fertilizers as CSA practice (European CSA Declaration n.d.). Although organic is usually pointed out as a key contrastive feature of CSA with the dominant food system (Picardy 2001) the use of chemicals apparent from the data created misalignments with SP 2. Practice seems to range from misalignments with organic and agroecological production (as this study revealed) to organic production or permaculture and biodynamic practices. However, literature on the differences in practice remains little. While many of the CSA’s practice organic production or beyond, many of the farms do not get organic certification (Shi et al., 2011; Moore et al., 2014) often due to time intensive and costly certification process (Lang 2010). These different takes on the core sustainability practices of CSA are also reflected in literature. The distinction between ‘conventional’, ‘transitional CSA’ and ‘ideal CSA’ (Bobulescu et al. 2018) reflects this wide range. While the ‘conventional’ practices are described as unsustainable agriculture, the ‘transitional CSA’s practices are considered sustainable, expressing a concern for food safety and food security. However, according to Bobulescu (et al. 2018) only the ‘ideal CSA’ practices organic agriculture, furthermore also biodynamic, permaculture and food democracy.

From the interviews, the fact that CSA supports small scale family farming based on agroecological principles was pointed out, therefore supporting biodiversity on farms which aligns with SP 3 (Physical degradation). It was pointed out by Schnell (2007) that the size of CSA
farms as a factor can enable more dedication to sustainable practices enabling the farmer for more labor or time intensive work. A misalignment with SP 3 was pointed out with the use of hybrids limiting ecological diversity. It was reasoned that the need of hybrids was due to the fact the ‘ideal CSA’ model was not properly applied, which creates the need for farmers to deliver products on a due date (basket scheme boxes in France) therefore creating the need for hybrids. Hybrids are considered to reduce biodiversity, therefore are a misalignment with SP 3. The reduction of food waste was mentioned, which is also reflected in literature since CSA’s can enable the reduction of food waste as well as the reduction of waste due to less packing (Lutz and Schachinger 2013).

CSA’s aim to produce fresh, healthy and organic food (European CSA Declaration n.d.). It was found that organic production was not always the case in CSA, having implications for SP 4 (health). However, it was also reported that CSA’s can have positive effects on diet habits and increase life quality (Saltmarsh et al. 2001). Work overload and pressure for farmers was not only mentioned as a challenge in the interviews but also overlaps with literature pointing out the higher workload compared to the delivery to wholesale traders (Lutz and Schachinger 2013) and the risk of self-exploitation of farmers (Galt 2013). CSA’s ability to create relationships and a sense of community and its ability to strengthen the social fabric was present throughout the data. However, also the heterogeneous interpretation of CSA’s community aspects was reflected aligning with the multitude of literature reflecting the different takes on community aspects of CSA’s. Ranging from strong community-based models (Lass et al. 2003; Schnell 2007) to more market-oriented models with little or no community (Lang 2010), which relates back to the distinction of the ‘ideal CSA’ and ‘transitional CSA’ (Bobulescu et al. 2018). While ideally CSA is supposed to foster strong relationships amongst members (Feagan and Henderson 2009) the lack of community was also described in literature (DeLind 1999).

CSA's potential to advocate for its (political and civil) interests as a way to influence the larger food or political system and on the other hand the diverse understanding or prioritization of the importance of this work was pointed out regarding SP 5 (influence). The data reflected the wide variety of understandings on the role of CSA’s in the larger system. The importance and the role of networks in the CSA community reflects this as well. While many emphasized the importance of networks, it has been pointed out that on the other hand many CSA’s do not join the networks. Furthermore, diverse perspectives have been expressed on how political the movement should be and whether it should join forces with other movements as a way to create (political) influence. Regarding the structural obstacles that CSA is facing, the barrier of multinational companies influencing and controlling the food market has been mentioned, which has also been mentioned elsewhere (e.g. Shiva 2004). The perspective that “food becomes political” and that “sustainable agriculture is swelling into a significant social movement with a national network and an effective policy wing” (Henderson 2000, 187-188) was described in literature. However, the transformative ability of grassroots activism in alternative agro-food systems was also questioned pointing out that “A complete transformation of the agriculture and food system, it might be argued, requires a complete transformation of the society” (Magdoff et al. 2000, 188).

CSAs were described as opportunity for food education, exchange of knowledge and information (SP 6: Competence). Literature reflects CSA’s ability for education opportunities (Chen 2013) its ability for environmental education (Donahue 1994) and knowledge transfer (Bloemmen et al., 2015) and as enabler for increased knowledge of food practices and local production systems (Torjusen et al. 2008). Yet, it was pointed out in the data that many CSA’s
lack knowledge regarding the CSA operations, often due to the fact that the new generation of farmers is young people without farming background.

Concerning SP 7 (impartiality), it was pointed out that CSAs can contribute to removing structural obstacles to financial impartiality by incorporating risk sharing, payment in advance and strong communities could prevent farmers left behind in debt. However, risk sharing was not always applied as farmers hesitated to ask members to pay for an empty share. The findings of Bobulescu et al. (2018) also point out that “[...] risk sharing is not always practiced as the farmers assume the risk financially and personally. What these examples illustrate though is that it is the farmer who bears the pressures of risk sharing and at times it is the inability of the farmer to share the risk.” Furthermore, CSA’s ability to create financial stability and security and its as its power to strengthen the local infrastructure and economies was pointed out. Literature reflects AFN’s (such as CSA) capacity to create economic resilience for small scale farmers and creating decent incomes (Lutz and Schachinger 2013). Besides, little income for CSA farmers was not only mentioned as a challenge in the data but is also reflected the nationwide study by Lass et al. (2003) in the US. Furthermore, challenges for CSAs due to the lack of rural infrastructure was pointed out. Rural isolation of CSA’s has been documented as challenge for CSA in a case study (Fceagan and Henderson 2009). It was pointed out that CSA as small-scale vegetable producer, being in between scale, challenges to find the right tools due to size, obstacles to receive subsidies for small scale farming, or the lack of subsidies were described as disadvantages. It was mentioned the case that farmers have little or no salary, which can create the obstacle for new people to start a farm. A need for legislative change was pointed out. The need for fundamental structural changes of the political and economic systems in order to strengthen local food networks (such as CSA) is reflected in the work of Lutz and Schachinger (2013) pointing out that “The obstacles arising from the intersection of local food networks with the dominant food regime and economic landscape make it difficult for local food networks to develop the stable structures that would help them move beyond the niche level.”. Furthermore, the challenges due to the lack of local infrastructure for small scale farms was described in the same study (Lutz and Schachinger 2013).

It was revealed that CSAs can create conditions that allow meaning making (SP8). One interviewee pointed out: "We have a society which is in a deep need of having meanings. And the meaning around food is very essential today.” Furthermore, CSA’s enabling people to regain power and control over their life and over food production was pointed out.

A variety of elements that go beyond the frame of the sustainability principles have been identified. Regenerative practices such as permaculture and biodynamic farming have been mentioned regarding ecological sustainability. Regarding social aspects, members wellbeing, the strengthening of the social fabric and the creation of trust can serve as examples. As Bobulescu et al. (2018, 16) concludes, “the social interactions occurring within CSA show signs of trust, and it extends much further than the obvious form of members paying upfront and trusting the farmer to do his/her best in producing with that money.”

As described in this section, the findings have been related to the current literature. It can be concluded that the discussion on the sustainability efforts of CSA is closely related to the discussion on CSA model(s), the core elements of CSA (see Chapter 4.1) and the different expressions of CSA regarding an ‘ideal CSA’ or an ‘transitional CSA’ approach. It can be noted that not applying some of the elements of an ‘ideal CSA’ (risk sharing or agroecological
principles) can have strong impacts regarding the social, ecological and financial sustainability of CSA (e.g. lack of risk sharing led to use of chemicals because of high risk for farmer). Furthermore, CSAs as small-scale farms seem to face structural obstacles such as the common agricultural policies possibly impeding the flourishing of CSAs and the movement.

Based on the findings the complexity of a sustainable CSA with all its facets and the challenge of balancing social, ecological and economic sustainability within CSA becomes explicit. The interrelation between risk sharing and the advantages for financial security for farmers (that can be an enabler for organic farming and sustainable farming practices as explained earlier) however also creating pressure for farmers to hold up to the expectations and the trust of members is a good example. Therefore, risk sharing can possibly lead to the risk of work overload and self-exploitation of farmers or the challenge for farmers to ask for risk sharing in the actual situation, not wanting to disappoint the customers.

Besides, CSA’s potential for social sustainability contributions from the data and literature is clearly recognizable. Certainly, there is difference in the importance of the community aspect, however there is CSA’s with priority on community building (Sumner et al. 2010). From the data it appears, that the social aspect can be a leverage for impact of CSA’s. Galt (2013, 359) quotes a farmer saying, “the point of what we are trying to do is much bigger than grow food and make money – I mean that’s not even the point. It’s to live sustainably and create communities that are growing their own food.”

### 4.4 Comparison of France and Sweden

#### 4.4.1 Key contrastive features

This section presents the comparative analysis of France and Sweden. Some significant patterns that emerged from the data will be discussed with the aim of understanding the similarities and differences between a successful and relatively unsuccessful countries in terms of the flourishing movement of CSA. The comparison revealed cultural and social elements that helps and hinders the CSA movement. Key contrastive features are summarized in Table 4.1.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship with food</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
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<tr>
<td>Localization</td>
<td>Gastronomic culture</td>
<td>Less attention to food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Centralization of food distribution</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>Political engagement</td>
<td>Political engagement</td>
<td>Legal procedures</td>
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*Relationship with food. As reported in the previous chapter, not only French but also Swedish interviewee mentioned “France being very important country of food, nutrition and gastronomy (France 4).” In fact, several French interviewees talked about growing awareness of people on the quality of food including where it comes from, making CSAs more attractive to those people. Additionally, some of them related this increasing awareness directly to the demand for alternatives such as CSAs (France 11). The research data showed that only French farmers mentioned this theme as a farm-level enabler. On the other hand, Swedish interviewees*
talked more about relatively less interest of people in Sweden in food quality and nutrition. For example, Interviewee 16 (Sweden) described a campaign by the Swedish government in 1960s, which she thinks affected the society in a negative way. With the aim of economic development as a nation, it created canteens in offices and factories and encouraged people to pay for the food there instead of thinking or planning about what to eat by themselves. A quote from Interviewee 19 (Sweden) could be a concise summary of the difference in cultural situations according to countries: “There's food deserts in America. In Japan was the quality of the food in, in France, maybe, well, maybe it was the love of the food. In Sweden, we don't have any of those. We don't have food deserts. We don't have so many people that are very demanding on the quality of food (Sweden 19).”

Although missing food culture in Sweden emerged from the data, recent trend in healthy diet supports how the Swedes and people from other Nordic countries eat. The New Nordic Diet, “which is a gastronomically driven regional, organic, and environmentally friendly diet, in a carefully controlled but free-living setting (Poulsen et al. 2013, 35),” has been attracting attention in science. For example, studies have shown that it could potentially reduce cardiovascular risk factors (Adamsson et al. 2011) and cognitive decline (Shakersain et al. 2018). This can be suggested as something that the Swedes can be proud of.

Localization. Active movement of localization in food production and distribution was witnessed more in France. Interviewee 11 (France) further insisted that “CSA is perceived as a way to revitalize the local economy and to create new jobs.” By contrast, Swedish farmers talked more about centralization of food distribution as a barrier for the movement. Interview 19 explained that the current food production and distribution system is so effective that it is easy for people to go to big supermarkets and buy whatever they want. In addition, Interviewee 20 illustrated the situation where people are not used to buy products directly from the farmer because there are actually few towns that have farmers markets with local producers. These concerns around negative impact of centralized industrial food production systems have been pointed out in CSA literature, and a study with CSA members in New York reveals the connection between consumers’ motivation and these concerns. Through a survey conducted with CSA members in New York, O’Hara and Stal (2001) found that concerns for the deterioration of social and value context of food systems were the key motivating factor for joining CSA. The situation in Sweden could thus be seen as a challenge and opportunity for the CSA movement.

Trust. The theme of eroding trust in food industry as a movement-level enabler was only witnessed in interviews with French farmers. Interviewee 8 (France) talked about the resistance in French people to agro-industry, mentioning that there have always been people “who sought out ways to resist the system or, or show that it still was possible to live differently and produce differently.” Furthermore, different food scandals were brought up including contamination and false labeling. Interviewee 11 (France) suggested the direct relationship between the eroding trust and growing people’s awareness “to regain control over the way food is produced and distributed and uh, making sure that we get food from a safe source.” These observations by CSA farmers align with the research on customers’ motivation to join CSA. According to a study conducted with 264 French households, social and environmental considerations were statistically significant factors that determined CSA participation (Bougherara et al. 2009). The study concludes that “giving households the opportunity to control more precisely the way their food is produced and get what they want in comparison to ‘impersonal markets’ could constitute a strong argument in favor of CSA (Bougherara et al. 2009, 1494).”
Political engagement. The research findings revealed that French government is more active in advocating the movement. French farmers gave many concrete examples of how they were already being supported, as shown in 3.2.3. Furthermore, Interviewee 9 specifically mentioned political advocacy for local agriculture when talking about his expectations for the next regional elections. This aligns with what Schlicht et al. (2012) found about political engagement in France, where support and acknowledgement for CSA was witnessed from regional and local to government level. They also suggested that the interaction with regional authorities would be crucial for the advancement and upscaling of the movement. The findings showed that CSA farmers could in fact get support from the government and municipality, which contributes to a flourishing movement. On the other hand, Swedish farmers did not provide much detail in touching upon the political and legal support as an enabler for the movement. In addition, multiple Swedish farmers pointed out the challenge of small-scale CSA farmers to get support from the government and be financially stable, whereas no French farmers mentioned the size of CSA farms as a movement-level barrier.

Possible influence of cultural- and context- specific elements have been investigated in literature. For instance, Bobulescu et al. (2018, 5) argue that is impossible to have one CSA model; there are a variety of models that are influenced by different cultural frameworks. They further claim that “The idea of CSA travels abroad and adapts to different social, economic, cultural, and environmental contexts, by transforming them in exchange.” (ibid.). In a study of CSAs in Hungary, Solyom (2016, 60) described how cultural differences, in this case between eastern Europe and consolidated democracies, “play a significant role [...] in shaping CSA,” which affect CSA’s relation to volunteer work, long term planning and the appreciation of organic vegetables.

4.4.2 Is France actually a case of success?

This study was based on the comparison of a country as success example (France) with a less successful country (Sweden) based on the quantity of CSAs within each country. France can be considered a success in terms of an exponential growth in the number of CSA farms over the last two decades, with more than 2000 CSAs in 2016 (Eurpoean CSA Research Group 2016). However, based on the findings, its success in relation to the definition of a flourishing movement can be questioned. The AMAP movement could be regarded a driving force towards a sustainable food system in France. Nevertheless, discontinuity with the CSA principles and sustainability principles were found. The two examples that carved out were irregularities with the principles such as the use of chemicals or risk sharing.

The success of the France AMAP was questioned by a French interviewee (15) considering that ideal CSA is hard to compare with “the French one, where people actually are paying per basket. Excuse me. Paying for basket has nothing to do with CSA.” Furthermore, the interviewee stated that “you cannot say me that CSA is successful in France because so far, and I'm living here like one and a half year now in France as a little bit less. And since then I have not, at least in my area where I'm living, I have not seen one single CSA farm yet. There is a bunch of AMAP farms. There's a bunch of AMAP initiatives, but I have not seen one that has the pure form of CSA.” (France 15). Since France AMAPs share more features of a ‘transitional CSA’ rather than a ‘ideal CSA,’ it is an ideal example of the discussion presented earlier on CSA models and the role of the movement illustrating the trade-offs between a growing movement that reaches more people while risking distortion and loss of its core elements.
4.5 Strategic Guidelines

The strategic guidelines of the research emerged from the results and discussion. Since the CSA movement is diverse throughout Europe, these guidelines were designed to be general enough to guide CSAs towards a flourishing movement in Europe. It is strategic in the sense that is framed around a vision of success, which allows the use of backcasting approach within boundaries of the SPs (see Chapter 1.2). The researchers believe that they could possibly be applied to European countries as well as France and Sweden (see Chapter 1.6).

To be a driving force in the transition towards an alternative food production system

The first strategic guideline is to build stronger alliances with the agroecological and food sovereignty movement, while getting closer to the local political environment. According to the literature (Seyfang and Smith 2007), there is an opportunity to have local communities closer to local governments informing policy developments in order to scale up these initiatives. On the other hand, as shown in the results, there is a challenge for networks to have a central role in this process due to the lack of resources, finances and workman force. The same author mentions that grassroots groups know what work in their localities and what matters to people, while Rossi (2017, 16) states that "grassroots innovation in local scale may be the basis for the definition of new food policy frameworks and more general food governance patterns."

To live up to its values, CSA principles, definition and the European CSA Declaration

The second strategic guideline is preserving the core elements of CSAs. As discussed in Chapter 4.1, not being strict with the definition could help the movement to grow faster and wider. On the other hand, this could mean the movement losing its own essence. The CSA movement carries strong values that can allow not only to comply with the SPs but even go beyond in some cases. Direct relationship, risk sharing, long term agreement and agro-ecological practices can benefit the environment and contribute to a broader sense of community and creation of meaning. Rossi (2017) mentions that widening awareness around the hidden meanings of food is the first and major contribution of such initiatives. In fact, an example of a flourishing movement can be seen in Flanders, where the ‘ideal’ CSA practices such as risk sharing and self-harvesting are going on.

To be consisted of economically viable CSAs and a strong coalition of networks operating within a principled definition of sustainability

The third strategic guideline, from a strategic perspective, is that the movement should keep using participatory processes such as the first European CSA movements meeting in 2012. It was an 18-month long process of crafting the European Charter of CSA (European CSA Research Group 2016) as a means to get closer to the essence of the movement in terms of a shared definition and common vision. Participatory processes not only enable ownership of the participants but create a more solid basis on which the movement can agree on. The shared vision allows to create a creative tension with the current reality that can serve to strengthen the movement locally, regionally, nationally and within Europe, which could also influence policy making that could benefit CSAs to be sustainable and viable economically.
The three strategic guidelines can serve as an inspiration to guide network mobilization and therefore influence policy making. This research could provide a foundation for more descriptive studies in different countries and contexts.

4.6 Reliability and Validity

Based on the criteria for evaluating qualitative research introduced by Bryman (2016), credibility (the degree to which the findings are believable), transferability (whether the findings are applicable to other contexts), dependability (whether the findings are applicable at other times) and confirmability (whether the investigator tried to prevent personal values from affecting the study) will be discussed, reflecting upon the overall design of this study.

First, credibility was relatively hard to establish because the source of data for this study was semi-structured interview. In other words, triangulation, which means to employ multiple theoretical perspectives, sources of data and methodologies, did not happen in this study. The researchers do recognize that there was a possibility of using different data collection methods such as systematic literature review and surveys in an attempt to increase credibility of the study. Another possibility could be ensuring respondent validation by, for example, submitting research finding to experts and obtaining confirmation and further recommendations would have increased the credibility of this study. However, these did not happen due to the limited time and resource. That being said, the fact that the research was conducted according to “the principles of good practice” (Bryman 2016, 384) could contribute to some degree of credibility.

Second, as for transferability, the researchers expect that the thick description of findings could provide a basis for future analytical studies in other contexts. Especially, strategic guidelines were designed to be more context-independent, which increases the level of confidence in transferability.

Third, the researchers tried to ensure dependability by providing the detailed description of data collection and analysis procedure, which could potentially serve for similar descriptive-analytical study in the future.

Finally, confirmability of this study was ensured by rigorous collective participation in the data analysis, discussion and writing process that contributed to reducing individual bias. The researchers are confident that personal values or theoretical bias were minimized to the utmost. It should be acknowledged, however, that the results, discussion and conclusion of this research will entail interpretations of the researchers. How the interviews were coded, how the themes were identified, and how the key features were identified could have been influenced by interpretations.

4.7 Further Research

It is important to note that implications mentioned above are possible implications for a flourishing CSA movement. More research is needed to investigate structural challenges of CSA that became evident from the data. The scope of this study was experts of CSAs, and thus one of the suggestions for future research is to conduct qualitative studies focused on different internal and external stakeholders such as customers, network leaders and policy makers. The description and analysis of narratives of various stakeholders will help capture more comprehensive current reality of the CSA movement.
Considering the effect of distortion of CSA definitions and operations in addressing sustainability challenges, another recommendation for both researchers and practitioners is a continued discussion of how CSA should be. How flexible the CSA principles can be until the movement loses its essence? In order to answer this question, further research is needed to explore how CSA principles influence CSA practices with regards to the impact on sustainability performance and agricultural system change.

Taking into account the country- and region- specific factors that emerged from this study, more research is needed to investigate different cultural aspects that potentially determine or affect barriers and enablers for a flourishing CSA movement.

Solutions to barriers and challenges could be another focus of research. An example from the findings would be whether technology can make the process of ordering and distribution of products easier, hence help contribute to a flourishing movement. Another example would be the perceived role of networks and how it relates to a flourishing movement.
5 Conclusion

This study began by introducing the sustainability challenge. Society is facing unprecedented social and ecological crisis. The effects can be seen in climate change, biodiversity loss, water scarcity and food waste. The current industrial agriculture model is one of the major contributors to these issues. In the next years, population and demand for food will increase significantly. Now is a moment when the demand for natural resources is increasing, while the earth resource availability decreases systematically. As these problems are complex by nature, it is helpful to use a systems perspective to address the sustainability challenge.

To address the challenge, the CSA movement nested in industrial agriculture was introduced as one of the emerging alternative food initiatives. It has been illustrated from the literature that the concept of CSA can address some of the sustainability challenges. In order to contribute to the flourishing CSA movement, a qualitative-descriptive study was conducted. Overall, the results revealed barriers and enablers for the CSA movement in France and Sweden. Five main themes have been addressed in the interviews: definition, structure and operations, the direction of the movement, social aspects, knowledge and communication, and country-/region-specific aspects.

The discussion on core elements of CSA also reflected in literature reveal a diversity of understandings and interpretations of CSA. The notion between an ‘ideal CSA’ and a ‘transitional CSA’ was introduced. The ‘ideal CSA’ shares key features of sustainability. However, the current reality revealed some CSAs were not adhering to core elements of the ‘ideal CSA’ such as organic farming or risk sharing. This reveals something that can be a dilemma for the movement: the openness of the movement and diversity on the one hand side, and misalignments with core aspects described in the CSA definition and disagreement on these core elements within the movement on the other side. Besides, there is also evidence of consolidation of the concept by excluding certain models that are not considered to be CSA, as the case presented by Parot (2015). It can also be indicated that the discussion on core elements can have strong implications for the sustainability contributions of CSA. Based on the findings, also the complex challenge of balancing social, ecological and economic sustainability within CSA has become evident, considering the interdependence of these aspects. Bobulescu et al. (2018, 30) concludes that “CSAs future and especially their transformational power will depend on the CSA commitment to the original values.”

With increasing demand for more sustainable food, it became clear that the CSA movement could take advantage in positioning itself more in the mainstream of the food system. Currently, many models are growing to fill this gap which also raises the question on how the CSA movement wants to relate to them. There is evidence in the literature of other food movements (e.g. fair trade and organic production) losing its own essence due to the pressure from the main stream. This phenomenon raises some questions as to how and if the CSA movement wants to grow? What would be a distortion of the model? What kind of partnerships should be fostered? And how political should the movement be? These questions will be essential for the flourishing of the movement in the following years.

The comparative analysis on France and Sweden started with the question: why is the movement flourishing in France not in Sweden? The key contrastive features identified in the analysis gave clues on this question such as the gastronomic culture and the cultural importance of food in France. The conditioning of different cultural frameworks on CSA is also pointed
out in literature (Bobulescu et al. 2018, 5): “we cannot have a monolithic CSA model, but a patchwork of CSAs conditioned by different cultural frameworks.” However, from the discussion of CSA’s core elements, another question arose as to whether France represents a case of success. Although France presented a case of success in terms of growth, some CSAs revealed challenges to hold up to the values and principles of the movement which has implications for the definition of a flourishing movement.

Some decisive questions for the movement have been raised throughout this research: What would be a distortion of the model? Does the CSA movement want to grow? What kind of partnerships should be fostered? And how political should the movement be? To contemplate on these questions will be essential for the flourishing of the movement in the following years.
References


Appendix 1: Comparing some feature of “traditional” and “modern” food systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food System Feature</th>
<th>Traditional Food Systems</th>
<th>Modern Food Systems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal employment in food sector</td>
<td>In food production</td>
<td>In food processing packaging and retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply chain</td>
<td>Short, local</td>
<td>Long with many food miles and nodes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food production system</td>
<td>Diverse varied productivity</td>
<td>Few crops predominate; intensive; high inputs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical farm</td>
<td>Family-based, small to moderate</td>
<td>Industrial, large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical food consumed</td>
<td>Basic staples</td>
<td>Processed food with a brand name; more animal products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchased food bought from</td>
<td>Small, local shop or marker</td>
<td>Large supermarket chain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutritional concern</td>
<td>Under-nutrition</td>
<td>Chronic dietary diseases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main source of national food shocks</td>
<td>Poor rains; production shocks</td>
<td>Internation price and trade problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main source of household food shocks</td>
<td>Poor rains; production shocks</td>
<td>Income shocks leading to food poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major environmental concerns</td>
<td>Soil degradation, land clearing</td>
<td>Nutrient loading, chemical runoff, water demand, greenhouse gases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influential scale</td>
<td>Local to national</td>
<td>National to global</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: adapted from Maxwell and Slater (2003)
Appendix 2: European CSA Declaration

PREAMBLE

All over Europe, people are coming together to take control of our food systems, from production to distribution to consumption. We are building systems centered on our local communities. We are joining forces to achieve food sovereignty, by claiming our right to define our own food and agricultural systems.

The time is ripe to address the disastrous effects of the industrial food system. Food is too important to merely treat it as a commodity. The Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) movement generates practical, inclusive solutions to the food crises. We are many, varied and united. We are stepping up in solidarity—taking responsibility—to create socially inclusive, economically viable and environmentally sustainable food systems. Hundreds of thousands of people in Europe have already proven that CSA works, by creating a variety of practices, initiatives and networks based on common values.

Building upon the existing charters and experiences, this declaration aims to lay down the common ground for this CSA movement to flourish.

DEFINITION

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a direct partnership based on the human relationship between people and one or several producer(s), whereby the risks, responsibilities and rewards of farming are shared, through a longterm, binding agreement.

CSA GUIDING PRINCIPLES

CSA is not a static model. Like a garden it is dynamic: it evolves and grows through daily care. Each CSA partnership has autonomy. We also agree on these basic principles as our common ground to grow the CSA movement. • Responsible care for the soil, water, seeds and the other commons through the agroecological principles and practices as found in this declaration and the Nyeleni Declaration 2015 • Food as a common good not a commodity. • Human scale production rooted in local realities and knowledges. • Fair working conditions and decent income for all involved. • Respect for the environment and animal welfare.

• Fresh, local, seasonal, healthy and diverse food accessible to all. • Community building through direct and long term relationships with shared responsibility, risks and rewards. • Active participation based on trust, understanding, respect, transparency and cooperation. • Mutual support and solidarity beyond borders.

BUILD - DEVELOP – EMPOWER

We want to build a strong coalition of CSAs and CSA networks across Europe to: • Strengthen the CSA movement and help new CSAs to flourish. • Enable sharing of knowledge and skills between CSAs in different countries. • Conduct and promote participatory research on our farms and in our networks. • Empower and educate people to act for and develop the movement • Show the benefits of CSA for the whole of society. • Advocate for CSA communities at international, European and local level to implement our principles. • Engage
in local food governance. • Work together with the food sovereignty movement and strengthen our alliance with social and solidarity economy movements.

We are a grassroots movement: we believe that the power of CSA is in pragmatic, everyday action and face-to-face relationships. We are connecting with each other, with the producers in our communities, and with the living soil beneath our feet.

This is our Common Ground.

Adopted by 3rd European Meeting of CSA on 17th September in Ostrava, Czech Republic

(URGENCI n.d.)
### Appendix 3: The definition for success for the CSA movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A flourishing movement</th>
<th>What does a flourishing movement look like?</th>
<th>Reference (European CSA Declaration n.d.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A strong and flourishing movement, that is, a driving force towards an alternative food production system. The movement continues to grow new CSAs, collaborates with other movements towards food sovereignty, claiming the right to define its own food and agricultural system.</td>
<td>“The Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) movement generates practical, inclusive solutions to the food crises. We are many, varied and united. We are stepping up in solidarity—taking responsibility—to create socially inclusive, economically viable and environmentally sustainable food systems. Hundreds of thousands of people in Europe have already proven that CSA works, by creating a variety of practices, initiatives and networks based on common values.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is a driving force in the transition towards an alternative food production system</td>
<td>Is a strong movement, that continues to grow new CSAs.</td>
<td>“Strengthen the CSA movement and help new CSAs to flourish.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieve food sovereignty, claiming the right to define own food and agricultural system.</td>
<td>“We are joining forces to achieve food sovereignty, by claiming our right to define our own food and agricultural systems.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advocate for the movement collaborate with other movements.</td>
<td>“Advocating for the movement” “Work together with the food sovereignty movement and strengthen our alliance with social and solidarity economy movements.” “Advocate for CSA communities at international, European and local level to implement our principles.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lives up to its values, CSA principles, definition and the European CSA Declaration</td>
<td>Being able to follow the guiding principles and definition indicated in the CSA Declaration advocating for fresh and healthy food as a common good.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being able to follow the definition of CSA and the CSA principles indicated in the CSA Declaration</td>
<td>“Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a direct partnership based on the human relationship between people and one or several producer(s), whereby the risks, responsibilities and rewards of farming are shared, through a long-term, binding agreement.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foster human relationships and strong communities</td>
<td>“Solidarity—taking responsibility—to create socially inclusive, economically viable and environmentally sustainable food systems”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase accessibility to healthy food as a common good</td>
<td>“Fresh, local, seasonal, healthy and diverse food accessible to all.” “Food as a common good not a commodity.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consists of economically viable CSAs and a strong coalition of networks operating within the constraints of the eight Sustainability Principles</td>
<td>Economically viable and autonomous CSA partnerships and a strong coalition of networks by the sharing of knowledge and skills, innovation and development, education, research, engagement in local governance operating within the constraints of the Sustainability Principles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSAs operate within the constraints the Sustainability Principles and strive to eliminate the contribution to structural obstacles (Broman and Robert 2017). CSA’s are economically viable.</td>
<td>“We want to build a strong coalition of CSAs and CSA networks across Europe”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomous CSA partnerships that live up to the values of CSA.</td>
<td>“[…] to create socially inclusive, economically viable and environmentally sustainable food systems” (European CSA Declaration, n.d.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong coalition of networks engaging in local food governance, sharing of knowledge and skills, innovation and development, education, research, engagement in local governance.</td>
<td>“CSA is not a static model. Like a garden it is dynamic: it evolves and grows through daily care. Each CSA partnership has autonomy.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We want to build a strong coalition of CSAs and CSA networks across Europe. Enable sharing of knowledge and skills between CSAs in different countries. Conduct and promote participatory research on our farms and in our networks. Empower and educate people to act for and develop the movement. Show the benefits of CSA for the whole of society. Engage in local food governance.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Appendix 4: A description of each interview participant’s background**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Member of the Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Member of the Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Member of the Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Member of the Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Researcher and Member of the Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Researcher and Member of the Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Member of the Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Member of the Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Researcher and farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Farmer and member of the network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 5: Interview guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Main-questions</th>
<th>Sub-questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Phase 1**  | Warm up questions              | What is your involvement in the CSA, and why did you get involved?              | Tell me about the history of your CSA?  
What are the main principles you work with, either personal principles or principles from the CSA movement?  
What do the CSA Principles mean to you?  
Being involved in a CSA, did it increase your awareness of the current social and ecological challenges that we are facing? |
| **Phase 2**  | Current situation of the farm/country | How would you describe the current situation of your CSA?                      | How would you describe the social aspects of your CSA community (the relationships with partners, customers, local government...)?  
How would you describe the ecological impact of your CSA?  
What are the practices regarding ecological sustainability in your CSA?  
How is the CSA doing regarding its finances?  
Are there any obstacles for your CSA's to live up to its values/principles? |
| **Phase 3**  | Barriers and enablers for the CSA to flourish | What allows the CSA to flourish? What hinders the CSA to flourish?              | Barriers and enablers:  
How would you describe the social aspects of your CSA community (the relationships with partners, customers, local government...)?  
How would you describe the ecological impact of your CSA?  
What are the practices regarding ecological sustainability in your CSA?  
How is the CSA doing regarding its finances?  
Are there any obstacles for your CSA's to live up to its values/principles?  
Flourishing:  
Were there any factors that have contributed to a stronger CSA community (partners, customers, local government...)?  
Were there any factors that have contributed to your CSA towards more sustainable practices for the environment?  
Are there any factors that have contributed to your CSA being economically viable?  
What have been barriers and enablers to you to live up to your personal principles?  
Barriers:  
What challenges regarding the CSA operations do you face in the present?  
What do you foresee being a challenge in the future?  
Do you have a plan in approaching them?  
What advice would you give someone starting a CSA project as to the main barriers they should be aware of?  
From your experience, what have been the biggest barriers/challenges affecting your CSA in the past?  
Why do you think it is a barrier? And how have you dealt with these challenges?  
Enablers:  
Is there anything needs to be strengthened or what is missing so that the CSA can flourish/work well?  
Is there anything that enabled your CSA in the past to flourish/work well?  
What do you see as vital for a flourishing CSA, based on your experience?  
Have there been any important external factors (i.e. city council, bylaws, community support, other UA initiatives...) that contributed CSA's working well/flourishing?  
Opportunities:  
What do you see as opportunities for your CSA to flourish in the future?  
What resources does the CSA need to flourish? |
### Phase 4 (10 min.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers and enablers for the Movement to flourish</th>
<th>What allows the CSA movement to flourish?</th>
<th>What hinders the CSA movement to flourish?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How would you describe the social aspects of your CSA community (the relationships with partners, customers, local government...)?

How would you describe the ecological impact of your CSA?

What are the practices regarding ecological sustainability in your CSA?

How is the CSA doing regarding to its finances?

Are there any obstacles for your CSA’s to live up to its values/principles?

**Flourishing:**

Can you identify barriers and enablers for a flourishing/successful CSA movement in your country?

Can you identify factors that have strengthened the CSA movement in your country?

Can you name factors that have contributed to ecological sustainable practices of the CSA movement?

What factors have contributed to economic viability CSA movement in your country?

What helps the movement to live up to its (CSA) principles?

**Barriers**

Are there any challenges for the CSA movement that you see in the present?

Are there any issues that you foresee being a challenge in the future? Do you have ideas in approaching them?

From your experience, what have been the biggest barriers/challenges effecting the CSA movement in the past? Why?

**Enablers**

Is there anything that needs to be strengthened or that is missing so that the CSA movement can flourish/work well?

What do you see as vital for a flourishing CSA movement, based on your experience?

What enabled the CSA movement in the past to flourish?

Have there been any important external factors (i.e. city council, bylaws, community support, other UA initiatives...) that contributed to the success of the movement?

**Opportunities**

What do you see as opportunities for the CSA movement to flourish/be successful in the future?

What resources does the CSA movement need to flourish/be successful?

What did the movement do in the past that was successful/helped it to flourish?

What do you see as future possibilities for the movement?
# Appendix 6: Structural and operational challenges that CSAs face

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural and operational challenges encountered (data)</th>
<th>Related literature findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>workload and work-overload</strong></td>
<td>Risk of self-exploitation (Galt 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food diversity and increase in workload (Lutz and Schachinger 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>finances and risk sharing</strong></td>
<td>Inadequate wages (Tegtmeier and Duffy 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farmers uncomfortable with risk sharing (Galt 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dissatisfaction with financial compensation amongst farmers (Lass et al. 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Risk sharing not always applied (Bobulescu et al. 2018), regional and cultural implications for the concept of risk sharing (Bobulescu et al. 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>volunteering and participation</strong></td>
<td>different beliefs and practices in member volunteering (Feagan and Henderson 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Main motivation to participate is food not community (Pole and Gray 2013).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CSA core groups decline (Lass et al. 2003) and reluctance of members get or stay invested (Ostrom 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A diversity of how volunteering is executed (Bobulescu et al. 2018) and critique on volunteering (ibid.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 7: The findings on the alignments and misalignments with SPs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alignments</th>
<th>Related Literature</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>CSA declaration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SP1 (Substances extracted from the Earth’s crust)</strong></td>
<td>AFN can reduce transport (Lutz and Schachinger 2013)</td>
<td>Location as crucial factor</td>
<td>Agro-ecological principles and practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SP2 (Substances produced by society)</strong></td>
<td>Organic, agro-ecological production (European CSA Declaration)</td>
<td>Organic, agro-ecological production</td>
<td>Agro-ecological principles and practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SP3 (Physical degradation)</strong></td>
<td>Small-scale farming can foster sustainable production (Schnell 2007)</td>
<td>Small-scale (agro-ecological) enables sustainable production and fosters biodiversity</td>
<td>Agro-ecological principles and practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SP5 (Influence)</strong></td>
<td>CSA can enable influence the larger food or political system (Henderson 2000)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Financial support and policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SP6 (Competence)</strong></td>
<td>CSA’s can enable food education (Chen 2013) environmental education (Donahue 1994) and knowledge transfer (Bloesch-Strasser et al., 2011) and increased knowledge of food practices and local production systems (Torjesen et al. 2008)</td>
<td>CSA’s opportunity for food education, exchange of knowledge and information</td>
<td>Local realities and knowledges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SP7 (Impartiality)</strong></td>
<td>AFN can enable decent incomes and more economic resilience for small scale farming (Lutz and Schachinger 2013); AFN can reduce food waste (Lutz and Schachinger 2013)</td>
<td>CSA enables financial stability and security reduction of food waste</td>
<td>Socially inclusive fair working conditions and decent income food accessible to all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SP8 (Meaning-making)</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>regain power and control over their life and food production</td>
<td>Promote trust, understanding, respect, transparency, cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SP9 (Meaning-making)</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>CSA enables meaning making</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misalignments</td>
<td>Related Literature</td>
<td>Data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP1 (Substances extracted from the Earth's crust)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Rural location can increase the need for transportation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP2 (Substances produced by society)</td>
<td>Classification of different CSA practices (Bobulescu et al. 2018); Key contrastive features of CSA (Picardy 2001)</td>
<td>Use of pesticides</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP3 (Physical degradation)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Use of hybrids</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP4 (Health)</td>
<td>Higher workload compared to the delivery to wholesale traders (Lutz and Schachinger 2013) and risk of self-exploitation of farmers (Galt 2013)</td>
<td>High workload and pressure for farmers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP5 (Influence)</td>
<td>Community features of CSA implemented in different ways (Lass et al. 2003; Schnell 2007; Lang 2010; O’Hara and Stago 2002; Bobulescu et al. 2018; Feagan and Henderson 2009; DeLind 1999)</td>
<td>CSA’s ability to create relationships and a sense of community. Different interpretations of community features</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP6 (Competence)</td>
<td>Influence of multi-national cooperations (Shiva 2004) can create barriers for small-scale farming</td>
<td>Multi-national cooperations influencing and controlling the food market</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP7 (Impartiality)</td>
<td>Rural isolation of farm in case study (Feagan and Henderson 2009)</td>
<td>Isolation due to lack of infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP8 (Meaning-making)</td>
<td>Lack of local infrastructure for small-scale farms (Lutz and Schachinger 2013)</td>
<td>Structural obstacles for small scale farming such as challenges to find the right tools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP9 (Impartiality)</td>
<td>Need for fundamental structural change for stronger AFN’s (Lutz and Schachinger 2013)</td>
<td>Need for legislative change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP10 (Impartiality)</td>
<td>Little income for CSA farmers (Lass et al. 2003)</td>
<td>Little or no income</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP11 (Meaning-making)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>