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## Qualitative assessment of motivations, practices and organisational development of short food supply chains

G Vittersø, H Torjusen, K M Laitala, F Arfini, B Biasini, E Coppola, P Csillag, M Donati, Matthieu Duboys de Labarre, R Gentili, et al.

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## Strengthening European Food Chain Sustainability by Quality and Procurement Policy

### Deliverable: 7.1

### QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF MOTIVATIONS, PRACTICES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SHORT FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report focuses on the organisational development of Short Food Supply Chains (SFSC) in Europe. It aims at understanding the motivations, attitudes and practices for actors to participate in these alternative food networks as well as identifying the enabling and constraining factors for further development of SFSCs. It is the result of the collaborative work conducted within Task 7.1, within Work Package 7, of the Strength2Food project.

Short Food Supply Chains form an important part of rural development in Europe. They are connected to traditional ways of food provisioning and represent the future development of the “sharing economy” where more socially and locally embedded production and consumption practices evolve. Their growth and potential is often discussed in relation to new developments of social media and within information and communication technologies (ICT).

These historic and future trends form the backdrop of the research undertaken in this WP, involving 12 selected cases in six European countries: France, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland and the UK. Previous studies have pointed to several positive factors for producers, retailers and consumers from participating in SFSCs. From the producer perspective, the economic benefits from direct sales with price premiums on products are often highlighted, but also the greater autonomy and better utilization of the resources available on the farm. From producer/retailers’ point of view, strong motivations are related to the face-to-face interaction with consumers which add new dimensions to their work and development of products and the agricultural activity itself. The face-to-face relations are also viewed as the most important motivations seen from the consumers’ side. Especially the way in which SFSCs provide greater transparency regarding how the food is produced, increases consumers’ trust. The sociability aspects of farmers’ markets, speciality shops and other alternative food initiatives are also highly valued by consumers, retailers, market managers and producers alike.

This report aims at answering the following three research questions:

- What are the main motivations for participating in SFSC initiatives among producers, retailers/managers and consumers?
- What are the perceived drivers and barriers for the development of the studied SFSCs?
- What are important experiences that may be shared and transferred across different types of SFSCs?

## Sustainability dimensions

WP7 aims at evaluating SFSCs along economic, social and environmental sustainability dimensions. This includes both a qualitative assessment, which is carried out in this D7.1 report (Task 7.1), as well as a quantitative assessment on specific sustainability indicators (Task 7.2). Together these tasks will form the basis for carrying out pilot actions and demonstration activities in WP9 and providing policy and practitioner recommendations in WP10.

These tasks will be closely related when evaluating the role of SFSCs on sustainability along several dimensions:

- Economic – The two tasks will focus on the development of prices along the value chain, but also on economic strategies and evaluations among the supply chain actors. To what extent are SFSCs economically viable for producers and consumers alike? To what extent are market prices viewed as fair among producers and consumers? How do SFSCs contribute to economic local development?

- Social – We focus on the role of SFSCs for social and territorial cohesion by looking at how SFSCs are viewed in terms of their contribution to social capital and local community building, but also the potential for strengthening equality, education, knowledge and competencies among supply chain actors.
- Environmental – The role of SFSCs for mitigating climate change, with focus on transport distances and CO2 emissions, reducing resource over-use and waste along the supply chain, improving animal welfare standards and strengthening biodiversity among others.

### Definitions

SFSC is a multifaceted phenomenon that plays different roles in different parts of Europe and across different national and socio-cultural contexts. Thus, one main challenge was to define what is meant by SFSC and how to select cases for this study that covered our research needs. The official definition of SFSCs in the EU is '*a supply chain involving a limited number of economic operators, committed to cooperation, local economic development, and close geographical and social relations between producers, processors and consumers.*' (Augère-Granier, 2016). This is a broad definition that takes into consideration both 'social' proximity (number of actors) as well as geographical proximity (physical distance between producers and consumers). Other definitions delimit to only cover the social distance and include '*no more than one intermediary between farmer and consumer.*' (Augère-Granier, 2016). This definition, thus, involves only direct sales in a strict sense from producer to consumer such as for farm sales, farmers' markets, etc. Thus, leaving out other types of SFSCs such as specialty shops selling local products, box schemes etc. operating via one or few, but limited, intermediaries. For this study, we have chosen a broad definition considering social as well as geographical proximity.

### Case selection

Taking into consideration that this study involves six different countries we wanted to have a broad as possible selection of cases in order to be able to explore the great variations and differences in SFSCs that exists across these European countries. The cases were selected on the basis of assessing a wide range of initiatives, besides the geographical dimension, also covering dimensions such as:

- Direct sale vs. one (or two) intermediaries
- Older vs. newer initiatives
- Traditional vs. innovative initiatives
- Ordinary (fresh produce) vs. speciality (processed) products
- Agricultural products vs. freshwater / saltwater fish products

This mix of different cases seemed especially well positioned when identifying different challenges for SFSCs. The cases covered different types of initiatives including more traditional town- and farmers' markets, speciality shops (fish and cheese) and more innovative initiatives (consumer co-operatives, solidarity groups and box schemes). The report also contains experiences from the national network of Farmers' markets in Italy, Campagna Amica, run by Coldiretti, which is a stakeholder partner in Strength2Food.



### **Methodological and Theoretical framework**

A comprehensive theoretical and methodological framework was developed on the basis of Theory of Conventions (CT) and Social Practice Theory (SPT), which informed data collection via customer surveys as well as in-depth interviews with the main actors in SFSCs (producers /farmers/ fishers, market managers/retailers and consumers).

### **Typology of cases**

Based on the analysis of data collected from the customer surveys and in-depth interviews, a typology of cases was developed. This emphasises three types of justification worlds:

The ‘Domestic’ world represented by traditional SFSC markets and outlets that exist across Europe, in spite of the rapidly evolving supermarket expansion, with a wide range of food products. These markets cater for consumers who may have the habit of visiting local markets to get ordinary, local (traditional) products at affordable prices.

The ‘Civic and Green’ mode representing those SFSC initiatives which emphasise fair relations in the food system, meaning that the producers shall have a fair return on their sales, but in many cases also that the consumers are entitled to access good quality food at affordable prices. These initiatives often have a broad “alternative” agenda involving new forms of organising production and consumption (‘prosumption’) and aim for better justice in the food system (food sovereignty) as well as improved environmental and social sustainability.

The ‘Market’ world containing SFSCs which aim at creating added value from unique small scale, locally produced / processed (often hand crafted) food. The strategy consists of creating unique spaces to sell the produce, often in a touristic setting, such as speciality shops or farmers’ markets, which often attract consumers in the high-end market and/or highly educated.

### **Common challenges across types of SFSCs**

These three typologies were then used to discuss challenges for SFSC especially related to food distribution, food provision, trust and transparency, fair price, community building and transferability of experiences.

### **Food distribution and provision**

#### *Domestic*

- Strengths - Consumers visiting the SFSC as part of routinized practices. They have great knowledge of the products through familiarity with the place.
- Challenges - Strong competition with conventional retail chains on price and availability. Producers often lack knowledge and interest in marketing and use of ICT, social media, etc.

#### *Civic and Green*

- Strengths - Improved access to local and organic food products to affordable prices. Extended information and communication about the food distributed and the places (farms/fishers) it comes from.

- Challenges - Infrequent delivery and less convenient pick up places may lead to drop-out of members. Fixed boxes may seem challenging regarding volumes and content (unfamiliar products). One side effect may be increased waste.

#### *Market*

- Strengths - The experience value (sociability) and quality of products.
- Challenges - Viewed as expensive and exclusive.

### **Trust and transparency**

SFSCs in general are highly trusted by consumers and seen as alternatives to the impersonal and less transparent conventional/large retail chains. A wide range of different motivations all contributing to enhance transparency and trust are connected to the inspired, domestic, civic and even green modes of evaluations. These evaluations are found in opposition to industrial evaluations of efficiency and standardization that are perceived as less transparent and where the lack of trust often comes as a result of impersonal communication and a distant knowledge of the way food is produced.

However, SFSCs are not a homogeneous group of markets, but represent different types of communication between producers and consumers. They also play different roles for consumers in their daily food purchasing habits as well as in local community building. Thus, one general measure, such as a common labelling system for SFSCs to strengthen transparency and avoid fraud, will not be in compliance with the different needs and challenges that the local SFSCs face. In the domestic and civic/green cases in this study, a “generic” SFSC label may even be met with scepticism. While in the market mode, cases with a more distant relationship between producers and consumers, via a labelling system or a uniform set of communication and information, will be more important to enhance transparency and trust. These differences in the perceptions of trust reflect the diversity of SFSCs where some cases are strongly embedded in the local context, while in other cases the relation between consumer and producer is more loose and “distant”. Thus, measures for enhancing trust, such as for formal structures and guarantee systems will, to a greater extent, have to be developed in accordance with the local context.

### **Fair price**

The argument of fair price in SFSC is complicated and depends on the type of SFSC and whether one considers the producer or the consumer side.

- Domestic: Ordinary food products are seen in competition with supermarkets. Consumers are price conscious.
- Civic: Fair price is emphasised – often in favour of the producers, while consumers may contest market price levels.
- Market: Price premiums on products are enjoyed by farmers while exclude significant groups of consumers (e.g. in the low-end market).

### **Community building**

*Domestic.* Activities within domestic worlds of SFSCs are based on local traditions and knowledge is developed in line with familiarity with the place. SFSC activities, thus, contribute

to strengthening cultural heritage including small-scale farming, traditional food processing- and consumption practices.

*Civic and green.* Community building along several sustainable issues, such as through solidarity principles (fair relations) and strengthening the local “food sovereignty”. Community building also include local nature preservation and resource management.

*Market.* Indirect support for local community through the diversification of farm activities that may strengthen livelihood of individual farms. Successful markets may boost other local activities and businesses.

### **Transferability**

Different types of SFSCs may have different capabilities of transferring experiences across cases and national and cultural boundaries. In general, there are great variations in food cultures across Europe, with France, Italy and other southern European countries often recognised as the countries where traditional and cultural aspects of food, valorised via SFSCs, stand strongest. For the *domestic* types of SFSCs one common denominator is the role they play in *community building* for strengthening the local food identity and supporting the cultural heritage. However, building “local food identities” may not easily be transferred from one context to another.

New, *civic and green* SFSCs often rely on innovative practices concerning the co-operation between consumers and producers as well as more efficient organisational communication models in the distribution of food, involving the use of social media and smart phone applications. Technological and knowledge barriers may stand in the way for transferring experiences across Europe.

*Market.* Another challenge for further SFSC development is directly linked to organisational issues. Several barriers are mentioned regarding the disadvantages faced by producers, retailers and market managers when trying to develop their business or initiative. Strengthening the co-operation and organisation at the local level is a key element for further development of SFSCs. The development of the SFSC can be achieved via larger network organisations (such as the Italian farmers’ market organisation Campagna Amica).

This co-operation must involve not only the producers or private businesses/organisations themselves but must be seen as an overall task to co-ordinate the different structures that have direct impact on the local SFSC development. This is evident from the perceptions of the actors involved often pointing to difficulties such as heavy workload, low income and lack of capital, but also in many (albeit not all) cases suggesting the lack of support and co-operation from national and local authorities. Many express the view that regulations and requirements from authorities often levy the producer or retailer, while support is often hard to achieve.

### **Sustainable development**

As previously mentioned, WP7 of the Strength2Food project is concerned with assessing the sustainability of SFSCs along economic, social and environmental dimensions. This assessment is made via two interlinked tasks: qualitatively (Task 7.1) and quantitatively (Task 7.2). The strength of this assessment lies in the interconnectedness of these two approaches, so that the qualitative results from this Task 7.1 will be a valuable source for interpreting the quantitative findings from Task 7.2.

The economic sustainability of SFSC is, according to the producers interviewed for this report, valued as beneficial when taking into account price premiums and bargaining power (the autonomy in price setting). The value of fair price for producers is often shared among both producers and consumers, but not in all instances. In some cases consumers express that SFSCs are important to get high quality food at affordable prices, while in other instances high price may be a major barrier against consumers' participation in specific initiatives. In Task 7.2 these issues will be quantitatively assessed in terms of producer price differentials and value added across different chains, producers' own evaluation of bargaining power as well as local multiplier effects.

Regarding social sustainability several dimensions seem to contribute to strengthen SFSCs development such as the sociability of markets, closer connections between producers and consumers, enhanced co-operation among producers and strengthening local identity via the close tie between producers and consumers. An important success factor in some, but not all cases, is the wider co-operation with other sectors and, not least, support from local or national authorities. However, in many cases, the lack of local cohesion is seen as a major weakness and many call for a greater local engagement, especially from local authorities. In Task 7.2 the social dimension will be evaluated examining issues such as producers' relationship with other food chain actors, trust and pleasantness in specific market chains. Gender equality and educational attainment of the participating producers will also be measured.

Regarding environmental sustainability, the environmental efficiency regarding emissions and resource use in SFSCs remains an open question (Mundler and Laughrea, 2016). This may significantly differ between types of SFSCs. In this report we have seen that both domestic, civic and green types of SFSC may contribute significantly to the food basket of consumers. However, to what extent these forms of distribution are effective in the use of resources compared to conventional long chains remains an open question. In the cases where organic food products were distributed, the SFSCs were seen as important sale channel making these products more easily available and, besides apparent environmental benefits, these products were perceived as more healthy. Important arguments in favour of SFSCs include their reliance on less packaging, lower food waste and shorter transportation distances. These last elements are not measured here, but in Task 7.2 we will measure the food miles and carbon footprint associated with SFSC-distribution.

### **Potential for change**

Participation in SFSC often represents a reflexive choice by producers and consumers not solely aimed at the 'neutral' exchange of food products, but seen as an act encompassing a range of preferences and motivations. These motivations are often voiced as discontent with the present food system, but more positively they underline the positive aspects of SFSC participation such as increasing contact between local producers and consumers, supporting a more fair agricultural and food economy, securing a better management of, and access to, local resources, the provision of fresh and healthy local food etc. Findings in this report show that farmers and fishers often perceive a pressure on prices. They feel a heavy workload not least from managing several different tasks besides the primary work as farmer/fisher. In many cases, the farmers and fishers expressed frustration with government authorities, and were overwhelmed by the detailed requirements and the number of different types of regulations required for compliance. This complex, bureaucratic system contribute to the perception that rather than working with the farmers, fishers and other SFSC-supporting actors, the authorities work against them.

However, Marsden (2013) outlines possible development paths and among others “a new area” for food system development where SFSCs have a prominent place. It requires, thus, a new reflexive governance approach including a greater co-ordination of the different public bodies, and legislative and control measures are needed to better support SFSC development. This co-ordination is needed both on a governmental level and between the national and local level. It is required for a broader local, rural development strategy that aims at supporting measures for SFSC development encompassing the role of different actors.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

AFN	Alternative Food Network
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
DES	District of Solidarity Economy
EU	European Union
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
FM	Farmers' Market
GAS	Solidarity Purchasing Group
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
NFU	National Farmers' Union
PDO	Protected Designation of Origin
PGS	Participatory Guarantee System
SFSC	Short Food Supply Chain
S2F	Strength2Food
UK	United Kingdom
VAT	Value Added Tax
WP	Work Package



## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report is the first of two deliverables from WP7 of the Strength2Food (S2F) project, with the main aim to evaluate economic, social and environmental sustainability of Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs). This specific report (D7.1) provides a qualitative assessment of motivations, practices and organisational development of 12 SFSCs initiatives across six European countries (France, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland and the UK), and will be followed by a quantitative assessment of the economic, social and environmental impacts of SFSCs (D7.2). Together, these approaches will help in discussing the role of SFSCs in sustainable production, distribution and consumption of food. The work package aims at *identifying positive and negative impacts and factors that may deter or enhance sustainability in the food chain*. The results of WP7 will feed into the work of pilot implementation and demonstration activities in WP9 and policy and practitioner recommendations in WP10.

In line with the multi-actor approach of the S2F project, this task focuses on the motivations as well as perceived barriers and drivers for development of SFSCs of different actors along the food chain. The novelty of Task 7.1 lies in the combination of a theoretical and methodological approach to develop a typology of cases in order to systematically assess the motivations, practices and organisational development of the 12 SFSCs. This study is developed in close collaboration with other tasks, especially Tasks 7.2 and 8.2, with the aim of creating synergies beyond the results reported here:

Application of an extensive theoretical and methodological approach. Kneafsey et al. (2013) point out methodological difficulties when studying SFSCs on a European scale, including uncertainty as to how to assess impacts quantitatively, difficulties in comparing qualitative data in a meaningful manner, and challenges in comparing analyses from different geographical contexts. Following up these methodological challenges, we have adopted a comprehensive methodological and theoretical approach that aims at systematic analyses and discussions of SFSC development complementing previous research on SFSCs (e.g. Kneafsey et al., 2013; Eip-Agri, 2015; Galli and Brunori, 2013).

First, a *contextualist* case study approach (Mjøset 2008) was applied in order to explore the heterogeneity and complexity of SFSCs. The approach included a desk research mapping the social, political and cultural contexts of the studied SFSCs. The context description is valuable also taken into consideration the broad spectrum of types of SFSCs in this including marine and aquaculture products besides agricultural products. In addition, a comprehensive field work in each of the twelve studied cases were carried out that included a customer survey and in-depth interviews with producers, retailers, market managers and consumers. In all this gave a nuanced picture of the structures and mechanisms behind SFSC development.

Second, a conceptual framework, based on *Convention Theory* (Boltanski & Thevenot, 1999) has been applied both in the design of the empirical research and analyses of results. This framework formed the basis for the questionnaires and interview guides used in the field work and developed in co-operation with all participating partners.

Development of a typology of SFSCs. This overall approach has resulted in a typology of SFSCs termed domestic-, market-, green and civic worlds of food. This typology have helped us identify a number of commonalities among actors across the studied cases, but not least differences in the ways they are organized and how they are viewed by the actors involved in the SFSCs. This typology may function as a tool when discussing future possibilities and challenges and how to develop policies for support of SFSCs.

Synergies within S2F. This work has been developed in close cooperation with both Task 7.2 and Task 8.2 (WP8). The methodological approaches and fieldwork was developed in parallel in Tasks 7.1 and 7.2 with the aim of synergies both in the collection of data and in the later analyses. The results from 7.1 provide an analyses of the perceived drivers and barriers of SFSC development seen from an actor perspective (producers, retailers, consumers) that will complement the quantitative assessment of the economic, social and environmental sustainability of SFSCs in Task 7.2.

The theoretical and methodological approach was developed in close collaboration with Task 8.2 on the qualitative research of *European consumers' food practices linked to sustainable food chains and food quality schemes (Deliverable 8.2)*<sup>1</sup>. A common theoretical framework for collection and analyses of data across different tasks and field works was developed with the aim of synergies in the analyses of the different collected qualitative data materials and synthesis of final results.

This report is based on the results from 12 case studies carried out by researchers from the S2F partners in six European countries (see Table 1). In total, twelve individual case study reports were prepared by the case study conductors (two in each country). The selection of cases and development of questionnaires and interview guides were developed in cooperation with all partners in WP7, on the basis of which comprehensive fieldwork was carried out, including customer surveys and in-depth interviews with producers, retailers, market managers and consumers. The report also draws on experiences from the Italian Farmers' markets organisation, Campagna Amica, coordinated by the S2F stakeholder partner Coldiretti. In the present report, we refer to data from surveys conducted by Coldiretti in June 2017 among 2058 customers and 687 producers participating in Campagna Amica.

**Table 1 Partners in Task 7.1 and authors of case reports**

Country	Authors	Institution	Case reports
<b>France</b>	M. Duboys de Labarre, J-L. Lecoecur	Umr CESAER, AgroSup Dijon, Univ. Bourgogne Franche-Comté, France (INRA-D)	1. Dijon's central market 2. Hauterives' producers' market
<b>Hungary</b>	Á. Török, P. Csillag	Corvinus University of Budapest; ECO-SENSUS Research and Communication, Hungary (ECO-SEN)	1. Szekszárd Farmers' Market 2. Freshwater fish in Hungary
<b>Italy</b>	D. Menozzi, B. Biasini, M. C. Mancini, M. Donati, M. Veneziani, A. Lucini, F. Arfini	University of Parma, Italy (UNIPR)	1. Latteria Sociale Garfagnolo 2. "Kuminda" – network of solidarity purchasing groups
<b>Norway</b>	H. Torjusen, G. Vittersø, K. M. Laitala,	Consumption Research Norway, Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway (HiOA)	1. Consumer cooperative – "Vestfold Kooperativ" 2. Distribution of local fish in Vestfold County
<b>Poland</b>	E. Majewski, A. Malak-Rawlikowska, A. Maj	Warsaw University of Life Sciences, Poland (SGGW)	1. Local organic food market in Warsaw – "BioBazar" 2. Local food market in Płońsk
<b>UK</b>	B. Tocco, M. Gorton	Newcastle University, UK (UNEW)	1. Hexham Farmers' Market 2. Creel Fish Club – box scheme
<b>Italy</b>	R. Gentili, E. Coppola	Coldiretti, Italy	Campagna Amica – national SFSC network

<sup>1</sup> This project report can be viewed at: <https://www.strength2food.eu/2018/09/27/qualitative-research-findings-on-european-consumers-food-practices-linked-to-sustainable-food-chains-and-food-quality-schemes/>

In the following sections, we provide a brief background to the study before discussing how we have defined SFSCs. This is followed by a short review of previous literature on SFSCs. In Chapter 2, we present the theoretical and methodological approaches used in this study, including the selection of the case studies across countries. Chapter 3 provides a descriptive account of the customer base across different SFSCs, with Chapter 4 focussing on the motivations of consumers, producers and organisers/retailers for participation in specific initiatives. The possibilities (drivers) and challenges (barriers) for SFSC development, as mentioned by the interviewed actors, are presented in Chapter 5. The case study results are discussed in Chapter 6 in light of the developed typology of cases. The discussion focuses on four relevant themes: food distribution and provisioning, trust and transparency, fair pricing and community building. Finally, possibilities for transferring experiences across types of SFSC and European contexts are offered, followed by some concluding remarks, which point to possibilities for a reflexive governance approach to SFSC development.

## 2. METHODOLOGICAL AND ANALYTICAL APPROACH

SFSCs unfolds and develops unevenly and in various ways across Europe. This complexity is challenging for how to assess development and support for SFSC. First of all, how do we define SFSCs? They vary greatly in their proximity between production and consumption both in physical, geographical terms and in social, organisational terms. In some cases food is distributed directly from the local producers to consumers where they meet physically on the farm or on a local market. In other instances the distribution is more anonymous and the two actors do not physically meet, such as in internet sales or box schemes. However, these organisational factors may not be the most important differences of European SFSCs. More challenging, seen from a political governance perspective, may be the cultural and social differences in food distribution across Europe. In some countries direct sales are important sales channels and contribute significantly to the livelihood and income of small scale farmers, while in other countries direct sales almost have disappeared. However, direct sales is now “rediscovered” and supported as an extra opportunity and strategy for farmers to diversify their production and strengthen farm income. All these variations in political, cultural and social contexts affect the role individual SFSCs plays for development of individual farms, fishers and producers, for food provisioning of the individual consumer, for local and rural development and finally for development of the food system at large.

In sum, this imply that SFSCs must be understood within its local, cultural and political context. At the same time there are clearly common features driving different development paths within the food system, thoroughly discussed in the research literature (see e.g. Morgan et al., 2006). In a simplistic way it may be described by dividing the food system into a conventional food system where the food are distributed without considerations of the provenance of food. This is a “placeless” food system (Morgan et al., 2006), including global as well as national and even local supply chains, but where the processes of production, processing and distribution of food are highly specialized and where large volumes of so called “bulk” products anonymously are distributed through the value chain from producer to consumer. Alongside this dominant food system regime, SFSCs exists based on small scale production and multifunctional farming. Within these SFSCs the close social and cultural relations between the actors involved affect ways of valuating food production and consumption that have little room in conventional food supply chains. In other words different “logics” or conventions are at play in these different food systems.

This is of course a very broad and general description of the present food system, in reality actors involvement in food systems are complex and hybrid, meaning that farmers as well as consumers do not participate exclusively in one or the other food chain (Sonnino & Marsden, 2006). Marsden (2013) point to several global trends that he believe will have effect on future food system development, including small scale, alternative distribution modes or SFSCs. Not least the climate- and financial crisis have lead to that new, or recurring, issues are put on the political agenda including concerns for rising food prices with effects on food security. These vulnerabilities, as Marsden puts it, may open up for new development paths within the food system. Previously, ‘niche’ alternative food systems have been absorbed by the conventional food system and thus being marginalised in the food system at large (Marsden 2013: 128). However, in light of these emerging global crises he calls for a more reflexive governance approach, involving the small scale alternative niches and ask: “(...) *to what extent do we begin to see local and regional forms of reflexive governance emerging which can bolster a real paradigm shift towards agri-food sustainability and the ecological as opposed to the bio-economy (...)?*” (Marsden 2013: 132).

Thus, we want to see this study in the light of these global issues and their consequences for food system governance which potentially may opening up new development paths for SFSCs. With this as a point of departure we will investigate commonalities and differences between conventional food system and the SFSCs, between different types of SFSCs and between the actors (producers, retailers, managers and consumers) within SFSCs.

In this report we will investigate the following research questions:

- What are the main motivations for participating in SFSC-initiatives among producers, retailers/managers and consumers?

The assumption is, following the short introduction, that the actors' perceptions and motivations are marked by the different food system logics, where on the one hand some motivations and values are seen in opposition to the conventional food system while other motivations and values may be ascribed to the local context and organisational principles of the specific SFSC.

- What are the perceived drivers and barriers for the development of the studied SFSCs?

As for the participants motivations, we assume that the perceptions of the SFSC actors of drivers and barriers are marked by the relation to the dominant, conventional food regime as well as particular contextual and organisational factors adherent to the specific SFSC. Thus to analyse these perceptions and experiences of food system actors and to map both the general drivers and barriers as well as more specific aspects, a framework depicting different worlds of food – or food system conventions will be applied as discussed in the section 2.2.below. The applied methodological and theoretical framework function as a basis for the development of various classifications or typologies of SFSCs. Galli and Brunori (2013) underline that such classifications are useful for a more systematic exploration of SFSCs and for discussions on the development and implementation of the necessary support measures. This framework will also be used in discussion of the third research question:

- What are important experiences that may be shared and transferred between different types of SFSCs?

Central for this question is to what extent there are significant differences between different types of SFSCs that complicate a common understanding towards SFSC development and thus, the possibilities for transferring experiences across cases and different cultural and social contexts of Europe.

## **2.1 Short Food Supply Chains development**

### ***2.1.1 SFSC - Definitions***

Due to differences in governance, regulations, markets, history, ideological and political goals as well as geographical characteristics, a unique and universally agreed definition of SFSCs does not exist (Tregear, 2011; Kneafsey et al., 2013). Definitions and structures of SFSCs vary between national and regional contexts. In some places, SFSCs develop without any formal political organization, while in other places, such as for instance in France, direct selling is highly regulated, politically supported and with a formal definition.<sup>2</sup> Also the US government

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<sup>2</sup> For more info refer to the following report: [http://savoie.synagri.com/synagri/pj.nsf/TECHPJPARCLEF/07277/\\$File/rapport\\_du\\_gt\\_circuits\\_courts0409.pdf](http://savoie.synagri.com/synagri/pj.nsf/TECHPJPARCLEF/07277/$File/rapport_du_gt_circuits_courts0409.pdf)

has developed definitions for SFSCs, while in the UK rural and farmers' organizations have developed their own definitions of SFSCs that to a stronger or lesser degree focus on the number of intermediaries and/or the proximity of sales (local food) (Galli and Brunori, 2013).

On EU-level support for SFSCs has been integrated especially in the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and in Article 2 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 SFSCs are defined as: '*a supply chain involving a limited number of economic operators, committed to cooperation, local economic development, and close geographical and social relations between producers, processors and consumers*'. Following Augère-Granier (2016) this definition is complemented by Article 11 of European Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 807/2014 supplementing the Rural Development Regulation, which stipulates that '*Support for the establishment and development of short supply chains ... shall cover only supply chains involving no more than one intermediary between farmer and consumer.*'

This is a strict definition focusing on limited numbers of actors involved leaving out the question of physical and social/cultural proximity understood as the distance food travels from place of production to place of sale and consumption, and how direct sales are embedded in the local context of production and consumption.

Deliverable 3.1 from the S2F project discusses definitions of SFSCs in the literature and an operational definition is given as a basis for the research on SFSCs in WP7 (Galli and Brunori (2013); Kneafsey et al., 2013; Marsden et al., 2000; Ilbery and May, 2006):

- a) 'Face-to-face' systems: producers have direct contact with consumers without any intermediaries (e.g. on-farm direct sales, farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture)
- b) 'Proximate' systems: delivery occurs through one intermediary (e.g. box schemes, speciality shops, town or city markets etc.)
- c) 'Local' systems: often one intermediary (but no more than two) is involved in the transaction (e.g. processed fish sold from the processor to a local food store)

Beside the number of intermediaries, also the physical distance between the place of production and sale is usually included in these definitions of SFSCs. "*However, due to regional and cultural diversity of food systems there is no universal definition possible that would define the optimal physical distance of SFSCs*" (Galli and Brunori, 2013: 4). This definition, including both the number of intermediaries and the physical distance is, thus, wider than the EU-definition and covers a range of different types of SFSCs and the regional and cultural diversity of European food systems (see section 2.3 below).

### ***2.1.2 Challenges for SFSC development***

The United Nations (UN) has set out 17 sustainable development goals for meeting global challenges such as the climate crisis, population growth, poverty and hunger. The goals are interlinked and many of them concern development of the food system. Especially development goal number twelve about ensuring *sustainable consumption and production patterns* have great relevance for development of SFSCs stating that: "*There also needs to be significant focus on operating on supply chain, involving everyone from producer to final consumer. This includes educating consumers on sustainable consumption and lifestyles,*

*providing them with adequate information through standards and labels and engaging in sustainable public procurement, among others.”<sup>3</sup>*

WP7 aims at evaluating SFSCs along economic, social and environmental sustainability dimensions. This includes both a qualitative assessment as in this report as well as a quantitative assessment in Task 7.2 on specific sustainability indicators. These tasks will be closely related when evaluating the role of SFSCs on sustainability along several dimensions:

- **Economic sustainability:** The two tasks will focus on development of prices along the value chain, but also on economic strategies and evaluations among the supply chain actors. To what extent are SFSCs economically viable both for producers and consumers. To what extent are food prices viewed as fair among producers and consumers? But also how SFSC contribute to economic development locally.
- **Social sustainability:** Here we focus on the role of SFSCs for social and territorial cohesion by looking at how SFSCs are viewed as contributing to local community building, but also the potential for strengthening equality, education, knowledge and competencies among supply chain actors.
- **Environmental sustainability – the role of SFSCs for mitigating climate change,** with focus on transport distances and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, reducing resource use and waste along the supply chain, animal welfare and strengthening biodiversity among others.

Conventional production and distribution of food has for many years been contested along economic-, social and environmental sustainability dimensions (Marsden, 2013). Economically, in the form of asymmetries in the relations and bargaining power between producers, wholesalers and retailers. One particular issue raised is the role of asymmetric power relations and giving producers their fair share of the value creation in the food chain. Another issue is the social dis-embeddedness of production and consumption which results in a lack of transparency in the food chain that affects the trust of consumers in the present food system. Food scandals on national and European levels have contributed to this distrust. Environmentally, “long” conventional food chains have been criticized for increasing the food miles, e.g. the transportation distances of food, thus contributing both to increasing the carbon footprint and to reducing the quality of food.

In the wake of this contestation of conventional food systems, we have witnessed an increased interest in alternative distribution systems with special emphasis on more direct sales through shorter supply chains. In the EU on average, 15% of farms sell more than half of their production directly to consumers (Augère-Granier 2016). However, the role of SFSCs differs across European countries. In some countries, direct sales have almost completely disappeared with more than 90 percent of retail occurring in the large supermarket chains, while in other countries direct sales, traditional speciality shops and food markets have prevailed and account for a significant share of the market. Following Augère-Granier (2016), the share of farms involved in direct sales is nearly 25% in Greece, 19% in Slovakia and around 18% in Hungary, Romania and Estonia, while it is less than 5% in Malta, Austria and Spain.<sup>4</sup>

SFSCs have gained increasing political attention in view of the beneficial outcomes they are likely to provide for the economy, the environment and the society as a whole (EIP-AGRI, 2015; Galli and Brunori, 2013; Kneafsey et al., 2013). To what extent SFSCs contribute to sustainability is seen from the literature still an open question on many issues. Here we will

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-consumption-production/>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/586650/EPRS\\_BRI\(2016\)586650\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/586650/EPRS_BRI(2016)586650_EN.pdf)

briefly recollect some dimensions mentioned in the research literature, while a more comprehensive literature review is given in Deliverable 3.1 of the S2F project.

Especially the social dimensions are mentioned as positive associated with retained local control of the economic activity (endogenous development) based on cooperative, fair and ethical principles. SFSCs are often considered to increase transparency and trust and are characterised by the socially embedded relations between the different actors in SFSCs (Kneafsey et al. (2013)). Besides 'fair price' fairness also implies the recognition and appreciation of farmers' work (Galli and Brunori, 2013). Mutual trust and regard is essential in these types of relations (Kneafsey et al., 2013; Hinrichs, 2000; Kirwan, 2006; Sage, 2003; Tregear, 2011). The reconnection/new relationships between consumers and producers as well as consumer education (Torjusen et al., 2008) are all emphasised. However, the consumer perspective is often neglected in studies on SFSCs or alternative food networks, which generally tends to focus on the production/supply side (Tregear, 2011). Another critique is that most of the studies often emphasise the positive valuations from SFSCs participants, while having a blind spot for negative impacts (Hinrichs, 2000).

Regarding the economic dimension there is limited evidence on whether SFSCs increase or decrease farm incomes (Kneafsey et al. (2013)). Some studies suggest that the majority of farms participating in SFSCs are also parts of longer value chains or in some cases, the farmer depends on other sources of income outside the farm (Mundler and Laughrea, 2016).

Mundler and Laughrea (2016) emphasise the little agreement in the literature over the environmental impacts of SFSCs. The complexity in providing a real picture on the environmental dimension of SFSCs can be a consequence of the trade-offs among different priorities. For instance, packaging has a function to protect and preserve the perishable food products and thus avoid further food waste. Moreover, consumers' driving activity to and from the local retail outlet or pick-up point (box scheme) can be more "carbon intensive" compared to the ordinary shopping. In this respect, the organization of distribution within the SFSCs is thus critical for the environmental impact in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Mundler and Laughrea, 2016).

The report looks specifically at the actors' motivations for participating in different SFSCs, and regards the actors' motivations and perceptions as important factors for establishing and developing SFSCs. Previous studies and EU-projects have identified both benefits perceived by producers and consumers as well as organisational challenges and constraints for further development of SFSCs (Augère-Granier 2016; EIP-Agri, 2015; Galli and Brunori, 2013; IPES-Food, 2017; Karner and Dower 2010; Kneafsey et al., 2013) here listed in Table 2):



**Table 2 Supporting and constraining factors for development of SFSCs**

Enabling and driving factors	Constraining factors and barriers
<p>Consumers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased transparency</li> <li>- Enhanced food quality</li> <li>- Strengthened knowledge of food production and food quality</li> </ul> <p>All/General:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mutual trust loyalty and long term commitment (producer – consumer)</li> <li>- Sociability and experience value of direct sale</li> <li>- Fairer power relations in the food chain</li> <li>- Shared recognition of food quality</li> <li>- Strengthening local food culture and traditions through local engagement</li> </ul> <p>Producers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better control and fairer price to the producer</li> <li>- Autonomy in production and marketing decisions</li> <li>- Direct access to (local) markets</li> <li>- Low entry costs</li> <li>- Strengthening smallholders' and women's position in food production</li> <li>- Cooperation among a wider network of local and extra-local social actors</li> <li>- Flexibility / hybridity (they deliver both through short and conventional market channels)</li> </ul>	<p>Consumers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Higher prices for consumers</li> <li>- Limited availability for consumers (in terms of localization and opening hours)</li> </ul> <p>All/General:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dependence on a few actors and persons</li> <li>- Seasonal variations</li> </ul> <p>Producers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Long working hours</li> <li>- Limited income opportunities / limited size of markets</li> <li>- Distribution costs</li> <li>- Lack of knowledge (e.g. about food distribution, logistics, marketing and sale) (e.g. communication and use of Internet – effective logistics and distribution)</li> <li>- Lack of financial resources/capital (for investments in facilities and equipment for effective distribution)</li> <li>- Political regulations (not adapted to small scale production and distribution)</li> </ul>

Source: Own compilation based on EIP-Agri (2015), Galli and Brunori (2013), Karner and Dower (2010), Kneafsey et al. (2013).

Table 2 lists a number of factors that either act as drivers or barriers for SFSC development. Here we have grouped them according to the relevant actors: consumers, producers or all/general (producers, consumers, retailers/market managers etc.). In the report, we will discuss these issues especially in Chapter 4, 5 and 6. In Chapter 4 the motivational factors, in the table mostly presented as enabling and driving factors, will be systematically explored by use of the conventions theoretical framework elaborated in section 2.2. below. In Chapter 5 the actors' perceptions of drivers and barriers (as drawn from Table 4) will be further presented in more detail. Chapter 4 and 5 may seem a little overlapping; however, we believe it is worth presenting especially motivational factors in both chapters because they often are intertwined with how other factors are perceived by the SFSC actors. The factors that specifically stood out from the data material in the twelve cases were actors perception of meaningfulness of participating in SFSC (mainly as a driving force), possession or lack of special knowledge, material conditions often act as barriers (lacking infrastructure, necessary equipment and machinery etc.), governance and social organisation (including price issues, recruitment etc.).

In Chapter 6 we will discuss a typology of cases drawn from the empirical findings in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, that in the report has functioned as a tool when discussing the present and future challenges for SFSC development. In particular, we will here focus on challenges with distribution seen from the producer perspective as well as food provisioning seen from the consumer perspective. We find that here different types of SFSC face different challenges, and

may also represent different solutions. Then we are approaching the third research question outline above related to exchange of experiences, transferability and support for SFSCs across countries and types of SFSCs. In Table 2 political regulations are mentioned as barriers for SFSC development. This is mentioned in several publications exemplified with trading rules and taxes that may be disproportionately more costly for small-scale producers as well as challenges they face with complying to hygienic legislations etc. Augère-Granier, 2016; EIP-Agri, 2015; Galli and Brunori, 2013; Karner and Dower, 2010; Kneafsey et al., 2013). On the EU level support programmes for SFSC development are directed towards these barriers, especially support for physical investments, knowledge transfer and cooperation along the value chain (Augère-Garnier, 2016). However, it is argued that the dominant economical EU policy first and foremost has been beneficial to large scale producers with high productivity and which produce for distant markets (Karner and Dower, 2010). Thus, questions are raised, for instance from the international panel of experts on sustainable food systems (IPES-FOOD) as to: *‘whether existing policies are sufficient to support alternative food system initiatives, whether further policy tools are required, or even, whether more transformative structural changes are required for a sustainable food system transformation to occur’* (IPES-FOOD, 2017:7). In the final section of the report, we will discuss future developments of SFSCs in light of Marsdens (2013) concept of reflexive governance.

## 2.2 Research design

The core focus of the S2F project is on sustainability and how the Food Quality policy and schemes (FQS including SFSCs and Public Sector Food Procurement) may contribute to sustainable rural development. However, it is clear that the understanding of quality, sustainable food products and short food supply chains is shaped by the social context surrounding the production, distribution and consumption of food. Thus, a main theoretical issue is how different social contexts (such as the production and consumption of quality labelled products or direct sales of local and organic food) shape, or are shaped by, the actors’ (e.g., farmers, processors, distributor/retailers, consumers, regulators, public authorities) perceptions and actions.

In this report, we have applied a Theory of Conventions theoretical approach, highlighting how sets of social norms and conventions come to play within different worlds of production and consumption. This approach is specifically relevant for the study of SFSCs hypothesizing that certain motivations and social logics are prevailing/dominant within SFSCs and differ from the logics within ordinary food supply chains.

Within rural sociology the “Worlds of Production” model of Salais and Storper (1992) has been widely used to analyse how SFSCs develop in the “struggle” between different worlds of production and consumption. On the one hand, the model describes an Industrial World characterized by standardized production processes and distribution of generic products on a mass market. On the other hand, we find the Market World also marked by standardized production processes, but with specialized marketing techniques to reach different segments of consumers (“nichification”) (Morgan et al., 2006:22). Finally, we find the Interpersonal World, which complies with the notion of SFSC relying on close relations between producers and consumers (Morgan et al., 2006:22).<sup>5</sup> This Worlds of Production model is based on the Theory of Conventions approach originally developed by Boltanski and Thevenot (1999). In our research approach we have been inspired by the model of Boltanski and Thevenot (1999: 368)

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<sup>5</sup> The literature also mentions the World of Intellectual Resources marked by highly specialized production processes, for instance genetic modification (GMO), but with products sold on the mass market.

identifying common worlds of justifications and their modes of evaluations (worth), which in the table below are adapted to the context of SFSCs. (Forsell and Lankoski 2017. Ponte, 2016) (Table 3):

**Table 3 Worlds of justifications**

[JUST] Common worlds and modes of evaluations (worth)	
▪ Industrial	Product standard, efficiency, technology, professionalism
▪ Inspired	Creativity, aesthetic pleasures of food, emotions
▪ Domestic	Trust, family, tradition, relationships, small scale, care
▪ Civic	Fair price, collective, solidarity, justice, public health
▪ Market	Price premium, value, profit, product differentiation, quality
▪ Green	Less waste, organic, value of nature, animal welfare
▪ Opinion (fame)	Reputation, recognition, fame, brand

When adapted to a SFSC context, this framework differs from the World of Production model, identifying in all seven common worlds of justifications, and for instance with a stronger distinction between the Market and Industrial worlds. The Industrial world are here linked to efficiency and standardized products while the Market world are associated with product differentiation and high quality foods (Forsell and Lankoski, 2017). Thus, one central question is how these evaluations vary between cases and among the involved actors. To what extent do we find shared and common conventions of food among producers, retailers and consumers?

Some critics have pointed out that although the model is good at identifying quality conventions, it is less suitable to analyse how food products and food systems in general may develop and be transformed. For instance, what are the main drivers or barriers for change? We, thus, combine the Conventions Theory approach, as a main theoretical framework, with a social practice theoretical approach where we look upon what are important elements of the practices of producers and consumers that either constrain or enables their active participation in SFSCs? A social practice has been defined as: *“a routinized type of behaviour that consists of forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge”*. Reckwitz (2002: 249). This has later been developed to a model for understanding how social practices are established and may change focusing on three elements: Material, Knowledge and Meaning. A social practise is normally seen as a routinized type of behaviour but that may change when some of the elements are changed. Thus changes in either material conditions (e.g. technology) or knowledge and competences among actors involved may either strengthen or weaken the practice (Shove et al., 2012). Inspired by social practice theory we will in Chapter 6 discuss how SFSCs may develop dependent on changes in these three elements. We have modified the original model to include an economic element as central to understand SFSC development. In Table 4 we have listed some key factors found in the literature that we included in the field work and analyses of the empirical material (Augère-Granier 2016; Eip-Agri, 2015; Galli and Brunori, 2013; IPES-Food, 2017; Karner and Dower 2010; Kneafsey et al., 2013):

**Table 4 Drivers and barriers experienced by the involved actors**

[DRIVER] DRIVERS	
▪ D-Individual	Self-determination, competence, skills
▪ D-Economic	Price premium, market opportunities, diversification
▪ D-Material	IT-technology, equipment, facilities (storage)
▪ D-Governance	Bargaining power (price, contracts)
▪ D-Political	Support measures, subsidies, taxes, regulations, authorities
▪ D-Social	Networks, social media, family, friends, public opinion
▪ D-Other	
[BARRIER] BARRIERS	
▪ B-Individual	Self-determination, competence, skills
▪ B-Economic	Market constraints (price, quality, standards)
▪ B-Material	IT-technology, equipment, facilities (storage)
▪ B-Governance	Bargaining power (price, contracts)
▪ B-Political	Taxes, regulations, local authorities
▪ B-Social	Networks, social media, family, friends, public opinion
▪ B-Other	Time , workload

**2.2.1 Case methodology / qualitative research**

Case studies are often associated with a so-called contextualist research approach emphasising that researchers must ground their knowledge in sensitivity with the context of the cases to which they relate (Mjøset, 2009; Green et al., 2010). This means that observations and findings in the studied cases must be interpreted in relation to the social and/or physical context. Therefore, a comprehensive description of the context (national, regional and local) along several dimensions has been undertaken (see case study reports). The case study approach also implies a flexible research design, which provides a mixed method approach with the use of several methods for the collection of data. In this study, we have used desk research for gathering secondary data and information from official statistics, public reports and policy documents. In addition, we have performed a comprehensive field research in each case to collect primary data on actors’ perceptions and experiences through in-depth interviews with central actors (producers, retailers, and consumers) as well as customer surveys in each of the twelve studied cases.

**2.3 Case selection**

In the literature, a broad variety of initiatives, markets and ways of distribution are mentioned ranging from direct sales to consumers on the farm to farmers’ markets and speciality food shops as well as more innovative initiatives such as box schemes – and collaborative consumer/producer initiatives such as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and other types of cooperatives. To select cases that would represent all these different types of SFSCs was impossible in the framework of this research covering two cases in six European countries. However, on the other hand we wanted to have a broad as possible selection of cases in order to be able to explore the great variations and differences in SFSCs that exists across Europe. Amongst others, this approach was also chosen to fill a research gap, identified by Feldmann and Hamm (2015) who argued that to draw more meaningful conclusions future studies should address: (...) *the identification of further contextual factors (...). Moreover, further studies on local food including several products or product categories as well as studies across different*

*countries are recommended*” (Feldmann and Hamm, 2015: 159). They point to several contextual factors that may influence local food consumption such as different socio-cultural background and national framework conditions (economic background, degree of self-sufficiency, legislation, etc.).

Taken into consideration that this study involves six different countries and we are limited to study two cases per country, a representative selection of cases was naturally not the goal. However, we wanted to have a variation in the cases broad enough to explore if we could find some more general patterns or typologies. We thus, selected the cases according to the following dimensions in addition to the geographical dimension (6 countries):

- Direct sale vs. one (or two) intermediaries
- Older vs. newer
- Traditional vs. innovative
- Ordinary (fresh produce) vs. speciality (processed) products
- Agricultural products vs. freshwater and saltwater fish products

This mix of different cases seemed especially fruitful when creating the typologies as basis for discussing different challenges of SFSCs. Even though the cases covered different dimensions they at the same time reflected a similarity across cases, such as several cases that represented both traditional town- and farmers’ markets, as well as newer forms of farmers’ markets. Then the cases also included as speciality shops (fish and cheese) and more innovative initiatives (consumer co-operatives, solidarity groups and box schemes). This is of course not a complete list of possible types of SFSCs. We have for instance not specifically studied SFSC distribution through catering or public procurement of local food. However, this is studied in more depth in WP6 of strength to food: “Impact of Public Sector Food Procurement (PSFP).

Thus, acting upon this approach the following cases were selected for the study (Table 5):

**Table 5 List of cases**

Type of case	Name/specification	Types of products
FR - Central market	The central market in Dijon	Diverse
FR - Producers' market	Hauterives' organic producers' market	Diverse
HU - Farmers' market	Szekszárd farmers' market	Diverse
HU - Freshwater fish shop	Local distribution of fish in Tolna County (Szekszárd)	Freshwater fish: Carp
IT - Dairy cooperative	'Latteria Sociale Garfagnolo' – Appennino Tosco-Emiliano National Park	Cheese
IT - Solidarity Purchasing Group	'Kuminda' – network of solidarity purchasing groups (GAS) in the Parma Province	Vegetables
NO - Consumer cooperative	'Vestfold Kooperativ'	Organic vegetables, fruit, meat, dairy, bakery
NO - Fish shop	Local distribution of fish in Vestfold county	Seafood: fish and shellfish (shrimps)
PL - Farmers' market	Local food market in Płońsk	Diverse
PL - Organic market	Local organic food market in Warsaw – 'BioBazar'	Organic, diverse
UK - Fish box scheme	The 'Creel Fish Club'	Seafood: fish and shellfish
UK - Farmers' market	Hexham Farmers' Market	Diverse

Source: Own compilation based on Task 7.1 partners.

The next section will give a brief description of the selected cases and reasons for selection of the individual cases.

## 2.4 Short description of cases

### **French Central market: The central market in Dijon**

The French cases of two diverse types of market were chosen partly because there are relatively few French studies on this subject. These cases also make it possible to investigate a hybrid situation, where SFSC and longer chains coexist. This is also an issue, which is rarely described in the literature.

This traditional central market in Dijon (a medium-sized town with 150000 inhabitants) is about 150 years old, and has been selling local products way before it became fashionable in the early 2000s. The market has been restored several times, most recently in 1994. The market is

organised and managed by the Town Hall, with the aim of fostering the development of the town centre.<sup>6</sup>

Various food products are sold at the market, including vegetables and fruits, meat (processed and non-processed), dairy and fish, bread, and ‘ethnic’ stalls selling Arabic, Portuguese or Asian food. Some of the merchants in surrounding streets sell non-food products, such as kitchen tools, clothes and flowers. Many of the products are from SFSC, but not all.

Visits to the market depend a lot on the day: Tuesdays are far less dense than Fridays, and even more come on Saturdays.

### **French Producers’ market: Hauterives’ organic producers’ market**

This initiative is a producers’ market in a village of 2000 inhabitants, in a rural area. Unlike most French markets, it is not organised by the town hall. It is a private initiative, based in the courtyard of the initiator.

Hauterives village is located in the Drome, at the western edge of the Alps, in a hilly area. This sub-region is quite poor and the population density rather low. Agriculture represents an important part of the activity, and Drome has the largest number of farms in the region (6395 in 2010).

Six producers gather in the courtyard of the initiator every Saturday morning, selling their products from 9 to 12 a.m. It has no formal structure yet, but the producers are thinking about it. The idea of this market is to sell only organic food<sup>7</sup>, and (mostly) directly from producers to consumers. In terms of products, there is more or less one producer per type of product (dairy, vegetables, fruits, meat, and bread).

This case was selected to investigate a contrasting type of market from the Dijon market: this one is a private initiative in a rural area, very recent, small scale and dedicated to only direct sellers of organic products. As it is organic and local, it targets a specific part of the consumers (rather committed). This case also shows the importance of the market in terms of the web of relations in a rural area.

### **Hungarian Farmers’ market: Szekszárd farmers’ market**

The local farmers’ market in Szekszárd is a typical, frequented Hungarian small-town market with both local producers and non-local retailers. The town of Szekszárd is situated in Southern Hungary alongside the Danube, on the West coast. Szekszárd is the capital of Tolna County with about 33,000 inhabitants.

Farmers’ markets play an important role in Hungary; this is one of the most traditional and still most commonly used platforms where the supply of the (small-scale) producers directly meets the demand of the consumers. Markets are operated either by the municipalities or privately, about evenly distributed between the two, and they generally offer a wide selection of products, even the smallest ones.

The market is located in the heart of the town of Szekszárd in a semi-opened recently built roofed facility. The area of the market hall covers 1700 m<sup>2</sup>, offering stands for a dozen of small-

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<sup>6</sup> There is no policy favouring local or SFSC food in itself. The policy of the town hall favours quality products.

<sup>7</sup> We considered the “Nature and Progress” brand as organic, for commodity reasons, even if its specifications and mode of certification are a bit different.

scale producers selling their own products, as well as several shops. The market is operated by the local municipality, and is open six days a week (Monday to Saturday), with the main days on Wednesday and Saturday. Producers come to sell their products from about a maximum of 40-50 km range with an estimated average of 30 km. The Szekszárd farmers' market simultaneously bears the characteristics of a farmers' market (by the composition of the supply side) and a city market hall (by the new, semi-roofed facility and its operation).

There are 55 registered farmers, and an additional 65 grocers and suppliers (e.g. baker, butcher, sausage buffet, pasta maker, household accessories shop etc.). At the local farmers' market, almost all types and sort of agricultural produce are traded: fruit and vegetables, egg, dairy, processed meat, (freshwater) fish, mushroom, spices (e.g. ground paprika), honey, non-alcoholic beverages (juices, syrups), flowers etc. and also several complementary services are offered (e.g. sausage buffet, drink bar, retail shop form gardening, shop for household commodities, shoemaker etc.).

The Szekszárd farmers' market simultaneously bears the characteristics of a farmers market (by the composition of the supply side) and a city market hall (by the new, semi-roofed facility and its operation).

This case was selected to study a typical Hungarian small-town market with both local producers and non-local retailers.

Szekszárd is an interesting location also because it is the centre of a wine region, close to the Danube and therefore it possesses a diverse agricultural production system and it is interesting to examine how a local food system "beyond the wine" operates.

The importance of the local market as a distribution channel is indicated by the fact that the infrastructure of the Szekszárd farmers' market was modernized recently within the framework of an EU co-funded project.

### **Hungarian Freshwater fish: Local distribution of fish in Tolna County (Szekszárd)**

Tolna County is a traditional fish-eater region, whereas the general fish consumption in Hungary is low: With an average per capita consumption of about 4.5 kg/year, the level of fish consumption in Hungary is about a quarter of the EU-average. Domestic fish supply originates mainly from fish farms, and fresh (live) fish is available through fish shops.

There are large regional differences in fish consumption, the highest levels of consumption traditionally being found in Southern Hungary, alongside the rivers Danube and Tisza. The density of fish shops (number of shops per capita) is used as a proxy for the consumption of fresh fish in a particular region as regional data on fish consumption is lacking. In Szekszárd, the seat of Tolna County, there are four fish shops serving a population of 33 000 inhabitants (8 250 people per fish shop). In parts of Hungary with low consumption of fish, there may be as much as 50 000-70 000 inhabitants or even more being served by a single fish shop.

Since January 2016 fishery in natural waters is prohibited, and only fish from aquaculture can be sold. Sport fishing is one of the most popular hobbies in Hungary, with 440 000 registered anglers, and although their catch may be consumed, selling it is not allowed.

SFSCs consisting of fish farms and fish shops are regarded as important means of increasing the availability and consumption of fresh fish in Hungary, which is considered an important public health issue.



The SFSC studied consists of fish shops in Szekszárd and their suppliers of fresh fish (fish producers, aquaculture), as well as customers in the fish shops.

### **Italian Dairy cooperative: Latteria Sociale Garfagnolo – Appennino Tosco-Emiliano National Park**

This case is an example of a system of dairy farms organised in a dairy cooperative producing the Parmigiano Reggiano PDO cheese in a less favoured mountain area (within the Appennino Tosco-Emiliano National Park), selling part of the production through direct sales marketing channels (on-farm store).

The dairy cooperative ‘Latteria Sociale Garfagnolo’ was founded in 1947, when several small farmers (more than 50) were used to sell the milk milked by hand. ‘Latteria Sociale Garfagnolo’ is one of the first dairy cooperatives born in the Appennino Tosco-Emiliano mountains; the company boasts a great tradition.

The Parmigiano Reggiano PDO cheese produced by the ‘Latteria Sociale Garfagnolo’ is mainly sold to wholesalers (60%), while some 20-25% of the production is sold through the cooperative store. In this store, it is possible to buy the Parmigiano Reggiano PDO ‘Product of the Mountain’ in various seasonings and other dairy products such as butter and ricotta produced by the dairy cooperative and sold with the logo of the Appennino Tosco-Emiliano National Park. Moreover, other local products from the territory are sold in the shop, including organic wholemeal flour of autochthonous ancient wheat and maize stone-ground varieties, organic chestnut flour, meats produced with local pork, handmade cakes, organic honey, organic jams, traditional balsamic vinegar, etc.

This is an interesting example of a quality food system maintaining the agricultural production in a remote and less favoured area, using the direct sales through the on-farm cooperative shop as a tool enhancing the consumers’ awareness of the product quality features, and increasing the revenue opportunities of the farms.

### **Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group: Kuminda – network of solidarity purchasing groups (GAS<sup>8</sup>) in the Parma Province**

This case is a study of a network of solidarity purchasing groups (GAS) in the Parma Province, named ‘Kuminda’. ‘Kuminda’ is one of the 25 Italian Districts of Solidarity Economy (DES), aiming at enhancing local resources and producing wealth in conditions of justice and ecological and social sustainability, through the active participation of the citizens and producers involved. In this context, the GAS becomes a fundamental tool primarily dedicated to implementing food procurement from local supply chains.

The District of Solidarity Economy (DES) in the Parma territory originates from a vast network of associations that since 2003 has worked on critical consumption and the solidarity economy, and solidarity purchasing groups who decide to work together to enhance and promote solidarity-based practices based on trust and solidarity between the subjects of the community.

The core of this network is the solidarity purchasing groups (Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale – GAS), a network of consumers purchasing goods collectively. In general, a GAS is a kind of short supply chain involving a number of consumers or households cooperating to buy mostly food, and in minor part other commonly-used goods, directly from producers or cooperative

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<sup>8</sup> Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale (GAS)

retailers at a price that should be fair for both parties. The aim of a GAS is to shorten the chain, and having lower prices, higher quality, promotion of local products with respect for workers' rights, reducing the intermediation, reducing environmental impact and establishing a relationship of trust between producers and consumers.

Kuminda was initiated as a connection between 31 GAS located in the Parma Province and other cultural and voluntary associations of citizens, with the intention to coordinate and implement activities and projects taking steps towards a solidarity economy.

The case of 'Kuminda' has been selected because it represents a perfect example of local community supporting local production systems through short food supply chains.

### **Norwegian Consumer cooperative: Vestfold Kooperativ**

'Vestfold Kooperativ' is a consumer-initiated cooperation for local distribution of organic food established in 2015 in Vestfold County south of Oslo. The cooperative distributes organic and biodynamic vegetable-, meat-, grain- and dairy products directly from producer to consumer within the local area.

The cooperative is situated in a region which has – in a Norwegian context - favourable agricultural land, with a large share of vegetable production – a majority of which is distributed nationally. It is a paradox that in such an area, consumers experienced it as difficult to get access to locally-produced organic food. This is one of the reasons why this initiative was formed.

Vestfold Kooperativ is organised as a non-profit cooperative, run and owned by the members. By cutting intermediaries, the cooperative aims at providing a fair price for the farmers as well as lower costs for members. Another main aim is to lower the environmental impact by less transport, packaging and food waste.

Food is mainly sourced from diversified and small-sized local farms, some of which have facilities for processing, such as a flour mill, bakery, dairy, cheese production and meat processing. The exception is one of the supplying farms, which is a large-scale operation, delivering just a smaller proportion of its products (vegetables) to 'Vestfold Kooperativ'. Most of the farms have biodynamic certification.

The 'Vestfold Kooperativ' has around 150 members, and about 30 of these order frequently. Cooperativ members pre-order bags of vegetables, meat or dairy from the online portal of 'Vestfold Kooperativ', and pay online. Deliveries are made twice a month on Wednesdays between 4 and 5.30 PM to two pick-up places: one in the centre of Tønsberg town, and the other at the Steiner School in the vicinity of Tønsberg town.

This case was selected because it is an example of an innovative producer-consumer cooperation of local food distribution. Since the cooperative only includes organically produced food, it also provides an opportunity to study how consumers perceive and handle information about food production in the context of a short chain (e.g. the role of certifications/labels vs direct information about food products). In this case, the direct contact, which traditionally is characteristic of short chains, is combined with new communication platforms (to get information, order, as well as pay online). This is also an issue of interest in the study.

**Local distribution of Fish in Vestfold County, Norway**

This case investigates the local structures for the distribution of local seafood in Vestfold County. Local fishmongers and a handful of specialist fish shops provide local consumers and tourists with fresh shrimps, fish and other seafoods.

In Norway, local distribution of fish has decreased over the years due to structural changes in fishing and aquaculture, the fish processing industry as well as the retail system. The supply chains for fish are to an increasing extent globalised and also strongly centralised at the national level. In Norway, the distribution of fish happens mostly through the large food retail chains, while speciality fish shops have been disappearing. In Vestfold County, along the Skagerak coast, there exists a local fishery, mainly for shrimps but also other types of fish and seafood.

This case was chosen to study an example of the possibilities and challenges that exists for developing local distribution of fish in Norway.

**Polish Farmers' market: Local food market in Płońsk**

This case is a traditional farmers' market situated in the open-space square of the small city of Płońsk, typical of what can be found in many Polish towns and villages. The market has existed for more than 50 years. There is a long tradition of farmers' markets in Poland. Farmers' markets traditionally were and still are a significant source of fresh agricultural products for consumers.

The market is equipped with some basic facilities such as stand-tables and a fence, and it takes place twice a week, on Tuesdays and Fridays. At the market, consumers can buy a wide range of food products provided directly from farmers from the local area: fruits, vegetables, eggs, honey, but also meats. The offer of farmers is very season-dependent; therefore in the summer it is much richer than during the winter.

The farmers' market in Płońsk was selected as one of the Polish case studies due to its typical form, which combines a traditional place for buying food with supplies provided directly from farmers from the local area.

**Polish Organic market: Local organic food market in Warsaw – 'BioBazar'**

'BioBazar' is a local organic food market, started in 2010 by the company MyEcolife. Inspired by organic markets in other countries, they decided to create a similar place in Warsaw.

'BioBazar' is situated in the premises of the former "historic" factory Norblin (which formerly produced plated and metal parts), in Żelazna Street in Warsaw. In the post-industrial atmosphere, in buildings 100 years old, next to vintage machinery stalls, consumers can buy organic fruits, vegetables, dairy products, meats, cheeses, preserves, fish, cakes and pastries, juices, bakery products, delicatessens, oils and many more. Moreover, other organic products, such as cosmetics and cleaning products are also offered at the market. Consumers can have a cup of Fair Trade coffee, tea and participate in workshops of cooking.

This is a unique place for locals, suppliers of organic products and tourists.

The 'BioBazar' case was selected due to its originality, which combines in one pot: the traditional farmers' market with the conditions of large city, historic premises, and certified, high value-added organic production, which finds its specific customers, with different motivations and perceptions. All that creates a unique case, which is very interesting to explore.

**UK Fish box scheme: The Creel Fish Club**

The Creel Fish Club is a fish box scheme, which aims at promoting good quality, fresh, local, sustainable and seasonal seafood. This scheme was introduced in 2016 by the Northumberland Seafood Centre, located in Amble Harbour Village, on the North Sea coast of Northumberland, England. The Creel Fish Club aims to take the strain off overfished stocks, introduce customers to new types of fish and seafood and help support the inshore fishing fleet.

Based on local and seasonal availability, there is a huge variety of fresh fish and shellfish being caught and available via this box scheme, including: brill, brown coalfish/coley, conger eel, crab, cod, cuttle fish, dab, dover sole, grey mullet, gurnard, haddock, hake, halibut, herring, john dory, langoustines, lemon sole, ling, lobster, mackerel, monkfish, octopus, oysters, plaice, pollock, red mullet, red sea bream, sea bass, sea bream, sea trout, skate, squid, turbot, velvet crab, whiting, wild salmon, witch, wolf fish. Processed seafood, such as crab claws, dressed crab and kippers are also available.

The Creel Fish Club operates similarly to a vegetable box scheme, whereby consumers need to register their interest and commit to collect the fish box, on a set day, from one of the various local distribution points – at present, seven locations exist in the counties of Northumberland and Tyne and Wear. The consumer can choose the size of the fish box (small – 500 g, medium – 1 kg, large – 2 kg), its order frequency (weekly, fortnightly, monthly), while indicating specific features (whole fish vs filleted) and other preferences (e.g. specific dietary requirements, avoid shellfish, etc.).

An important feature of this initiative is that the fish box content remains a ‘surprise’ to be discovered by the consumer upon collection and, as for any vegetable box scheme, is largely dependent on seasonal and weather conditions.

The Creel Fish Club represents a good example of a short and local food supply chain whereby the local shop (e.g. the Northumberland Seafood Centre) acts as only intermediary between fishers and consumers. This initiative was selected as a case study for the UK for two main reasons:

- i. the complex dynamics in the fish supply chain;
- ii. the limited consumer knowledge on the variety and availability of local seafood, especially in the North-East.

Due to these local and context-specific factors, the initiative’s opportunity to add significant value in the drive towards sustainable local development seems remarkable – however, its rather small-scale operation and limited customer base pose questions on the success and long-term viability of this business model.

**UK Farmers’ market: Hexham Farmers’ Market**

Hexham Farmers’ Market is a long established market in the heart of the historic town of Hexham, Northumberland, in North-East England, UK. The market, which started in 1999, runs twice a month, on the second and fourth Saturday of each month, typically from 9 am until 1.30 pm.

Among the numerous farmers’ markets in the North East, Hexham stands out for its good reputation and its vibrant community, its great selection of local food, and the attractive setting, located in the square of one of the finest market towns in England, right beside Hexham Abbey.

In 2001, thus only a couple of years after its establishment, it was awarded the best farmers' market in England and Wales by the National Farmers' Union (NFU). More recently, in 2015, it was selected as regional representative in the 'best market' category for the BBC Food and Farming Awards.

On a typical market day, there are around 20 stalls on display, selling a wide range of local and 'distinguishable' produce, including: seasonal vegetables and fruit, rare breed meats and game (beef, lamb, pork, mutton, chicken, duck, guinea fowls, turkey, etc.), fresh and smoked fish, artisan bread, cakes, pies, scones and pasties, traditionally-made local cheeses (cow, sheep, goats), other dairy products such as curd cheese and yoghurt, various confectionary such as honey, jams, marmalades, chutneys, mustards and pickles, herbs and spices, locally brewed beers and ales, fruit juices and other drinks, and various ready-meals. Some non-food products also being sold include vegetable plants, natural skin care products, and some local crafts.

The majority of producers/traders attend the market regularly, some of them only once a month, and few of them are there only occasionally as 'guests', to test the market or replace existing traders who may not be able to attend on a particular date.

Hexham Farmers' Market represents a great example of a short and local food supply chain, and was selected as a case study for the UK for two key reasons:

- i. the close geographical and social connection between local producers and consumers;
- ii. the strong community element in support of the local economy. In this initiative, all the stallholders are local producers within a 50-mile radius (around 80.4 km) who are expected to grow / rear / produce the products they sell.

### **Italy, Coldiretti; Campagna Amica**

'Confederazione Nazionale Coldiretti' is the main farming organisation at the Italian and European levels. In 2008, Coldiretti promoted 'Campagna Amica', the foundation that links interests of producers and consumers.

To reach this goal, Coldiretti, through the foundation, created a national network of Short Food Supply Chains, made of farmer's markets, restaurants, farms, vegetable gardens, agri-tourisms and small shops recognised by the collective brand 'Campagna Amica' (that literally means Friend Countryside).

What make 'Campagna Amica' different from other experiences of short food supply chains is that in all the Italian territory, all the points of sales adherent to the network are managed through the same rules made mainly of dispositions of:

- The brand and the colours to be used (yellow)
- The Regulation about the use of the brand
- The behavioural rules
- The Code of Ethics on environmental issues
- The Control System

The network is now (2018) composed of 1041 Farmers' markets, 7357 farms, 2303 agriturismo, 188 food grocery shops (named Botteghe), 569 restaurants and 213 urban gardens.

Coldiretti acts as a guarantor of the origin of food products along all the chain, in the light of a re-generation of agriculture that produces food but also protects the environment and citizen's

wellbeing. Through Coldiretti, the Strength2Food project could benefit from insights from ‘Campagna Amica’, and compare experiences with those of the case studies in the project. In the present report we refer to data from surveys conducted by Coldiretti in June 2017 among 2058 customers and 687 producers participating in Campagna Amica.

## **2.5 Customer survey**

### ***2.5.1 Aim of survey***

There was a twofold aim of the customer survey:

To identify drivers, motivations and barriers among consumers for acquiring food through SFSCs, customers’ socio-economic background and motives were mapped. In addition, questions for gathering data on customers’ food mile/carbon footprint in relation to SFSC food purchases were included for further analyses of SFSC sustainability at the consumer level in Task 7.2. The questionnaire is given as an Appendix to this report.

Thus, besides socio-economic background questions the questionnaire consisted of:

- 1) Questions on shopping habits and motivations for buying from the studied SFSCs.
- 2) Questions to map customers travelling pattern in connection with buying food from the SFSC.

In Chapters 3 and 4 some of the results from the customer survey will be discussed against data from Campagna Amica from a survey dated June 2017 made on 2058 customers and 687 producers.

### ***2.5.2 Questionnaire***

The questionnaire includes background variables of the customers such as demographic (age, gender) and socioeconomic data (education, household size and income), as well as information about the customers’ motives for visiting the shop, how they get there, visiting frequencies, what they buy etc.

The questionnaire was first tested in a pilot study (see separate report). After minor adjustments, the survey was prepared in English and translated into the local languages by project members. The languages were French, Hungarian, Italian, Norwegian and Polish. In order to fit the questions to local context of each case, some minor adjustments were made, such as calling the case either market, shop or box scheme.

The gender of the respondent was recorded, but in some cases the answers were actually given by a couple who were buying food together. In these cases, the person that answered most of the questions was registered as informant.

The age was recorded as year of birth. In a few cases (e.g. the UK Farmers’ market), the respondents were not willing to give their exact age, and in these cases age categories were used instead.

The level of education was recorded in three categories with a fourth alternative as “other”;

1. Primary/Lower secondary
2. Upper secondary (including short-cycle tertiary education)
3. Tertiary
4. Other, please specify

As the education systems vary slightly between the participating countries, some additional explanations were given for the categories in the local languages.

The household size was recorded as number of adults and number of children below the age of 18 in the household. These answers were later recoded to different household types:

- Living alone
- Couple
- One parent with child/children
- Couple with child/children
- 3-5 adults
- Three or more adults and child/children

Income: Due to large variations in income levels in the six countries based on the distribution of income (monthly net household income) in each country, we constructed six categories (National statistics in each country). The surveys in Poland used seven income categories. Here, two of the highest income categories are combined to one, so that the average polish income of 1000 euros is in the middle category three.

The categories are not equal in absolute numbers (EURO), but reflect the income levels (low, medium, high) in each country (Table 6).

**Table 6 Income categories used in the six countries (converted to euros)**

Country	Cat. 1	Cat. 2	Cat. 3	Cat. 4	Cat. 5	Cat. 6
FR	<1131	1131-1450	1451-2090	2091-2890	2891-4100	>4100
HU	<480	481-657	658-754	755-1219	1220-2680	>2681
IT	<900	900-1499	1500-2499	2500-3499	3500-4499	>4500
NO	<2060	2060-3089	3090-4119	4120-5664	5665-7209	>7210
PL	<450	450-800	800-1300	1300-1800	1800-2300	>2300
UK <sup>9</sup>	<1129	1130-1806	1807-2483	2484-3387	3388-5645	>5646

The customers' shopping habits were surveyed through four questions:

How did you first learn about this outlet/shop/market? (You can choose more than one).

- Media (Newspaper, radio, TV) (1)
- Family, friends, colleagues (2)
- Flyers, posters etc. (3)
- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.) (4)
- By chance / passing by (5)
- Other (6) \_\_\_\_\_

Since when have you been shopping here? \_\_\_\_ (Year)

<sup>9</sup> Exchange rates in EURO reported as per May 2018: a) < €1138; b) €1138 - €1820; c) €1821 - €2525; d) €2526 - €3413; e) €3414 - €5689; f) > €5689.

How often do you shop here? Please select appropriate (A, B or C) and indicate number of visits on average, or if your first visit, select D.

- A. Times a week (1) \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Times a month (2) \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Times a year (3) \_\_\_\_\_
- D. First time (4)

What was your main type of transportation to get here today?

- Car (1)
- On foot/bicycle (2)
- Bus/train/tram (3)
- Taxi (4)
- Other (5)

The consumers motivations for shopping at the specific cases were surveyed through two sets of opinion questions.

Compare shopping here with buying food from a typical grocery store. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (from 1 “I completely disagree” to 5 “I fully agree”). Compared to a typical grocery store:

- I get products which are more fresh (1)
- I get products which are more healthy (good for my health) (2)
- The selection of products that I look for is not as good here as in a typical grocery store (3)
- I get more value for money here (4)
- I find it more environmentally friendly to shop here (5)
- I find it more pleasant to shop here (6)
- I get more information about the food products here (7)
- I get unique food products here that I cannot buy in a typical grocery store (8)
- I only do some supplementary shopping here (compared) to what I buy in a typical grocery store (9)

What are the most important reasons why you shop here? To what extent do you agree with the following statements (from 1 “I completely disagree” to 5 “I fully agree”) I shop here because...

- It is convenient for me (1)
- This business is innovative and creative (2)
- I trust this outlet/shop (3)
- I wish to support environmentally friendly food production (4)
- This outlet/shop has a good reputation (5)
- I wish to support local producers (e.g. farmers / fishers) (6)
- It offers high quality products (7)
- It is less expensive for me (8)
- I get traditional food here (9)



### 2.5.3 Data collection

The customers were interviewed by project members at the different case locations. The software Qualtrics was used for data collection and computation of results. For simplicity, most interviewers chose to use paper questionnaires that were punched into Qualtrics afterwards. However, there were some local adjustments. The Polish Biobazar case was started earlier than the other cases, and the researchers used different software for recording the results. In the UK, it was not easy to get hold of customers, so additional answers were collected via social media, i.e. by posting the online version of the survey via the Facebook and Twitter accounts of the initiatives, with additional media coverage in the local newspaper for the fish box scheme. In total, 596 respondents answered the survey (Table 7). Not all have answered all questions. The aim was to survey between (at least) 30 – 60 respondents in each of the cases, dependent on the customer base and accessibility of customers in different cases. Some of the cases such as the UK fish box scheme and Norwegian consumer co-operative have rather small number of subscribing members, and some of the markets have also infrequent opening hours and great variations in customer base.

**Table 7 Number of customers surveyed in each case study**

SFSC initiative	Number of respondents
FR - Central market	61
FR - Producers' market	34
HU - Farmers' market	60
HU - Freshwater fish shop	61
IT - Dairy cooperative	62
IT - Solidarity Purchasing Group	73
NO - Consumer cooperative	28
NO - Fish shop	65
PL - Farmers' market	48
PL - Organic market	40
UK - Fish box scheme	19 <sup>10</sup>
UK - Farmers' market	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>596</b>

## 2.6 In-depth interviews

### 2.6.1. Interview guides

The aim of the in-depth interviews was to explore different patterns of understandings and practices among the involved actors connected to their participation in SFSC. Semi-structured interview guides were developed to provide data for identifying the characteristics, motivations,

<sup>10</sup> This relatively low number reflects the small size of the customer base – on average, on a weekly basis, around 13-20 fish boxes are typically delivered.

perceptions and practices of actors as well as drivers and barriers for the development of the studied SFSCs. The guides were adapted to the different types of actor interviewed.

### ***2.6.2 Selection of interviewees***

We recruited participants using a purposive sampling technique where the respondents were selected based on their roles as either producers (farmers/fishers), retailers (store managers, managers of markets, subscription schemes, co-operatives etc.) or consumers (customers on markets, subscribers to box schemes, members of consumer co-operatives etc.). Where appropriate other relevant respondents were also included such as employees at food stores, market stalls, subscription schemes or volunteers in co-operatives with first-hand knowledge of the SFSC.

To secure a uniform collection of data across partners and cases, common guidelines were developed on how to recruit respondents and carry out surveys and interviews. The field work was mainly carried out from June 2017 to January 2018. The partners were encouraged to recruit 4 producers and 4 consumers for in-depth interviews as well as interviews with central actors such as retailers or market managers in each case. All interviewees were given written information about the project and a short introduction about the aim of the interview. Written consent forms were handed out for signature by the respondents.

### ***2.6.3 Analyses***

Most of the interviews were transcribed and then analysed by the partners. To secure conformity among partners, the analyses were carried out with the help of a common codebook identical to previously outlined Table 3 (*Worlds of justifications*) and Table 4 (*Drivers and Barriers*). This has helped in systematizing and categorizing findings across cases.

3. CHARACTERISATION OF CUSTOMERS AND PRACTICES

A selection of customers from each of the 12 SFSC case studies answered a survey questionnaire. This section presents who the typical customers were, what were their purchasing habits, and motivations for buying food at the various outlets. In section 3.2 about consumer practices, the results from the customer survey will be presented together with findings from the in-depth interviews with consumers. Where appropriate, results from the customer survey will be discussed against findings from a previous survey of customers at the Italian Campagna Amica farmers' markets.

3.1 Who are the customers? Socio-demographic characteristics across case studies

In this section, we present the demographics of the SFSC customers for each of the selected cases.

Most of the cases have a larger share of female customers, except for the Hungarian Fish shop and the Italian Dairy cooperative (Figure 1). However, in some cases it was common that couples were buying food together, such as in the French Central market in Dijon, as well as the Norwegian is Fish shop and the UK Farmers' market. In these cases, the person that answered most of the questions (female) was registered as informant. Therefore, the gender distribution is not quite as uneven as the statistics indicate.

These findings are in line with results from the Italian survey among customers at the "Campagna Amica" farmers' markets, where 59% were female. In general, women more often than men have the responsibility for the daily food acquisition.

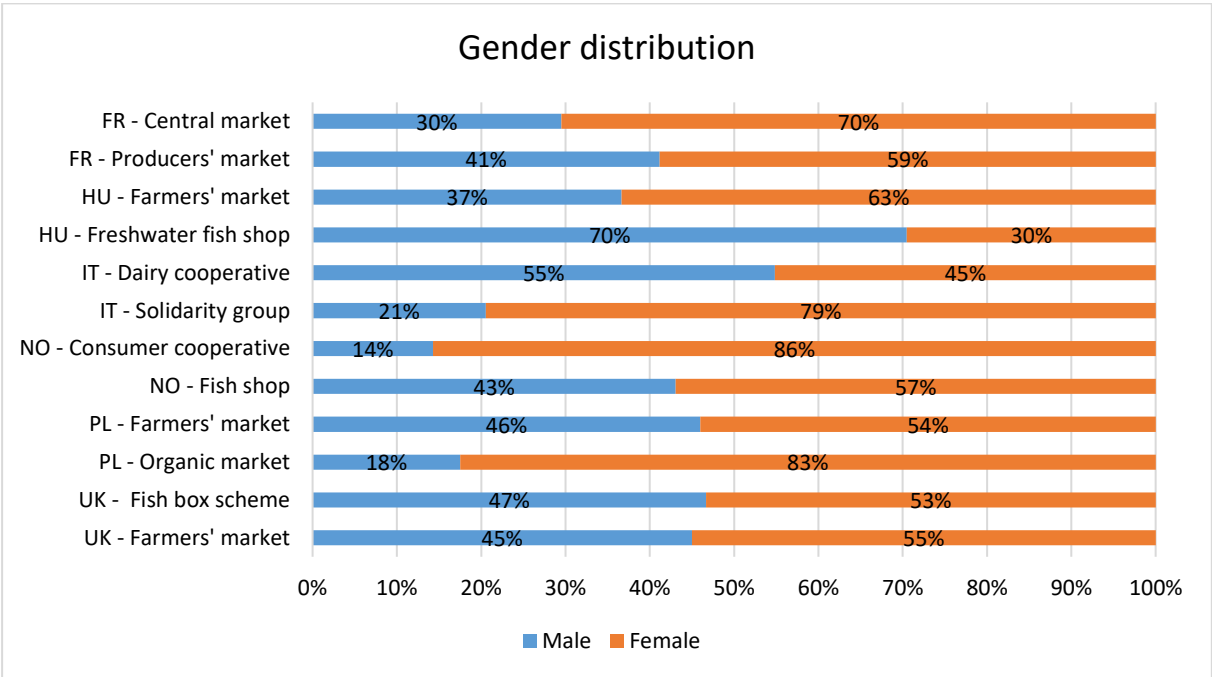
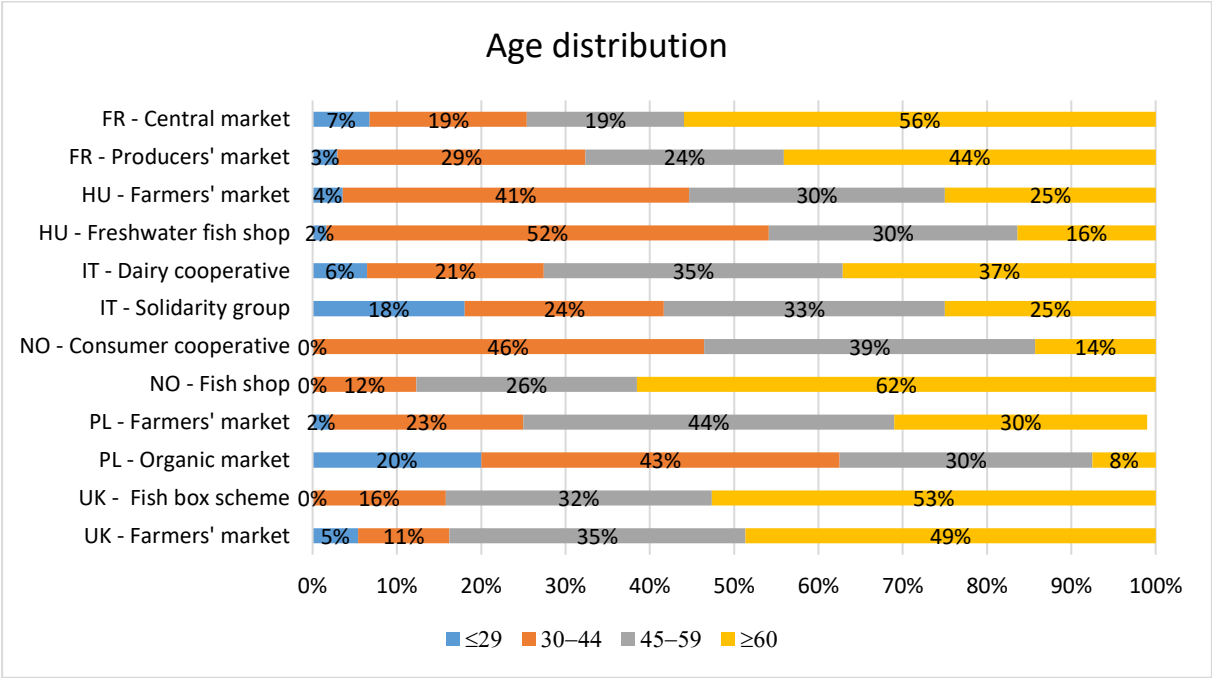


Figure 1 Gender distribution of interviewed customers

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

The average age of the customers was about 52 years<sup>11</sup>. This is in line with the “Campagna Amica” survey, where the highest percentage of respondents (23%) were in the age group 45-54 years. The age distribution of the customers varied greatly across the cases, but the average age of these customers was higher than the average age of the national population (Figure 2). Especially, two of the outlets selling fish were dominated by elderly respondents, such as the Norwegian Fish shop and the UK fish box scheme. Also in the traditional Central Market in Dijon more than 50 % were in the highest age category. The new initiatives had larger shares of younger customers, especially the Polish organic market and the Italian solidarity purchasing group.



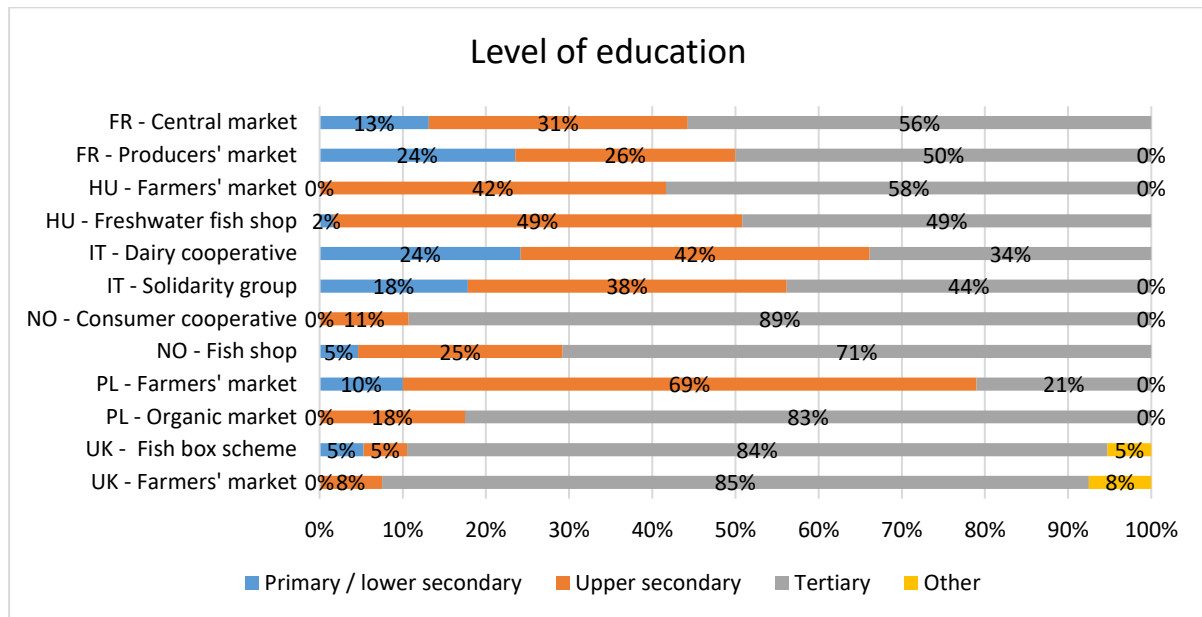
**Figure 2 Age distribution of interviewed customers**

Notes: missing answers have been excluded.

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

The customers had a higher educational level than the average level for the respective countries, especially in the UK, Norway and Poland (Figure 3). In the “Campagna Amica” survey, customers likewise had a higher level of education than the national average. This segment of consumers was in general more inclined to make sustainable purchases and be aware of various types of ‘added value’ in food purchases.

<sup>11</sup> The figure is partly based on an estimation, because a few customers did not wish to report their exact age and were recorded to belong to an estimated age group. Each case was weighted equally, so that the uneven number of respondents per case does not effect this.

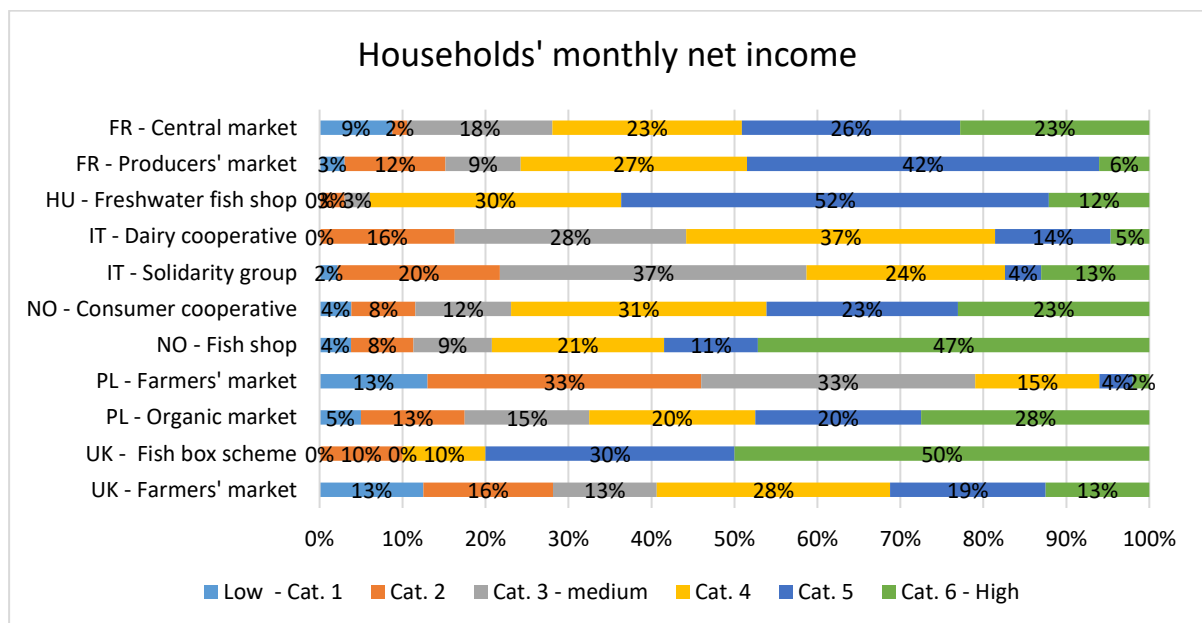


**Figure 3 What was your highest level of education completed?<sup>12</sup>**

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

The customers were asked about their household’s monthly net income. Six income levels were identified in each country, based on the distribution of national income levels of the population. The polish surveys were an exception, as they had seven income categories. Two of the highest categories are combined here to be able to compare the results together with the other cases.

Most of the customers had higher than average income (Figure 4). The highest income groups were particularly overrepresented in the case of customers of the fish shop in Norway and the box scheme in the UK.



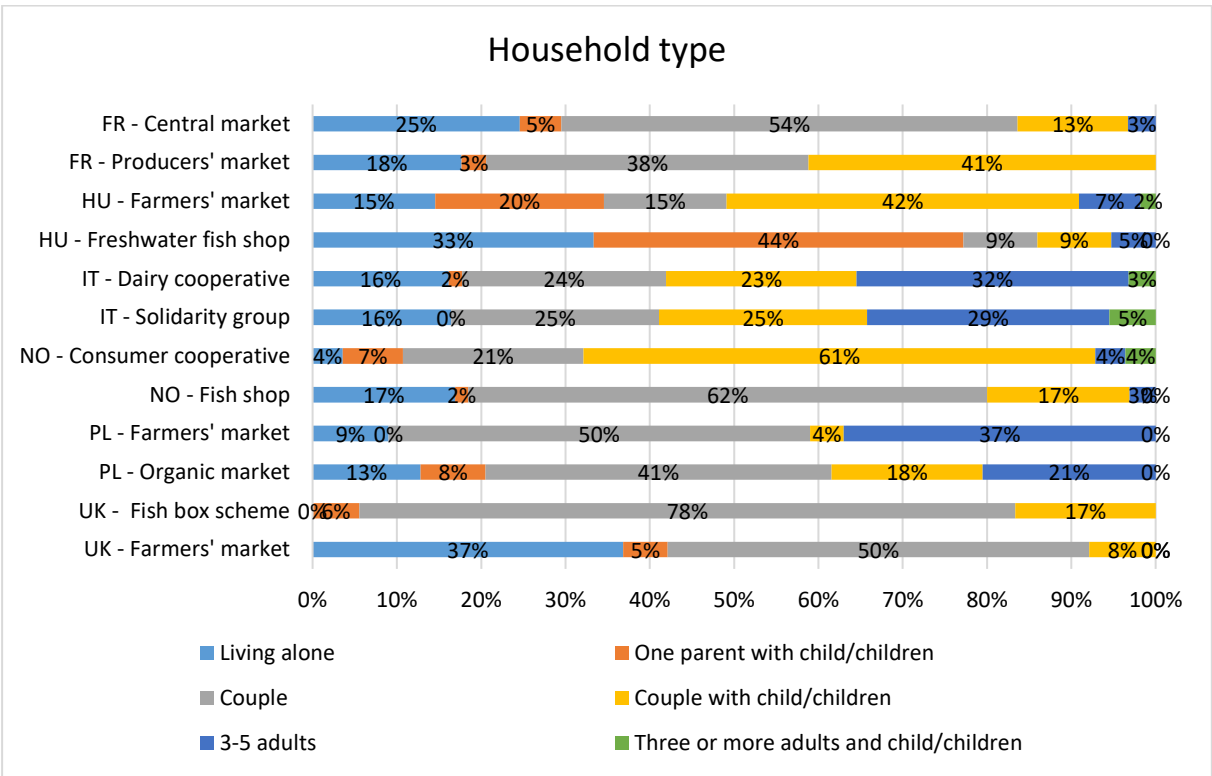
<sup>12</sup> The category “upper secondary education” includes short-cycle tertiary education.

**Figure 4 What is your household’s monthly net income?<sup>13</sup>**

Notes: Net income = gross income minus taxes. Missing values have been excluded from the percentages.

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

The customers were asked about the type of household they live in, meaning the number of adults 18 years or more and number of children under 18 years. From this, we created six different household types (Figure 5). The figure shows a great variation in types of households across cases. In the French Central market, the Norwegian Fish shop, the UK Box scheme and the UK Farmers’ market more than 50 percent belong to households with couples or are living alone. The average age of the respondents in these cases was also fairly high (see Figure 2). In some of the cases such as the Norwegian Consumer cooperative, and Hungarian Farmers’ market families with children where dominant.



**Figure 5 Household types divided by adults and children below eighteen years**

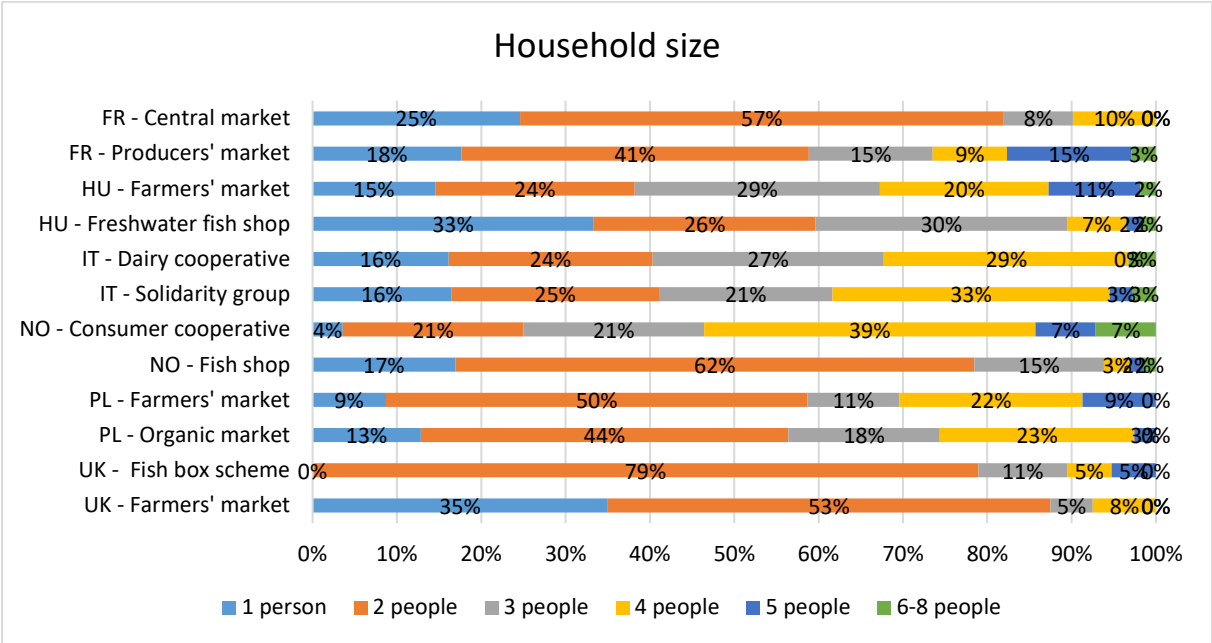
Notes: Missing values and ‘other’ answers have been excluded.

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

We also registered the number of persons per household and, as depicted in Figure 6, households with one or two persons were common in most of the cases. However, some are

<sup>13</sup> The Hungarian Farmers’ market case is left out due to low response rate to this question (only 12% answered, i.e. 7 customers) that is not likely to be representative for the case.

more characterised by larger households, presumably families with children (e.g. Norwegian Consumer cooperative, Hungarian Farmers’ market).



**Figure 6 Household size**

Notes: Missing answers have been excluded.

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

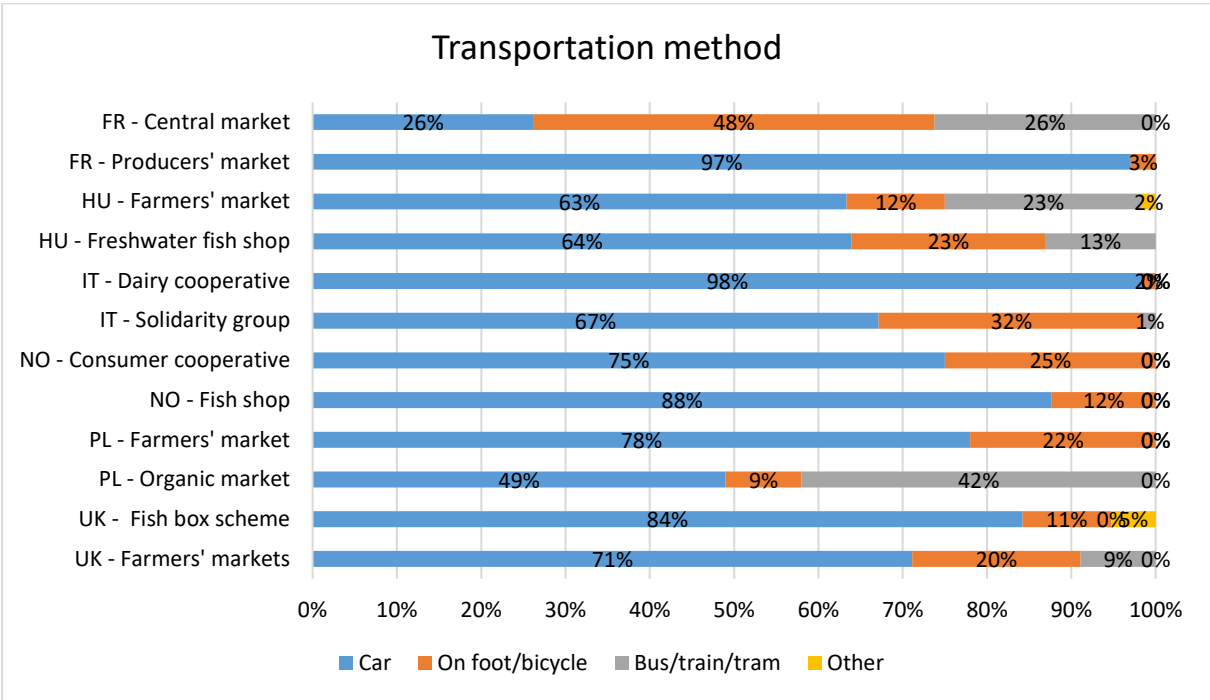
**3.2 Practices related to the SFSCs**

In this section, practices related to the purchasing of food will be described, including transport, shopping frequency, how customers first learned about this SFSC, and for how long they have been buying food through the studied SFSCs.

**3.2.1 Purchase habits and recruitment to the SFSC**

*Ways of transport to the SFSC*

The most common way of transportation to the outlets was driving a car, except for the central market in Dijon, France, which is easily accessed on foot/by bicycle (Figure 7).



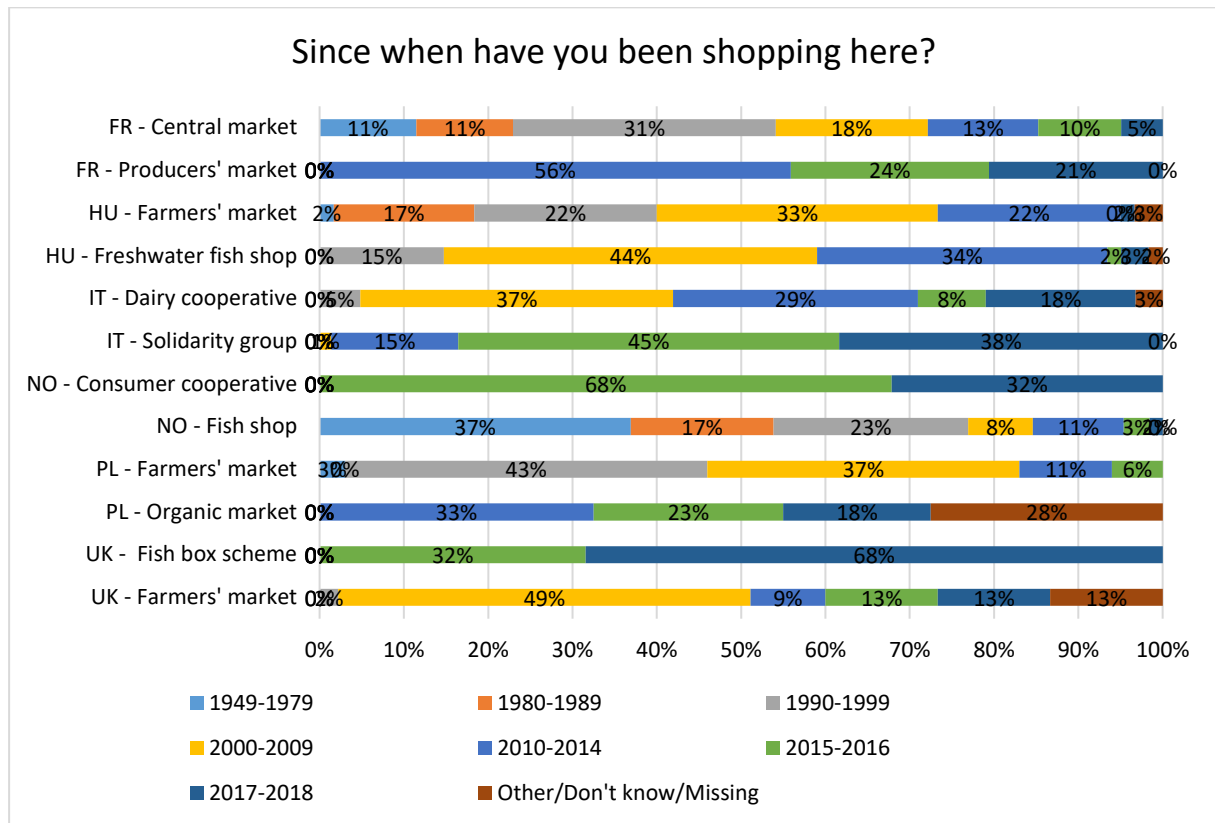
**Figure 7 What was your main type of transportation to get here today?**

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

*Establishing the relationship with the customers*

There are large variations across cases with respect to their years of operation. The newest cases have only been operating for a few years, such as the Fish box scheme in the UK and the Consumer cooperative in Norway. Others have existed for decades, such as the Norwegian fish shop where 37% of customers interviewed had visited for the first time before 1979 (see Figure 8). These differences were naturally reflected in the answers to the surveys.





**Figure 8** Since when have you been shopping here?

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

With regard to how customers first learned about the SFSC, recruitment through already existing networks was prominent in several of the cases. Friends and colleagues already involved in the network were an important source of knowledge about the SFSC (refer to Figure 9).

*‘I knew the president of INTERGAS and the coordinator of new members of my current GAS who suggested me to join the network.’* (Consumer 4, Italian Solidarity purchasing group)

*‘The most important reason why I participate is that I know so many of those who are involved and organize it, and that it takes place here. Because it is a kind of ‘local community-thing’.’* (Consumer 3, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

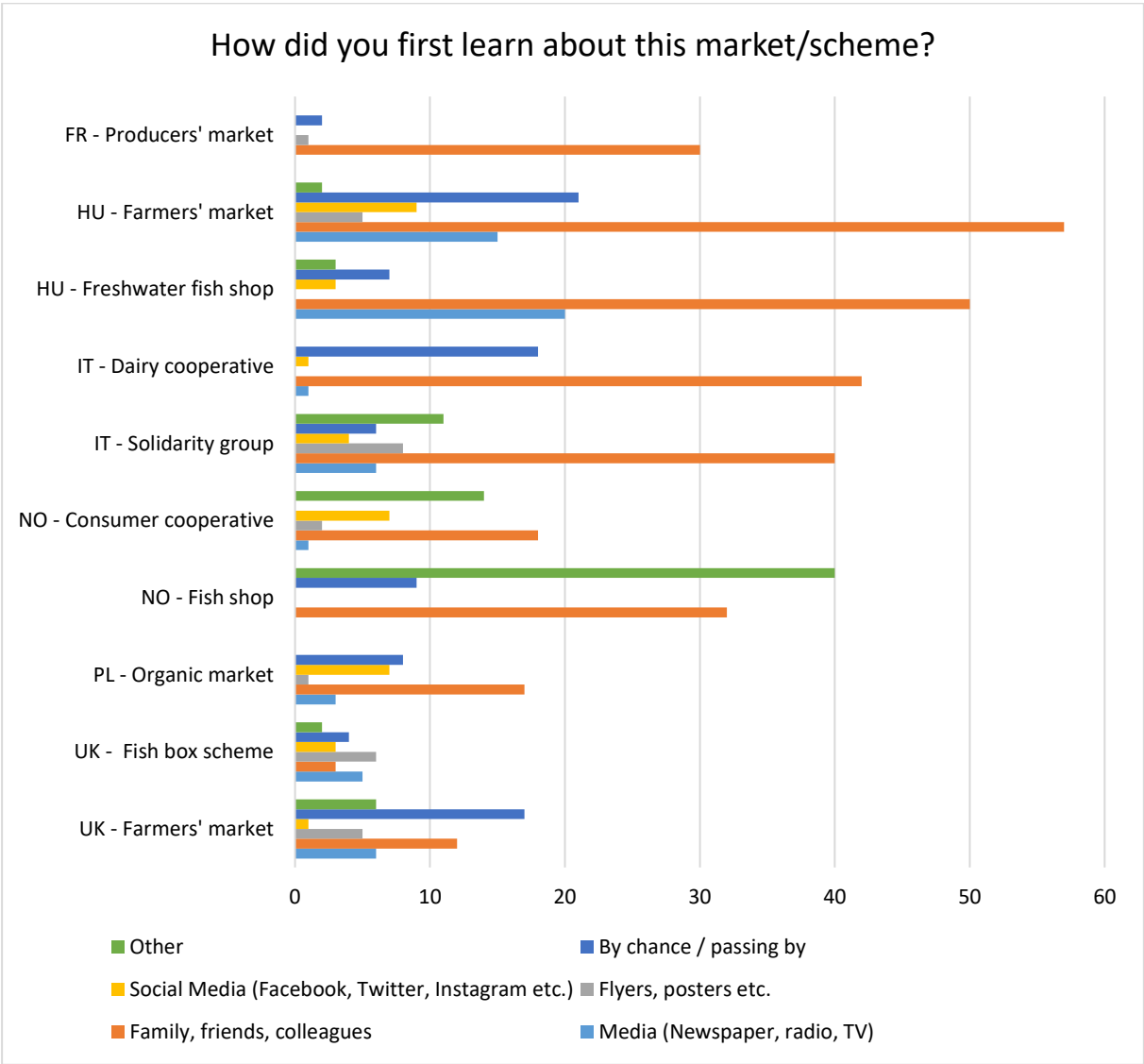


Figure 9 How did you first learn about this outlet/shop/market?<sup>14</sup>

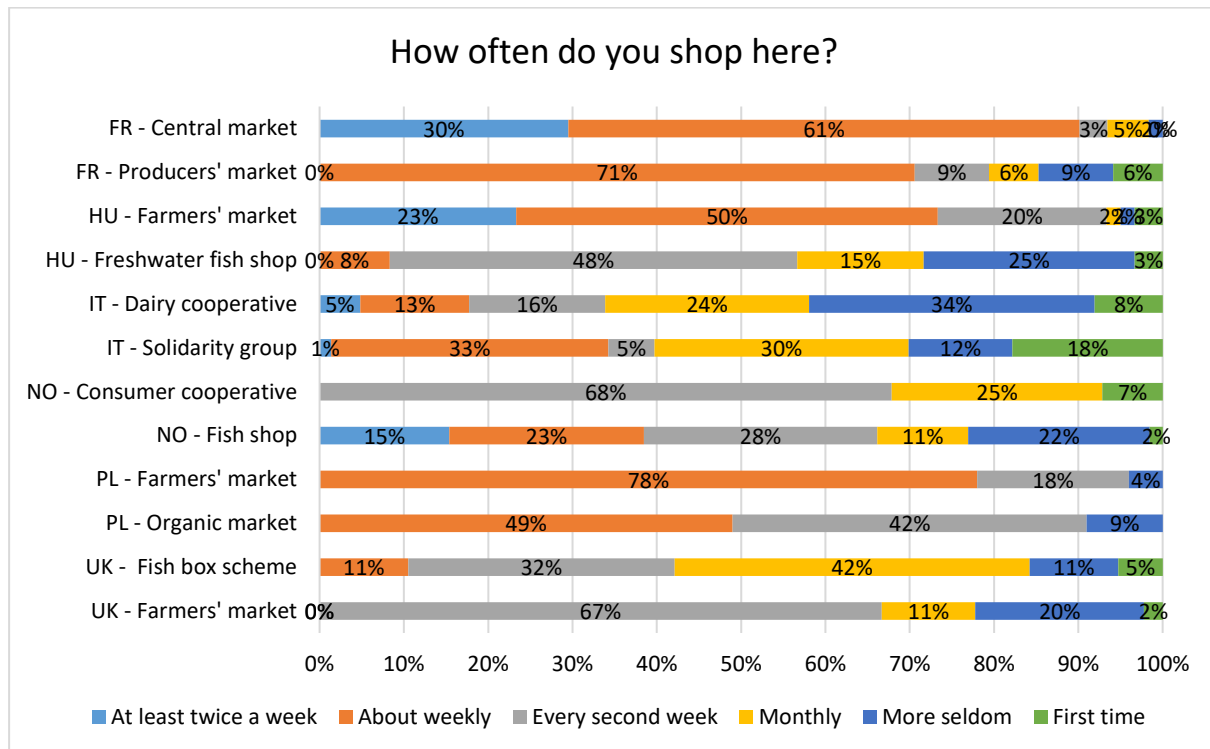
Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

This question about how they first learnt about the outlet/marked/scheme was not asked in the French central market in Dijon or at the Polish 'Farmers' market, because both of them are well established and well known to all locals. This was also observed in the answers of other well-established outlets such as the Norwegian Fish shop, where most customers answered that they "always" had known about it (recorded as "other" answer).

With regard to the shopping frequency, patterns varied between the cases (Figure 10). It was most common to buy food regularly at least once a week at the central market in Dijon as well as at the farmers' market in Szekszárd and the Polish farmers' market. This implies that these markets for many of the customers form an important part of the household food provisioning. Visits every other week are most common in the Hungarian Freshwater fish shop as well as in

<sup>14</sup> Possible to choose more than one alternative answer. The reasons why we gave more alternatives was that often people do not remember exactly how they first learn about something. The most important was to get an impression of what type of channels are used to attract customers.

the UK Farmers’ market and the Consumer cooperative in Norway, which only operate twice a month. The fish shop in Norway and fish box scheme in the UK have a combination of regular and infrequent customers. The Italian solidarity purchasing group ‘Kuminda’ had quite a high share of first-time visitors.



**Figure 10 How often do you shop here?**

Notes: Calculated from the average number of visits per year.

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

The survey among customers at the “Campagna Amica” farmer’s markets in Italy shows that the majority of consumers (57%) visit the market once a week. At the larger markets, this percentage increased to 71%. This is a similar level of frequency to most of the cases in this project.

The nature of the relation to the SFSC and the role it plays in consumers’ everyday life may also be reflected in their thoughts about returning to the SFSC: in the “Campagna Amica” survey, 73% of respondents said that he/she would come back again to these markets. Moreover, 74% answered that they would come again even if prices increased by 5% (36% definitively yes/38% probably yes). This indicates a high degree of satisfaction and integration in everyday practices.

Seasonal variations in shopping frequency and pattern are relevant for several of the cases studied.

*‘I often go to the shop, mainly during summer holidays, as I spend summer vacation in the nearby camping.’ (Consumer 1, Italian Dairy cooperative)*

*‘The product that I usually buy here is Parmigiano Reggiano, I also buy butter, stone-ground flour, yoghurt and ricotta, as necessary. I come here about every fifteen days to buy Parmigiano Reggiano and sometimes on a weekly basis to buy fresh products. [...] If it was possible, I would*

*also buy other products here because I like to buy from small-scale shop retailers devoted to the sale of local fresh products.* (Consumer 5, Italian Dairy cooperative)

Shopping frequency may also vary with the type of product:

*'We buy Parmigiano Reggiano every two months, as we make limited use of it.'* (Consumer 4, Italian Dairy cooperative)

In summary, there was quite a large variation between the cases with regard to how the relation to the SFSC was first established, how customers first learned about it, as well as the role that the SFSC plays in peoples' consumption practices, including shopping frequency and transport. This conforms with the expectations, given the differences between the cases with regard to how long they have existed, the types of foods they offer, as well as other main characteristics.

### **3.2.2 Eating habits – food practices related to provisioning from the SFSCs**

For what types of occasions do customers typically buy food for from the SFSCs? What are the contexts in which food from these SFSCs are eaten?

It partly follows from the section above, that the frequency of purchase from the SFSC also relates to whether the food purchased is part of the everyday-life diet and social setting, or whether the food purchased is mainly for special or festive occasions (year-around vs. certain times of the year – holidays etc.).

In the Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group case, it was reported that the members obtain a large part of their diet (80-90%) through this SFSC. Consequently, this food greatly influences the family diet, and goes into the common, daily food intake.

While for example in the case of the Norwegian local Fish shop, the food purchased here is for a large part of the customers related to summer vacation, special occasions, week-ends and times of some 'extravagance'. Some of the purchases made here, are certainly also for everyday use (such as warm fish-cakes for lunch, or family dinner), and some of the customers report a regular pattern of purchase for regular fish dinners throughout the year. But high quality, high prices – and a general high price level for fresh seafood in Norway, make up a setting for 'special occasions' more than everyday consumption.

### **3.2.3 Perceived changes**

What changes (if any) have the customers perceived in their own practices of purchase, eating, waste etc., which they relate to participating in the SFSCs? In cases with a strong element of tradition (Domestic), changes in food and eating practices may not be predominant among customers:

*'My food preparation habits and my knowledge about the product have not changed [by shopping here]. This is because I live in a regional context where the gastronomic tradition is very important and deep-rooted in family food habits.'* (Consumer 1, Italian Dairy cooperative)

Practices may already be deeply rooted in tradition (of the specific family, in local food culture, related to the place) and not so prone to change. Reduction in household waste is one of the factors mentioned by some SFSC customers:

*'Since I started to do shopping here I give more value to food and I waste much less because I purchase limited amounts of product on a weekly basis.'* (Consumer 3, Italian Dairy cooperative)

In the Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group case (GAS), almost all the respondents stated that they had significantly changed their food practices and eating habits after joining GAS,

preferring plant based food and paying more attention to waste as little of it as possible, while for others the changes were not so relevant.

*‘We consume only seasonal products and combine them in everyday recipes.’* (Consumer 1, Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group)

*‘I’ve learned to cook ingredients that I didn’t know before, I use more herbs and spices and I eat more legumes. From a qualitative point of view, now my diet is more rich in vegetables and sustainable; I try to avoid animal suffering and limit environmental impact.’* (Consumer 5, Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group)

*‘I’ve changed the way I relate to food. For example, I’m much more selective in the purchase of meat, I wouldn’t go in a butcher’s shop. We try to waste nothing, the leftovers are finished the day after; if something is rotting, I use it as fertiliser in my vegetable garden, while if the order is too much I can freeze a part. My diet is now more rich in vegetables, in particular seasonal, than in the past. Moreover, food has a sentimental value as I know who has cared for it and the work needed to obtain it.’* (Consumer 2, Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group)

While for others the changes were not so relevant. – due to practices already established.

*‘My dealing with the waste has not changed much since my family has taught me to reuse everything. I’m very sensitive to this issue. I’ve always loved to cook and from the time I started buying through GAS, I dabble at preparing preserved food.’* (Consumer 4, Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group)

### Summary

SFSC customers are characterized by:

**High education:** Tertiary level of education was dominating, except for the Polish farmers’ market and Italian dairy cooperative where most customers had upper secondary education.

**Above average income:** The customers' income was generally above the national average. Some exceptions were close to average.

**Female oriented:** A higher share of the respondents were women (except for the Hungarian fresh water fish and the Italian dairy cooperative). This reflects the general picture that women are generally more involved in food purchasing decisions for the household, compared to men.

**Middle-aged customers:** On average customers were around 50 years old. Average ages varied from around 40 (from the Polish organic market) to 60 (from the Norwegian fish shop).

**Variations in shopping frequency, but predominantly regular customer base:** Especially the markets in France, Hungary and Poland were visited on a weekly basis.



#### 4. ACTORS' MOTIVATIONS

In this chapter, the motivations of consumers, producers and retailers/market managers for participating in the studied SFSC will be presented. The discussion is based on data from in-depth interviews with all types of actors as well as results from the customer surveys. Where appropriate, the results will be compared with findings from a previous survey of customers at the Italian Campagna Amica farmers' markets and general experiences of Campagna Amica made by the Italian farmer organisation Coldiretti.

The customer motivations for shopping at the SFSC were surveyed through two sets of questions where the respondents could agree to various statements on a scale from one to five, where one was "I completely disagree" and five "I fully agree". The questions were "Compare shopping here with buying food from a typical grocery store. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?" and "How important are the following reasons why you shop here? To what extent do you agree with the following statements?" In this section, the average scores for each statement are presented and the statements from both questions are included in a topical order. The detailed results including share of each score and no opinion and missing values can be found in the appendix of each case report.

##### 4.1 Domestic

Direct sales are important for the relationship between the different actors in the food chain. However in some of the cases, producers never or seldom meet the end consumer face-to-face. This is the case for the UK Fish box scheme and the Norwegian fish shop case. Exceptions are in those cases where the fishers operate their own or family local shop (UK), or sell from the boat (Norway). In the case of the UK Fish box scheme, the Northumberland Seafood Centre acts as intermediary between fishers and consumers providing a closer connection via the appreciation of fresh and locally caught seafood. Similarly, there is a knowledge and appreciation of the fact that much of the seafood is sourced locally, and brought in by local fishers, among many of the customers in the Norwegian fish shop case. There is also a physical closeness, in that the shop is situated on the quay where the seafood is actually landed.

###### *4.1.1 Close relationship between actors*

###### *Trust*

The presence of trust relations based on social, geographical and cultural proximity between producers and consumers is central in several of the SFSCs studied. Transparency and reciprocity are key elements in several of the cases, defining the relations between actors in the SFSC.

In the Italian Dairy Case of the cooperative 'Latteria Sociale Garfagnolo', trust is a key aspect. In this case, the verification system, based on a third-party certification system involving an independent external body providing assurance that the relevant requirements of the PDO have been followed, is strengthened by the guarantees provided by producers themselves, based on auto-control (by the individual producer) or internal control (by the cooperative organisation). This latter is a key aspect distinguishing the trust system supporting the Parmigiano Reggiano PDO of the 'Latteria Sociale Garfagnolo' SFSC, compared with the Parmigiano Reggiano PDO sold in a long chain (e.g. large-scale retailer). In both cases, the third-party certification system guarantees the PDO specification compliance, while for the SFSC only the first-party verifications provided by the cooperative itself carry this responsibility for the reliability of the distinguishing quality attributes. The cultural and geographical proximity of producers and

consumers contribute to ensuring that the rules are respected and the quality of the product is guaranteed.

The president of the ‘Latteria Sociale Garfagnolo’ (retailer), expressed in the interview that the consumers are looking for traditional, territorial and safe products, and that the dairy shop satisfies this request, *‘because the customer gains confidence, trust and security by entering into the dairy.’*

*‘Supermarkets are not my scene because I like to have direct contact with the producer.’ (...)*  
*‘I recognise the merit of the supermarket to provide a faster service compared with our network; on the other hand it doesn’t allow for the creation of a trust relationship with the producer.’* (Consumer 3, Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group)

*‘Compared with other shopping experiences, such as those that take place in a supermarket, I recognise a difference in the price, but I prefer to buy in a traditional way because I really trust this shop.’* (Consumer 2, Italian Dairy cooperative)

Close relations, and a ‘family atmosphere’ are emphasised as motivation from the perspective of the farmers as well:

*‘The decision to sell the milk to the dairy derives from the fact that a family atmosphere is established.’* (Farmer 5, Italian Dairy cooperative)

*‘The short supply chain gives more visibility and recognition to the company, there is a whole discourse of food traceability and quality of the product that we can transmit to consumers.’* (Farmer 1, Italian Dairy cooperative)

*‘The main difference between spending through GAS<sup>15</sup> and in a store is the personal relationship and trust between GAS producers and consumers which doesn’t exist in a supermarket.’* (Consumer 1, Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group)

Within the network of Kuminda, there are structures and established ways to handle disagreements as well: One way is setting up a proper meeting with the farmer in case of dissatisfaction, to find a solution, and there are also possibilities of excluding producers if agreements are not complied with.

The consumers frequenting the Polish Organic market were questioning the healthiness of the food products in conventional food stores. Certified products sold at the market were trusted as more sound/healthy as they were perceived as free of potential contamination and artificial additives. For the consumer the market itself stood as a guarantee for the quality of the product and the face-to-face contact with the producer was a main factor in building trust.

Likewise, in the Polish Farmers’ market in Płońsk, customers’ trust in producers/sellers was at the core of the SFSC. Many of them had been customers at the market place for years; they trusted the sellers and believed they would not be cheated by them. Trust in the sellers was built on the basis of tradition and intergenerational bonds.

*‘I trust producers, I believe they sell healthy products.’* (Consumer, Polish Farmers’ market)

A further example of how personal contact is building confidence is from the UK Farmers’ market:

*‘[...] it’s that personal contact we have with the people who are rearing the animals, or producing the cheese, or smoking the salmon. And that gives you confidence that these are the*

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<sup>15</sup> Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale – Solidarity purchasing group



*sorts of people who do take the issues of animal welfare, of the welfare of the environment, they do take them seriously.* (Consumer 11, UK Farmers' market)

The direct contact and possibility to have a dialogue, together with direct insight into the food production may build relations of trust, which in some cases may make labels superfluous. Labels can be interpreted as substituting trust – and when trust is there, the need for labels may diminish.

In the interview data, the element of trust appeared as a basic element in several of the cases and the customer survey shows that most of the respondents in all cases either agreed or fully agreed to the statement “I trust this shop/outlet”. The mean score ranged from 5 in the Norwegian consumer cooperative to 3.9 in the Polish Farmers' market case (Figure 11).



**Figure 11 I trust this outlet/shop**

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

### *Knowledge through direct relations*

In addition to trust through direct relations, there were other aspects of the close relationship between the actors in the SFSCs that were valued. One such aspect was the possibility of gaining broader knowledge about food and the way it had been produced. Information is gained through talking with the producers or traders, but also by direct experience and knowledge of the place of production.

The direct, face-to-face contact provides for useful communication e.g. about practical matters, that for instance can lead to problem-solving or improved products, and meeting the concerns of consumers.

*‘That’s what I like with the concept of the Consumer cooperative: That there is a direct sale between farmer and consumer. [...] The more direct sale, the stronger the communication, I believe.*

Researcher: *Does it go both ways, do you think? Is it important for you to know what the customers think about your products?*

Farmer: *Yes, it is very important. There are several customers - not from the cooperative, but others – who have asked actively - ‘what are the hens eating?’ for example. And then I can tell them what they eat. And then they might say ‘well, but isn’t it possible to get any grain feeds without soy?’, for example. And that may push me – or other farmers – towards thinking ‘yes, perhaps I can try to achieve that.’ Last year I did in fact get hold of a feed product, ‘Norgesfôr’, without soy, and then I changed to that. I didn’t even know about it, and there were several other small-scale farmers who were unaware of it, and then we all changed – and then ‘Norgesfôr’ suddenly stopped producing it.’ (...)*

*‘But now several farmers have cooperated about a common order to ‘Felleskjøpet’,<sup>16</sup> so now they have started producing one type of feed [without soy] – because there were enough who requested it. So if the customer hadn’t asked for it, I am not certain that I would have involved myself in it – perhaps I wouldn’t have even thought about it. I completely agree that it is better with proteins from Norway in the grain feed, than soy from Argentina – even if that may be organic. Then the feed gets a bit more expensive, but – this is an example of how the consumer may affect change – and I am more than willing to be influenced: If the customer wants pasteurised milk, then I will be happy to provide that for them. One has to do what people want.’*  
(Farmer 4, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

The same farmer also gave another example of continuous improvements based on dialogue with customers:

*‘There was a woman from Sandeffjord who came here and bought Wiener sausages, because she didn’t like a lot of additives – but then she wanted to know whether it was refined or unrefined salt in those sausages. And then I had to ask the butcher – because I didn’t know that – I hadn’t told him ‘this is what I want you to use’ – I had just ordered sausages without additives – but I hadn’t thought that far that perhaps someone prefers a certain type of salt. So – next time I make those sausages, I will have him use unrefined salt. That way I can continuously improve – because customers have different needs. And those who do not care about unrefined salt; they are not harmed by the fact that there is unrefined salt in them.’*  
(Farmer 4, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

The possibility of providing customers with practical knowledge about food quality and food preparation was described as a benefit related to direct contact in several of the cases.

*‘Very good and very helpful – e.g. stop the scheme when going on holiday – fishmonger at the centre very friendly, taught me a few times how to fillet – happy with the relationship.’*  
(Consumer 2, UK Fish box)

The opportunities for meeting face-to-face with consumers – being the GAS members or the farmers’ market customers - are described by the farmers associated with Kuminda as crucial for communicating the quality features of the fresh fruit and vegetables, and to add value to better balance the workload at the farm. Findings from the “Campagna Amica” survey in Italy indicate that direct contact is a key factor in the success of the network, and that this contact relates to information. The reported experience is that people/consumers like to satisfy their curiosity, to be an “aware consumer”, and to express that they are not just “someone who buys” but also “someone who wants to know”. Within the network, it is emphasised that sellers have competences on direct contact with consumers. For this purpose, “Campagna Amica” continuously organise training activities that include these aspects, and contributes to the definition of a common “communication” towards consumers (Coldiretti, Italy).

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<sup>16</sup> ‘Felleskjøpet’ is a Norwegian cooperative established in 1896 and presently owned by 44000 farmers, which has the purpose of joint purchases and securing reliable provisioning for farmers.

Through additional activities such as “pick your own”; schools/visits on farms; solidarity groups; agritourism and social farms, “Campagna Amica” supports direct contact with producers also outside the market, thereby also strengthening the relations between the producers and customers at the farmers’ markets.

#### *Knowledge through familiarity with the place*

Familiarity with the place of production, and possibilities of direct insights into the food production were important in several of the cases – both in terms of trust, as discussed above, and in terms of getting information. The close connections that were described did not only include people, but also animals, land and place.

*‘My family usually buys from this shop because we know the stable that supplies the milk to the cooperative. In particular, I’ve worked with some of them.’* (Consumer 4, the Italian Dairy cooperative)

*‘Sometimes, when I don’t have time to come to this shop, I buy food products in other similar shops, not at the supermarket. The place where I purchase makes the difference.’* (Consumer 2, Italian Dairy cooperative)

*‘Frequently, people come just to look at the animals – and maybe buy something. [...] I try to provide for that – so that people can feel free to just come whenever they like, look at the animals and feel free to spend some time here without feeling that they are bothering anyone. [...] I have built a customers’ room where it will be a small self-service shop, where they can come and buy without feeling that they have to take up my time when I am occupied with something else.’* (Farmer 4, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

*‘I think that is a good thing, if we can establish a culture where people can just stop by and buy some yoghurt or cheese, that it is displayed down there [in the self-service room] so that they can just pay with “Vipps”,<sup>17</sup> and then they have gotten some good products and visited/looked at the animals.’* (Farmer 4, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

#### *Place, direct knowledge and quality perceptions*

Descriptions about how consumers experience food quality often appear in the context of familiarity with the place where food is produced, or with the way it is produced. They may refer to insights into food production through direct communication with producers, or to own visits to the farm or knowledge about the place.

One example of familiarity with the place is from the Italian Dairy case, where the cooperative shop was born with the dairy, to satisfy the request of Parmigiano Reggiano of those who lived in the territory, especially of those who moved to the Liguria region and, at the weekend or during the summer period, were coming back to the native territory and were looking for local products. For these customers, the knowledge of the place is already established, and this sense of familiarity may affect how they experience the cheese and dairy products.

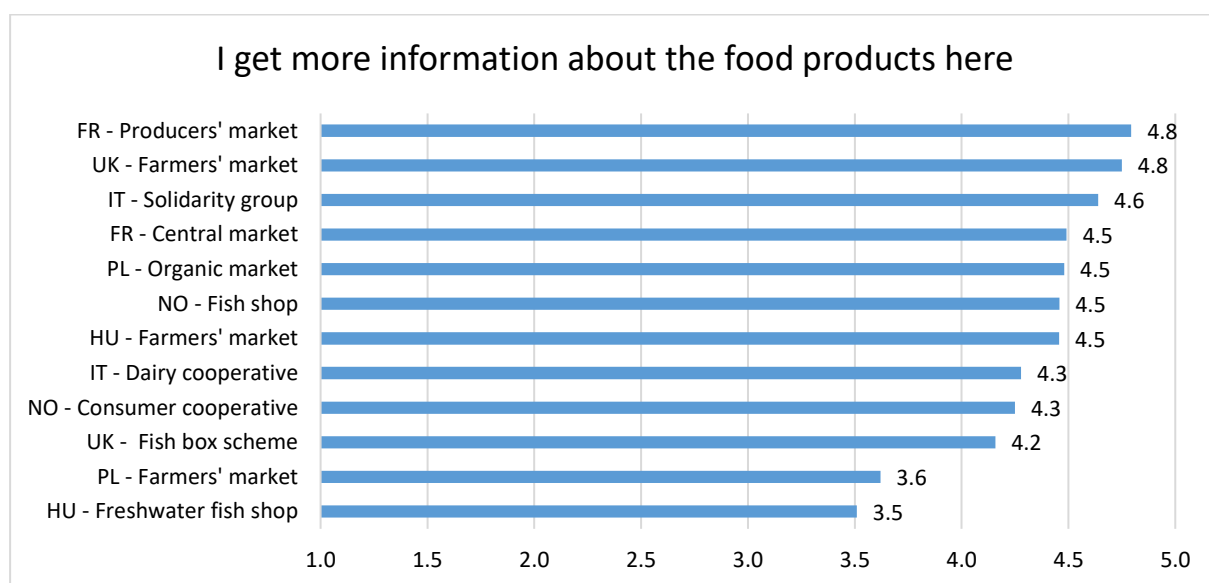
Actual visits to the farm were described in several cases, as below in the Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group:

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<sup>17</sup> “Vipps” is a Norwegian smart phone application where payments from one person to another is directly transferred.

*‘With my actual maturity I see the difference; buying directly from the farmer I have a direct knowledge of what I eat and its origin, in particular where the crop fields are located, the water used. For example, a local farmer produces very tasty vegetables and when I went to him I discovered that it is due to the fact that he uses a different water coming from his private well.’* (Consumer 5, Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group)

The survey results indicate that customers in most cases feel that they receive more information about the food products in the SFSCs than in ordinary supermarkets (Figure 12). There are generally high scores for this question, with the lowest in the Polish Farmers’ market and the Hungarian Fish shop.



**Figure 12 I get more information about the food products here**

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

### *The meeting place; sociability between actors – the significance of feeling connected*

The experience at the meeting place, where the food provisioning takes place, is clearly an important aspect for several of the actors involved in SFSCs, across the cases.

The social aspect of direct, face-to-face contact was clearly valued in itself by both producers and consumers. The significance of the ‘feeling of being connected’ was emphasised in several cases. Below two examples from the UK Fish case and the Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group:

*‘It feels much, much more connected with the people who are fishing...it feels different (from the supermarket) because it feels like my money might stay in the local community.’* (Consumer 2, UK Fish case).

*‘[...] food has a sentimental value as I know who has cared for it and the work needed to obtain it.’* (Consumer 2, Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group)

Experiences from “Campagna Amica” indicate that the atmosphere at the farmers’ markets, with additional activities such as exhibitions, activities for children, tasting of food may play important roles of making the markets pleasant places to come and spend time. However, buying food of high quality – naturally - remains the main reason and basic function of the

markets. There were 68% of the respondents who considered the environment of the farmers’ markets very important.

Regarding the social context related to food provisioning, participants in the customer survey were asked to compare the experience of shopping here (at the relevant SFSC) to an ordinary food store (*I find it more pleasant to shop here than in an ordinary food store*).

In all cases, except for the two Hungarian cases, the mean score was 4.1 or higher meaning that the respondents to a large extent agreed or fully agreed with the statement (Figure 13). This experience value or sociability surrounding the SFSC cases was explained in several ways, and was expressed not only by the consumers, but just as much by the producers and retailers/managers. Thus, this element is also an important driver for the upholding and further development of several of the SFSCs.



**Figure 13 I find it more pleasant to shop here**

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

There seem to be some variations in the factors that explain the pleasantness of these SFSCs connected with the different organisations and the different aims of the business/initiatives. The French Producers’ market (4.9) and the Norwegian Consumer cooperative (4.7) both have a high score on the pleasantness of shopping. These initiatives are both based on a close network of producers and consumers. The French Producer’ market case is located on one of the producing farms: *‘The selling place is rustic: it’s half under an awning, half in the open air, which is a problem in winter and when raining’* (French Producers’ market). The initiative is an important contribution to “community building” and the whole initiative started when *‘Lydia and Thomas organised a “farm party” inviting around 2000 people from the surroundings, with music and dance.’*

*“The place is meant for sociability, and not only trade. In this rural area, most people know each other, and the place is an occasion to meet friends and neighbours, to talk to the schoolteacher of one’s kid, to meet a practitioner of alternative medicine, etc. Many customers spend quite a time talking with each other, or with producers, who come and have a coffee with*

*their customers when they can. Most of this population shares ethical values, political tendency and feels comfortable there. There is strong identity closeness.*” (French Producers’ market)

The sociability and pleasant shopping experience is also emphasised among customers in the Italian Dairy cooperative case and the UK Farmers’ market:

*‘I appreciate very much the contact with the staff to which I often talk.’* (Consumer 5, Italian Dairy cooperative)

*‘I absolutely love it...I just find it absolutely delightful to know who your producers are and to buy local stuff.’* (Consumer 4, UK Farmers’ market)

Also at the Polish farmers’ market in Płońsk, customers declared that they liked to socialise at the market:

*‘I always do the shopping here, this is a tradition, people are nice, it’s good to talk to them.’* (Consumer 1, Polish farmers’ market).

*‘There is a nice atmosphere here, everyone knows each other.’* (Consumer 3, Polish farmers’ market)

*‘There is a family atmosphere here, I meet many people I know here.’* (Consumer 4, Polish farmers’ market)

The sense of being appreciated, and of being important for others, are among the motivations described by farmers, with examples here from the Norwegian Consumer cooperative and the Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group:

- *It is an inspiration – the customers are an inspiration – the guests, friends*
- *Definitely. The feedback from people is an important reason why we have kept on with it, of course.*
- *Yes, it is part of what gives meaning to it all.* (Farmers 2, conversation between husband and wife, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

*‘I am happy to be with the SFSC. Not only for economic reasons, but also for personal satisfaction when the quality of my kiwifruits is recognised by the consumers.’* (Farmer 1, Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group)

Similarly, in the Norwegian Fish case, being appreciated by customers is valued by both fishers and shop-keepers.

A shop-keeper expresses how he experiences that the speciality stores possess a different and perhaps richer knowledge of the products than what is found in the regular food stores. An important mission is thus, in his view, to communicate and share this knowledge with the customers. He describes how they receive feedback from faithful customers who appreciate the craft and their knowledge of the products:

*‘Yes, that’s what makes you bother getting up in the morning when you run such a store like this. The customers are extremely satisfied. (...) but sometimes I’m a bit embarrassed too, because there are so many who think it’s so nice. But this gives motivation for all those who work here.’* (Retailer 2, Norwegian Fish case)

One of the fishers expressed a feeling of satisfaction and pride by having eager customers waiting for him in the harbour and outside the landing facilities where he often has a chat with

customers and receives a lot of compliments for his products. The fishers in general describe that they often get positive attention from the locals. In order to get the shrimp as fresh as possible, they stand in the harbour waiting for the boats to land the catch of the day:

*'Yes, they stand in the harbour having a chat while looking for the boat to come in with today's catch. Especially if they are sold out in the fish shop it happens that I have to weigh up a box with fresh shrimps right away.'* (Fisher 3, Norwegian Fish case)

In the Italian Dairy cooperative, both producers and consumers emphasise the benefits of direct contact and the pleasantness of the shopping experience:

*'I mainly purchase through these shops because I don't like to do shopping in supermarkets. I think that the shop has an added value, not only from an aesthetic point of view, but also because of the shopping experience. I have the perception that the product in the shop is less processed, more fresh and, as a result, qualitatively better. In my opinion, doing shopping in the shop is faster and less exhausting compared to the supermarkets, as there I find that it's chaos with a multiplicity of confusing commercial offers.'* (Consumer 5, Italian Dairy cooperative)

From the producer side, it is described that selling through the Dairy cooperative is important also by giving more intangible satisfaction to the producer because the product is appreciated:

*'It gives extra monetary value, but also a greater satisfaction to us, because the product is appreciated. It is an opportunity to make yourself known and make the product known.'* (Farmer 1, Italian Dairy cooperative)

Thus, we see that the function of making it possible for the producer to establish a direct contact with the customers is an important aspect of the SFSC. The majority of consumers attending the UK Farmers' market are regular and local often returning to the same producers to buy specific products they are already familiar with. The close connections and even friendship-relations between producers and customers are described as a core characteristic:

*'I like people, I like meeting the people. I think I'd be quite lonely if I didn't go now because that's my social life.'* (Trader 2, UK Farmers' market).

*'For me, the experience is to go to the market, buy what's special/ I like at the time, and be sociable to interact with people'* (Customer 5, UK Farmers' market)

*"People are coming there [to the market] for an experience (...) they are having a chat with the people, they are our friends, you know, we've been serving them for fifteen to sixteen years... we know their members of the family, we know their grandchildren (...) it's like a social event rather than just going to the supermarket and just loading your trolley with whatever you want."* (Trader 1, UK Farmers' market)

#### *Strengthening networks and support among producers*

There were several examples of the SFSCs enhancing mutual support and informal networks between producers.

*'The organisation of the market is informal. (...) the relation between the producers is not hierarchical, but rather association-like. (...) Once every couple of months, producers gather for a meal and discuss the market and its evolution.'* (Producer market, France)

It is further described that some of the producers at the French Producer market build on already existing social networks – as several of them are members of the same organic organisation: ‘Nature and Progress’.

Also in the Norwegian Consumer cooperative case, there were other connections between farmers apart from the SFSC: Some of them make use of each other’s facilities, such as meat processing facilities available at one of the farms. There is also a spirit of cooperation rather than competition with regard to seeking to supply rather than to compete with each other when it comes to the different types of products offered to the consumer cooperative.

*‘I very much appreciate the farmer-network. (...) We have in a way a cooperation.’* (Farmer 1/Organiser, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

A similar appreciation of the producer network is described in the UK Farmers’ market:

*“Some of my best friends now are the other traders. It’s nice. I mean, I’ve been doing it so long that quite a few of the traders have died, given up and things like that. But it’s always a nice atmosphere, and everybody helps everybody, so that’s nice.”* (Trader 2, UK Farmers’ market)

Several advantages of being part of a large network with other producers were described by participants in “Campagna Amica”. For instance, coordinated activities and offers to consumers would collectively benefit all producers in the network. One such example, is a recipe-based home delivery initiative<sup>18</sup> that brings a bag with all ingredients for the requested recipe, for the number of people specified by the customers. All products come from producers in the network. Reduction of food waste when receiving the exact ingredients needed is one of the advantages for the customers.

### *Strengthening networks between consumers in the same SFSC*

In some of the cases, there are overlapping social networks between the consumers in the SFSC. In the Norwegian Consumer Cooperative case, the establishment of the cooperative benefited from the possibility of building on the existing network connected with the local Steiner (Waldorf) School. One of the pick-up places is located in the school canteen, and many of the members are associated with the school (teachers, parents).

The fact that some people within this social network were already engaged, and have found it important and contribute with voluntary work, was described as a motivating factor by one of the members in the Consumer cooperative in Norway:

*Consumer 3: The most important reason why I participate is that I know so many of those who are involved and organise it, and that it takes place here. Because it is a kind of ‘local community-thing’. It is kind of a small group of people who say: ‘We think that this is important’. Thus, you support them. And I also think it is important, and I don’t feel that it is any sacrifice for me to buy these bags. But if it had been organised by some people I didn’t know, such as the neighbouring school, then I am not sure I would have participated. Perhaps one semester, and then I wouldn’t have continued any longer. But this is like: ‘We do this, we think it is important’ – and then it is a ‘local community thing’.*

*Researcher: So you think that it contributes to something beyond the cooperative in itself, is that what you think?*

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<sup>18</sup> <https://cuc.bio/vision>



*Consumer 3: Yes. It 'lubricates' the local community, the milieu around the school is like a local community, in a way. (...) I (...) think that it is a very good initiative – that people do something that they don't get paid for, that has a good purpose. (Consumer 3, Norwegian Consumer Cooperative)*

#### *The importance of 'Place'*

In some of the cases, the possibility to connect – or reconnect – to the specific local area is apparent as a main quality aspect for the consumers.

One of the cases in which this is described, is the Italian case of Latteria Garfagnolo. It seems that the practice of buying the local cheese, at the local, traditional dairy holds a potential for the consumers to re-establish or affirm a personal connection with the local land, the 'terroir'. It seems to give meaning in relation to their sense of identity.

Personal knowledge of and connections to the place where the food is produced – such as the land where the cattle has grazed – are among the factors that are emphasised. Taste, quality and animal welfare are examples of (food) characteristics, which are related to *place* by consumers.

*'I choose to buy from the shop to support them and because I know the animal living conditions as well as the feed and grazing which characterize the cattle.'* (Consumer 4, Italian Dairy cooperative)

*'I don't look for particular information before buying because we live around here and we have a direct knowledge of the products; we too come from the agricultural sector and therefore we are able to recognize natural products.'* (Consumer 1, Italian Dairy cooperative)

In some cases, the quality of connecting to the 'local area' is expressed as a more general value, where it also comes into play in other places, for instance on holiday, travelling:

*'There are other things that matter as well. Price - and whether the product appeals to me in other ways as well. But given that everything else is equal, I would generally choose the local option. But I find that when we are on vacation, then you buy raspberry juice or something like that – apple jam – from the places where you are. You pay extra, because of that experience. The taste does not reveal that it is those apple trees that you looked at – but you buy an experience. And it is similar with the organic things as well – you buy a feeling in a way.'* (Consumer 3, Norwegian Consumer cooperative).

#### **4.1.2 Local traditions and culture**

The two previous sections have dealt with 'place', while this section deals with culture, and - in a sense - 'time': It matters that something has been practiced for 'a long time'.

Practices related to both the shopping/food provisioning in itself and the types of products bought were embedded in tradition for consumers in several of the SFSCs.

The question about 'how they first learned about this SFSC' from the customer survey was dominated by the answer 'through family, friends and colleagues' in many of the cases (refer to previous Figure 9). In some cases, the question was met with puzzlement, and comments such as – 'What do you mean?' - 'this shop has always been here' or 'I have always known

about it' – 'I remember coming here with my grandmother as a child' (Norwegian fish shop), etc.

Here an example from the Italian Dairy case (in which almost all the interviewees (N=60) where respondents said they learnt about the selected SFSC thanks to family, friends and colleagues (N=42).

*'The dairy cooperative shop has always been there...(). Those who were involved in the dairy sector and moved in the neighbourhood regions, once coming back were looking for our product, so there was a strong demand that remained over time and that allowed the shop to increase the activity.'* (Retailer, Italian Dairy cooperative).

*'My first knowledge of the dairy cooperative is due to a school excursion, but all along my family has bought here.'* (Consumer 4, Italian Dairy cooperative)

The French Central market is also an example of a traditional market. From this case, it is described that it was striking to see the continuity of certain families, for instance saying 'their parents and grandparents used to come to the same stall, where the producer's father was'. For some consumers, the market is a matter of long-term relations, of trust, respect, sometimes even friendship.

Similarly, in the Norwegian Fish case, one of the retailers explains that he felt it almost as an obligation to take over the shop, which was a traditional shop established in 1948, when the owners were thinking of retirement:

*'This shop is an institution in this town that someone just had to take care of.'* (Retailer 2, Norwegian Fish case).

This retailer also describes how traditions and memories are relevant for his customers when they are looking at the seafood in the shop – recognising fish they caught and ate in their childhood:

*'(...) they have fished a lot when they were young, together with their parents or together with grandparents. They were fishing mackerel and whiting and they know many types of fish. And then they also get flounder. So this is what they have eaten when they were young and these memories are still there. So when they come here: 'Oh, here's whiting in the counter! We have not seen this anywhere else.'*' (Retailer 2, Norwegian Fish case).

Also from the production-side, entering into farming /fishing may be related to local traditions and family. For example, among the fishers in the UK Fish case, several of the fishers had entered into the fishing business as a consequence of ties with family/friends, where knowledge and skills are passed in the local community and across generations.

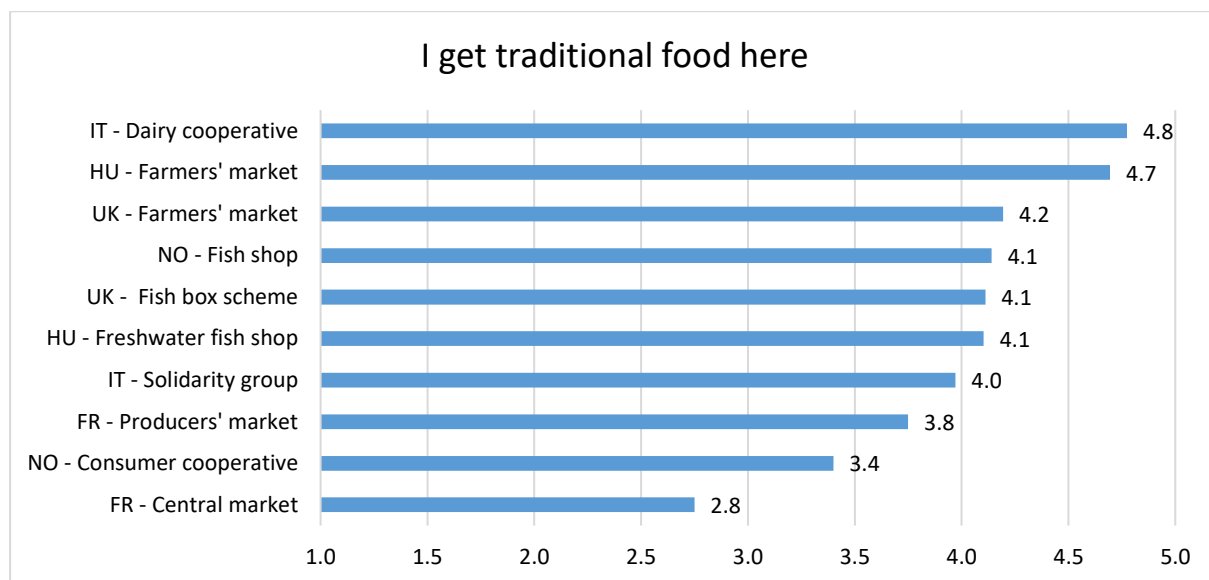
From the customer survey, we see that in many of the cases the respondents regard the SFSC as important in order to get traditional food products (Figure 14).<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> In France, "traditional food" doesn't mean anything to many consumers (especially in Dijon). Many of them picked the middle number "3" because they were puzzled by the question;

Especially in the Italian Dairy producers' cooperative case, the average score is as high as 4.8 (+) meaning that almost all respondent fully agree. In this case, both producers and consumers have an explicit concern for supporting the traditional way of cheese production:

*'The strengths of this shop are the direct contact and the fact that it is family-run.'* (Consumer 1, Italian Dairy cooperative)



**Figure 14 I get traditional food here<sup>20</sup>**

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

Customers at the 'Latteria Sociale Garfagnolo' explain that they are familiar with the local territory as well as the shop (many refer to it as a 'family tradition' to buy there) and the product itself. The aspect of familiarity and tradition therefore extends into their eating practices:

*'My food preparation habits and my knowledge toward the product have not changed. This is because I live in a regional context where the gastronomic tradition is very important and deep-rooted in family food habits.'* (Consumer 1, Italian Dairy cooperative)

#### **4.1.3 Family and care**

Food provisioning implies 'love and care' for those you shop for (often your family), meaning that considerations for others than yourself (the shopper) often comes into play (Miller, 1998). Health is a main concern – for the shopper her/himself and her/his loved ones.

*'I trust producers, I believe they sell healthy products.'* (Polish Farmers' market)

There are examples of perceptions of 'healthy food' based on a domestic orientation, where the knowledge of and trust in the producer is the basis, as in the example above from Poland.

Customers at the farmers' market in Płońsk relied on relations with the community rather than any 'professional knowledge' referring to healthy lifestyle, although some of the customers pointed out the importance of buying 'healthy' products. Sometimes "healthy products" were identified with domestic (local, Polish) products.

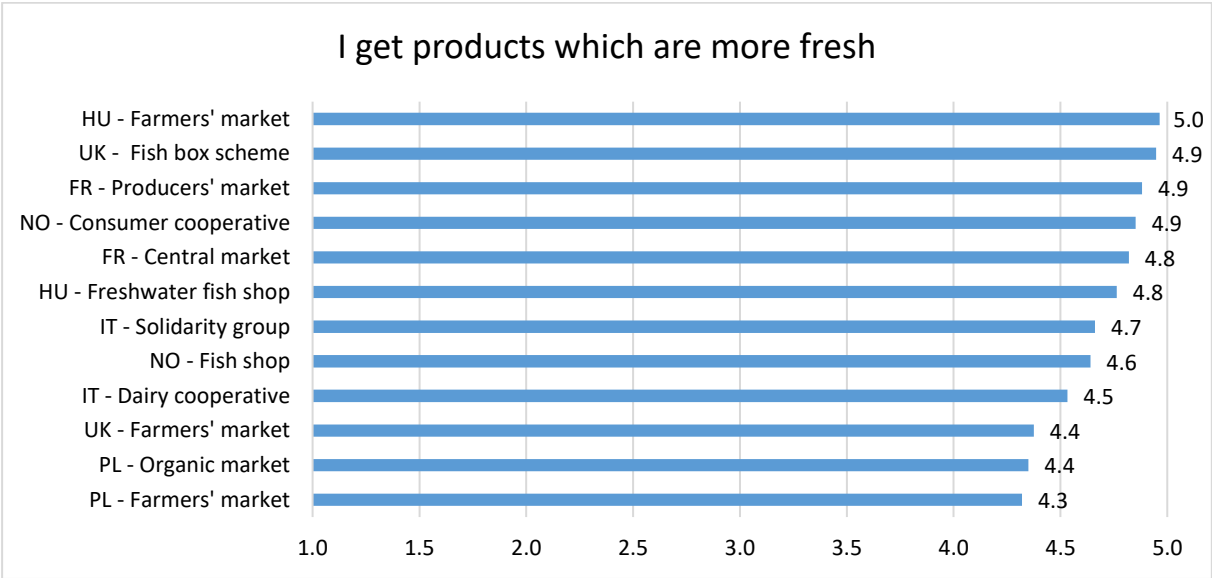
<sup>20</sup> This question was not asked in Poland

The perception of health for the consumer, for animals and for nature as interlinked is evident in many cases:

*‘It is ‘purer’, it is healthier, you get fewer toxins. It is better for the earth [...] you take better care of the planet – having sustainable production methods.’* (Consumer 1, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

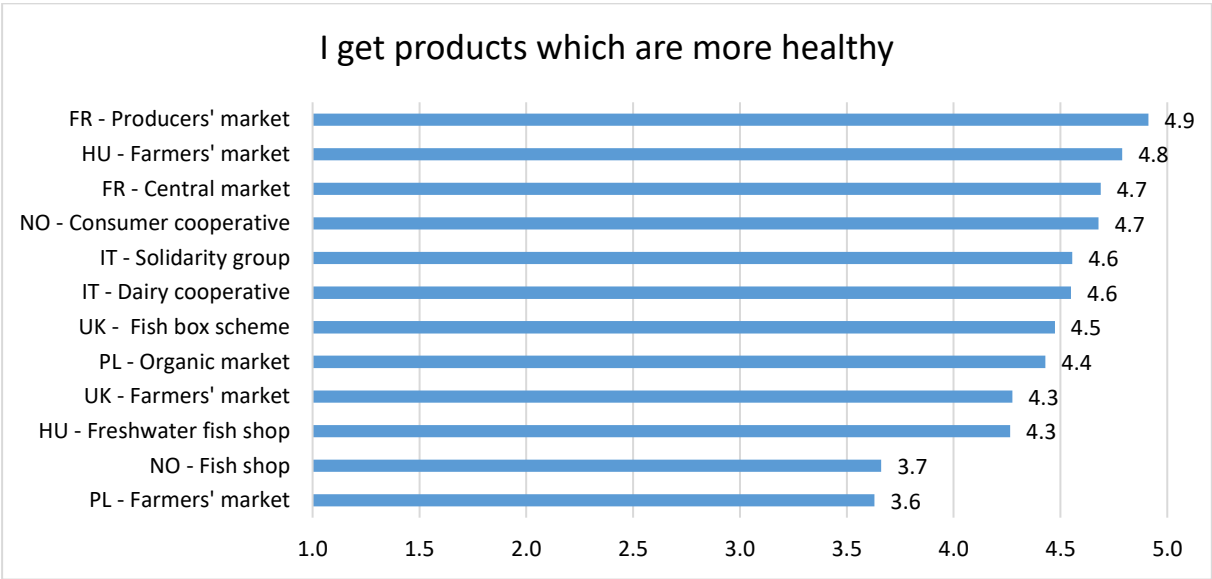
*‘The traceability of the products purchased through GAS network is more clear and easy to define. Furthermore, with no doubt, these products are more healthy [...] the main reason to purchase through GAS network is not the cheapness but the fact of knowing what I am eating.’* (Consumer 2, Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group)

Taste, freshness as well as good ‘experience quality’ or sensory quality are thus important factors for using specific SFSCs (Figures 15 and 16). As discussed in other sections of this report, how food is experienced by the eater may be closely interwoven with other qualities, such as knowledge of place and good animal welfare etc.



**Figure 15 I get products which are more fresh**

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.



**Figure 16 I get products which are more healthy / good for my health**

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

In summary, we have seen through examples from the cases that trust may be established by direct relationships (social proximity) and knowledge of - and familiarity with - the place (geographical proximity). In some cases, the possibility of seeing for oneself the place where food is produced – by visiting the farm or entering into the dairy – was important for the consumer. In other cases, the possibility of meeting the producer in person, and through dialogue and communication getting information about issues of concern was important. Also the social aspects of the close relationships were valued, across types of actors.

The face-to-face situations, which are often a key characteristic of SFSCs, provide for opportunities to enhance social relations, and to exchange information and opinions about the products as well as the food production. Both consumers and producers in several of the cases highlighted benefits with direct relations.

The possibility for people to connect to the place where food is produced may also include relating to the animals on the farm, and experiencing joy by seeing the animals and being in the natural surroundings.

**4.2 Civic**

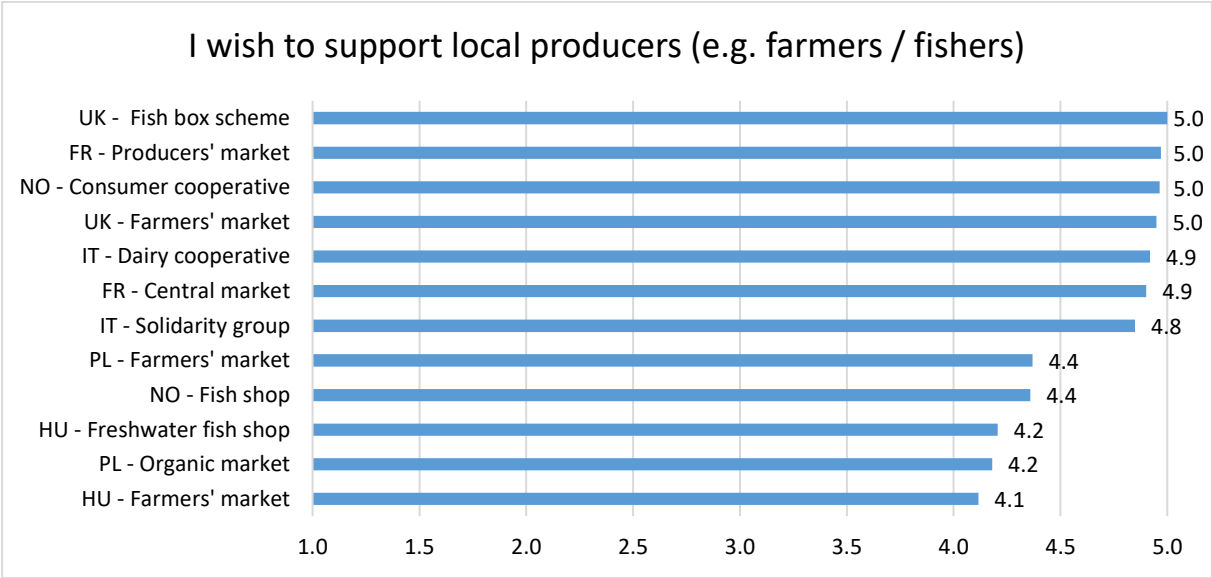
Especially the two cases of consumer co-operatives / solidarity groups in Norway and Italy were motivated by civic conventions with emphasis on fair price, collective organisation, solidarity, justice and public health as well as green conventions focusing on organic food production, animal welfare etc.

*‘We want people in Vestfold to be better informed about how their food gets to the table. We think that increased awareness about sustainable food production will not just generate support for Vestfold Kooperativ but will also allow people to make sensible choices about sustainability for the future.’ (Organisers (web page), Norwegian Consumer cooperative)*

*[Kuminda is committed to creating] ‘a fair and sustainable economy based on rules of justice and respect for people; fairly in the distribution of value; with transparent criteria in the definition of prices.’ (Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group)*

**4.2.1 Support local production**

There was a strong support for local food production, local farmers and fishers across all cases (Figure 17). In the customer survey respondents were generally highly positive about the statement “I wish to support local producers.”



**Figure 17 I wish to support local producers (e.g. farmers / fishers)**

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

A wish to support local farmers was explicitly expressed by consumers in several of the cases. The view that they liked that the farmers were receiving a larger part of the economic return was recurrent.

High levels of agreement with this statement were found in all cases. The lowest levels in the two Polish farmers’ markets, the fish shops in Norway and Hungary, and the Hungarian farmers’ market were all above the score of 4. Other reasons for choosing the SFSC may have been important and more in the forefront in these cases - in addition to supporting local producers.

In the in-depth interviews as well, consumers and organisers/retailers across all cases emphasised the importance of supporting local production. A variety of values and motivations related to the support of locally-produced food were expressed, which could be interpreted within civic (e.g. solidarity, collectivity), green (e.g. less transport, less need of packaging, better animal welfare due to short travel), domestic (e.g. possible with direct insight and knowledge, trust based on direct relations, familiarity and tradition) as well as market conventions (e.g. unique qualities in local products). Several of these values and motivations appeared to be related and interwoven.

The support of local food production was in some cases expressed in opposition to the conventional food system that many were critical of for various reasons.

These findings are in agreement with results from the Italian survey among customers at the “Campagna Amica” farmers’ market, which show a high level of support for local food production: 84% of respondents reported buying local food as being of great relevance for their choice of buying food at the farmers’ market (Coldiretti, Italy). Among the reasons for buying at the farmers’ market were, according to Coldiretti, the perception of doing something important, a feeling of solidarity towards agriculture, environment, and landscape (Coldiretti, Italy).

Here is one example of a consumer expressing her support for local producers:

*‘I care for the farmers getting paid for what they do. That they have the possibility all the time to improve their production – take care of animal welfare, and not all the time be pressured on price.’* (Consumer 1, Consumer cooperative, Norway)

Supporting local producers is also an explicit value expressed by customers in the Italian Dairy Cooperative case – often combined with other motivations, such as animal welfare and product quality:

*‘I choose to buy from the shop to support them and because I know the animal living conditions as well as the feed and grazing which characterize the cattle.’* (Consumer 4, Italian Dairy cooperative).

#### 4.2.2 Solidarity

The two consumer-initiated cases - the Italian “Kuminda” and the Norwegian consumer cooperative – were both characterised by high emphasis on solidarity aspects, and fairness in economic issues. A wish to support local farmers was explicitly expressed by consumers with the view that it was important to them that the farmers received a fair economic return for their work. In the French producers’ cooperation case, the aspect of conviviality is central, and the ‘wish to support local producers’ figure as the most important reason for buying there (score of 4.97 – closely followed by ‘high quality products’, ‘trust’, and ‘support environmentally-friendly food production’).

Solidarity with the local farmers and a wish for them to receive a fair economic return were main motivations in the Italian case of Solidarity purchasing group:

*‘Purchasing through GAS network, I have the assurance that the capital goes only and directly to the manufacturer.’* (Consumer 1, Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group)

The view expressed by farmers of the role of consumers as ‘co-producers’ also illustrates this nature of equality and solidarity:

*‘GAS have certainly been an important driver for our development, they have helped the development of other micro-farms. However, they should understand that they are ‘co-producers’; that is, we should create a balance in which the consumer is a person who supports, even materially, farmers’ work.’* (Farmer 5, Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group)

Below are some examples from the free comments addressed to the organisers on the consumer survey sheet in the Norwegian Consumer cooperative case:

*‘[it is] important to support smaller producers. Now, we get [vegetables] from ‘Farmer 5’. They don’t need us. [There are] many local farmers (CSAs) in Vestfold. Cooperate with them in the fall, when they have a surplus of products. “Vestfold Kooperativ”[can function] as a buffer for these farmers.’* (Survey sheet, No. 20, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

*'[It is] nice to cut the intermediaries. [It] gets cheaper and the farmer is better paid. Anti-capitalistic. Can deliver better animal welfare when [the farmer] is getting better paid.'* (Survey sheet, No. 22, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

*'I care for the farmers getting paid for what they do; that they have the possibility to all the time improve their production – take care of animal welfare, and not all the time be pressured on price.'* (Consumer 1, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

We see from the comments above that the 'need' of the local farmers for support from local citizens/consumers is considered as a relevant factor, and also quality aspects associated with the production, such as 'better animal welfare' which is perceived as being better cared for when the farmer is better paid. A decent payment for the producer is considered both as a value in itself and as a value because it enables and secures high standards in the production with regard to values that are held high.

Similar reflections were also found in other cases:

*Yes, I would like to see them [farmers' markets] everywhere because it is the way for the basic producer, the farmer, to get more margins. They certainly cannot from the supermarkets."* (Consumer 2, UK Farmers' market)

*"You know it's good food, it's local and that you are helping local producers as opposed to some big supermarket...[I like the fact that it] hasn't been shipped across the world...and you are helping their businesses."* (Consumer 5, UK Farmers' market)

*'Money spent by local people on local things, enhance the community rather than money disappearing into some multinational company!'* (Consumer 2, UK Fish case)

*'Support local fishermen in Amble and the fishing industry generally in the UK.'* (Consumer 3, UK Fish case)

Consciousness about the consumer-citizen role, and motivations based on collective benefits were apparent in many consumer interviews across the cases.

Below is an example of such reflections in an interview with a member in the Consumer cooperative in the Norwegian case:

*Consumer 3: Contributing with whatever you can – in a small scale. That you avoid taking the car when you know that – you know – 'now you emit a little less road dust and carbon dioxide'. In the large picture, it does not really contribute much, but it is the sum – you know?*

*Researcher: So you feel that you contribute to a change or two?*

*Consumer 3: Yes, in a way. (..) By constituting an example to your children, wanting them to think in the same way. And then there is a little of moral philosophy of Kant, or categorical imperative – if you want everyone to do something, you must act as if it could become a general rule. (...) so when you cook, it is important that the footprint is as small as possible, and that you support local producers and all that. (Consumer 3, Norwegian Consumer cooperative).*



### 4.2.3 Public health

Among the values that can be interpreted as ‘civic justifications’ is the value of public health. Some producers expressed that they held the aim of catering to the consumers’ wellbeing and public health high.

One of the farmers in the Norwegian Consumer cooperative expressed as a core motivation to reach as many ‘ordinary consumers’ as possible, by keeping the price as low as possible, so that his organic produce would be affordable and accessible to most people. His perception of organic foods as healthier and more beneficial to public health, and the notion that ‘the food should be your medicine’ underlined his motivation.

*‘I want to avoid not being chosen by consumers because of price.’* (Farmer 5, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

*‘The farmers, the doctors, and the consumers were the ones who should be cooperating: The doctor knew about diseases and what the problem was, and then the farmer should try to change the product, the food – the way it was produced – that was the key idea [among pioneers in bio-dynamic agriculture] – and I completely agreed. But to see this happening in my time is not likely.’* (Farmer 5, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

*‘When people come to me and say that they could not eat carrots, and then suddenly they can eat mine – of course that makes me happy!’ I know that many people do not tolerate those pesticides, but no one dares to write about that in the newspapers, because then you are ‘slaughtered’, you know?’* (Farmer 5, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

*‘Why do people eat poison? Everybody eats food with poison, and they know it. There is poison in our food. I wish it were declared – if you had sprayed with these chemicals, it should be listed on the products. Sometimes at restaurants now, everything you may be allergic to is listed – but all those chemicals, which have been applied to a carrot – they should have been listed. If we had accomplished that, then I think it would speed up ecology.’* (Farmer 5, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

*‘I had [organic] strawberries a few years ago, and then people came from far away and stuffed their station wagons full – finally their children could eat strawberries... It’s tragic! And the fact that the Farmers’ Association or Norwegian Agriculture do not address it –they just laugh at you!’* (Farmer 5, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

## 4.3 Green

Values such as care for the environment, use of local resources, preservation of landscape and local culture, high emphasis on animal welfare, and reduction of waste and pollution is at the core of several of the SFSCs studied. They can be described as ‘green justifications’ when interpreting actors’ motivations for being part of the SFSC.

In the Italian case of Solidarity Purchasing Groups, it is reported that farmers are ‘enthusiastic about the SFSC as a tool to enhancing their values and ideals (independence, lower environmental impact, reduction of food waste, etc.).’

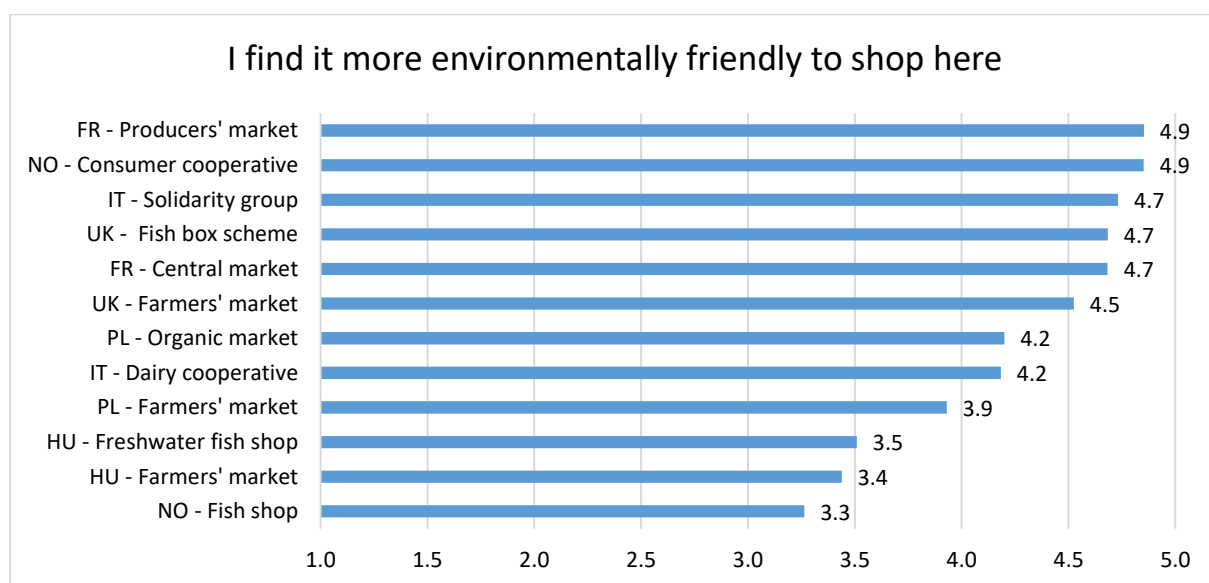
### 4.3.1 Environmental friendliness

Self-sufficiency was by many farmers viewed as an ideal which among others meant to optimise the use of local resources, minimizing the use of external input-factors as well as transportation. Distribution through SFSCs is generally perceived to lower emissions from transportation of

food, however, previous research shows that emissions from SFSC distribution varies greatly from case to case (Mundler and Laughrea, 2016).

*‘We buy very little. That is the key to our system.’ (...) ‘We aim at producing everything that the animals eat here at the farm. It makes very little sense to transport things from far away. For example – we have bought organic grains from Uzbekistan – a country where you have to cross the border of three other countries to get to the sea, if I am not mistaken. That is the place where ‘Felleskjøpet’<sup>21</sup> decides to buy organic grains!! [...] I feel that this is undermining what we others are striving at.’ (Farmer 3, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)*

The customer surveys also confirm that the customers believe that buying from SFSCs is more environmentally friendly (Figure 18).



**Figure 18 I find it more environmentally friendly to shop here compared to a typical grocery store**

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

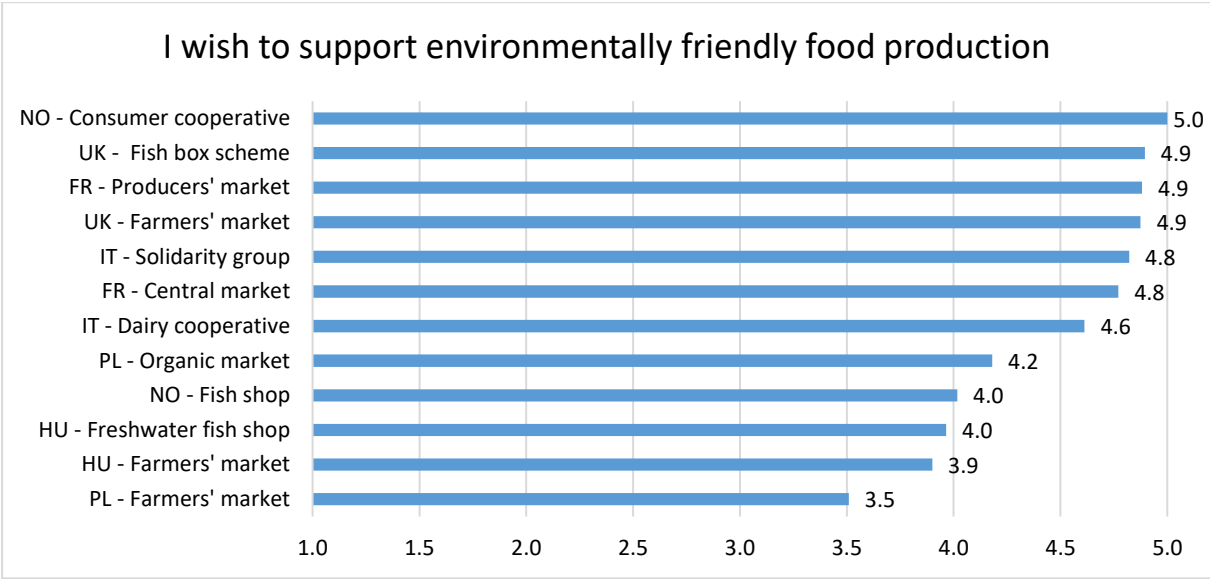
Moreover, based on Figure 19, supporting environmentally-friendly food production was an important motivation for customers, although a little less supported in the more traditional food markets such as in Poland and Hungary.

From the in-depth interviews with consumers we find that some view participation as a conscious action for promoting change: *‘it is not supposed to be only about that bag of meat and those sausages.[...] It should be about making changes – less poison in nature, and providing for endangered species to live.’ (Farmer 3, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)*

*‘Contributing to ecology by being creative human beings - that is an inspiration to what we are doing.’ (Farmer 2, female, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)*

*‘...when you cook, it is important that the footprint is as small as possible and that you support local producers...’ (Consumer 3, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)*

<sup>21</sup>‘Felleskjøpet’ is a Norwegian cooperative established in 1896 and presently owned by 44000 farmers, which has the purpose of joint purchases and securing reliable provisioning for agriculture.



**Figure 19 I wish to support environmentally friendly food production**

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

Several of the cases are (fully or partly) promoting organically produced food: The Norwegian Consumer cooperative; both the French cases; the Italian Dairy cooperative and the Italian Solidarity purchasing group; the Polish Organic market; the UK Farmers’ market.

*‘All the produce we procure is cultivated in accordance with organic and biodynamic principles. This means any type of farming method that does not exhaust the soil or introduce more synthetic chemicals, fertilisers or pesticide sprays into the earth and the environment. The agricultural methods we support are founded on the desire for healthy and sustainable agriculture, clean water, biodiversity and animal welfare.’* (Organisers (web page), Norwegian Consumer cooperative).

In the case of the French Central market, producers strongly emphasised values, which can be seen as belonging to civic and green conventions; including avoidance of pesticides and ensuring animal welfare and biodiversity. The consumers at this market also described themselves as committed to these values, e.g. by explicitly going to organic, more expensive producers (partly) to respect environmental concerns. Also, many of them brought their own bags, reused yogurt pots etc. to reduce waste. Both producers and consumers at this market spoke about their sales/buyings as a way to participate to form a better world, through responsible consumption.

Awareness of ethical and environmental issues were also at the core of the case of the Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group:

*‘The main reason is essentially ethical, as was the choice to be organic. For us, ethical means raising awareness among the small producers, who are often sensitive to environmental issues.’* (Farmer 3, Italian Solidarity Purchasing group)

Some of the farmers go far to find solutions that reduce waste and environmental impact and at the same time provide high food quality:

All the farmers are selling vegetables harvested the same day or at most the day before. Two farmers do not have refrigerated storage and almost all are organised in such a way as to reduce environmental impact:

*‘For sale, he uses recycled wooden boxes from the sale of other products, and envelopes for organic material.’* (Farmer 1, Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group)

The availability of organic food is valued by consumers across several cases. Below are some examples from the Norwegian and UK cases.

*‘I buy through ‘Vestfold Kooperativ’ because it is organic, some is bio-dynamic, and you support local producers. There is a thought behind about helping producers to ‘come up’. It is fresh products, and there is considerably less plastic wrapping.’* (Consumer 1, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

*‘...organic products – clean products that I think are better – that it is better consciousness related to the conditions of production, animal welfare, and footprints on nature. I willingly pay a little more for that.’* (Consumer 3, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

*‘It’s organic, something is even Biodynamic and you support local producers. (...). The products are fresh and many of the products have substantially less plastic.’* (Consumer 1, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

Several values may be combined in the motivation to participate in a SFSC, as described by one producer at the UK Farmers’ market:

*“Well, a number of reasons: promoting organic food, promoting local food, and just getting the message across about healthy food production, and how not everything has to be how it is through the supermarket...The philosophy of the farm is, sort of, ethical, quality production.”* (Trader 4, UK Farmers’ market)

The value of nature and preservation of the local natural area (such as traditionally farmed/cultivated landscape) is at the core of the Italian Dairy cooperative case, where traditional use of grazing in the mountain region is central.

Awareness of the ‘terroir’, the local area of food production, and a wish to support environmentally friendly production in this area is high among consumers in several of the cases.

The value of nature, and a sense of responsibility to care for it and sustain it, is expressed by both producers and consumers.

One farmer in the Norwegian Consumer cooperative case reflected about how she became inspired from Bio-dynamic farms, and how she relates that to the value of ‘*taking responsibility for being a human on earth*’:

*‘I have become excited about what I have experienced – which has appeared to me as deeply sensible. (...) It is in a way sensible and a responsible – that is, taking responsibility for being a human on earth, doing our very best with it, without destroying what is around us.’* (Farmer 2, female, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

The soil is in focus – understanding more about how we can care for and sustain the soil we depend on for our food:

*‘I feel that we should have had more ‘basic research’ [...] It is claimed that there is something like a billion microorganisms in one thimble of soil. How many of these do we know the name of? And how they work? We have no idea. I feel that there is something about this soil – what*

*makes it possible for us to produce food – that I don't fully understand. But there is something there – it is alive – but we treat it – at least in conventional agriculture – as if it were dead soil. [...] Now, lots of money is given for making ditches – they don't understand that there are other things causing the problems. There is nothing wrong with making ditches, but it is because the soil is dead! The soil is not living anymore! [...] The biology of the soil – that should have been worked with.'* (Farmer 5, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

Another of the farmers in 'Vestfold Kooperativ' practices care for the environment even beyond the farm:

*'I have lots of ideas. [...] I hang up birdhouses for endangered birds – right now I am very interested in owls which are endangered, and I have been very interested in salamanders, the large ones, which are very endangered, so I have been digging large dams and making small streams for them in the forest – such things I do.'* (Farmer 3, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

This farmer expresses a wish to inspire people (customers) to realise that – as member of the cooperative - they are in fact part of 'something bigger' - not just taking home their bags of vegetables.

*'Everyone' wants to do something for the environment, but few actually are able to do something. But I may do something, I have lots of ideas – and if I can give them [the consumers] a feeling that by buying that bag of food, I can complete a project – [...] That's what I am really doing.* (Farmer 3, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

In many cases, care for the environment, animals and human health is expressed in a holistic way, as intrinsically interconnected values and aims. In this way, green and civic justifications are interwoven, as care for the environment (green) and care for public health (civic) are seen as deeply connected.

#### *Values of Green convention – and quality*

The values connected with green conventions are also seen as inherently and deeply connected with the quality of the products. The in-depth interviews with consumers confirm the findings in the customer survey of the perception that products from SFSCs are more environmentally-friendly. They often find the supermarket as "cold, impersonal, saturated with adds", and these products (chain produced, industrial, "artificial/chemical") are viewed as being opposed to "hand crafted" products from local farms.

Some of the choices farmers make, and values they base their production on, they also relate to food quality.

Both at the Italian Dairy and the Norwegian Consumer cooperative, farmers explained how their choice of animal breed and grazing, and the prominent role of high animal welfare are connected to the quality of milk and cheese:

*'In the plains, farms have improved productivity a lot and are more industrialised, while in the mountains we still have traditional stables and feed.'* (Farmer 5, Italian Dairy Cooperative)

*'Our products are differentiated for animal welfare. The fodder consisting of fresh grass and the breed of cows; in fact many say that the milk of the Bruna breed is qualitatively better than other breeds. We have Bruna, Pezzata Rossa and mixed breeds. They certainly produce less milk but of better quality. Grazing cows also improves the healthiness of the products from a hygienic point of view because there is a lot of attention to cleanliness of the cows.'* (Farmer 4, Italian Dairy cooperative)

In the choice of breeds, factors other than productivity count.

*'They are cross-bred of old breeds.[...] Jarlsberg and Telemark are the main breeds. And they fit well in this management, because we farm extensively with little grain feed, and then it is smart to have animals which are well-suited for that sort of production. And then they are good at transforming grass, and they milk on it, and they are smaller animals, which move easily in the terrain – they are good at grazing, and good mothers – they calve easily. (...) It is a breed that belongs to this area, and then it makes sense to use it, really. (Farmer 4, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)*

This farmer keeps 250 hens, which have access to 2 hectares fenced outdoor area, in addition to the indoor hen house. He compares his egg production to one of the largest producers of organic eggs in Norway. Eggs from both farms are actually sold side-by-side in the same speciality shop.

*'In the shop, those eggs both appear as 'organic', while within the Debio-regulations, you may have a chicken farm with 7500 hens under one roof – which is a tremendously large industrial production – in my view. And here it is a small chicken farm – so I cannot compete with him on price. But both is 'organic'. But – there is a large difference in animal welfare, in my opinion.'* (Farmer 4, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

He also comments on differences in quality:

*'And the consistency [is different], for all of mine go outdoors and eat grass, and I am not so sure if his gets to do that, because when you have that many hens, then you must have 2 hectares of area, for it to be comparable, – and it may not be that they would use that area in the same way, because – if it isn't covered with bushes and trees, they don't dare to go far out onto a field, you know. So when the scale increases, it wouldn't necessarily be the same – even if it is 'Debio [approved]'. (Farmer 4, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)*

### **4.3.2 Animal welfare**

Animal welfare is an expressed value and motivation among all types of actors across the cases studied.

*'I would not buy from anywhere where animal welfare was not important...animal welfare is the most important thing to me above all else.'* (Consumer 2, UK Farmers' market)

*'I have always been very interested] about welfare, small abattoirs, that sort of thing, and meat that's killed with as little stress as possible...'* (Consumer 3, UK Farmers' market)

*'The main things I would be interested in are that there is good quality of animal welfare, that the animals live outside, are free range and ideally organic.'* (Consumer 5, UK Farmers' market)

*'Our pigs grow quite slowly and quite laid-back... but it takes a lot of human energy to keep them like that. It's much easier to keep them in a shed, all piled on top of each other, and feed them with shoots and things like that. But that's not what our product is about, really, or how we would like to keep them. So we walk miles, feeding pigs, checking pigs, and everything, and they have a life of luxury.'* (Trader 2, UK Farmers' market)

*'I choose to buy from the shop to support them and because I know the animal living conditions as well as the feed and grazing which characterize the cattle.'* (Consumer 4, Italian Dairy cooperative)

*'I used to go out to the farm of Dan, who supplies the organic meat, many years before Vestfold Kooperativ was established. To me it is important that the animals have a good life. (Consumer 1, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)*

Researcher: *The fact that your breed of cows are well-suited for this environment and that you provide for good animal welfare – is that something you experience that your customers are engaged with?*

Farmer: *Yes, yes, they are very concerned with that. Yes, absolutely – they are. They are very occupied by good animal welfare and that the animals are well and they really appreciate it when they hear that they are outdoors. I have fenced in an area of about 20 hectare of the forest, and that is where they graze in the summer. They really appreciate to know that the animals are living like that – that they can walk in and out of the barn as they wish, and that they may go outdoors in the wintertime if they want to, and can go inside if they prefer that. (Farmer 4, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)*

In some cases, the value of animal welfare is brought into the concept of food quality. For instance: less stress in the animals' lives, as well as in relation to slaughter (transport etc.), is seen as a value in itself, at the same time as it is experienced as having a positive impact on sensory food quality.

Below are examples from the Norwegian Consumer cooperative:

*'One thing is that in small-scale, it is in my opinion easier to succeed with good animal welfare.[...] The fact that they are grazing out in the forest in up to five months a year gives a different quality of milk than if they eat silage [...] Actually, it is a prerequisite for getting good cheese – that one feeds with hay and not with silage. So – the feeding and animal keeping is designed for high quality – and that will be recognisable in the products.'* (Farmer 4, Norwegian Consumer cooperative).

The connection between local and direct sourcing and food quality was brought up in the seafood cases as well. Fishers from the UK Fish box case, for example, emphasised that sourcing directly from the fishers implies that seafood comes straight from the sea and, thus, is fresh, local, seasonal and with 'low stress levels', hence of the greatest quality. For instance, Fisher 2 highlighted that the flesh of farmed fish and live lobsters in holding tanks with elastic bands on their claws generally present high stress levels affecting the quality of the flesh.

### **4.3.3 Waste reduction**

Making use of local resources is a central value in several of the cases. This practice can in itself contribute to reduce the need for external resources, and reduce waste.

In several of the cases, there is a high degree of awareness among the consumers of waste reduction, and this is among motivations for being part of the SFSC:

For example, this was the case in the Norwegian Consumer cooperative, where organisers as well as members put high emphasis on using less or preferably avoiding plastic and food wrapping.

Similarly, in the UK Farmers' market case:

*'I like the fact that you can choose the exact number of things you want [at farmers' markets] and put them straight into your bag. I don't like all of the packaging in supermarkets which you struggle to avoid.'* (Consumer 5, UK Farmers' market)

*'I always try to be very careful about not wasting things. It's one of the reasons that I go to the farmers' market, to try not to create as much waste in packaging and so forth. But my habit, for a long, long time, has been not to waste stuff.'* (Consumer 4, UK Farmers' market)

Reduction of waste was also mentioned by customers at the Italian Dairy cooperative:

*'Since I have started to do shopping here I give more value to food and I waste much less because I purchase limited amounts of product on a weekly basis.'* (Consumer 3, Italian Dairy cooperative)

## 4.4 Market

### 4.4.1 Profitability – niche, added value

The need to increase profitability is present in most of the stories about the SFSCs studied. How this need plays out in relation to other motivations for taking part in the SFSC differs – but the need to sustain the economy remains central.

This is also in line with results from the “Campagna Amica” survey, where economic advantages are among the main reasons for farmers to participate at the farmers' markets: increase of turnover was a main motivation for 52% of the respondents, along with the certainty to sell (46%), and the possibility to propose higher prices compared with those made by wholesalers (18%). The average reported increase in turnover was 22%. (Coldiretti, Italy )

Direct sales at farmers' markets were generally accompanied by sales through other channels, giving farmers the possibility to diversify the income and reduce the dependency on wholesalers. Immediate payment was also seen as an advantage, which is not granted where there are contracts with wholesalers. The farmers participating in the “Campagna Amica” survey reported that they mainly used the following channels in addition to the farmers' markets: selling directly at their own farm (80%); to other grocery stores (47%), and to restaurants and catering (17%). One of the benefits perceived by the farmers attending the “Campagna Amica” farmers' markets was the increased visibility, which in their experience often led to customers coming to visit the farm and buying directly there. (Coldiretti, Italy ).

The need to add value and increase profitability was observed across cases – and for both farmers and fishers.

Greater profitability and higher market returns were reported as key reasons for the local fishers to engage in short chains and supply directly to customers via the UK Fish box scheme.

Further examples are from the UK Farmers' market and the Italian Dairy cooperative:

*'Since the foot and mouth big problem that we had, we decided we needed to do something drastically different. Because that year the supermarkets just paid us peanuts for our produce. All the export markets were all shipped out... We were just at mercy of the supermarkets' buyers, that year. We're just a small producer... So, we needed to do something drastically different to ensure the farm survival going forward.'* (Trader 1, UK Farmers' market)

*'We haven't got a very big farm to make money, so we needed to add value somehow or get a job off a farm.'* (Trader 2, UK Farmers' market)

*'In terms of profitability, direct sales give us the possibility to earn more money than the wholesaler. However, it is not possible to sell only through a short supply chain because the quantity of cheese produced is far higher than sold. We produce about 10,000 wheels and we*



*sell through the shop 2,000, we hope to increase the sale to 5,000.*' (Farmer 1, Italian Dairy cooperative)

In the case of the Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group, it is described that 'large retailers and wholesalers do not offer sufficient profits for the survival of these small companies.'

*'We have chosen this type of supply chain because by focusing on the quality of a product, it is difficult to sell it to a trader who would greatly reduce profit margins. The aim of our direct sales has always been to valorise our work.'* (Farmer 2, Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group).

*'We want to beat the unfair competition of the large retailers, which, with the use of hormones, gather the fruits in advance and in larger quantities.'* (Farmer 1, Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group)

While profitability is central for sustaining the farm or the SFSC – it may not necessarily figure as the main motivating factor.

On the contrary – in the stories of informants, there are many descriptions of passions or motivating factors that lie elsewhere – and of the selling part as a necessity to be handled.

*When you like to grow vegetables, it's nice to sell them – and then direct sale is the easiest'*. (Farmer 2, male, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

*'I enjoy keeping at it and digging and making things. But it is expensive. [...] So to be able to complete my projects, I am dependent on making money.'* (Farmer 3, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

Another point, modifying or adding context to the aim of making money, is that the aim may be to earn a decent living by a way of life that is meaningful – and not seeking a continuous increase of income. This was expressed by a pork breeder in the French Producers' market case.

*'The idea was not to create a company. It was to live. In a meaningful way. That's why I wanted to be organic.'* (French Producers' market)

An observation from the French cases was that in the discourse of the producers, the justifications of the market world were typically not refused or opposed as such, but they were viewed as deeply problematic and denounced if they were regarded as the only relevant ones. Other worlds of justifications exist in parallel.

#### ***4.4.2 Quality and product diversification***

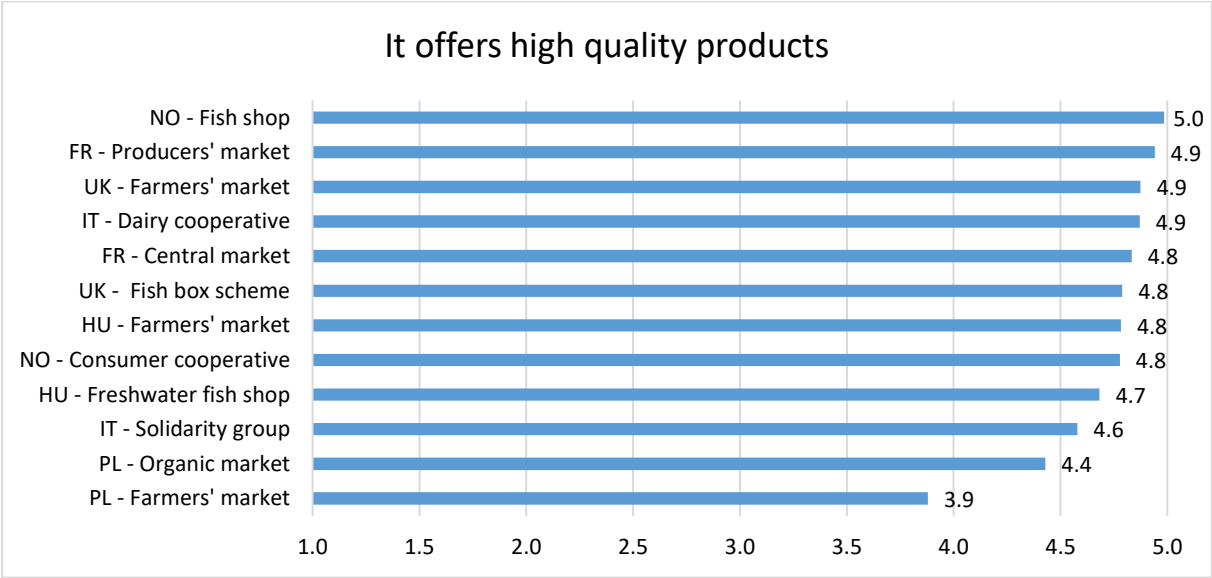
There is a high level of agreement that food purchased from these outlets is 'unique', as fresher and of higher quality, compared to products available in a typical grocery store (Figure 20). The high quality of products, including freshness, is found to be very important for the customers at "Campagna Amica". A central aim for the network is to educate consumers about food quality related to seasonality.



**Figure 20 I get unique food products here that I cannot buy in a typical grocery store**

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

Similarly, perceptions of high food quality and high satisfaction with the different food quality aspects are common across all cases (Figure 21).



**Figure 21 This outlet offers high quality products**

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

In the case of the Italian Dairy cooperative, the quality of the products is considered one of the most relevant drivers for customers to choose this SFSC:

*'Usually, I don't buy the same product from other points-of-sale because I think that they are not comparable from a qualitative point of view [...] the reason why I buy from this shop is*

*the quality of the product which I consider particularly good.*’ (Consumer 2, Italian Dairy cooperative)

Uniqueness and high quality in terms of taste is often emphasised by consumers in several of the cases.

*‘I often purchase at this shop because I think the products are qualitatively valuable, in particular I find the mountain cheese<sup>22</sup> more tasty than the normal.’* (Consumer 1, Italian Dairy cooperative)

*‘Regarding the difference between the products bought in a supermarket and by GAS network, I think it is more important to underline the taste difference.’* (Consumer 3, Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group)

The freshness and keeping quality of products were other aspects that were described as better.

*‘The vegetables bought from our producer are still good after a week, while those from the supermarket have a lower shelf life.’* (Consumer 4, Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group)

*‘(...) if it was possible, I would also buy other products here because I like to buy from small-scale shop retailers devoted to the sale of local fresh products’.* Consumer 5, Italian Dairy cooperative)

Short travelling distance to abattoirs are also mentioned as positive characteristics – with respect to animal welfare as well as tastefulness of the meat. Freshness of vegetables in particular is often emphasized in several of the cases – a key feature in SFSCs with potentially very short time and distance from harvesting to consumption. This is a quality aspect, which is discussed by consumers as a competitive advantage in comparison with fresh produce bought in supermarkets.

#### **4.4.3 Price – value for money or the ‘real costs’ of food**

Price is of importance– and often understood and talked about within a common framework of understanding – shared among the various actors in the SFSCs. Common values, which in accordance with the common understanding should not be compromised include:

- Environmental sustainability
- Animal welfare
- Sustenance of the small-scale, diversified farms in marginalised areas – or in the local area where the customers live
- Trust in SFSC

It appears to be a common understanding that the price of food is related to costs of production – and that cheaper food (that comes at the cost of compromising some of these values) is not desirable.

*‘We require a product description to understand the production costs and see if it is compliant to the proposed price.’* (Consumer 2, Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group)

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<sup>22</sup> The consumer refers to Parmigiano Reggiano PDO ‘Product of the Mountain’.

Insights into the food production – how it happens, and what the costs cover – inform the customers and provide a basis for them to evaluate if the price seems meaningful for them or not. Meaningfulness seems to be the key. As long as the price appears as meaningful - although with some (individual) upper limits – it seems justifiable for customers. Examples of dialogues about price negotiations from the Norwegian Consumer Cooperative case follow below:

From the farmer perspective:

Interviewer: *What are your experiences with 'Vestfold Kooperativ'? Are there price negotiations there?*

Farmer: *No, on the contrary - they have contributed to raising the price rather than taking it down. (...) 'If we are to survive with this small-scale diversified farm, I think it is through CSA, cooperative and direct sales that it might be possible.'* (Farmer 2, male Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

From the consumer perspective:

Researcher: *What makes up the value for you in buying directly from the farmer? Is it the freshness of the produce? Or is it that the farmer gets a larger part of the profit?*

Consumer/Member: *It is both. Yes. I do like that the farmer is paid more rather than others making the profit.* (Consumer 2, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

*'I care for the farmers getting paid for what they do. That they have the possibility all the time to improve their production – take care of animal welfare, and not all the time be pressured on price.'* (Consumer 1, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

*'I would not buy from anywhere where animal welfare was not important...animal welfare is the most important thing to me above all else.'* (Consumer 2, UK Farmers' market)

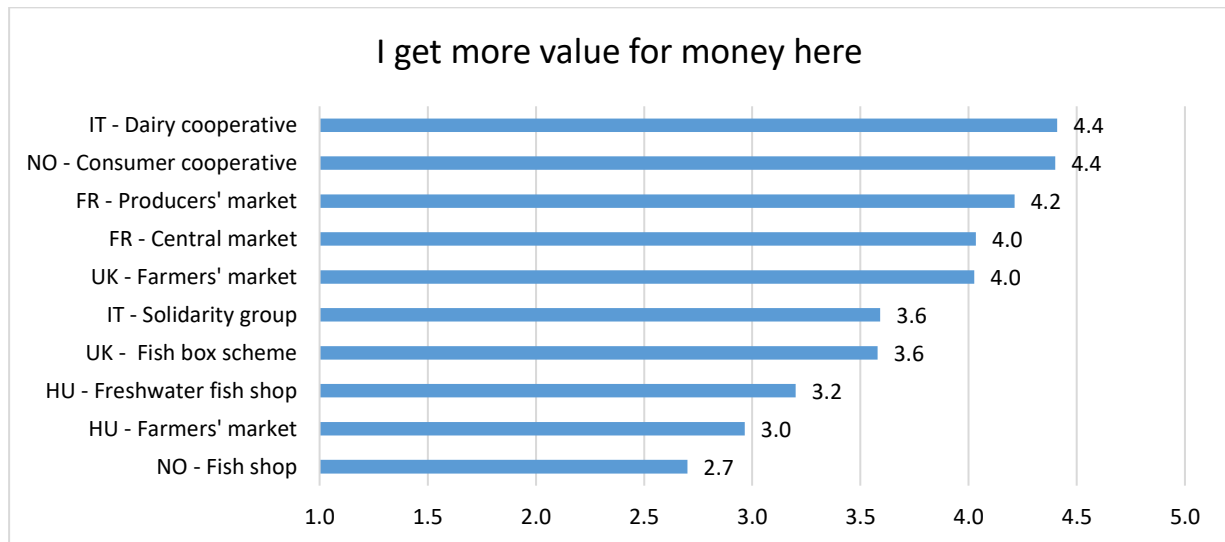
Below is a further example of how higher price is considered to be 'worth it' because of trust:

*'Compared to other shopping experiences, such as those that take place in a supermarket, I recognise a difference in the price, but I prefer to buy in a traditional way because I really trust in this shop.'* (Consumer 2, Italian Dairy cooperative)

These kinds of issues and reflections inform the answers and reactions to the question asked in the survey about 'value for money' (Figure 22). *What supports the sense of getting 'value for money'? What constitutes the value? How (within what convention(s)) are justifications made?*

In some cases, prices are experienced as fair and comparable to similar products in grocery stores:

*'I could imagine that there are many who could have been interested in getting local vegetables. And if they are not that interested in the organic aspect, it is local vegetables at a fair price. The meat bags are perhaps somewhat more expensive than what you get at KIWI, but I believe that the vegetable bags are quite fair.'* (Consumer 3, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

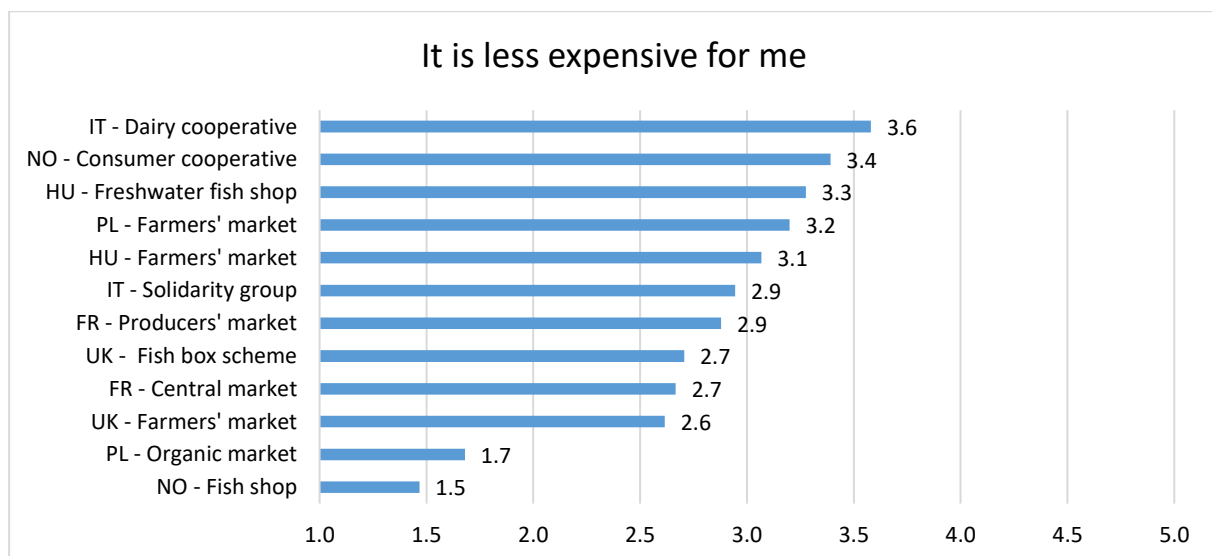


**Figure 22 I get more value for money here compared to a typical grocery store<sup>23</sup>**

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

The customers do not select these outlets for saving money, but find that the products generally offer good value for money. The cooperatives in Italy and Norway are experiences as best value for money and not that expensive, while especially the fish shop in Norway is evaluated to have high prices (Figure 23).

Although it is evident that the price of food is an important factor for many, there are examples of considerations that the price should reflect the realities behind the food products; the ‘true costs’ of food produced in line with basic values. Here is an example from a consumer at the UK Farmers’ market: *‘In an ideal world, I would like it to be illegal for food to be sold at less than it costs.’*



**Figure 23 This outlet is less expensive for me**

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

<sup>23</sup> This question was not asked in Poland.

In the “Campagna Amica” survey, 70% of customers reported that they did not look at the price when buying food; 85% reported that they choose the farmers’ market because of good value for money; and 74% responded that they would buy there even if prices increase by 5%. One interpretation made of the results, is that people understand the value of food, appreciate the quality and recognise that fresh products allow them to save money by reducing food waste. (Coldiretti, Italy)

### **Summary**

Higher prices in SFSCs may partly be justified by customers due to the higher quality of food, reflected by better taste in fruit and vegetables, freshness and longer keeping quality (Market justifications). Other types of justifications are also expressed in our results, such as buying foods of higher quality and longer keeping quality leading possibly to a reduction of food waste (Green).

## **4.5 Industrial**

Food provisioning in supermarkets has to a large degree become a routinized activity for many European consumers where the retailers cater for the customers’ demand for efficiency and convenience. The supermarkets offer a wide range of standardized food products, often processed and “ready-to eat”. Their competitive advantages are to a great extent belonging to the ‘Industrial world’ of standardisation and efficiency, meaning a wide range of products, easily accessible to reasonable prices. However, as discussed, consumers also are critical of the quality of products offered in conventional retail stores. In what ways do customers value convenience and selection of products in SFSCs?

### ***4.5.1 Convenience***

There is some variation in how customers in different cases view the convenience of buying from SFSCs (Figure 24). The two Norwegian cases score lowest, which may be explained by the fact that there is a high density of supermarkets, especially in the cities. The larger retail chains have more than 90 percent of the total food sales, and Norwegian consumers are used to convenient, (almost) everyday shopping, of food. Speciality shops and markets only make up for a marginal share of food purchases in Norway. At the other end, we find the customers at farmers’ markets in Poland, Hungary, UK and also customers of the Italian Dairy cooperative that find it convenient to make their food shopping at these markets. This may have to do with the regularity of the markets and that they form a part of their daily or weekly food purchasing routines. We have seen that these markets to a great extent cater for the older segment of consumers, thus there is a potential to draw younger consumers to these markets. In Chapter 6, barriers, potentials and measures for attracting customers will be more broadly discussed.

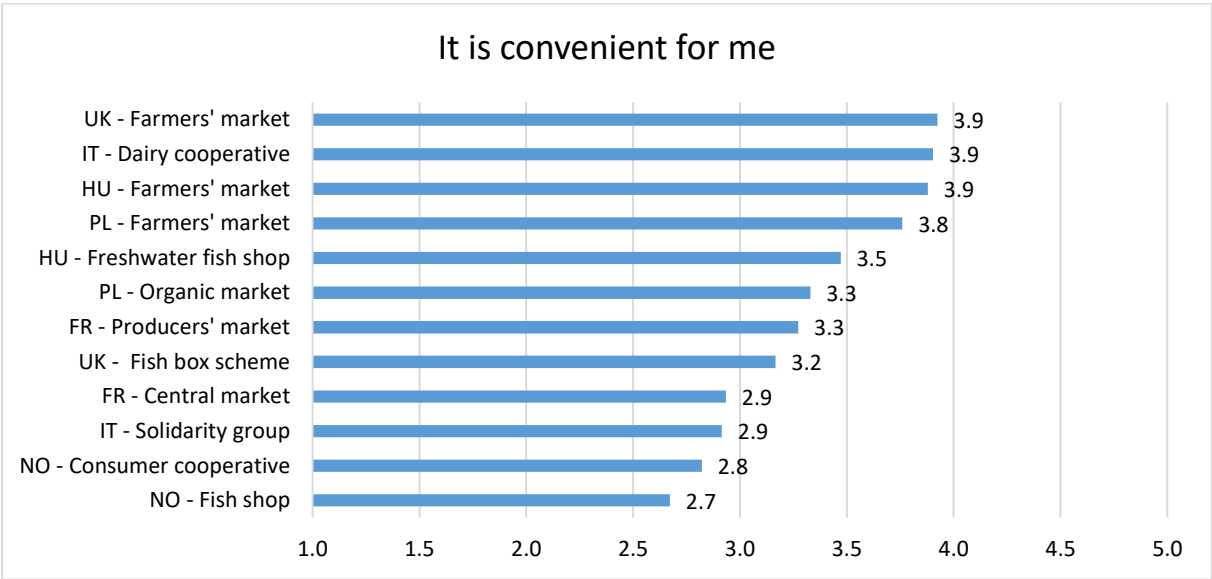


Figure 24 This outlet is convenient for me

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

4.5.2 Product selection

The survey results show that there was a large variation in the satisfaction with the selection of products in the SFSCs (Figure 25). This is as could be expected, due to the differences in the range of products offered in the different cases, and the expectations held by customers being familiar with the nature of the outlet.

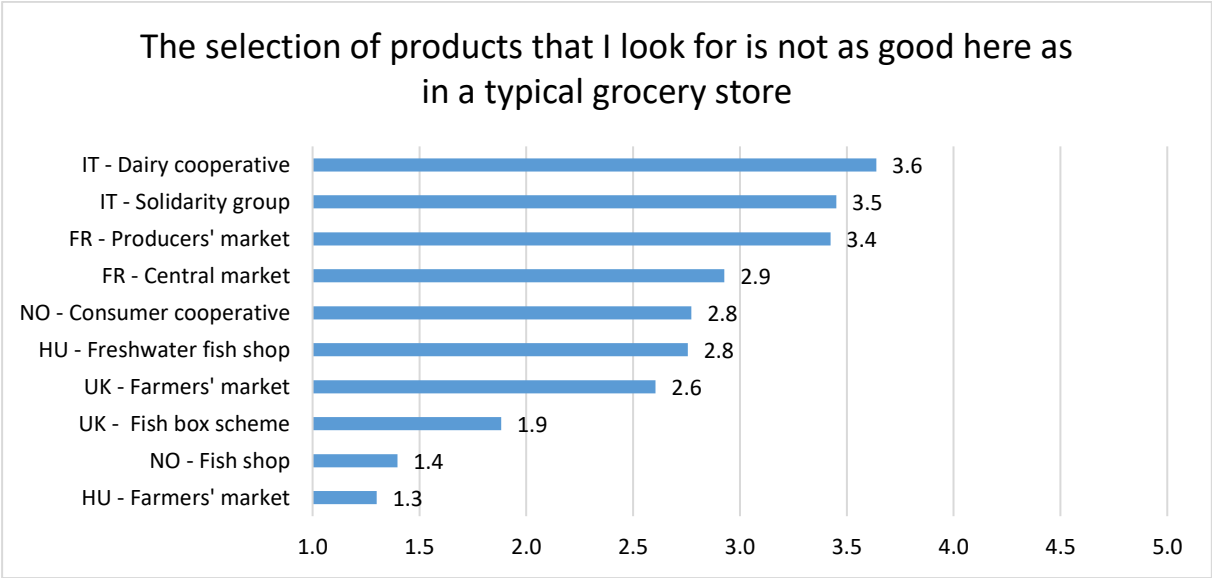


Figure 25 The selection of products that I look for is not as good here as in a typical grocery store<sup>24</sup>

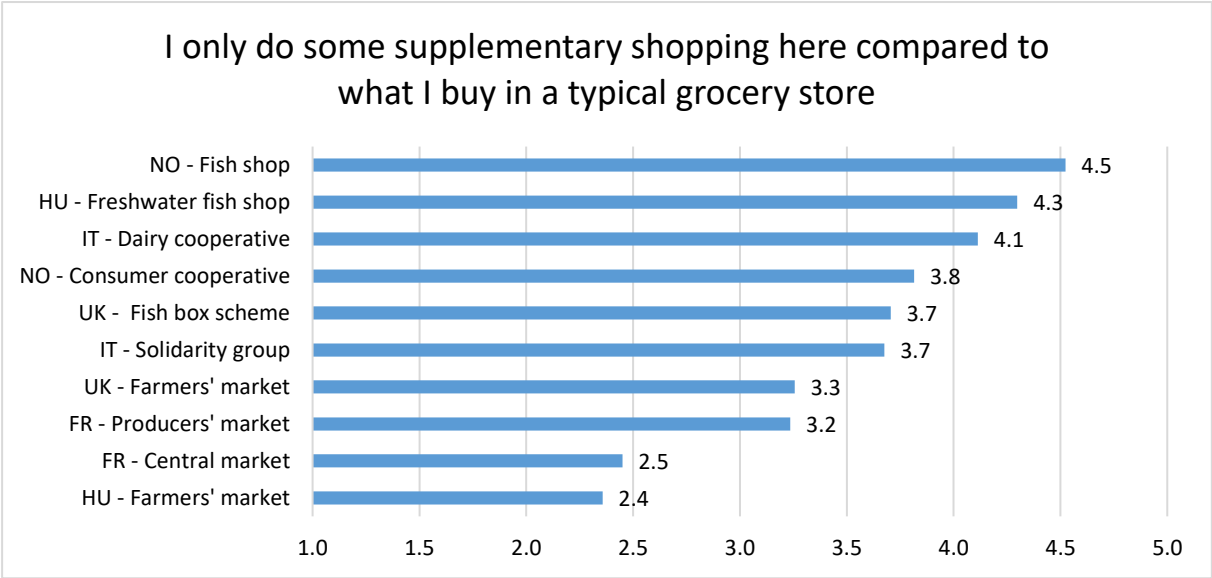
Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

<sup>24</sup> The question was not asked in Poland

In the case of the French Producers’ market, it is described that consumers typically buy the whole range of products available at the market (e.g. vegetables, fruits, meat, cheese), and that they sometimes buy products for special occasions, but more often as part of everyday life. Customers in this case were among those with a high score (3.4) on this question. This could be explained by the fact that a variation of products are actually offered, combined with the long tradition of this market, and perhaps familiarity with the products one can find.

Product selection, access to a wide variety of products was not considered a very important reason to choose to buy at farmers’ markets by respondents in the “Campagna Amica” survey. This is interpreted as customers being familiar with what they can find and not find there according to the various seasons, and that they are comfortable with that. At the same time, the selection of products is generally very good at these farmers’ markets, and they are organised with the aim that the attending farmers complement each other products.

Regarding the question about supplementary shopping (Figure 26) the fish cases stand out where the respondents to a larger degree see this only as supplementary to ordinary food shopping. This is in contrast to Figure 25 where the customers in the same cases responded with a great satisfaction with the selection of products. We interpret this as a confirmation that these cases of SFSC of fish really cover a demand for fresh, high quality fish and seafood, that they do not find in ordinary supermarkets. While fish outlets are seen as supplementary, farmers markets to a greater extent are viewed as important in households’ food provisioning, especially in the French and Hungarian cases (Figure 26). This was also reported from the Polish farmers’ market case, although not asked about in the customer questionnaire.



**Figure 26 I only do some supplementary shopping here compared to what I buy in a typical grocery store <sup>25</sup>**

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

<sup>25</sup> This question was not asked in Poland.



4.6 Fame

Some of the cases are characterised by having a strong standing of recognition in the general population. Either in terms of ‘fame/celebrity’ or by tradition, being firmly established as a natural part of the local food culture and consumption practices.

The central market in Dijon is one such example, having existed for about 150 years. Another is the Norwegian fish shop, ‘Brødrene Berggren’ (the Berggren brothers), which was established in 1911 as one of Norway’s oldest fishmongers. Located in the heart of Sandefjord's harbour area, it is well-known both among the locals and beyond. Today, the building of the fish shop also houses a seafood restaurant with an excellent reputation, run by world champion<sup>26</sup> chef Geir Skeie.

The dairy cooperative ‘Latteria Sociale Garfagnolo’ is another example of a company with a long tradition and proud history: it was founded in 1947, when more than 50 small farmers were selling hand-milked milk. ‘Latteria Sociale Garfagnolo’ was one of the first dairy cooperatives established in the Appennino Tosco-Emiliano Mountains.

The SFSCs with the longest history and/or having received public attention (e.g. been awarded prizes) are typically those that received the highest scores on the issue of reputation in the customer survey, while the newer initiatives had yet to ‘earn’ their reputation (Figure 27).

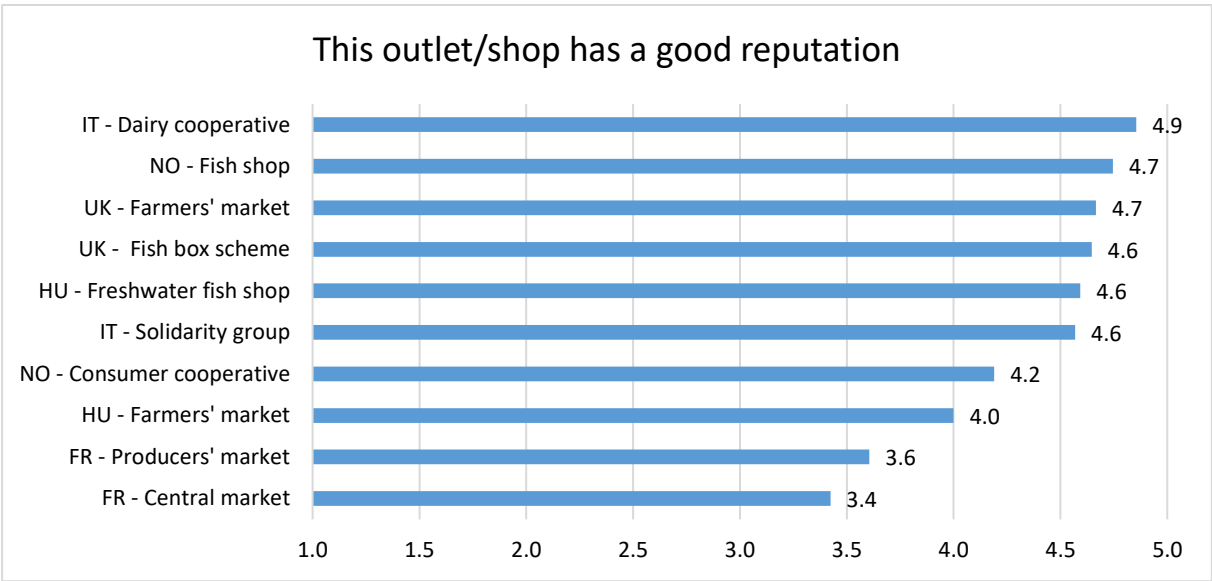


Figure 27 This outlet has a good reputation <sup>27</sup>

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

The survey results show a generally high score for the statement about the outlet/shops’ reputation, which on average ranged above 4, except for the two French cases. For example the Italian Dairy Cooperative was perceived as having ‘always been there’.

<sup>26</sup> Winner of Bocuse d’Or in 2009

<sup>27</sup> This question was not asked in Poland.

#### ***4.6.1 Outlet reputation – ‘fame’ and brand***

While some of the cases rest on a solid reputation through a long-standing history, others have earned a good reputation by other means through positive public attention in the media, or by receiving prizes. One such example is the UK case of ‘Hexham Farmers’ Market’, which despite its relatively recent establishment has gained a good reputation among the numerous Farmers’ Markets in the North East. It was awarded the best farmers’ market in England and Wales by the National Farmers Union (NFU), and furthermore, was selected as regional representative in the ‘best market’ category for the BBC Food and Farming Awards in 2015.

#### **4.7 Inspired**

Motivations belonging to the ‘Inspired’ convention appear to be important in most of the studied cases – as a basic underlying force that is often crucial for long-term sustenance of the SFSC.

Emotions and inner motivations typically appear in the stories of how they have endured difficult times, the reasons why they have continued and made their way through the difficulties, the reasons why they are still motivated to this way of life (in the case of producers).

Justifications from the inspired world are not always at the centre in the outward communication but appear as a central up-holding force for the continuation of the involvement with the SFSC.

Experiencing meaning and inspiration to continue this way of life is basic for producers; but also important for why costumers stay loyal and keep coming back (in some cases despite higher prices and less convenience). Stories about joy, excitement, and the sense of meaningfulness are found across all types of actors. For example in descriptions of the value of the experience of going to the UK Farmers’ market:

*‘It’s just enjoyable, you know? It’s interesting... It’s much more fun walking around a market and you know...markets are lovely, vibrant places where you have contact with people. Supermarkets are not...They’re horribly lit and terribly, terribly dull I find.’* (Consumer 3, UK Farmers’ market)

*‘I absolutely love it...I just find it absolutely delightful to know who your producers are and to buy local stuff.’* (Consumer 4, UK Farmers’ market)

Enjoyment is also part of the stories of becoming a fisher, as pointed out in both the Norwegian and UK cases. The UK fishers expressed enjoyment of fishing and connection to the sea as important and similarly the Norwegian fishers underlined that they have always had an interest for fishing, appreciated working outdoors and close to nature.

Whether customers found the SFSC as ‘innovative and creative’ was asked in the survey (Figure 28).

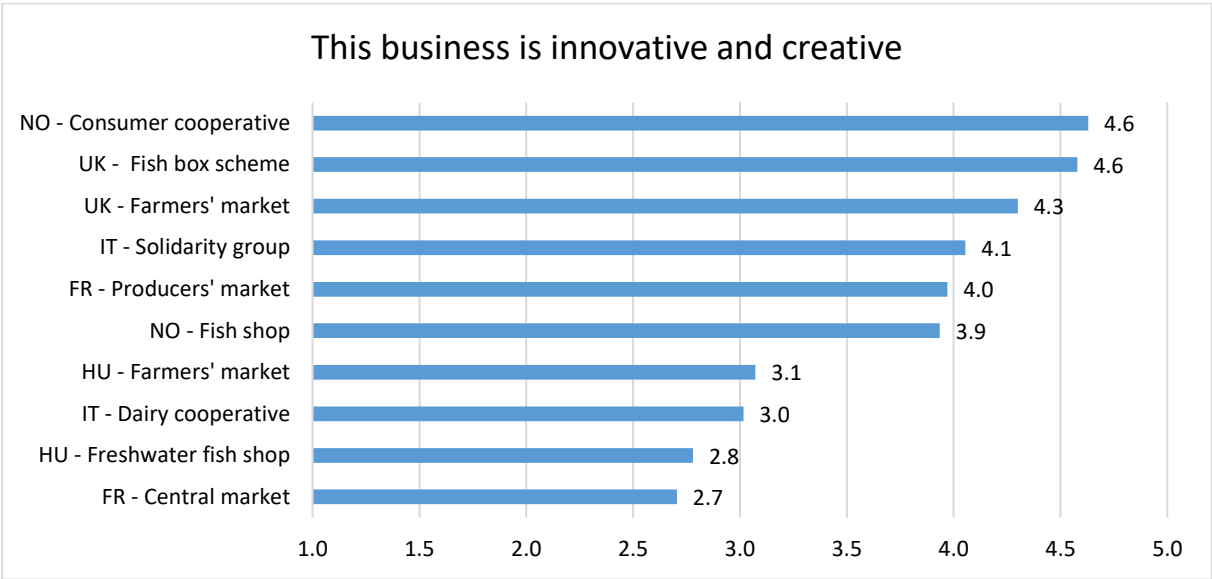


Figure 28 This business is innovative and creative <sup>28</sup>

Source: Own compilation based on data collected from fieldwork.

The results showed that this was a question that divided the cases somewhat; with highest scores in the more recent and innovative SFSCs, such as the Norwegian Consumer cooperative, the UK Fish box scheme, and the Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group.

One source of uncertainty for these results is that the question was framed as “How important are the following reasons why you shop here?” Customers may have found the initiative innovative and creative, without that being an important reason to buy there.

Inspired justifications appear across all actors in the Norwegian Consumer Cooperative Case. References to emotions such as *joy* and *excitement* as a central driving force for what they do are recurrent. Farmers express joy at being able to create something based on the values, which deeply motivate them.

*‘It is fun to see it happening, that what we are building and what we envisioned 30 years ago actually is beginning to appear – and even nicer than we thought it was going to be! It is quite remarkable. 25 years ago, I drew an idea about how the garden/farm could be part of a larger social setting – ‘this is what the garden could look like in the future’ – and then, suddenly, people come and ask if they could become part of a community supported agriculture, and we stand here wondering: Wow! This is what we thought about so many years ago!’ (Farmer 2, female, Norwegian Consumer Cooperative)*

When present at the pick-up place, during data collection, we could observe how the organizers expressed joy at the sight of the bountiful bags of vegetables, photographing them to share with members on Instagram, put on Facebook etc. Joy was expressed by the customers as well, for instance through comments in the customer survey: *‘The joy of vegetables, which I do not get in the ordinary food store, and completely fresh!’ (Survey note, Customer 21, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)*

The notion of being innovative and creative was central in the stories of several farmers in the Norwegian Consumer Cooperative:

<sup>28</sup> This question was not asked in Poland.

*'I don't really know of anyone else who is starting up anything in this business. Most people talk about quitting. It's only myself and a couple of others who are talking of starting up something.'* (Farmer 3, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

*'We are idealists (...) We are entrepreneurs.'* (Farmer 2, Female, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

Strong, inner motivations are described as central for the ability to endure demanding situations and phases in the development and sustenance of the SFSC. It seems from several of the stories told, that being deeply inspired, and experiencing the work as meaningful provides a source of stamina to overcome difficulties encountered on the way. Even when temporarily lost, it seems that having once been deeply inspired provides a source that can be re-gained as motivation to carry on.

*'Well, it is a bit like 'once inspired – always inspired'. Or when you get a kind of inspiration, or set a goal for yourself – when that goal is sufficiently 'big and hairy' so that you sort of never really get there – and then as long as the inspiration remains, that you find back to it – it may be gone from time to time, but 'as long as there is heat in the glow', then I don't see for myself that there is anything else than this for me.'* (Farmer 2, male, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

*'What I would say we could be proud of is that we have stood by ourselves. That we have endured, and kept on. That we have had a kind of perseverance along with being visionaries, in a way, being idealists.'* (Farmer 2, female, Norwegian Consumer cooperative)

## **5. ACTORS' PERCEPTIONS OF DRIVERS AND BARRIERS FOR SFSC DEVELOPMENT**

### **5.1 Meaningfulness**

As discussed in the previous chapter there are several motivating factors that act as driving forces both for producers and consumers to take part in SFSCs. Participants often express that the work with - and involvement in - SFSC activities in various ways has a significant meaning. For some this may be in the form of inner motivations creating a certain self-esteem, while others get engaged by more altruistic and idealistic reasons or get motivated by the many social aspects of direct sales. In this section we will present the results from the in-depth interviews where producers, retailers, market managers and consumers express why they want to take part in SFSCs.

#### ***5.1.1 Autonomy***

We found that autonomy and a sense of freedom was important for the interviewed producers (farmers and fishers) and retailers in many of the cases. One of the Polish farmers expressed the view that selling his own produce at the market had become a way of life with a great deal of autonomy. To manage one's own workhours were also treasured although the workload often was heavy with long working days.

Many of the farmers stated that selling their product direct to the consumer, without being subjected to strict demands from large processing or retail companies, was a relief. Direct sales gave a greater sense of freedom to do and producing what you like. Direct sales was also a way to adapt the type and volume of production to the resources available on the farm. Farmers at the UK farmers' market said that they wanted a different type of life from "conventional farm production" and that this SFSC initiative gave them an opportunity to make a change in their lives. Here they could make a business out of something they enjoy doing (selling cakes, ready meals etc. (see case report UK Farmers' market). These inner motivational factors were found important across actors in most of the studied cases.

#### ***5.1.2 Idealism***

Other supportive factors were different types of ideal or altruistic motives expressed by producers, retailers and consumers. This ideological element was naturally strong in the initiatives explicitly founded with an aim of solidarity between consumers and producers such as the Italian solidarity groups and the Norwegian consumer cooperative, but as we saw in the previous chapter the support for local producers and environment were also prominent in other types of SFSCs. One of the retailers in the Norwegian fish shop expressed a strong obligation to take care of the local know-how and preserve local traditions. For him it was a strong motivation to run a speciality fish shop with expert knowledge on how to handle and process fish. This ideal was also shared among producers in the French producers' market cases who saw the importance of developing alternatives to the industrial- and globalised food production and distribution systems. The notion of environmentalism was also a strong motivational factor (see French case report; Hauterives' organic producers' market).

#### ***5.1.3 Sociability***

Shared values among consumers and producers, such as in the Italian solidarity groups and the Norwegian consumer cooperative, were seen as important for laying the foundations for a trustful relationship. This sociability was both an inner motivational factor as well as a more altruistic motivation connected to local community building as for instance seen among the participants of the French producers' market. In Hauterives, the social dimension was thought of as an objective by the initiators, who established a table, chairs and self service coffee. This

market is an important place where local inhabitants can exchange information (where to get help for something, for some service, etc.).

For producers the direct relationship with customers was especially inspiring when receiving recognition for the quality of their products and when consumers expressed their special gratitude (Central Market in Dijon, Hauterives' organic producers' market, Local distribution of fish (Norway)). Also in the Hungarian Farmers' market social and local aspects were important and farmers experienced that many customers came back on a regular basis, and that these were stable and lasting relationships. Even younger consumers came back to the same producers as they were visiting together with their parents in their childhood. This type of experience value was also recognized by consumers in the Norwegian local fish case. Also the direct feed-back (Italian dairy co-operative) from consumers was appreciated and gave the producers a special pride in providing high quality products (Norwegian local fish).

## 5.2 Knowledge

### 5.2.1 Products

In the Italian dairy cooperative case there was a strong identification with the local cheese production among the local actors including farmers, processors and consumers. As a consequence, there is a genuine and shared local (tacit) knowledge about how the distinct quality of the cheese is developed and created. The preservation and development of this knowledge is an important driver for further development (expansion) both in primary production, processing and consuming (market) of this speciality cheese. In the Norwegian local fish case both fishers and retailers emphasized their first-hand knowledge of handling and processing of fish to obtain best possible quality of the seafood. For the fishers the knowledge of how to handle the fish and shrimps to obtain high quality was learned through practical experience. The retailers emphasize that their advantage was to have skilled workers (e.g. chefs) to secure the highest quality and a range of speciality products that differ from the selection in ordinary food stores. First-hand knowledge of the final product is an advantage in communication with consumers to give good guidance on how to treat and prepare the products. Consumers in the Hungarian farmers' market experienced that the produce offered by the local producers was more fresh compared with the produce of other retailers at the market. Thus, the transparency and trust in the local farmer contributed to the consumers' evaluation of the food quality. The social connection and proximity with consumers, at a farmers' market or in a local speciality shop, help to explain how things are produced (see for instance UK Farmers' market case or NO local fish case). This is especially relevant for organic producers who feel that many consumers do not know what organic production means or do not trust labels. The direct relation with the consumer can thus help to explain farming practices and related information, while contributing to improved current understanding and public perceptions.

Even though producers and retailers in many cases possess special knowledge about their products, processing of food is for many of the farmers who are developing their own food specialities a new area where more knowledge is needed. For instance in the Polish organic market case the farmers said: *"Knowledge about processing technologies is crucial – we have to continuously learn"*. Also for consumers, products bought outside the ordinary food market may be challenging either because the products are new and unfamiliar or they are raw and not processed the way consumers are used to. For instance in the Norwegian local fish case consumers said they were not comfortable with handling and preparing a whole fish bought in the local fish shop. This is because they are used to the convenience of purchasing fillets of fish or processed fish, which they believe is more efficient to prepare in a hectic everyday life.

### 5.2.2 Communication, marketing (social media) and technology

How can social media and new ICT-platforms be used to strengthen SFSCs? Galli and Brunori (2013) emphasised that the Internet has become an important tool for setting up, establishing and organizing SFSCs. On a national level the Italian farmers' market organisation, Campagna Amica, uses several social media platforms to reach different audiences and users, including Twitter, Instagram, Facebook as well as YouTube. On the organisations' web-page all the points of sales adherent to the network are listed, with a brief description of the activities, details about food produced, contacts and the website that, for many farms, is the tool where the e-commerce is organized. Facebook is an especially important medium to reach the consumers on important themes such as labelling of food, food safety, traceability and has about 58,000 likes. Consumers seek information about FMs, opening times, specific products and recipes (Coldiretti, Italy).<sup>29</sup>

However, many SFSCs lack the competence on how to use information technology, to improve logistics and marketing of products to end consumers. Marketing is an area where the interviewees expressed a lack of knowledge and with a great potential for improvements such as in the farmers' market cases in Hungary, Poland and France. Some farmers, for instance in the Italian dairy cooperative case, expressed a lack in fundamental skills about information and communication technology in general and the cooperative expressed a lack of competence in marketing, not least in the use of social media as an innovative channel to reach new customer groups and markets. This was also the case among farmers at the Central market in Dijon stating that their websites are not up to date and there was little communication and marketing. In the Polish organic market, BioBazar, producers expressed a lack of marketing and communication skills. However, both producers and the market managers have especially focused on the importance of training courses:

*'We participate in many trainings to increase our knowledge for example in the area of sales, marketing but also processing techniques.'*

Also Campagna Amica, the Italian farmers' market organization, facilitates a range of training activities for its members on information, nutrition and fiscal aspects to improve the farmers' communication and marketing skills.

IC-technology not only in the form of communication (social media), but also in the form of ordering and transaction of orders (purchase and payments) is rapidly developing. These electronic platforms may have a great potential for the future development of SFSCs, but may also face a threat from competition with other actors such as new online companies and conventional food retailers offering local food to customers. While lack of competence was a widespread barrier, we also found that especially in the new initiatives, social media were a central part of the organisation and communication between producers, managers/retailers and consumers. In the solidarity purchasing groups in Italy, web-based platforms have been important to expand the organisation and connect different initiatives (see Italian case report: p. 54). Also the Polish organic market has been innovative in collecting e-mail/Facebook orders from customers and pick-up products from the stand and send the products directly to customers on behalf of the producers (see Polish Organic market case report). The Norwegian consumer cooperative originally organized their activity through their web-page for ordering food baskets (vegetables, meat or bread) and a Facebook group for information about orders, pick-up places and pick-up times as well as recipes etc. Recently, the cooperative introduced a new option

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<sup>29</sup> <http://www.campagnamica.it/> <http://www.campagnamica.it/la-nostra-rete/fattorie/azienda-agricola-moretti-geltrude/>

based on the Norwegian smart phone application “Vipps” where both orders and transactions (payments) are made in one operation (see box 6.1).

### 5.3 Other material conditions

In line with previous studies (EIP-Agri 2015; Galli & Brunori 2013), lack of appropriate facilities and up-to-date machineries were considered important constraints among producers, retailers and market managers. For instance, the *Italian dairy cooperative* really saw the need for investments in new facilities to improve direct sales from the local shop in the form of expansion of the maturing facilities, refurbishment of the dairy facilities to attract visitors as well as to the food outlet.

However, some exceptions were also found in other cases such as for instance BioBazar, the organic market in Warsaw, for which new investments proved to be successful. The market had recently moved to a new location with improved facilities. This had really spurred the activity at the market. The Hungarian farmers’ market of Szekszárd was newly renovated and the support from the municipality in facilitating the infrastructure of the market had been of great importance offering stands, cleaning, waste management, parking, rest rooms and dressing rooms for the vendors. This support from local authorities is of vital importance for the development of the market.

Lack of capital often constrains producers and retailers from doing necessary investments and expanding their businesses. This was a recurring issue in many of the cases. However, the drive for constantly improving the facilities or investing in more efficient machinery were not always shared among participants or between different types of SFSCs. In several of the cases, capital was a limiting factor, however; especially the small scale producers often adopted a careful investment strategy and avoided (too high) loans. Galli and Brunori (2013) emphasized that “*It is about making strategic decisions on what size fits best the operation, both economically and socially.*” In the Hungarian Farmers’ market some producers rather preferred to buy used machinery or make it themselves, rather than making expensive investments in new machineries. The attitude of careful investments to stay autonomous was also reflected among some of the farmers in both French cases of Central market in Dijon and Hauterives’ organic producers market.

#### 5.3.1 Availability and seasonality

In the customer survey and in-depth interviews with consumers we found that regularity, seasonality, locality (distance from home) and variety (selection of products) may be factors that refrain consumers from buying direct from producers. Time is a limited factor in everyday life, thus many consumers prioritize shopping to be as convenient and timesaving as possible at the local supermarket, where a wide range of products are available all year round. Distance from home to the outlet is also for many a crucial factor, which often rules out the possibility of visiting an alternative SFSC-outlet.

The Polish organic farmers’ market, BioBazar, is open all year round, though the selection of products varies to some extent with the seasons, especially regarding fresh produce such as vegetables, fruits and berries. For the individual producers, seasonality is a challenge in terms of having regular incomes from the market all year round, while for market managers the seasonality also gives potential for increased activities. The holiday season is the time when many of the businesses experience the greatest demand, and at BioBazar for instance, Christmas gave an opportunity to organize several other activities such as donating Christmas trees or selling holiday gift baskets (see Polish organic market case BioBazar). In the Italian Kuminda



case some farmers have solved the challenge with seasonality by investing in machinery for processing tomato sauce in the summertime, when the harvest is large while sales are poor.

While at other times of year, besides the high peaks of holiday seasons, some producers and retailers face several challenges with lack of demand. In the Hungarian farmers' market case, seasonality and availability was a special challenge for the smaller producers. In some periods they were not present and they also often ran the risk of selling out their limited amount of products before the end of the market day. This made these producers more unpredictable for cooperating with and they also lost customers to the larger retailers. On the other hand, the regular consumers had a deeper understanding and higher tolerance towards the small producers and the fact that their products are only available in the season. This was also experienced in other cases, and for instance the Campagna Amica organization as well as the Norwegian consumer cooperative saw it as an "educational" task to teach customers to follow the season. In the Norwegian local fish case, the small speciality fish shops were dependent on the holiday seasons and demand from tourists. They looked for new possibilities to strengthen sales all year round. One tried out home-delivery with limited success, while another had bought a food truck to sell at the market square in the nearby town. However, they also recognized a greater potential from seasonal variations because the local use of many types of fish and seafood is seasonal. This seasonality in fish consumption was also found in the Hungarian freshwater fish case where 60-70% of the consumption is concentrated at the time of Christmas. The Christmas season is thus vital for the survival of the fish farming industry and, however, to increase all year consumption of fish would have strengthened the local distribution of fish. The UK Fish box scheme is an example of an innovative business which can significantly contribute to strengthening local supply and demand making local fish more available and easier to purchase.

New ways of attracting consumers represent a key for success of SFSCs and must include foreseeable and regular supply to meet consumers' expectations of convenience. Box schemes may be a way to minimize the time required for provisioning of speciality food and products that are not readily available in ordinary supermarkets.

Especially in households where time is a limiting factor, new ways of food provisioning were discussed. For example at the UK Farmers' Market one of the interviewed customers recognised: *"I realise that if you are a different person with a busy job and a family then a veg box delivery would be really handy."* At the *Central market in Dijon* it was also recognized that, if not retired, consumers were heavily constrained by the available time they spend doing food purchases at the market.

### **Summary**

Even though these markets are located centrally in the town, they compete with supermarkets, and with internet sales, that can satisfy consumer demand regarding convenient and efficient shopping. Thus, initiatives that seek to meet such consumer needs may be successful in attracting new customers. The UK Fish box scheme and the Norwegian consumer cooperative are examples of initiatives that try to facilitate convenient food provisioning by regular boxes of food and fixed pick-up places.

## 5.4 Governance and social organization

### 5.4.1 Close networks

Even though in many cases there is competition between producers, for instance at traditional food markets and farmers' markets, the producers said they cooperated and benefitted from the close network that participation in SFSC-initiatives contributed to. Thus, the focus was more often on the benefits of cooperation than potential conflicts/competition. Producers at the Central market in Dijon emphasized that the close relations to the customers was important in building loyalty, and networks and cooperation with other producers was important for running the business as, for example, the possibility of buying from each other when running out of their own produce. One of the traders at the UK Farmers' Market mentioned the solidarity and harmony within the network: *'...getting to know some of the other traders, the way they run their business. Hexham is a good example, really good atmosphere, some good regular customers and good traders there'* (Trader 4). Also in the Norwegian consumer co-operative farmers, who are used to operate *autonomously*, appreciated the opportunity for participation that also led to cooperation with the other farmers in other settings than the cooperative. With regard to supplying products to the cooperative, there was a focus on supplementing each other rather than competition in delivering the same type of products. An attitude of respect and goodwill towards each other was apparent. One of the farmers expressed the view: *I very much appreciate the farmer-network. (...) We have in a way a cooperation.* Although there was a competition among farmers at the Hungarian farmers' market, they also expressed the advantage of cooperating with each other. Here it was thought that the main competition came from the larger retailers. These organizing principles of autonomy on the one hand and cooperation in close networks on the other, were appreciated when compared with the hierarchical structure of the conventional food market that is often experienced as a disadvantage to the producer, especially regarding price.

### 5.4.2 Price

In most of the cases, the main reasons to participate in the SFSC were economic, not least the possibility to gain higher prices than those made by wholesalers in "long" chains, but also, as reported by members of Campagna Amica, increased turnover and a security to sell. Some of their members saw direct sales as the only way to survive.

In many of the markets the producers were free to set their own price on the product, and this was perceived as advantageous by the producers with the potential for added-value on their products. One example of a more autonomous price setting was the Italian dairy cooperative, that through direct sales gave the producers the opportunity to independently set a price which is currently about 1 EURO above the market price. The Norwegian local fish case represents an exception because of governmental regulations securing the fishers a minimum price set by the co-operative sales organization. This was in contrast to the UK situation where the bargaining power was perceived weak by the fishers due to large scale operations by the merchants who control the distribution and set prices (see UK Fish box case).

In the Hungarian farmers' market case, which was a hybrid market also including more conventional retailers buying from larger wholesalers, individual price setting was more limited and smaller producers had to follow the leading price to a strong degree. Hungarian consumers are also more price sensitive, thus, leaving little room for price premiums on the products, although the prices at the market in general were higher than in supermarkets. Also in the Polish local farmers' market, producers felt the competition on price from local hypermarkets.

The price issue is not without controversy in the cases studied. From the customer survey, as well as in-depth interviews with producers, retailers and consumers, we found that in some cases the high prices of the products was a major barrier for purchase, not least when trying to attract new customers. This was typical for the cases where producers and retailers followed a market mode of evaluation and niche strategy, meaning that they sought to add value through differentiation of products in the market. This was for instance found in markets where producers promoted organic food such as at the Central Market in Dijon, in the Polish organic market, BioBazar, as well as at the UK Farmers' Market, where one of the traders explained: *'People are so used to paying very little money for chicken, and when you see a chicken that is maybe 15 pounds, their jaws sometimes hit the floor, until you explain why it's that price.'* (Trader 4).

In contrast, we found cases that explicitly were built around the civic mode of evaluations emphasizing solidarity among producers and consumers such as in the Italian solidarity groups and the Norwegian consumer co-operative. The Italian solidarity groups are committed to acting for: *"a fair and sustainable economy based on rules of justice and respect for people; fairly in the distribution of value; with transparent criteria in the definition of prices"*.

In practice, producers and consumers decide together and agree the price of the products; and in principle, the price should be lower than the retail price of the same product, as they are ordering very large quantities. However, these principles are tested from time to time:

*"Sometimes, the definition of the price can lead to some kind of disagreement or tension with the producers; this happens if the price requested by the farmer is questioned by the GAS. In this case, as we also experienced from the interviews, these negotiations are not appreciated by the farmers and could force them to stop selling their products through the GAS network."* (Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group)

Thus, low prices do not act as a main driver for consumers to join the GAS as there are several other distribution channels offering the same products at the same prices. To some extent, these disputes over price have changed the initial meaning of the initiative and one important challenge has been to get out of the roles as producers and consumers and become "co-producers". The Norwegian consumer cooperative faces another dilemma regarding pricing of products and support for farmers. The local organic farmers are quite diversified regarding size, thus, the larger farmers may offer the produce at a lower price than the smaller ones. Buying from the larger farmer then gives more vegetables in the bags distributed to the consumers. The challenge is how to communicate that sometimes there are fewer vegetables in the bag due to price differences between suppliers. This case illustrates how social norms of thrift (acting economically) at a household level conflict with ethical concerns and civic evaluations of fairness in the food system. These dilemmas seem especially challenging for the alternative food networks based on solidarity principles between consumers and producers.

#### **5.4.3 Organisation**

We found great variation in the organization of the twelve SFSCs. This variation may explain that individual SFSCs face different development challenges. As mentioned in the introduction, some are independent (traditional) speciality shops selling local food products, several are farmers' markets, but organized differently, either privately driven, driven by the local authorities or some are other types of initiatives (e.g. box schemes) co-operatively driven by producers or/and consumers.

Engagement from local authorities may contribute to strengthening the organization of the markets such as in Italy and Hungary. In Italy, a decree from the Minister of Agriculture and

Environment (Law dated 27 Dec 2006, n. 296) establishes minimum requirements for farmers markets: the main one being that the establishment of a FM should be authorized by the Municipalities. This means that opening of new markets has to be approved through a tender process, thus, must live up to certain requirements and standards set by local authorities. In addition, the Campagna Amica organisation sets its own rules and requirements for opening a new market. The strength of Campagna Amica is the support that local farmers' markets can get from being part of a nationwide network of markets. This collective organisation means that all farmers have to respect the same rules (behaviour, hygienic, transparency, label, controls...), while at the same time take the advantages offered by cooperation about promotion and communication (see section above about use of social media). Farmers are responsible for the purchase of the materials necessary for their sale while Campagna Amica pays all the costs for the design and their adaptation to the coordinated image of the FMs (Coldiretti, Italy).

Markets supported by local authorities such as in the Hungarian farmers' market of Szekszárd clearly benefit from having a public actor facilitating and organizing the activity which diminish the workload and costs of direct sales for the small scale producers. These producers also gain from no VAT on sale of smaller volumes along with other supportive measures from the market and local authorities. Some producers underline, however, the importance of uniform regulations for all kinds of producers to eliminate unfair advantages.

Thus, building networks not only between individual producers and consumers, but also between businesses or groups of initiatives is a strategy to strengthen the development of these SFSCs (Augère-Garnier, 2016) The Italian case with networks of solidarity groups on a local, regional and national scale is another example of how to strengthen SFSCs and secure the "small scale advantages". However, strategic decisions on how to run the initiative or market are also crucial to improve the attractiveness. In many cases this means to co-operate with other local actors, to locate or co-ordinate other activities together with the market/initiative and to carefully review regularity and opening hours of the market/initiative (see for instance BioBazar, farmers' market of Szekszárd, Campagna Amica). Innovative modes of distribution, such as box schemes, are other ways of organising local food supply and attract new customers (see for instance the Norwegian consumer cooperative, UK Fish box scheme, Italian Solidarity Purchasing Groups - Kuminda).

Even though the close networks in most cases are advantageous regarding co-operation and trusting relationships, these networks are also vulnerable especially in the cases with a strong co-operative foundation, dependent on the participants' common efforts. Especially smaller organizations may be dependent on a limited group of people who engage in the day-to-day management of the initiative. There might be asymmetries in how deeply individual participants are involved in developing the organization/business and differences in how economically dependent producers are of this specific market channel. Some (often larger) producers sell on several markets and distribute through different channels, while others are more dependent on selling through a limited number of markets. Unless there is a strong dedication among the producers / or consumers (if the initiative is consumer driven) the management will often depend on a small group or even only one or two enthusiastic people. If they get worn out, decide to lower their workload or quit their engagement with the initiative, the whole SFSC initiative may suffer and may be forced to close down. This is also the reality in other smaller private businesses such as speciality shops for local food, which at least in smaller places with limited market opportunities to a great extent are dependent on enthusiastic or even idealistic persons who have a passion for this type of trade/business. At least in countries with a dominant conventional retail sector, smaller businesses strive to survive also due to such disadvantageous organisational conditions.

#### 5.4.4 Workload

In most of the cases, heavy workload on the producers and retailers involved were reported. Traders at the UK Farmers' market required alternative ways to reorganize their work to overcome high workload patterns without compromising animal welfare standards. One of the vendors at the market commented: *'What I need to do is to streamline how we work, to make it easier.'* (Trader 2). In most cases we found that producers and retailers had "very long working hours" (found in most cases – due to extra work with packing, transportation and staying at the market). For instance in the Polish local market in Plonsk two of the farmers said that selling was very time consuming : "(...) *it takes 6 hours to come, stay selling the products and return back home*" (Producer 5, Polish Farmers' market) and "*I need 6 hours for preparation of products and 5 h to sell at the market.*" (Producer 3, Polish Farmers' market). Also in the second Polish case, BioBazar, producers reported higher workload preparing for and staying at the market than delivering produce in other channels. In the Hungarian Farmers' market, farmers reported a workload of often 12-14 hours a day, also here a great deal of involvement from other family members was required. Producers at the *Central market in Dijon* stated that they work 70 hours a week in normal while in hectic periods up to 100 hour a week (especially at the start). Some producers said that if they calculated their hour productivity, they would be below the minimum wage. Members of Campagna Amica FM complained that participation in the FM takes time away from production. In particular, they need more employees in production and processing/packaging products than what is required for deliveries to larger retailers.

#### 5.5 Recruitment

Retirement of farmers and lack of recruitment is a serious threat against further development of European SFSCs. In the Italian dairy co-operative, this problem was evident and there was a genuine worry about how to recruit the younger generation farmers to actively engage in milk and cheese production. In the Hungarian farmers' market, due to high age, the smaller producers are disappearing from the market and being replaced by conventional retailers. There is hope that the younger generation of farmers, may be more environmentally conscious, are curious about selling their products direct to consumers and willing to participate on the local farmers' market.

The same was happening in the two fish cases in Norway and the UK: the younger generations are for several reasons hard to recruit. In the UK case, especially, some of the fishers were pessimistic:

*"In the past, there were plenty of people, plenty of kids wanting to go fishing; now there are next to none...Once I pack in, there is nobody to carry on my boat. And the other boats now are the same. So the fishing in Amble, it will eventually die out...But I think a lot of it is that the kids just aren't interested...because it's not an easy job to do, fishing...You've got to be brought up to it, and you have got to want to go fishing...It will eventually die out."* (Fisher 1, UK Fish box scheme)

Also the Norwegian fishers were worried about the lack of recruitment of younger people to the profession. The average age was high and among the active fishers several soon will approach (and some were even over) retirement age:

*"There are two fishermen, each having a boat, who are over 70. And then there are two who have passed 60. So the average age is quite high (laughs a bit). So you're young if you're only*

*a couple of fifty.” (...) It's a bit sad. So we are a little worried about the future. But it looks like some newcomers may appear from time to time.”* (Fisher 3, Norwegian Local fish case)

Recruitment was not only found to be a problem from the producers' (farmers'/fishers') perspective, but also perceived to be a wider issue of carrying forward local know-how, traditions and cultural heritage. As we have seen above, the customers of several of the SFSCs were also among the older generations, implying a need for a stronger effort to provide support for - and renewal of – local production and consumption of food. This was particularly evident in the Hexham Farmers' Market (UK) where the biggest challenge and key requirement for ensuring its viability in the future, as identified by all interviewees, concerned the attraction of new customers to the market. Also at the local farmers' market in Plonsk (Poland), the number of customers was decreasing. The attractiveness of markets may also have to do with their location to larger markets with a broader customer base, but also regarding how the markets are facilitated and cater for consumers' expectations regarding convenience and array of products. As discussed previously, the more formalized markets such as the Italian Campagna Amica, the BioBazar in Warsaw (Poland) and the Central Market in Dijon (France) cater for many of these consumer expectations.

## **5.6 Political support and regulations**

Political regulations have several functions in the food system. This may be to secure sustainable management of natural resources (agricultural land, clean water, fish stocks), sanitary hygiene and food safety regulations in food processing, develop product standards and certification systems and support development of a specific production (e.g. organic) or distribution systems (e.g. direct sale) through subsidy or taxation measures.

At the EU level several programmes and support measures are enforced to support SFSC development especially through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) (Augère-Granier, 2016). The policy is directed towards several areas such as legislation, advisory- and training measures as well and economic support measures. Far the largest part of the economic measures, nearly 60%, are allocated to physical investments aimed at modernise farms and rural businesses (Augère-Granier, 2016). Analyses have shown that SFSCs based on collaboration among producers most likely has the greatest development potential (ref). As discussed in 5.4.3. in most of the cases producers and market managers saw the benefit of collaboration and in many cases saw the need for increased cooperation and also involvement from (local) authorities. Within the European development programme as much as 81 initiatives were supported to increase cooperation among supply chain actors. However, these measures received only a small portion of the development fund (7%) and they are only granted to new cooperation projects (Augère-Granier, 2016).

Augère-Granier (2016) describe the EU support measures as a “toolkit” provided for the use individual producers as well as collaborative initiatives. The programme does not only include economic measures, but also advisory measures and legislative measures. Steps has been taken to ease some of the administrative work associated with setting up and running small scale food businesses. One examples is the food safety regulations that has been better adapted to the small scale producers' need for flexibility without compromising food safety (Augère-Granier, 2016).

*Regulations are perceived both as barriers and support*

We found great variations between countries and regions in the extent and ways in which SFSCs are supported. Some regulations are common for all EU-countries, such as labelling systems and food safety regulations, while others are developed nationally. However, even though regulations are harmonized they are often interpreted and practiced differently across the EU. While, as we have seen, the largest parts of EU economic funding of SFSCs are allocated to physical investments, the impression from the Hungarian farmers' market case was that few of the farmers have received public funding. This may imply that fundings are too small, not widely known or do not comply with the needs of the small scale farmers. Both in the Hungarian case and the two French cases farmers told that they rather invested in second hand machinery than investing in new and expensive machines that may require obtaining loans. This may be due to the fact that they are not driven by the industrial conventions of efficiency and large volume production – volume strategy – rather they emphasises the benefits of staying small and independent.

In general, the costs and burdens of complying with laws and regulations on hygiene-, safety- (labour), marketing and sales issues are seen as disproportionate for small-scale producers compared with more industrialized/large scale production. Even though producers agree on the intentions behind the regulations (e.g. safe food and safer working conditions) they often see them as a threat or hindrance for developing the business. To comply with regulations and standards, often requiring a lot of paperwork, that by many producers and retailers are seen as a cumbersome and exhausting work that comes on top of all the other tasks that have to be performed. One trader at the Hexham Farmers' Market said that in terms of farm expansion and workload, they really should have more employed help, but: *“(...) taking someone on is quite scary, because of all the legislation that goes with it and the health and safety that goes with it. (...) I'm always on the verge of thinking 'I need some help', but I'm put off by all the unknowns that I don't know exist of employing somebody.”* (Trader 2, UK Farmers' market)

Regulations may also constrain expansion of a business in other ways such as in Poland, for example, where a new law allows farmers to produce and sell processed food only on a very small and local scale. Increasing scale above a relatively low limit requires establishing a company, which for farms that are still small is not profitable because of additional financial charges (e.g. taxes, social security payments, bookkeeping costs etc.). One way of compensation may be through the taxation system such as in Hungary where a small-scale producer can sell a smaller amount of their products without VAT which is an important market advantage against larger producers (VAT is 27% in Hungary in general).

Other regulations motivated by food safety reasons may, in some farmers' views, militate against animal welfare. Producers at the Central market in Dijon (France) voiced their discontent with some of the regulations which they found absurd, such as electronic chipping of goats, and they questioned the necessity of small-scale producers to comply with regulations and standards mostly developed for large-scale enterprises. For animal welfare reasons, the French farmers questioned regulations that restrained the small-scale producers from slaughtering their cattle at the farm, avoiding stressful transportation. These types of concerns were also expressed by the organic farmers in the Norwegian consumer co-operative.

Also, the UK and Norwegian fishery regulations were subject to criticism. In the UK fish box case, the fishers were critical of certain fish quotas and bans on catch of specific species. The scepticism was not so much directed to the regulation itself, but to how it was implemented, in that it was implemented too fast and that it applied only to British fishers. Similarly, Norwegian fishers in Vestfold county expressed a dissatisfaction with the way the regulations were enforced with frequent and sometimes unpleasant controls. Thus, the fishers felt that the resources would have been best used if concentrating the controls on the larger trawlers.

### **Summary**

Economic motivations are important reasons for producers to participate in SFSCs. Many producers report higher turnover and more stable sales that contribute to improve their income opportunities and business operations of the farm. In many of the cases, producers reported high bargaining power and autonomy in price setting as main motivations for participating in SFSCs. However, lack of capital for investments in new machinery and facilities, as well as processing and distribution capacity, were in many cases seen as barriers. Producers also indicated that the support system only to a certain extent was adapted for their needs for small-scale investments. Also at the retail/market level the need for upgrading the facilities was seen as a challenge in cases with a more informal organisation, while the existence of a formal structure by larger organisations or authorities seemed to support investments in the necessary equipment and facilities.

This co-operation must involve not only the producers or private businesses/organisations themselves but must be seen as an overall (public) task to co-ordinate the different structures that have direct impact on the local SFSC development.

This is evident from the perceptions of the actors involved, which often point to difficulties such as heavy workload, low income and lack of capital. Many expressed the view that regulations and requirements from authorities are forced on the producer or retailer, with limited support from governmental and/or local authorities.

Because many regulations are developed to comply with the requirements of conventional production and distribution systems, they have to be better adopted to the multifunctionality of small-scale producers and short supply chains. This was apparent especially regarding support measures in agriculture, food safety regulations (sanitary requirements etc.), regulations concerning employing labour on the farm etc.



## 6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

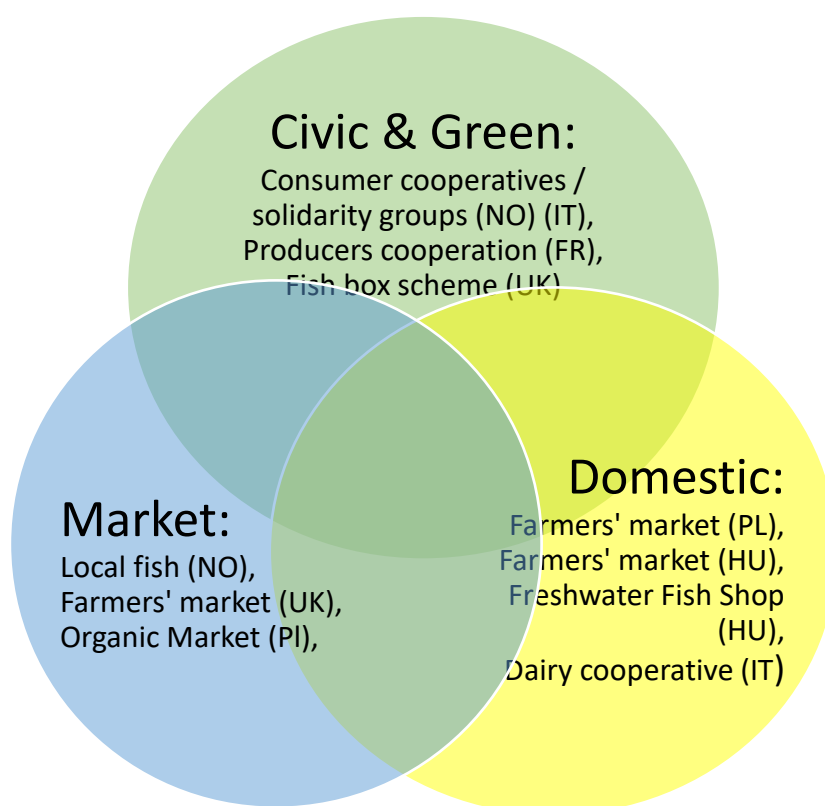
The conventional theoretical framework that was applied in the analyses of the 12 selected cases has acted as an ordering tool for both categorising the different SFSCs, the underlying motivational factors among the actors involved, and for identifying enabling and constraining factors for further development of the studied SFSCs.

In this chapter we will discuss the results from the case studies in light of the theoretical framework and initial research questions established in chapter one, including (1) main motivations among actors and (2) their perceived drivers and barriers for development. Eventually we will discuss (3) transferability of experiences between (type of) cases also by given examples of positive experiences and discuss how to support further development of European SFSCs.

### 6.1 Differences and similarities across typologies of cases

We have analysed the twelve cases according to the conventional theoretical framework described in section 2.2. The seven “worlds of justifications”: Inspired, Domestic, Opinion (fame), Civic, Market, Industrial and Green. This has given a nuanced picture of SFSC-development in the participating European countries in this study,

Based on the conventional theoretical approach and the empirical findings in Chapter 3, 4 and 5 we have constructed a typology focusing on three (four) worlds of justification (see Figure 29).



**Figure 29** Typology of worlds of SFSC

These categories, identified from the case studies, must not be seen as mutually exclusive, rather in many of the cases we found elements from all these worlds as well as the three other worlds (Industrial, Inspired and Opinion (Fame)). While elements from the Inspired world were recognized in most of the cases other worlds are less prominent (e.g. opinion/fame) and seem to play a minor role in development of SFSCs. In many instances different orders of worth/modes of evaluations stand against each other, for instance green and civic against industrial modes of evaluations. Thus, as we will come back to, in these instances the convention theoretical framework helps in identifying and discussing constraints as well as enabling factors for SFSC development. In the following, we will discuss the seven worlds and to what extent we have found the 12 cases to fall into one category or another (Figure 29).

### *Industrial World*

We will first look at *the Industrial World* that is dominant within the present food system with its emphasis on efficiency, large-scale production and distribution of standardized products. Technological solutions and social organisation that may increase efficiency is encouraged and sought for within the Industrial World that are marked by commodification, standardisation and streamlining of production and distribution. The present conventional food system is to a large extent based on these logics and ways of functioning, while SFSCs brake with these logics along several dimensions. Instead of standardization they seek diversification and instead of efficiency and large volumes, SFSCs (at least in this study) small scale and quality oriented. However, even though SFSCs function as a counterpart to the logics of the Industrial world, they cannot avoid being affected by the same logics. In order to be competitive and develop, SFSC also have to adapt to the “demands of the markets” and to a greater or lesser extent they are constantly faced with evaluations on how to cut costs and be more efficient etc. without compromising on the basic ideas behind their development as SFSCs. The Industrial logic is not only present in the distribution of food but also in food procurement and provisioning among consumers. Efficiency is a key word in many household managing a tight economic- as well as time budget in everyday life. Readily available and cheap food products may solve these constraints in everyday life – which are met within the logics of the Industrial world.

Thus, food procurement and provisioning are squeezed between on the one hand the industrial conventions appealing to convenience and efficiency of food provisioning and on the other hand, quality conventions directed at providing fresh and nutritional products, produced in a safe manner. In addition concerns for animal welfare, environment and fair relations in the food chain are increasingly seen as important quality attributes in foods. Thus, several needs and considerations are competing belonging to different logics or worlds of food: inspired domestic, market, civic and green as will be discussed below.

### *Inspired World*

This leads us to the *Inspired World* (Table 3, section 2.2) represented by the following modes of evaluations: Creativity, aesthetic pleasures of food and emotions. In section 4.7 we found that these modes of justifications appeared to be important in most of the studied cases and was viewed in contrast to the conventional food distribution (Industrial world) and crucial for long-term sustenance of the SFSC. Participation in an SFSC was experienced as a meaningful activity creating joy. In particular, the sociability of the SFSCs were mentioned by all actors, however to what extent customers valued the pleasantness of shopping from SFSCs varied between types of cases. The sociability of the SFSCs in many cases also made the foundations for creation of informal networks and co-operations important either for development of the individual business (farm) or for the functioning and development of the SFSC at large. In some cases the drive for trying out and developing new products and new modes of distribution

was prominent among the actors, while in other cases the lack of innovation and product development was seen as a constraint. From the customer survey we saw that the newer CFSC-initiatives marked by civic, green or marked conventions such as the UK Fish box scheme, UK Farmers' market and the French Producers' market were all viewed as more innovative compared to the more traditional ones (refer to previous Figure 28).

### *Domestic World*

Modes of evaluations from the *Domestic World* such as trust, family, close social relationships, small scale and care (Table 3, section 2.2) were present in all the studied cases. The direct contact and possibility to have a dialogue, together with direct insight into the food production are also crucial to build relations of trust. However, this important role of transparency and trust will be discussed in section 6.3 below.'

Direct and often positive feedback from the customers also gave the producers a special pride. The direct, face-to-face contact was naturally also appreciated by consumers; not least talking with the producers or traders that gave the possibility of gaining broader knowledge about food and the way it had been produced. This gave first-hand information for the consumers, while on the other hand feedback from consumers gave valuable information for the producers, not least for improving the quality of the products or other aspects related to production or marketing of their food products.

Domestic modes of evaluations related to family and care were also present among customers in all the case studies. Food has a central meaning and function in family care (Miller 1998: 23-36), and consumers are constantly valuing the freshness and healthiness of food products. Thus, generally these are two of the most important food attributes consumers are looking for in their everyday purchase of food (Vittersø and Jervell, 2011; Weatherell et al., 2003). However, in our study, consumers emphasised that they found products even more fresh and healthy in SFSCs compared with ordinary food stores. Also, the interviews with producers and retailers revealed how the type of small scale production in many cases can be more flexible to cater for freshness and to avoid deterioration and spillage of the produce. The fact that the food in most cases travels only a short distance is in itself viewed by consumers as positive both for the freshness of the produce and for the environment at large (less transportation and waste).

We have found that four of the cases in particular represent the *Domestic world*. They are characterized by two different sets of modes of evaluations. *First*, we have the farmers' markets that are rooted in the mundane/ordinary, routinized and traditional everyday life represented by the local farmers' markets in Poland and Hungary that cater for a substantial part of the food procurement of their ordinary customers. As much as 78 % (Polish farmers' market) and 73 % (Hungarian farmers' market) stated that they visited the market once a week or more often. These customers was in the middle to lower income- and educational attainment categories. A majority (79%) of the customers in the Polish farmers' market had medium to low income and only secondary level of education (79%). 42 percent of the customers at the farmers market in Hungary had secondary level of education. These markets had a long history and provided a broad selection of local products and this complied with the motivation of the customers agreeing to the statement that they visited the market because they got traditional food there. In the Hungarian markets the customers on the other hand fully *disagreed* with the statement "The selection of products that I look for *is not as good here* as in a typical grocery store" underlining the status of the Hungarian market as an important part of the ordinary food procurement for the visiting customers.

*Second*, we found two cases also highly marked by domestic modes of evaluations, however, first and foremost related to the cultural heritage of local production and consumption of specific food products. Thus, within this category we place the Italian dairy cooperative that was especially valued both by the producers and consumers as an important initiative for preserving the local cheese production and consumption heritage. Here the customers gave the highest score of all of the cases to the statement that they visited the shop to get traditional food. The importance of supporting the local, traditional cheese production was also underlined in the qualitative interviews with both consumers and producers. The second case included here is the Hungarian Freshwater fish shop that in a similar manner is upholding production and distribution of local fresh fish of vital importance for the fish consumption that is low in Hungary. The access to fresh fish in ordinary food store is limited, thus, these local fish shops are important for availability of fresh fish. This was also reflected in the customer survey where most customers fully agreed to the statement “I get unique food products here that I cannot buy in a typical grocery store” (previous Figure 20). Based on these findings we have included the Hungarian freshwater fish shop (strengthening local fish distribution), the Italian dairy cooperative (preserving local cheese heritage) as well as the Polish and Hungarian farmers’ markets (ordinary food provisioning) in the Domestic world category (Figure 29).

#### *Market world*

Quality conventions such as freshness and healthiness has in this study been regarded as belonging to the domestic world. From the customer survey we found that high quality of products is a main reason for customers to visit the SFSCs. This may be interpreted in two ways: either that they offer categories of products that to a little or no extent is provided by ordinary supermarkets (Hungarian freshwater fish shop) or that SFSCs consciously aim at diversifying from conventional food markets and targeting special segments of consumers. In this section we will focus on this latter interpretation. From Table 2 we find that the *Market world* is characterised by the following modes of evaluation: *price premium on products, product differentiation and quality foods*. It is clear that some of the initiatives function as niches in the food market in the sense that they first and foremost cater for consumers that are looking for speciality, or exclusive products, thus, attract special segments of consumers (e.g. tourists, well off customers). The most prominent cases, that resembles what we might call a “nichification” strategy, meaning “*goods produced for a dedicated market (...) carry customized and clearly differentiated qualities that are only recognized by specialized groups of consumers.*” (Morgan et al., 2006: 22). Some of the newer initiatives such as the UK Farmers’ market and the Organic market, BioBazar in Poland may fall within this category. The same as for the more traditional Norwegian fish shop which seem to attract a specialized segment of consumers and with profiles that are quite distinctive to the ordinary food markets. Based on the results from the customer survey the UK Farmers’ market attracted highly educated customers (80% tertiary education (Figure 3) and catered for the older segment of consumers (50% 60 years or older (Figure 2)). However, the income distribution was rather fair with 60% belonging to the three highest income categories (Figure 4). The Norwegian fish shop to a similar degree attracted highly educated (72% (Figure 3)) and elderly customers (61% (Figure 2)), while 47% belonged to the highest income category (Figure 4). In the Polish organic market case there was as much as 83% of the customers with tertiary education (Figure 3), however, they were from the younger segments of consumers with 73 percent between 30 and 60 year (Figure 2). As much as 68% belonged to the three highest income categories. Especially the Norwegian fish shop and UK Farmers market got high scores on the two statements “I get unique food products here that I cannot buy in a typical grocery store” (Figure 20) and “It offers high quality products” (Figure 21). While the three cases had the lowest scores on the statement

“It is less expensive for me”, leaving an impression that these SFSCs offer more exclusive (price premium) products compared to many of the other cases. The qualitative interviews with consumers seemed to strengthen this impression. We have thus chosen to include these three cases in the *Market world* category (Figure 29).

#### *Civic world*

In Table 2 *fair price, community, solidarity, justice and public health* are placed among the modes of justifications characterizing the *Civic world*. We found that solidarity principles such as support for local production and producers were shared values among all actors in all the cases (Figure 17). In four of the cases all respondents fully agreed (highest score 5) to the statement “I shop here because I wish to support local producers”. Among these cases was the Norwegian consumer cooperative, the UK fish box scheme, the French producers’ market and also the UK farmers’ market. The Italian Solidarity purchasing group (Kuminda) also got a high score on this statement (4,8). Apart from the UK farmers’ market (which we have placed within the Market world) all these cases are fairly new initiatives founded to a great extent on the basis of ideas such as solidarity between consumers and producers, community building and opposition to the conventional food system. Within the four initiatives these modes of justification were clearly expressed by both producers and consumers in the qualitative interviews (although sometimes some values also were contested).

#### *Green world*

Within the Green world modes of justifications such as *less waste, organic food, valuation of nature and animal welfare* are emphasised (Table 2). We have found that while green modes of evaluation were highly focused in some cases they were not as important in others. Only three of the cases were exclusively dedicated to distribution of organic food (BioBazar (Poland), the consumer cooperative (Norway), the Producers’ market (France). However, in several of the other cases organic food was distributed and supported along with other local food products such as the Central market in Dijon (France); the Italian solidarity purchasing groups (GAS) as well as the dairy cooperative (Italy) and the Hexham Farmers’ Market (UK). In five of the cases organic was not important, were of three was the fish/seafood cases. The UK ‘Creel Fish Club’ box scheme was, however, centred around the green convention of protection of local fish stocks - and enhancing the diversity of local fish species.

Two statements in the customer survey reflected the engagement for green modes of evaluations: “I find it more environmentally friendly to shop here compared to a typical grocery store” and “I shop here because I wish to support environmentally friendly food production.” With some variations both statements got positive scores from most customers, however, especially the newer initiatives, also included under the heading of the Civic world, such as the Norwegian consumer cooperative, the UK fish box scheme, the French producers’ market and the Italian Solidarity purchasing group were among the cases with the highest scores. Also the qualitative interviews with producers and consumers within these initiatives showed a high awareness of environmental issues. Based on these findings we have included four of the initiatives within the *Civic and Green world* (Figure 29): the Norwegian consumer cooperative, the UK fish box scheme, the French producers’ and the Italian Solidarity purchasing group.

Owing to the aforementioned multitude of cases and the fact that each case must be understood within its own social and local context, this ordering of the cases may seem too generalising. We have tentatively tried to place the different cases within the three typologies, even though all cases contain aspects from all three typologies. The way we have placed the cases within the respective categories may be debatable, and also within the WP7 research team we found after some discussions that for instance the Central market in Dijon was impossible to fit into only one of the categories, but had strong elements of all. This underlines the fact that the overlap between the cases is, as already mentioned, often more prominent than the differences. It depends on what aspects of SFSC development we are focusing on.

Nevertheless, we believe that this typology contribute to nuance former discussion of SFSCs. From the research literature, SFSCs have been discussed on the one hand as a strategy for producers to add value and improve their income by direct sales, and on the other hand SFSCs has been viewed as food networks based on resistance against the food system. These are consider to connect producers and consumers in new or different ways from conventional food distribution (often denoted as “Alternative Food Networks” (AFN) (Goodman, 2004; Morgan et al., 2006; Marsden 2013). Our study may nuance this picture first of all because the role of direct sales differ across Europe and in some countries direct sales for many producers always have, and still are, the main sales channel and income opportunity for farmers, while in other countries direct sales have almost disappeared. Seen from a consumer perspective, thus, for some European consumers provisioning food besides the ordinary supermarkets and retail stores are rooted in the ordinary everyday life, while for others to visit a farmers’ market is identified with leisure time, extraordinary events (Vittersø & Jervell, 2011). While for others engaging in a consumer cooperative is a way to show engagement or protest against problematic issues within the conventional food system. We believe the typology presented above reflects these different development paths and importance attached to European SFSCs as belonging to domestic, market, civic and green worlds.

### **Summary**

Based on the conventional theoretical approach we have found different types of SFSC cases ranging from cases that rely on (Figure 29):

- 1) Domestic modes of evaluations - rooted in the ordinary, routinized and traditional everyday life (Polish and Hungarian farmers’ market) as well as cases important for strengthening local cultural heritage (Italian dairy cooperative, Hungarian freshwater fish);
- 2) Market modes of evaluations - with importance on added value through “nichification” (price premium on products, product differentiation, speciality products);
- 3) Civic and green modes of evaluations - based on solidarity and fair relations between producers and consumers as well as environmental concerns fair price, community, solidarity, justice, organic food, valuation of nature, less waste and higher animal welfare.

In the following we will have a closer look on how discussions of central food system issues unfolds within and between the three typologies of SFSCs.

## **6.2. Food distribution (producers) and provisioning (consumers)**

One main factor for evaluating the sustainability of SFSCs is the effectiveness of distribution seen from the producers and the relevance they have for local procurement and provisioning of food for the consumers. A main critique in the literature against SFSCs is that they “retain a status as a narrow ‘class diet’ of privileged income groups” disregarding those “who are unable to secure access to safe nutritious food” (Goodman, 2004, Morgan et al., 2006). Thus the question is to what extent these SFSCs cater for a smaller segment of consumers, disregarding inequalities and injustices in the food system and appears as an elite phenomenon. The present study show that there are great variations between the typologies of SFSCs (domestic, civic, green and market) in the ways these questions unfold.

While there are great differences in the structure of SFSCs across Europe, the customer survey revealed some general patterns about the customers of SFSCs. Not surprisingly, women were in the majority in most of the cases (except the Italian dairy cooperative and Hungarian freshwater fish shop). In nine of the twelve cases 50% or more of the customers had tertiary education and mostly highly educated and in ten of the twelve cases 50% or more of the customers belonged to the three highest categories. More concerning we found that except for the urban organic food market in Warsaw and the Hungarian freshwater fish shop, the majority of customers belonged to the upper two age categories of 45 years and older. To put it crudely it seems that the SFSC (with some variations) tend to attract a smaller segment of consumers belonging to well educated, high income and higher age categories. The challenge many of the SFSCs face is, thus, to identify what are the main constraints and possibilities to reach new and broader segments of consumers? In this section we will discuss the “infrastructural” challenges that the SFSCs face, while the economic and social aspects will be further discussed in section 6.4 about fair price and 6.5 about community building.

### *Availability and convenient food purchase*

The reasons for the failures of reaching consumers are several and varied across cases. Below we will point to some common features and give some examples of potential (promising) solutions and ways of organization that also may be transferred between cases.

Seen from a consumer perspective, limited availability of both local products and local markets were in many instances viewed as barriers for participation in SFSCs. This is in line with former studies stating that consumers find local products hard to identify (Eurobarometer 2011)<sup>30</sup>. Food consumption is an intertwined practice involving planning of food menus, doing the food purchase, cooking and eating and finally handling the waste. However, these activities form only a part of everyday life and need to fit in with other activities such as work/ school/ kindergarten, leisure activities, rest and sleep. The everyday “time-squeeze” affects the way many, especially younger households with children, organise their food provisioning. In families with children, the time schedules are often tight, and time-effective measures are welcomed. Supermarkets which are easily available, especially in urban environments, and with a wide selection of food products cater for convenient food purchases. To meet consumers’

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<sup>30</sup> Other interesting results from this survey is that 54% of citizens totally agree that there are benefits to buying local food, and that only 19% of citizens agree that local products are easy to identify. See: [http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_368\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/ebs/ebs_368_en.pdf)

anticipations for regular access to a wide selection of food is challenging for SFSCs due to several constraints:

- *Selection.* The smaller volumes distributed through SFSCs in many instances do not match the wide variety of different types of food products offered by larger retail chains
- *Location.* In many places the larger supermarkets are located near residential areas and/or with easy access by car
- *Regularity.* Supermarkets are open (almost) every day and with long opening hours, while SFSCs usually have shorter and not as regular opening hours that put a strain on the loyalty of the customers
- *Seasonality* makes it more difficult to plan and organize the distribution and limits the regularity of product supply, thus, puts strain on the loyalty of the customers

It is clear that industrial logic of standardization and time-efficiency along the whole value chain from consumers, retailers to producers, challenge the other concerns of consumers prominent in domestic, civic and green modes of evaluations.

*Domestic:* In three of the studied cases the SFSC customers reported to visit the market on a weekly or even on a more frequent basis including the: Hungarian farmers' market (73 %), French central market (91%) and Polish farmers' market (78 %). Customers at the French producers' market were also regular (71 % about weekly). For customers these markets represent an important part of the consumers' everyday food consumption. The purchases are often carefully planned and the customers buy enough to provide for several days or a whole week of vegetable (or other products) consumption. The visit to the market is part of ordinary food habits and routines. In markets where consumers provide a major part of household food consumption, the consumers are often price conscious. This means that these markets to a great extent must compete on price and selection with ordinary supermarkets. The markets have an disadvantage regarding availability (opening hours, seasonality etc.). In the Hungarian farmers' market case it was reported that seasonality put a natural variation into the range of available products, as well as the number of producers attending the market in a certain day. However, seen from the qualitative interviews with customers, the strength of these markets is the close contact with the producers/vendors based on mutual trust, and consumers experience that the products are more fresh and often find it safer to buy from the market than in ordinary supermarkets.

*Civic and green:* An important aim of these initiatives have been to support local producers in order to improve provisions of more local and sustainable food products (organic, local produce and catch (biodiversity), animal welfare). In many ways these SFSCs represent more innovative ways of food provisioning. The UK fish box scheme for instance were initiated with the main aim of creating a distribution channel (a possibility) for fishers to reach new and local markets on the one hand and increasing the availability for consumers of fresh, local fish on the other. By some innovative solutions it has succeeded to cater for consumers demand for effective and convenient procurement. While the fish box scheme try to straighten failure in the conventional market offering products hardly available in conventional food stores, the Norwegian consumer cooperative offer ordinary food products, though organic, through their different baskets (vegetables meat, bread and dairy). They cannot compete with the conventional stores when it comes to selection of products and they are heavily reliant on what is in the season and what their few producers have available at the moment. However, they actively try to look at this



more as a benefit and a strength rather than a disadvantage. – connecting it to the overall aim with the cooperative to support a more sustainable distribution of local food. This is communicated to the members of the cooperative in various ways through newsletters, Facebook updates etc. contributing to increasing the knowledge about organic food production, seasonal constraints etc. among the members as well as connecting the consumers closer with the organic farmers. This in turn strengthens the social relations between consumers and producers (see Box below). The French producers' market in a more physical way make this connection through the weekly organisation of the courtyard market where consumers and producers meet. This initiative then provide local consumers with a range of local, organic products not readily available in ordinary store and at the same time contribute to community building - through the sociability of the market gathering consumers and producers in the small courtyard.

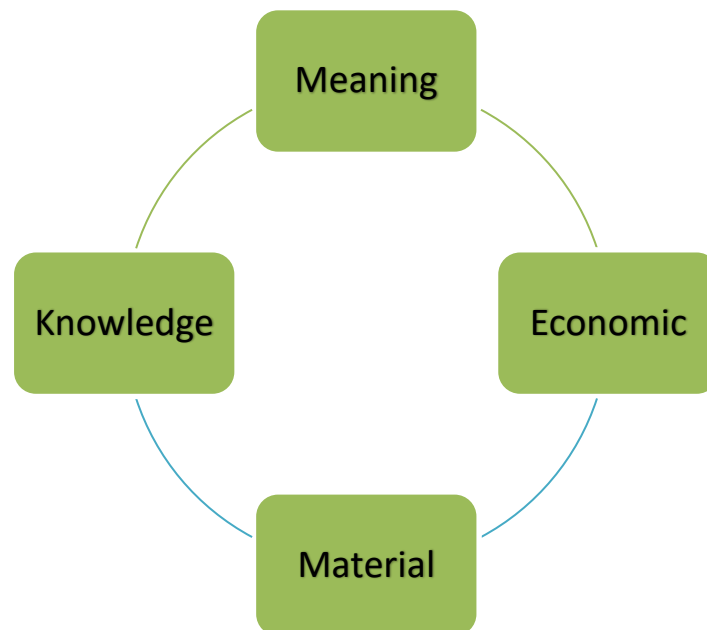
These initiatives were also innovative regarding the buyer–seller relations, as discussed previously, aiming at a fair price for both producers and consumers. Many of these initiatives aim at sharing the work and expenses of both production and distribution of food between producers and consumers. This is then based on a common goal of stimulating local, sustainable food practices and sharing risks and responsibilities. They relate to a great extent to the new trends in the sharing economy with a great emphasis on “prosumption”, and various forms of Community Supported Agriculture (not studied specifically here) are examples of new ways of food provisioning and sharing within agriculture.

*Market:* These cases do not focus on provisioning of food per se, rather the experience value of acquiring the product and visiting the market. There is a focus on quality and food specialties rather than price. However, as for the cases categorized as civic and green, also producers and consumers are concerned about credence qualities of the products such as organic production, animal welfare and “terroir”. The customers thus say that they visit the market to get products with special qualities that are not readily available elsewhere. However, the products are often considered expensive and exclusive by consumers. These markets are, thus, threatened by the conventional supermarkets which use their power to reduce prices, also on the niche products, and thus outcompete the producers on the SFSCs. However, reports from the studied cases also show that regular and dedicated customers wish to support the market in spite of a similar or even broader product selection in supermarkets. This is mostly due to the experience value of visiting the market and the direct, face to face relation with the producer/vendor that customers miss in ordinary food stores.

#### *Changing food practices*

To what extent does involvement in SFSCs lead to changes in food practices and how may the practice of visiting a SFSC be sustained and developed?

Following social practice theory meaning, knowledge and material elements are crucial for the establishment, continuation and eventual ending of a particular practice (see Figure 30).



**Figure 30 Elements of practice**

Source: Own adaption to Showe et al. (2012).

When it comes to food procurement and SFSCs the economic aspect is also important for consumers (as well as producers) when considering to continuing the practice. As seen above different types of SFSCs have different challenges, not least material (e.g. availability, seasonality) challenges regarding consumer involvement. For the customers at the *domestic* types of markets the challenge is not to establish new routines because to them the market has “always been there. Visits to the markets have great value for customers (sociability, experience, community), their food procurement routines (planning, buying, using) are adopted to the regularity and opening hours of the market (material conditions) and the food they got there are well known, not least form familiarity with the place (see section 4.1.1). The challenge for continuation and development of the market, thus, are not connected to the meaning or knowledge element, rather the way the market manage to facilitate (material elements (opening hours, selection of products, accessibility) for attracting new, younger generations of customers that perhaps have other requirements regarding convenience of food purchase. Thus, one question is how these markets are adopted to changes in lifestyles of younger generations?

In *civic and green* modes of SFSC studied here, challenges are faced regarding both knowledge and material elements. Involvement in these SFSC was motivated from ideological reasons of fairer relations in the food system, supporting local producer, but also to get access to local (organic) products less available in ordinary food stores. However, distribution based on “fixed” boxes of either vegetables (consumer cooperative (Norway), solidarity purchasing groups (Italy)), dairy, meat, bread (consumer cooperative (Norway) or local fish and seafood (Fish box scheme (UK)) was found challenging regarding both knowledge and material elements (frequence, pick-up place and time etc.). Unfamiliarity with some of the products and how to handle them were challenging for some customers reported in the UK fish box scheme. While in the Norwegian consumer cooperatives, members complained about too much or too little of specific food items in the delivered bags. This may have consequences for the amount of waste and spillage if not all products in the boxes come to use. Besides the knowledge-element routines for ordering and pick-up of boxes were both in the Norwegian and UK cases

emphasised as barriers towards keeping the members and development of the box scheme. In the Box 6.1 below we will give two examples on how these knowledge and material elements may be strengthened through innovative use of social media and new smart phone technologies.

In some of the *market* modes of SFSC studied, the local organic food market, BioBazar, in Poland, the Hexham Farmers' Market in UK as well as Campagna Amica (Italy) innovative organisational measures were introduced to attract customers to the markets and meet the demands for convenient purchase. These markets both resemble and divert from domestic and civic cases in the ways they attract customers. Some customers visit on a regular basis and thus the food purchase is an established routine, while other markets rely on occasional customers such as tourists

A close co-operation was viewed as important to strengthen trust and loyalty among actors within the *market* modes SFSCs. This contributed to a greater sociability, thus strengthening the meaning element of the SFSC; while at the same time strengthening material elements by improving the standard, including regularity, volumes and varieties of products in the SFSC. To benefit from seasonal variations, BioBazar the Polish organic market has, for instance, organized several activities such as donating Christmas trees or selling holiday gift baskets. To enhance availability, Campagna Amica has even taken the initiative of the "botteghe" that are food grocery shops of short supply chain where only Italian agricultural food products are sold, but by retailers. These measures, thus, strengthen the material element making local products more available, to what extent this may strengthen or weaken the meaning and knowledge elements are open questions taking into consideration that consumers value the direct contact with producers that they get at the markets and not to the same extent in a retail store.

**Summary**

Strengths and challenges in food distribution/provisioning were recognised.

*Domestic:*

Strengths - Consumers visiting the SFCS as part of routinized practices. They have great knowledge of the products through familiarity with the place.

Challenges - Strong competition with conventional retail chains on price and availability. Producers often lack knowledge and interest in marketing and use of ICT, social media, etc.

*Civic and Green:*

Strengths - Improved access to local and organic food products to affordable prices. Extended information and communication about the food distributed and the places (farms/fishers) it comes from.

Challenges - Infrequent delivery and less convenient pick up places may lead to drop-out of members. Fixed boxes may seem challenging regarding volumes and content (unfamiliar products). One side effect may be increased waste.

*Market:*

Strengths - The experience value (sociability) and quality of products.

Challenges - Viewed as expensive and exclusive.

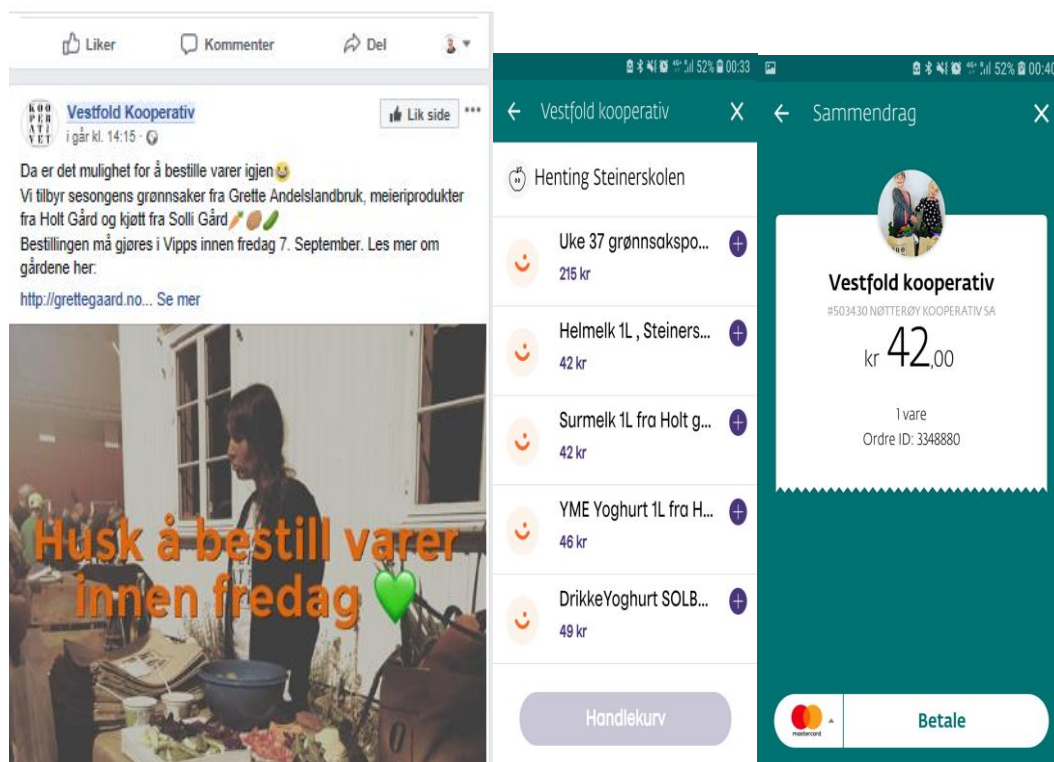
*Strengthening SFSCs through social media and (ICT) technology*

By analysing SFSC participation as a social practice either from the producer or consumer perspective we find that some main elements, and especially knowledge-, material- (infrastructure, accessibility) and economic (workload and time use) elements, are major barriers against SFSC development. Even though in many of the cases, producers and market managers report that they use social media actively to reach consumers, they also point to lack of knowledge on how to better utilize these new technologies.

We will here give examples of practices pointing to new ways of organizing and communicating with consumers that have the potential of making SFSC distribution more efficient both for consumers and producers. The examples given from Norway both combine social media such as Facebook, with new smart phone technologies that in combination cater for more efficient communication between producers and consumers.

### BOX 6.1. “Vipps” and Vestfold Kooperativ

In the Norwegian consumer co-operative promotion and information about the initiative initially were done through the web-page and the Facebook group of the cooperative. On Facebook, information about the content of the boxes and times for ordering and pick up was communicated as well as a link to the web page where information on the farms is given (see picture below). This contribute to strengthen the members’ relation to the farms and the cooperative as well as their knowledge about the products that are delivered in the boxes. The payments were done online through PayPal, however this required administrative work for the cooperative to control all payments and it also resulted in missing payments and sometimes boxes was not fetched by the members. A new application called “Vipps” has been introduced in the Norwegian market that has made communication and payments easier. Now announcement of boxes is placed as previously on Facebook, but orders and payments are received via “Vipps” and boxes have to be paid before receiving the boxes. “Vipps” is a direct payment system where the receiver (here the cooperative) immediately register when they receive payments from their members. Several functions are integrated in the app such as application for membership, marketing of the food baskets as well as members placing orders and payment. This saves time for the cooperative with administration and communication with the members as well as make ordering and payment more easy for the members.



*Facebook group information combined with orders in “Vipps”.*

### Box 6.2 REKO-rings

However, not studied particularly within this project, “REKO-rings” is another example of best practice of an innovative food distribution practice that combine the use of social media and smartphone technology. REKO-rings have become popular in the Nordic countries and, inspired by the French AMAP model it was introduced in Finland in 2013 where a couple of hundred rings are reported to be active. In Sweden the first REKO-rings were introduced in 2016 and in Norway 2017 (REFRAME\_Interreg North Sea Region (2017); Norsk Bonde- og Småbrukarlag, 2018).

REKO-rings consists of a group of producers forming a Facebook group for inviting consumers to place orders. When the orders are made, the producers and consumers collectively meet on a set time and central pick-up point where the products are delivered. Typical meeting points may be at a parking lot near a shopping centre or at the town square. The whole session only takes from ½ an hour to an hour, normally. Compared to staying at a farmers market for a whole day this is an efficient and predictable way of distribution and provisioning of food for both producers and consumers. As in the consumer cooperative producers in Norway have combined the Facebook announcement with the use of “Vipps”. Payments may thus be received in beforehand – that requires a great deal of trust – but it is a flexible system that also allows for consumers to “Vipps” directly when picking up the products. This system cater for little wastage because all products are sold in advance. Customers not turning up to fetch the produce may lose their orders, and this may have a disciplining effect.



Announcement for REKO-ringen Larvik on Facebook

### 6.3 Trust and transparency

The trust in food and the certification and labelling systems vary across Europe. Previous studies have found that trust in the food system is highest in Northern European countries such as the UK, Denmark and Norway, while countries where food quality and personal interrelations are emphasised, such as in Italy, Portugal and Germany, show lower food system trust among consumers (Kjærnes et al, 2005: 21). In section 4.4.1 we found that customers in the Polish and Hungarian cases to some extent expressed a lower level of trust relative to the cases from the other European countries. We interpret this as an expression of variations in the general level of trust between countries.

Participation in SFSCs is seen, from all actors involved, as a way to enhance trust and transparency in the food system. This is not necessarily voiced as an explicit distrust in the conventional food system, but often as some forms of discontent and scepticism among consumers and producers. SFSCs are seen to enhance trust and transparency along several lines. Face-to-face interaction between consumers and producers is emphasised as most important to strengthen trust – along with proximity to production. Thus, the identification with place and the local embeddedness of social relations, which we have discussed previously, contribute to enhance the level of trust.

More ideological and political voices are present in some of the cases with criticism of an unjust or unsustainable food system. Some of the cases studied were established with the main aim of contributing to fair prices and sustainable food production in line with the principles of food sovereignty adherent to civic and green modes of justifications.

At an EU-level SFSC-labelling has been discussed as a tool to avoid market fraud and increase transparency also in local and direct markets (Augère-Granier, 2016; Kneafsey et al., 2013)

However, standards and certification systems have to a large degree been developed to comply with a more industrial way of food production and not with the small scale processing and direct sales of products. It is also argued that a new label for SFSC may be both costly and bureaucratic and come on top of other types of existing quality schemes such as Geographical Indications (GIs) and the EU organic food label. There are several national and local labels of origin in EU, while labelling schemes exclusively for SFSCs are less common (Augère-Granier, 2016).

Even though consumers mostly are in favour of such labels (Augère-Granier, 2016; Eurobarometer 2011)<sup>31</sup>, evidence from studies carried out within the S2F project (WP8 deliverable 8.2) show that consumers tend to overlook labels and pursue other means and strategies for information when purchasing food. However, based on the findings in this study we see that a SFSC label may have a mission in some types of cases while seem less relevant in others.

In *domestic modes* of SFSCs such as local farmers' markets, trust and transparency are built by face-to-face relations that often are established over generations. Consumers told about how they were used to visit the market from early childhood together with their parents or grandparents. Thus, in these domestic modes of SFSCs food purchase is a socially or locally embedded practice, meaning that people already know and trust each other, thus the argument is that labelling will have a limited function and may be experienced as less relevant by the participants.

In the *civic and green modes* of SFSCs we found a more explicit criticism of the conventional food system and an even stronger scepticism and distrust in the certification and labelling

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<sup>31</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_368\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/ebs/ebs_368_en.pdf)



system. Here, both consumers and producers argued that for instance the organic food label was co-opted by the conventional food industry and retail system and that the aim of the label was diluted. In some of the cases the producers and consumers acted against the system by introducing alternatives to the official certification system, and established so called Participatory Guarantee Systems, based on mutual trust and where transparency was secured through the evaluation of peers (see Box 6.3; see also 3.2 and 5.5.2.).

### Box 6.3

#### Labelling and trust in the case of the solidarity purchasing group ‘Kuminda’

The trust relations between people involved, and the common search for local and sustainable products are pillars of the solidarity economy. An innovative aspect of this case is the involvement of small and medium-sized companies in a ‘participatory guarantee system’ (PGS), which is a sort of self-certification amongst small farmers, producers and consumers. This PGS is potentially an important tool for internal coordination (collective rules for a fair competition between producers) and external trust (regulation by society, information about quality available for retailers and consumers). This PGS-system may for instance replace the need for labelling systems such as the EU organic label. Some interviewees made a distinction between a “real” organic production and the organic label which the interviewees associated with industrial production. One consumer in the Italian case of Solidarity Purchasing Groups (Kuminda), described how they replaced the organic certification with a “participatory guarantee system” (PGS):

*‘It happens that the products are not organically certified as the small-scale producers can’t afford to pay the required control fee. However, we become friends and a dialogue, which is not possible to have in the supermarket, originates.’ [...] ‘To choose the farmers, we adopt the following criteria: the lack of any black economy; random laboratory analyses; adequacy of working structures, including the standards of cleanliness and geographical position of cultivated fields.’* (Consumer 2, Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group)

For these small-scale farmers the EU organic certification almost seemed redundant as they just need to comply with this self-managed scheme to get into the SFSC (the purchasing group network and the farmer’s market). This system is also present in France represented by the "Nature and Progress" association mentioned by the farmers in the Hauterives' organic producers' market.

In the *market* cases, however, different forms of “institutionalization” or “third party” standardization, communication or certification seemed efficient in strengthening transparency. Even though SFSCs often are associated with close networks and direct, face-to-face relationships, not all SFSCs are placed in a local context. Some direct distribution is based on distant relations where there is only brief or no direct contact between consumer and producer. In many cases SFSC markets and outlets may be located in city centres with wide customer



bases and where the contact between consumer and producer is more arbitrary. Within the tourism sector local food is important part of the experience product – either in restaurant settings, souvenir- and specialty shops and food fairs., These markets may face a greater uncertainty and risk of fraud than the more local and transparent farmers' markets, thus, the issue of trust must be handled differently within different types of SFSCs.

Here, European or national labels as well as a private or local “branding” of the markets with common rules and profiles that the producers have to comply with, were to a greater extent seen as a guarantee for quality of the products and as a measure against fraud. For instance, consumers in the Polish organic food market, BioBazar, said that they visited the market to get products that had ‘eco’ certificates and the customers regarded the organic labelled products to be more safe/healthy (free from additives etc.). Thus, these type of markets benefit both from having certified products that consumers trust as well as the opportunity that the face-to-face interaction gives: *“talking to sellers and other consumers, exchanging information, discussing healthiness of products can (also) be interpreted as a means of gaining trust and reducing uncertainty concerning the quality and origins of products (...).”* (Polish local organic market, BioBazar). In this market, the managers helped the producers with organic certification of their products to stimulate further development of the organic sector in Poland.

Experiences at the Central Market in Dijon indicate that organic in the French market has become a synonym of quality (taste, nutrition), and that direct relations are considered more trustworthy than a label. However, even though the regular customers express trust to the farmer, more occasional customers and newcomers to the market, will probably more likely look for the organic label when they do not know the producer.

Campagna Amica in Italy is another example of a cooperation between a private organization and national/local authorities to strengthen trust and transparency of their markets through a set of standards and common rules for the management of the markets as well as for the producers. The formalisation of rules within the organisation gives the possibility to exploit visibility and transparency towards consumers who trust Campagna Amica as guarantor of the origin of food (made in Italy), its safety, freshness, and quality. The experience from the Campagna Amica network confirms that trust towards the “shop” or the farmers is one of the main drivers of success for FMs. Moreover, in the case of Campagna Amica, the Control System contributes to increase the trust of consumers (87% declare that to know that farms are controlled has a great importance on the decision to attend the market). The formal structure works as guarantor of a FM/SFSC initiative and helps its development.

**Summary**

SFSCs are generally highly trusted by consumers and seen as alternatives to the impersonal and less transparent conventional/large retail chains. A wide range of different motivations all contributing to enhance transparency and trust are connected to inspired, domestic, civic and even green modes of evaluations. These evaluations are found in opposition to industrial evaluations of efficiency and standardization that are perceived as less transparent and where lack of trust often comes as a result of impersonal communication and a distant knowledge of the way food is produced.

However, SFSCs are not a homogeneous group of markets, but represent different types of communication between producers and consumers. They also play different roles for consumers in their daily food purchasing habits as well as in local community building. Thus, one general measure, such as a common labelling system on EU level for SFSCs to strengthen transparency and avoid fraud, will not be in compliance with the different needs and challenges that the local SFSCs face. In the domestic and civic/green cases in this study, a “generic” SFSC label may even be met with scepticism. While in the market mode, cases with a more distant relationship between producers and consumers a labelling system or a uniform set of communication and information, will be more important to enhance transparency and trust. These differences in the perceptions of trust reflect the diversity of SFSCs where some cases are strongly embedded in the local context, while in other cases the relation between consumer and producer are more loose and “distant”. Thus, measures for enhancing trust, such as for formal structures and guarantee systems will, to a great extent, have to be developed in accordance with the local context.

**6.4 Fair price**

The question of price is one of the most important issues and at the core of the discussions of a more community-based food system development. In conventional food supply chains imbalance in bargaining power may lead to unfair trading practices in disfavour of small scale food producers. For many farmers, direct sales through SFSCs enables them to get a higher share of the final retail price (Augère-Granier, 2016) Thus, added value for the local producer is often used as an argument for (public) support for small-scale SFSC enterprises because it leads to a fairer price on behalf of the producer. It is also argued that cutting the number of intermediaries give reduced prices to consumers. However, some SFSCs initiatives have also been questioned for their price premiums on the products, and critics have pointed to the fact that many SFSCs first and foremost cater for high income consumer groups (Morgan et al., 2006). This study to a large extent confirms a bias towards the higher income groups in some cases while a more average income level and even skewed towards the lower income groups are seen in other cases. Thus, this study nuance the given picture of SFSC exclusivity

We found that the cases in this study varied according to the motivations behind the different initiatives, the bargaining power of the producers as well as the groups of customers they targeted.

*Domestic:* The producers in these cases (Polish and Hungarian farmers' markets) are in direct competition with supermarkets and with other retailers and food markets. In the Polish farmers' market the producers expressed that even though they were autonomous in their price setting they had to consider the price taken by the other farmers at the market and not least they felt the pressure from hypermarkets. This competition was seen as a major cause why the number of customers at the market was decreasing (Polish farmers' market). Also the Hungarian farmers' market report that the producers got limited bargaining power, especially on perishable products and other ordinary products (such as eggs) that consumers procure on a daily basis. For these products they felt a pressure on price and direct competition from the major retailers. To a greater extent than the other types of SFSC in our study, these markets function as a main outlet for customers food provisioning, especially fresh vegetables. Thus, customers are price sensitive and expect affordable prices.

*Civic and green:* One main question from the study is: do more explicit co-operations among producers, but also between producers and consumers, lead to more fair relations in the food system where producers on the one hand get a proper return on their sale, and on the other hand consumers get good quality food at affordable prices? In the Italian solidarity group initiative and the Norwegian consumer cooperative one of the main organizing principles was the agreement between producers and consumers about fair prices on products – covering the actual costs with production and a fair return for producers and at the same time fair and affordable prices to consumers. Although with strong intentions on focusing on supporting local producers and a just local food system, we found struggles over price and what is fair (a fair price / fair share) also in these civic and green cases.

The member survey of the Norwegian consumer cooperative showed that the respondents overall were highly satisfied with the prices, and fully agreed that it was less expensive to buy from the cooperative. As in the Italian solidarity purchasing group, the farmers enjoyed the opportunity of autonomous price setting which gave a nice surplus from selling to the cooperative. They felt that the cooperative prices increased rather than pulled them down. In both cases the price setting was based on mutual trust in the form of dialogue such as explained in the qualitative interviews with members of the Italian solidarity group: *'we propose a less or more substantial purchase and a price, which is defined on the basis of the transparent price which includes the various production costs and the share of earning decided by the producer.'* (Consumer 5, Italian Solidarity Purchasing Group)

Even though producers and the organizers of the cooperatives and box schemes in various ways explain the foundations and principles these initiatives are based on, as well as how prices on the products are set, consumers tend to continuously make their own valuations based on their experiences with ordinary food purchases. They question the "value for money" especially in situations where the content of the basket does not live up to their expectations. Some times it may be too much of a product that the customer/member does not use or in other cases there is too little of an item, and the customers think they have paid too much for the whole basket. Especially, when organic and local products to a greater extent also become available at lower prices in ordinary food stores, consumers may tend to stop buying from the SFSC. Thus, contestation over price may also be present in these solidarity initiatives. Some of the producers in the Italian purchasing group complained about lack of support from the consumers in negotiations over prices and discounts and criticized them for little willingness to share risks with producers (as intended in the principles of the solidarity group).

*Market:* In markets with high emphasis on product differentiation and price premium, the questions of what is behind the price and whether it is worth buying the product are often raised. An often used argument is that these markets, emphasising price premiums, represent an exclusive niche. With their focus on price and exclusiveness they are creating a distance/opposition between producer/vendor and consumers - because market modes of valuations become prominent. This may undermine other intentions / motivations and possibilities for supporting a wider community-based development. Rather an including (local and social embedded) development – this strategy may function as excluding on different segments of consumers.

### Summary

The argument of fair price in SFSC is complicated and depends on the type of SFSC and whether looking from the producer or the consumer side.

- Domestic: Ordinary food products are in competition with supermarkets. Consumers are price conscious.
- Civic: Fair price is emphasised – often in favour of producers albeit consumers may challenge market prices.
- Market: Price premiums on products – enjoyed by farmers although exclude large groups of consumers.

## 6.5 Community building

Besides the environmental- and economic dimension, sustainability also has a social dimension. Social embeddedness is often emphasised as the prominent “hallmark” of SFSCs and contrasted with the “placeless” conventional food system (Morgan et al., 2006). While the conventional food system is criticized for depleting the countryside through several dis-embedding forces of “money, capital and technology” (Morgan et al., 2006), support for SFSCs are both from political authorities (Augère-Granier, 2016)<sup>32</sup> and in the academic literature viewed as a strategy to enhance local economy and strengthen the local community (IPES-FOOD, 2017; Morgan et al., 2006). On this background we will here discuss how participants perceive that SFSCs contribute to community building. We found that the different types of cases were perceived to enhance community building along several sustainability dimensions (local value creation, co-operation and solidarity). As previously discussed, participation in a SFSC was highly valued across cases and actors to support producers and thus strengthen the local community. However, participation was also valued due to enhanced cooperation and the sociability of the different markets and initiatives. Consumers, producers and retailers alike underlined these social aspects as main motivations for participating in the respective SFSC.

*Domestic:* A central value emphasised in the domestic cases was how the traditional markets contributed to maintaining local traditions not least food habits that rested upon availability of local produce. This was evident in the Italian dairy case where consumers, including out-migrated consumers, continuously returned to the cooperative shop to buy the special, local,

<sup>32</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/586650/EPRS\\_BRI\(2016\)586650\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/586650/EPRS_BRI(2016)586650_EN.pdf)

parmesan cheese. There was a strong awareness to buy the cheese both to maintain local food traditions, but also to strengthen and preserve local know-how and production. In this sense, the initiative strengthened local cultural heritage and community building. Also in the farmers' market cases of Poland and Hungary the markets were valued not only for fresh and affordable products, but also for strengthening the small-scale producers and local production.

*Civic and Green:* In these cases we found a special focus on community building along different sustainability issues. In the solidarity purchasing groups (GAS) in Italy, there was a strong focus on building a local «solidarity economy» involving both producers and consumers. Here the social equality aspect was specially strong, not least the theme of «food sovereignty». Also, in the consumer cooperative case from Norway one main aim was to strengthen the relation between local consumers and farmers. This became manifest not only in the cooperation on distributing the food baskets, but also through farm visits and the way information about the farms and their products was disseminated on the cooperative web page and through the Facebook group. The cooperative was initially founded at a private Steiner school, which also connected to the farmers as part of school activities. The cooperative members also expressed that an important motivation for participation was the local community building element in such voluntary work and (idealistic) cooperation. The UK Fish box scheme aimed at improving the economic conditions for local fishers (economic sustainability) by making them less dependent on external buyers. Another community building element (in a wider sense) was the intention of improving the management of the fish stocks, which eventually will contribute to secure the local fisheries in the long term.

*Market:* The market cases perhaps have a more indirect role in community building and not as explicitly expressed as in the civic and green cases. Some of these markets are supported by national and/or local authorities, often with the aim of strengthening the local economy and not least by adding value to products from small-scale producers. One general aim, at least seen from the agricultural policy perspective, was to help small-scale farmers in diversifying their activities and, thus, strengthening their possibilities to live from what is produced on the farm. Support for distribution at local markets naturally gives a boost also to other activities and other local businesses (local multiplier effects), thus directly and indirectly they contribute to community building. This was evident from the Polish organic market who emphasised its role in development of a more vivid city through its diverse activities and special products attracting tourists.

### Summary

*Domestic.* Activities within domestic worlds of SFSCs are based on local traditions and knowledge and are developed in line with familiarity with the place. SFSC activities, thus, contribute to strengthening cultural heritage including small scale farming traditional food processing- and consumption practices.

*Civic and green.* Community building along several sustainable issues such as through solidarity principles (fair relations) and strengthening local “food sovereignty”. Community building also include local nature preservation and resource management.

*Market.* Indirect support for local community through diversifying farm activities that may strengthen livelihood of individual farms. Successful markets may boost other local activities and businesses.

## 6.6 Transferability

In this chapter we have specifically looked at food distribution and provisioning, trust and transparency, fair price and community building as four important aspects where the different types of SFSCs meet different challenges, but also where they show their strengths and positive experiences for SFSC development. Our analyses have been inspired by a conventional theoretical approach for categorisation of different types of SFSCs and of Social Practice Theory for understanding how practices within SFSCs may develop and change. This has helped in pointing to similarities and differences in SFSC development and possibilities of shared experiences across types of SFSCs and countries.

The element of meaning is shared across all the twelve (13 including Campagna Amica) European cases. Throughout the report we find that all actors from producers, consumers, retailers and market managers to a great extent share the same values as to support local production, strengthen the connection between producers and consumers, increase transparency and trust and promote fresh, healthy good quality local products.

Without going further into the explanations and discussion of the role shared values in SFSCs, we state that this “meaningfulness” is the strongest element and a fundamental basis for SFSC development. Thus, when discussing difficulties in how experiences may be transferred we will specifically look at the material, knowledge and economic elements.

*Distribution and provisioning of food.* In the report we have studied several markets, either traditional farmers’ markets or more modern markets that in many instances resembles the traditional markets, but also in many ways have renewed the market concept. The markets in this study vary to the extent they have success in reaching consumers independently of them being traditional (domestic) or more innovative (market mode) types of markets. One important variable to explain differences may be the customer base – some of the successful SFSCs are placed in larger cities while those who struggled with attracting customers (for instance the local farmers in Poland and the Hexham Farmers market in UK) are placed in less densely populated areas and smaller towns. Another challenge for further SFSC development is directly linked to organisational issues. Several barriers are mentioned regarding the disadvantages faced by producers, retailers and market managers when trying to develop their business or initiative. Strengthening of co-operation and organisation on the local level is a key to further development of SFSCs. But also to strengthen the organisation of the market in terms of creating larger organisation (national such as Campagna Amica).

The knowledge and technology elements were especially focused in improving the organisation of the civic and green types of SFSC with a radical different distribution from local markets through box schemes. Their need for marketing via social media develops new ways of communication and organisation of direct sales. This has resulted in strengthening information and thus the knowledge element of consumers as well as new technology that has made the distribution and communication with consumers more efficient. This has again resulted in new business models such as the REKO-rings in the Nordic countries. There is a potential to transfer experiences, such as use of social media and payment technology to other types of SFSCs, however, from many of the studied cases in this report the transferability across Europe of these innovative organisational and technological initiatives seem challenging. From the Hungarian farmers’ market case we learnt that that IT was not used at all and only a very tiny part of the producers use advanced payment methods. The report further states that the far dominant payment method in the FM was cash. Small producers who make a little turnover (20-200 EUR/day) cannot afford the cost of a POS terminal but they also distance themselves from IT-developments.

*Transparency and trust.* Regarding the issues of labelling and transparency we found that third party control and labelling to most extent are not necessary within SFSC, however, in market modes of SFSCs the formalisation of rules within the organisation contribute to consumers' trust (e.g. Campagna Amica). Official labels, such as the organic or Geographical Indications (GIs), may also in these types of markets enhance trust (e.g. Polish organic market). Thus, experiences with enhancing trust through formalisation of rules etc. may easily be transferred to similar market mode SFSCs in Europe, however, in the other types of SFSCs, such as the domestic and also civic and green modes, systems and relations of trust and transparency are achieved in the close contact between producer and consumer. For instance through the PGS-system described in box 6.3 below.

*Fair price.* Autonomy in price setting was a main motivation for producers participating in all the SFSCs. However, this autonomy seem to vary according to the type of SFSC and type of products. In the co-operative models the producers seem to have a stronger bargaining power compared to the market modes where the individual producers seem more affected by the prices set particularly by the larger retailer, but also by other producers. One special co-operative model in this study was the Norwegian local fish case. Here the fishers co-operative by law has the right to set minimum prices on the first hand sale of fish. Transfer of this model will require comprehensive legislative changes, while the new types of cooperatives based on solidarity principles between producers and consumers, may more easily be transferred to different contexts and a stronger organisation, such as the Italian GAS, may enhance growth of such initiatives.

*Community building.* The green and *civic* modes of SFSCs are explicitly founded with the aim of strengthening the relation between producer and consumer, building a local "food economy" and defending the "food sovereignty" of local communities. Thus, they represent a movement contesting the *industrial* logics of the conventional food system, and the possibilities of growth and transferability must be seen in relation to the radical shift they represent. The domestic types of SFSC, the traditional farmers markets as well as the three specialty shops in this study (fresh water fish in Hungary, Dairy cooperative in Italy and fish shop in Norway) represent traditional ways of direct sales important for local identity and cultural heritage. However, they are threatened by competition from the *industrial* logic of the conventional retail system, thus growth and transferability of these types of SFSCs are challenging. The *market* types of SFSCs to a greater extent play the game of the conventional food system by their strategies of diversification of food products, aiming at finding their niche and, thus, a way to add value to the business. This added value model is highly supported also within agricultural policy programs. These businesses also face great competition from conventional retailers, and some cases, such as the Hexham farmers' market strives to attract new customers, while other markets have success perhaps reliant on the present status of local food products for instance among urban consumer groups.

### Summary

Different types of SFSCs may have different capabilities of transferring experiences across cases and national and cultural boundaries. In general, there are great variations in food cultures across Europe, with France, Italy and other southern European countries often recognised as the countries where traditional and cultural aspects of food, valorised via SFSCs, stand strongest. For the *domestic* types of SFSCs, one common denominator is the role they play in *community building* for building a local identity to food and supporting the local food cultural heritage. However, building “local food identities” may not easily be transferred from one context to another.

New, *civic and green* SFSCs often rely on innovative practices concerning the co-operation between consumers and producers as well as more efficient organisational communication models in the distribution of food, involving the use of social media and smart phone applications. Technological and knowledge barriers may stand in the way for transferring experiences across Europe.

## 6.7 Final comments and conclusions

In this report we have raised three questions relevant for SFSC development:

- What are the main motivations for participating in SFSC-initiatives according to producers, retailers/managers and consumers?
- What are the perceived drivers and barriers for the development of the studied SFSCs?
- What are important experiences that may be shared and transferred across different types of SFSCs?

These questions are interlinked with the overall aim of S2F assessing sustainability development along economic, social and environmental dimensions. In WP7 this assessment is made in two interlinked tasks: qualitatively (Task 7.1) and quantitatively (Task 7.2). The strength of the approach is that the qualitative findings in 7.1 can be ‘evaluated’ by the quantitative assessments in 7.2 and vice versa; the qualitative results in 7.1 will be a valuable source for interpreting the quantitative findings in 7.2.

A general assumption is often that SFSCs contribute to social, economic and environmental sustainability (see e.g. Augère-Garnier, 2016). The UN sustainability goals about sustainable production and consumption also focus on strengthening food system sustainability via the direct involvement of all actors, from the primary producer to the final consumer, whereby attention is placed on educating the consumer.<sup>33</sup>

The economic sustainability of SFSC is, according to the producers interviewed for this report, valued as beneficial when taking into account price premiums and bargaining power (the autonomy in price setting). The value of fair price for producers is often shared among both producers and consumers, but not in all instances. In some cases consumers express that SFSCs

<sup>33</sup> See for instance: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-consumption-production/>



are important to get high quality food at affordable prices, while in other instances high price may be a major barrier against consumers' participation in specific initiatives. In Task 7.2 these issues will be quantitatively assessed in terms of producer price differentials and value added across different chains, producers' own evaluation of bargaining power as well as local multiplier effects.

Regarding social sustainability several dimensions seem to contribute to strengthen SFSCs development such as the sociability of markets, closer connections between producers and–consumer, enhanced co-operation between producers and strengthening local identity among both producers and consumers. An important success factor in some, but not all cases is a wider co-operation with other sectors and not least support from local or national authorities. However, in many cases lack of local cohesion is seen as a major weakness and many call for a greater local engagement, not least from the authorities.

In Task 7.2 the social dimension will be evaluated by the producers participating in SFSCs about issues such as relations to other food chain actors, trust and pleasantness. Gender equality and educational attainment of the participating producers will also be measured.

Regarding environmental sustainability it is an open question to the (environmental) efficiency regarding emissions and resource use in SFSCs (Mundler and Laughrea, 2016). This may differ also between types of SFSC. In this report we have seen that both domestic as well as civic and green types of SFSC may contribute significantly to the food basket of consumers, however, to what extent these forms of distribution is as effective in resource use as conventional long chains is an open question. SFSCs are by the interviewed actors perceived as more environmental friendly than distribution through long supply chains. The participating producers are often small scale, multi-functional operations, that are perceived as more beneficial regarding animal welfare, resource management etc. In the cases where organic food products were distributed the SFSCs were seen as important sales channel making these products more easily available, and besides environmental benefits these products were perceived as more healthy. Important arguments for SFSCs were also less packaging, less waste and less transportation. These last elements are not measured here, but in Task 7.2 food miles and the carbon footprint of SFSC-distribution will be measured.

#### *Reflexivity of SFSC actors and potential for change*

We have mentioned the social dimension as a strength for SFSC development. Participation in SFSC often represent a reflexive choice by producers and consumers not solely aimed at the 'neutral' exchange of food products, but seen as an active act stating a range of preferences and motivations. These motivations are often voiced as discontent with the present food system, but more positively they underline the positive aspects of SFSC participation such as increasing support and contact between local producers and consumers, stimulating to a more fair agricultural- and food economy, securing management of and access to local resources, fresh and healthy local food etc. However, it seems like in meeting with the 'industrial' logic of the conventional food system, these SFSCs will stay marginal (Marsden 2013, Morgan et al., 2006, Guthman, 2004). Findings in this report show that farmers and fishers perceive a constant pressure on prices. They feel a heavy workload not least from managing several different tasks besides the primary work as farmer/fisher. In many cases the farmers and fishers expressed frustration with governmental authorities, and were overwhelmed by the detailed requirements and the number of different types of rules and laws to comply with. Regulations are governed by different authorities, which often are seen as complicating things even more. The bureaucratic "compartmentalization" of responsibilities for different sectors (agriculture, food safety, labour safety and protection) are not adopted to the requirements of small-scale

businesses dealing with multiple tasks (primary production, processing and distribution). This complex, bureaucratic organisation contribute to the impression/perception that rather than working with the (supporting) farmers, fishers and other SFSC-actors, the authorities works against them.

However, Marsden (2013) pictures possible development paths and among others “a new area” for food system development where SFSCs have a prominent place. It requires, thus, a new reflexive governance approach including a brake with the “*compartementalised working of the state apparatus*” (Marsden 2013: 131). This reflexive governance means a greater co-ordination of the different public bodies, and legislative and control measures are needed to better support SFSC development. This co-ordination is needed both on a governmental and regional level as well as between the national and local level (Marsden 2013). It is a need for a broader local, rural development strategy that evaluate the effect of legislation and support measures on SFSC-development as well as the role of different actors. Finally, we will lend our words to Terry Marsden stating that:

*“Sometimes, for instance one may need national and international (e.g. EU) policy structures to set overall frameworks, but also an active (and explicitly spatialised) form of regional and local governance to ‘occupy’ the new policy spaces these may encourage.”* (Marsden, 2013: 131).

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**APPENDIX 1: CUSTOMER SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE****Customer survey questionnaire**

Interview case location: (case selected by interviewer, the customers did not need to answer this)

Since when have you been shopping here?

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

How often do you shop here?

*Please select appropriate (A, B or C) and indicate number of visits on average, or if your first visit, select D.*

- Times a week \_\_\_\_
- Times a month \_\_\_\_
- Times a year \_\_\_\_
- First time

*In this survey we want to know more about travel habits of customers who come to buy food here. Based on information provided by you in questions 2 – 6 we will calculate Carbon FootPrint, which is a measure of the total emission of Greenhouse Gases.*

What was your main type of transportation to get here today?

- Car
- On foot/bicycle
- Bus/train/tram
- Taxi
- Other

What was your point of departure for the shopping trip?

- From home
- From workplace/school
- Other\_\_\_\_

What is your usual travelling pattern and distances you travel to buy food here (approximately km)?

	% of travels for each of the alternatives (A,B,C)	Distance travelled [km]	Number of stops for alternative B
A. I make the trip only for shopping here	_____	_____	X
B. Shopping here is only one among my planned stops on the way.	_____	_____	_____
C. Stopping passing by on my way from work, school or other	_____	_____	X

A: Here we ask for the distance the customer travel on the occasions where the customer come from home and go back only for the sake of buying food “here”. This means the total distance both ways from the starting point (e.g. home) and back (home or work etc.)

B: Here we ask for the distance the food travel on the occasions where the customer have one or more other errands. Thus, we ask the customer to estimate the total distance travelled from the starting point (home) and back, including all the other errands on the way. Here we also ask for number of stops.

C: Here we will measure only the distance from the shop and home on the occasions where the customer stop when passing by the shop for instance from work/school or other. Thus, we ask the customer to estimate the distance from the shop to home/final destination (one way).

What type of products have you bought and how much do they weight in total? (kg)

- Products bought
- Fruits or berries
- Vegetables
- Cheese
- Other dairy products
- Fish (fresh or processed)
- Meat (fresh or processed)
- Cereal products (bread, bakery, grains, etc.)
- Semi-prepared foods
- Beverages
- Other

Total weight of the food purchased in kg \_\_\_\_\_

Compare shopping here with buying food from a typical grocery store.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (from 1 “I completely disagree” to 5 “I fully agree”)

**Compared to a typical grocery store:**

	1. Completely disagree	2. Somewhat disagree	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Somewhat agree	5. Fully agree	No opinion
I get products which are more fresh						
I get products which are more healthy (good for my health)						
The selection of products that I look for is not as good here as in a typical grocery store						
I get more value for money here						

	1. Completely disagree	2. Somewhat disagree	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Somewhat agree	5. Fully agree	No opinion
I find it more environmentally friendly to shop here						
I find it more pleasant to shop here						
I get more information about the food products here						
I get unique food products here that I cannot buy in a typical grocery store						
I only do some supplementary shopping here (compared) to what I buy in a typical grocery store						

How important are the following reasons why you shop here? Please state to what extent you agree with the following statements (from 1 "I completely disagree" to 5 "I fully agree")

**I shop here because...**

	1. Completely disagree	2. Somewhat disagree	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Somewhat agree	5. Fully agree	No opinion
It is convenient for me						
This business is innovative and creative						
I trust this outlet/shop						
I wish to support environmentally friendly food production						
This outlet/shop has a good reputation						
I wish to support local producers (e.g. farmers / fishers)						
It offers high quality products						



1.	2.	3. Neither	4.	5. Fully	No
Completely	Somewhat	agree nor	Somewhat	agree	opinion
disagree	disagree	disagree	agree	agree	

It is less expensive for me

I get traditional food here

How did you first learn about this outlet/shop/market? (You can choose more than one).

- Media (Newspaper, radio, TV)
- Family, friends, colleagues
- Flyers, posters etc.
- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.)
- By chance / passing by
- Other \_\_\_\_

Gender

- Female
- Male

Year of birth \_\_\_\_\_

- Wish not to say

What was your highest level of education completed?

- Primary / lower secondary
- Upper secondary (including short-cycle tertiary education)
- Tertiary
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Number of persons in the household

Adults 18 years or more \_\_\_\_\_

Children under 18 years old \_\_\_\_\_

What is your households' monthly net income? (gross income minus taxes)

(Local answering alternatives with 6-7 income categories given)

- Category 1
- Category 2
- Category 3
- Category 4
- Category 5
- Category 6
- Don't wish to tell

General comments \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX 2: PRODUCER INTERVIEW GUIDE****Background information**

*Demographic/socio-economic background such as age, education, place of birth etc.*

*If you do the interview in parallel with the quantitative survey some of the background information about the producer will be entered in the excel sheet:*

1. How would you describe the farm operation? (conventional / organic, ...)
2. Area of agricultural land (ha)
3. What do you produce on the farm?
4. Through what type of SFSC do you sell?
5. Education level
6. Number of people working on the farm / business
  - a. Family members. Working time and gender.
    - i. full time males..... females .....
    - ii. part time males ..... females .....
  - b. Hired workers (full time males ... females / part time males ..... females.....)
  - c. Seasonal labour (males .... females.....)

**Other background questions:**

What is your age, and for how long have you had this farm /fish business?

*Can also be added in the EXCEL*

**For farmers:**

Did you inherit your farm?

If not, when did you purchase it?

Do you have other professions/work besides being a farmer/fisherman? If, yes please list:

**I. Motivations For Distributing Food Products Through This Particular SFSC**

*For the interviewer:*

*In this section we want to know why producers are motivated to participate in this SFSC-initiative. How do they explain why they chose to distribute their products through **this***

**particular SFSC?** We are also interested to know if producers' motivations match or are different from **other actors (retailers, consumers)** within the SFSC (their visions – etc.)

Justifications (Conventions) can be based on: price, profit (Market); trust, social relations (Domestic); reputation; solidarity, fair trade (Civic) etc.

*For this project we are focusing on this particular SFSC-initiative (**name of the initiative**):*

### 1. When and how did you first learn about this particular SFSC-initiative?

Probe:

- From other farmers/fishermen
- Media (Internet, TV)
- Education, school
- Authorities, producer organizations
- Other

*For the interviewer:*

*Distribution through SFSCs is often seen as an alternative income opportunity for producers, but also other benefits may be gained through this type of distribution.*

### 2. What are the most important reason for why you choose this particular SFSC-initiative for distribution of your product(s)?

**Probe:** Let the interviewees speak freely about their motives – probably one or more motives on the list below will appear (they are just listed here in case you want to check for reasons not mentioned by the interviewee, but it is not the intention to check for all of them):

- Profitability – better price
- Access to new markets
- Innovation (try something new)
- Autonomy (freedom – equality in the value chain)
- Closer relationship with local actors (consumers, retailers etc.)
- Equality and trust between actors in the value chain
- Visibility/recognition/reputation
- Fair price/fair share
- Security (stable sales volumes, adapt distribution to production capacity, etc.)
- Environmentally sustainable
- Outside support (local community / local or national authorities)
- Other reasons ...

## **II. About The Product(S):**

*For the interviewer:*

*In this section we want to know more about producers' own perception of their products. Again, it is interesting to know especially when comparing to how other actors (retailers, consumers) within the same SFSC value the same products.*

*Evaluations (Conventions) may be based on: Economic value (Market), traditional recipe, locality, trust (Domestic), fair price (Civic), brand, reputation (Renown), environmentally sound (Green)*

Products distributed through SFSCs like this particular initiative may have certain qualities that are distinguishable from other products.

### **1. What do you think distinguishes your product(s)?**

Probes: (Again, let the interviewee speak freely, and the list is more like a check for yourself)

- Quality, freshness, taste
- Presentation (packaging, design, brand)
- Tradition / history
- Healthy
- Environmental friendly / sustainable
- Special recipe
- Support local / regional identity
- Price
- Other

## **III. Challenges**

*For the interviewer:*

*In this section we want to know more about what are the main barriers and drivers for producers involved in SFSC. In the literature a number of factors are discussed as **potential challenging (barriers) such as:** material (infrastructure, technology), regulations (taxes, laws and rules), cultural-normative (support from society), economic, knowledge, psychological (individual) (also see e.g. Galli et al 2013: 15-20).*

A number of potential barriers or hindrances may influence the possibilities for distributing products through SFSCs.

### **1. What would you say have been the most difficult or challenging aspects associated with distributing through this particular SFSC?**

**Probes:** Let the interviewee speak freely, some of the aspects listed below will be subject for questioning later in the interview.

- Co-operation with other actors in the SFSC-initiative
- Profitability
- Special regulations (taxes etc.)
- Access to capital for investments
- Lack of relevant knowledge
- Lack of storage facilities
- Lack of necessary equipment
- Significant reorganization of farm activities (more labour needed)
- Increased workload
- Changes in the production system/farm operation;
- Changes in family life

### **Investments**

Distribution thorough SFSC may need additional investments to ordinary investments on the farm.

**1. What types of additional investments, if any, have you made in order to distribute products through this particular SFSC?**

**2. If additional investments;**

- Was it difficult to get the capital you needed?
- How will these investments contribute to strengthen the distribution of your products through this particular SFSC?

### **Supply chain governance**

**1. How are the prices decided for products you sell through this SFSC compared to ordinary sales channels or other SFSCs you have experience with?**

**2.a. How do you perceive your bargaining power in relation to retailers/purchasers within this particular SFSC compared to ordinary sales channels or other SFSCs you have experience with?**

**2.b. To what extent do you influence decisions on prices, deliveries, etc.?**

### **Public support**

**1. Have you received any kind of support from national or local authorities regarding your involvement with this particular SFSC?**

**2. If yes, what kind of support? How has this helped you and your business?**

**Probes:**

- Economic (grant, loan)?
- Educational (training courses etc...)?
- Other?

**3. To what extent does other public regulations affect your possibilities to distribute your products through SFSCs negatively or positively?****Probes:** Check for these different types of regulations:

- Economic (taxes, fees, subsidies)?
- Legal (laws, regulations, rules)?
- Hygiene regulations
- Certification systems
- Other?

**Knowledge**

*Farmers engaged in SFSC-initiatives, especially for the first time, may have to seek out new knowledge and competence that they do not have initially:*

**1. To what extent has distribution through this particular SFSC made it necessary to gain new knowledge / competencies?****2. In what areas have more knowledge been required?**

- Marketing
- Processing
- Business management
- New farming techniques/practices
- Other areas

**3. How have you managed to acquire this type of knowledge?****Organizational challenges****1. To what extent has organizational changes on the farm (such as additional labour (family/external); increased workload; new farming techniques) been necessary to manage to distribute your products through this particular SFSC?****Probes:**

- A lot of time/personal investment is required
- Combine various tasks (producing, selling)
- Involve additional labour (family, external)
- New practices and operations in the production
- Other

#### ***IV. Social networks and communication***

*For the interviewer:*

*How important are close, local networks in development of SFSC? In what ways do producers make use of social networks (social embeddedness, trust, reciprocity, transparency)?*

##### **1. With whom do you cooperate (closest) within this particular SFSC?**

**Probes:**

- Wholesaler / food processors
- Retailers, restaurants
- Consumers (organisations, cooperatives)
- Others, schools, local authorities ...?

##### **2. How important is the cooperation with the other actors within this particular SFSC?**

##### **3. What type of improvements / changes do you think is needed in the organization / co-operation within this particular SFSC-initiative?**

##### **4. Have you received any attention from the local community about your involvement in this particular SFSC (positive / negative)?**

##### **5. Have you yourself profiled the SFSC business locally (besides ordinary marketing)?**

#### ***V. Evaluation***

*For the interviewer: Final section to get some information about how the producer looks upon the future of distribution through this particular SFSC.*

##### **1. How will you compare your experience with supplying to this particular SFSC-initiative with your experiences with other distribution channels? What are the main differences both positively and negatively?**

- Other SFCS-initiatives?
- Long / conventional supply chains?

##### **2. Have you thought of quitting selling through this particular SFSC?**

- If yes, what have been the main reasons, worries, barriers, etc.?
- If no, what are the main arguments for continuing?

**3. What future plans do you have for production and distribution of your products through this particular SFSC?****Probes:**

- Increase the volume of production?
- Diversify the production?
- Other?

***End of interview*****1. Are there important issues that you want to add that we have not touched upon so far?**

Interviewing time: ...



**APPENDIX 3: CONSUMER INTERVIEW GUIDE****Warm up**

*For the interviewer:*

*This section is a “warm up” for the interview and it is a way to get an understanding of why the consumer buy food at this particular place and what they do with this food.*

*We would like to talk about the food you have bought at the SFSC (name of the shop/market etc.) today /when we met.*

1. Is this food for a special occasion or mostly ordinary meals? Do you plan to eat it alone or together with others?

**Product(s)**

*For the interviewer:*

*In this section we ask about the specific products we want to focus on. E.g. Fish, dairy, meat, fruits & vegetables. We pick at least one product of each of the categories fresh/processed. Ideally both categories. Focus on one particular **fresh or/and processed** food item that relates to your case.*

1. Why did you buy this particular food **here**?

Probes:

- Quality (taste, freshness)
- Economic (Price)
- Health (avoid food additives, pesticides ...)
- Environment (e.g. organic, ...)
- Animal welfare (e.g. free range, ...)
- Other .....?

2. Do you also sometimes buy the same product in other places? If yes, where?

3. Does it make a difference to you where you buy this type of product? Why/why not?

4. What do you like to know about this type of product before you buy it?

5. Do you get this information, and where?

Probes:

- From the label?
- From the shopkeeper?
- From a website?
- Other .....?

### *SFSC*

*For the interviewer: In this section we want to get knowledge about the reasons why the consumers come to the shop*

1. How often do you buy food here?
2. Why do you choose to shop here?

**Probes:** *Aspects to check could be convenience, quality:*

- Value for money
- Support local producers
- Good quality
- The food taste better / Sensory experience
- Good service
- Convenient
- Pleasant shopping experience
- Personal contact, trust this business
- Reputation
- Environment, less package, organic

3. Is it convenient for you to come here? If yes, why? If no, Why not?
  4. Do you usually find what you look for?
  5. Would you shop here more often if you could? Why or why not?
- What would make you come here (even) more often?

### *Shopping experience*

*For the interviewer:*

*In this section we want to know more about if consumers' experience buying food in this way different from their typical or ordinary food shopping experiences.*

1. Do you ever spend time talking with the staff, owners or other customers in the shop / at the market (adjust for type of SFSC)? If yes, what do you normally talk about?

Probes:

- To get information (about the quality, prices, other type of information)
  - knowledge about food
  - social relations
  - foods on offer
  - foods in the season
2. What do you think are the main differences, if any, from shopping here compared to shopping in an ordinary food store/super market?
  3. If you are dissatisfied, do you feel free to complain / give feedback?
  4. Have you ever complained? If yes, about what? What was the result?

### *Potential*

*For the interviewer:*

*In this section, we want to know more about the potential of this way of providing food. Is this just for dedicated people or people who live near by? What are the potential to grow? Why is this SFSC not important to some people?*

1. Have you ever recommended other people to come here? Why?/why not?
2. Do your neighbors or family also come here?
3. Would you like to buy all your food here if possible? Why?/why not?
4. Now we have talked about some of the reasons why you shop here, but are there also some things you don't like about this way of buying food?

### *Information and learning*

*For the interviewer:*

*In this section, we want to know more about how customers are recruited.*

*We also want to know if the customers have changed routines, values, interest in food etc. over time. Is there some kind of learning/educational aspects involved?*

1. How did you first learn about this shop/market (adjust for type of SFSC)?

**Probes:**

- From family,
- Friends,
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Just stopped by
- Posters, flyers
- Media (local newspaper, TV/radio)
- Don't remember / always done shopping here .....
- other

2. Do you recall the reasons why you decided to shop here for the first time?

3. Have you noticed that any of your routines related to preparation and cooking of food are different since you started shopping here?

**Probes:**

- Cook more with whole ingredients ('from scratch', from fresh/raw ingredients).
- Cook more with seasonal food than before
- Spend more/less time on cooking
- Cooking more fun

4. Has shopping here changed your knowledge and the way you value food? If yes, in what ways?

**Probes:**

- More knowledge about food production

- More knowledge about- / become more interested in cooking than before

5. Has there been a change in the amount food waste since you started buying food here? If yes, why?

Probes:

Value this food more, thus;

- Take better care of the food
- Use of leftovers

If waste has increased:

- the food are being spoiled more easily
- products are new to me / do not know how to use them

### *Summing up the interview*

1. How do you think this business could improve or be better?

Probes:

- Greater selection,
- More eco-friendly,
- Changing opening hours
- Reduce prices,
- Improve communication, information

2, Do you wish this type of food retail (direct distribution and sale) should be more widespread? Why /why not?

3. If yes, do you have any suggestions for how these types of distribution can grow and be more common?

4. What type of actors (authorities/businesses/NGOs/ others) do you think have responsibility for strengthening this type of distribution?

5. What type of measures do you think may have a positive effect?

6. Do consumers have a role in promoting and supporting these types of initiatives? If yes, what role can they play?

7. Are there important issues that you want to add, that we have not touched upon so far?

### *Demographics*

*For the interviewer:*

*In this section, we want to fill in personal, social-economic information about the informants – to the degree that they are comfortable with giving this kind of information. Do not discharge the interview if some of these remain unanswered.*

1. Do you live nearby/ in this local area? (Please give approximately the number of km between home and the relevant SFSC)

- 2. What is the number of members in your household?  
Adults 18 years or more: ..... Children under 18 years old: .....
- 3. What is your year of birth? .....
- 4. Gender of interviewee (to be filled in by the interviewer) Male.....Female.....
- 5. What is your highest level of education completed?
  - Primary / lower secondary
  - Upper secondary (including short-cycle tertiary education)
  - Tertiary
  - Other, please specify .....
- 6. What is your household's monthly net income (approximately)?

Use the same categories as in the Customer questionnaire (WP7) / national survey (WP8)

Interviewing time: .....

**APPENDIX 4: RETAILER INTERVIEW GUIDE***I. Background*

## 1. Demographics

- Age...
- Education ...

2. What is your professional background? Does that relate to your involvement with this SFSC?

3. For how long have you been involved in this SFSC or other similar types of SFSC?

Can you tell a little about the history of this SFSC?

4. When did the SFSC get started and why was it established?

5. How would you describe a typical workday here?

Follow up:

- What about other seasons? Does your work change with the seasons?

*II. Motivations for involvement in this particular SFSC*

*For the interviewer: In this section we will let the interviewee speak freely about the reasons why they are engaged in this particular SFSC. Informants may also come back to the topic about involvement in SFSCs at other points in the interview.*

1. What are (some of) the reasons why you are involved in this SFSC?

*Probe: Let the interviewees speak freely about their motives – probably one or more motives on the list below appear (they are just listed here in case you want to check for reasons not mentioned by the interviewee, but it is not the intention to check for all of them). However try to get what is the most important reason:*

- Profitability – good prices
- Access to new markets
- Innovation (try something new)
- Autonomy (freedom – equality in the value chain)
- Closer relationship with local actors (consumers, retailers etc.)
- Equality and trust between actors in the value chain
- Visibility/recognition/reputation
- Fair price / fair share
- Security (stable sales volumes, adapt sales to production capacity etc.)
- Environmentally sustainable
- Outside support (local community / local or national authorities)
- Other reasons

2. Have you heard from your customers why they buy food from this SFSC-initiative?
3. Have you heard from producers why they want to deliver their products through this particular SFSC-initiative?

### *III. About the product(s):*

*For the interviewer:*

*In this section we want to know more about the retailers' own perception of their products. Again, it is interesting to know especially when comparing to how other actors (retailers, consumers) within the same SFSC value the same products.*

*Evaluations (Conventions) may be based on: Economic value (Market), Traditional recipe, locality, trust (Domestic), Fair price (Civic), Brand, reputation (Renown), Environmentally sound (Green)*

Products distributed through SFSCs like this particular initiative may have certain qualities that are distinguishable from other products.

1. Why do you think people should buy your products? What do you think distinguish your products?

Probes: (Again, let the interviewee speak freely, and the list functions more as a check for yourself)

- Quality, freshness, taste
- Presentation (packaging, design, brand)
- Tradition / history
- Special recipe
- Support local / regional identity
- Market Channel / point of sale
- Price
- Other

### *IV. Challenges*

1. In your opinion what are the most difficult or challenging aspects affecting development of this particular SFSC?

- Co-operation with other actors in the SFSC-initiative
- Increase the customer base
- Stable supply
- Strong competition
- Profitability

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Special regulations (taxes etc.)</li> <li>▪ Access to capital for investments</li> <li>▪ Lack of relevant knowledge</li> <li>▪ Lack of storage facilities</li> <li>▪ Lack of necessary equipment</li> <li>▪ Workload</li> <li>▪ Other ....</li> </ul>
<p>Investments</p> <p>1. Does this SFSC have appropriate equipment, infrastructure, and storage facilities?</p> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How can this SFSC get the equipment and infrastructure it needs?</li> <li>▪ How will these investments contribute to strengthen this SFSC-initiative?</li> </ul>
<p>Economic development</p> <p>1.a. What has the sales trajectory looked like since this SFSC-initiative started?</p> <p>1.b. If positive, what factors may explain the growth in sales?</p> <p>1.c. If negative, what are the main factors that may explain its decline?</p>
<p>Supply chain management</p> <p>1. How are the prices decided for products you sell through this SFSC? You may compare to ordinary sales channels or other SFSCs you have experience with.</p> <p>2.a. How do you perceive your bargaining power in relation to producers / consumers within this particular SFSC-initiative compared to ordinary sales channels or other SFSCs you have experience with?</p> <p>2.b. To what extent do you influence decisions on prices, deliverances etc.?</p>
<p>Public / outside support</p> <p>1. Does this SFSC-initiative rely on outside funding or is it self-sustaining through sales?</p> <p>2.a Has this SFSC-initiative ever received or asked for public funds (from local or national authorities) to support its growth and development?</p> <p>2.b If yes, what kind of support and how has this helped with you?</p> <p>Probes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economic (grant, loan)?</li> <li>▪ Educational (training courses etc...)?</li> <li>▪ Other?</li> </ul> <p>3. To what extent do other public regulations affect the development of this SFSC-initiative negatively or positively?</p>



Probes: Check for these different types of regulations:

- Economic (taxes, fees, subsidies)?
- Legal (laws, regulations, rules)?
- Hygiene regulations
- Certification system?
- Other?

#### Knowledge

The SFSC-initiatives studied in Strength2Food are different in many respects. Some are well-established, businesses while other are new and innovative. Especially, for the newly established initiatives we believe that knowledge may be an important factor for how the initiatives develop.

1. What competency and knowledge do you think are missing (if any) within this particular SFSC-initiative?
2. In what areas do you think more knowledge will be required (in the future)?
  - Marketing
  - Processing
  - Business management
  - Other areas
3. Where do you intend to get new required knowledge?

#### *V. Social networks and communication*

*For the interviewer:*

*How important are close, local networks in development of SFSC? In what ways do retailers make use of social networks (social embeddedness, trust, reciprocity, transparency)?*

1. Do you have any collaboration with other local actors and social groups? If yes, how important are they as a way to expand the customer base or generate support?

Probes:

- Other businesses: wholesalers/food processors, retailers, restaurants, etc.
- Consumers (organisations, cooperatives)
- Producers organizations
- Other NGOs
- Local authorities
- Schools, educational- or research institutions
- Other

2. Have you received any positive or negative attention from the local community about this SFSC-initiative (e.g. media coverage, awards, etc.)?

Can you describe the communication / information channels in which this initiative engages?

*Probe: Communication can be through:*

- E-mail
- Facebook
- Print and social media outreach
- Smart technology and apps
- Informal communication at the store
- labels on the product
- Newspaper, local radio/TV

4. Which communication techniques are the MOST and least effective?

5. Have you ever got feedback about your communication strategy and outreach?

6. Does this SFSC follow a specific business-/organizational model for inspiration?

- If so, which one(s)?

- If not, why not?

#### *VI. Evaluation*

For the interviewer: Final section to get some information about how the retailer looks upon the future for this particular SFSC-initiative.

1. What are your *practical, achievable* visions and plans for this initiative in the future?

- 2 years?
- 10 years?

2. Will the SCALE of this SFSC change in terms of:

- Sales volume?
- Customer base?
- Selection of products?
- Producers involved?
- If relevant: number of sales outlets and/or number of co-operating partners

3. Will there be new groups of producers, consumers or other actors/partners involved?  
Which ones?

4. What type of products will the SFSC supply? Anything different or additional?

5. What are in your opinion the most important factors that will help to develop this particular SFSC-initiative further?

What do you think are the most important barriers and drivers for SFSCs in your local area in general?

*End of interview*

1. Are there important issues that you want to add that we have not touched upon so far?

Interviewing time: .....



### **The Strength2Food project in a nutshell**

Strength2Food is a five-year, €6.9 million project to improve the effectiveness of EU food quality schemes (FQS), public sector food procurement (PSFP) and to stimulate Short Food Supply Chains (SFSC) through research, innovation and demonstration activities. The 30-partner consortium representing 11 EU and four non-EU countries combines academic, communication, SMEs and stakeholder organisations to ensure a multi-actor approach. It will undertake case study-based quantitative research to measure economic, environmental and social impacts of FQS, PSFP and SFSC. The impact of PSFP policies on nutrition in school meals will also be assessed. Primary research will be complemented by econometric analysis of existing datasets to determine impacts of FQS and SFSC participation on farm performance, as well as understand price transmission and trade patterns. Consumer knowledge, confidence in, valuation and use of FQS labels and products will be assessed via survey, ethnographic and virtual supermarket-based research. Lessons from the research will be applied and verified in 6 pilot initiatives which bring together academic and non-academic partners. Impact will be maximised through a knowledge exchange platform, hybrid forums, educational resources and a Massive Open Online Course.

**[www.strength2food.eu](http://www.strength2food.eu)**

