

Identifying the Diversity of Alternative Food Networks: Exploring Consumer-Producer Relationships and Consumer Involvement Practices

A multiple case study on AFN categorisation, its underlying dimensions and forms of consumer involvement in Oldenburg, Germany



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Abstract

The heterogeneity of alternative food networks is increasing. First generation AFNs are linked to direct sales, whereas second generation AFNs focus more on the consumer roles within AFNs. Those AFNs can be categorised in many ways based on different theories and characteristics. Over time AFNs evolve and adapt and it is questionable if those categories still apply. Therefore the aim of this thesis is to investigate AFNs in order to gain more insight in AFN categorisation. This thesis seeks to find an answer on how consumer-producer relationships in operational AFNs in Oldenburg can be categorised. This is done by an inventory, a preliminary categorisation, an in-depth analysis of AFN characteristics based on interviews and observations and a final categorisation. It is complemented with an exploration of the underlying dimensions 'proximity', 'type of interaction' and 'type of exchange' as well as consumer involvement practices within AFNs in Oldenburg. This research result in the following findings: the underlying dimensions cannot be used in newer AFNs as the consumer-producer dichotomy limits the categorising approach. Furthermore, the research sheds light on different ways of how consumers can get involved in the operation of AFNs. Thereby, the active or passive nature is less of relevance and more insight is gained by looking at consumer involvement practices. In conclusion, categorising AFNs based on one or a few particular characteristics does not capture the complete AFN operation. As AFNs evolve, forms of consumer involvement got more diverse, also the variety of consumer-producer relationships got more complex, even to the extent that there is no such distinction anymore. Several AFNs practices go beyond the market economies and can be seen as forms of diverse economies. Lastly, the existence of a network of networks draws attention to an increase of relationships forms and collaborations between AFNs. This indicates that AFNs are part of a greater network than just the network of an individual AFN, whereby food is a tool to provide information to gain a greater goal such as sustainable development.

Keywords: alternative food networks, consumer involvement practices, food provisioning practices, producer-consumer relationships, network of networks, categorisation

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1. Introduction

In contemporary society more and more different ways are evolving to provide food to people than through the regular industrial supermarket chain. Although these 'alternative food networks' (AFNs) are already existing for years, in the past years they got more attention than before in order to complement or substitute the regular food chain. The existence of AFNs has several different reasons. Some want to contrast the conventional chain, others want to re-localise food provision, whereas others want to re-socialise and re-connect consumers and producers. As for example, Kneafsey (2010) notes that, "(...) [c]ontemporary (re-)regionalisation of food networks is driven by distinctive processes of re-spacing, re-scaling and re-connecting, rather than by processes of agricultural specialisation and concentration" (p. 181). Some go a step further and claim that AFNs represent a form of transition (Hinrichs, 2014).

It is clear that producers and consumers have an important role in food provisioning. Simply, food needs to be produced and finally needs to be bought and consumed. However, in modern industrial agro-food systems these two end-chain players are disconnected and distanced from each other and a direct relation between producers and consumers is lacking. New types of producers and consumers relation "[...] bring consumers closer to the origin of their food and in many cases involve a more direct contact between farmers and the end-users of their products" (Renting, Marsden, & Banks, 2003, p.398). These new types of relations are often element of the concept AFNs, which is described as, to "cover newly emerging networks of producers, consumers, and other actors that embody alternatives to the more standardized industrial mode of food supply" (Renting, Marsden, & Banks, 2003, p.394). This concept consists of various forms, e.g. pick your own initiatives, farm shops, farmers markets, box schemes, community supported agriculture, producer cooperatives, consumer collectives, community gardens, local restaurants, catering to schools and food trucks (festivals). All these have four characteristics in common (Jarosz, 2008, p.232). First, they bring producers and consumers in closer proximity. For example Renting et al. (2003) distinguishes between 'face-to-face', 'proximate' and 'extended' consumer-producer relations. Secondly, these food networks work often together with farms, which operate on a small scale and use "organic or holistic farming methods, which are contrasted with large scale, industrial agribusiness" (Renting et al., 2003, p.232). As a third common aspect, certain quality features and support for the local farmer

are expressed in the food supply venues. Also here Renting et al. (2003) differentiates between characteristics linked with the place of production (e.g. regional, artisanal or fair trade) and those linked with bioprocesses (e.g. organic, seasonal or GMO free). Lastly, these networks are often committed to social, economic and environmental sustainability in all parts of food provisioning (Jarosz, 2008, p.232).

The older, more market-based forms or 'first generation AFNs' like farmers shops, farmers markets and box schemes get increased attention as well as new forms where "social reproduction lies fully or partially outside the market" (Goodman, Dupuis & Goodman, 2013, p.429). Consumer collectives, social enterprises and community self-help schemes are the so called 'second generation' of AFNs. Until some years ago, research on AFNs was primarily focusing on the producer side (Renting, Schermer, & Rossi, 2012, p. 291; Venn, Kneafsey, Holloway, & Cox, 2006). Nonetheless, in recent years new types of AFNs have emerged, which results in an even greater heterogeneity of AFNs. In this new types citizens are initiators and operators, which present a shift in the role of consumer from passive towards proactive (Renting et al., 2012, p. 290). Therefore, the division of producer and consumer seem a bit old fashioned, knowing that in AFNs consumers get active and involve in the initiation and organisation of AFNs or even get involved in the food production.

These new AFN types together with the fact that the characteristics described above, are also present in other concepts, like short food supply chains, localized agri-food systems, local food systems and regional food networks; show that the concept of AFN is not clearly defined. Thus, several scholars (Maye, 2013; Renting et al., 2012; Tregear, 2011; Venn et al., 2006) state that the concept of AFN and its existing framework and approaches are insufficient to understand the diversity of new types and their underlying dynamics and capacities to transform the current food provisioning model. Nonetheless, "structural or organisational diversity is also accompanied by theoretical similarities as cases are commonly portrayed as new assemblages formulated to reconfigure or (re)connect producers and consumers" (Venn et al., 2006, p. 250).

So, what kind of approach is sufficient to understand the diversity of AFN types? If the theory presented so far is not clear, which theoretical approach needs to be applied? And does the theory correspond with the practice? Is the theory still relevant

for analysing operational cases? Which other categorisations or concepts could be applied more properly to the phenomenon of AFNs? So, how far is the 'older' theory still applicable to these types that are evolving and adapting over time? And how does the 'older' theory fit within new types, in which consumers are more involved?

The aim of this thesis is to investigate AFNs in the area of Oldenburg, Germany, in order to gain more insight in AFN categorisation and to discover if current AFNs categorisation is still applicable. This is done by an online inventory, an in-depth analysis and by exploring the underlying dimensions 'proximity', 'type of interaction' and 'type of exchange' as well as consumer involvement practices within AFNs in Oldenburg.

Thesis outline

In chapter 2 the theoretical approach of categorising AFNs is presented. The theory based on the underlying dimensions 'proximity', 'type of interaction' and 'type of exchange' and the theory of active and passive consumer involvement is introduced. This is followed by an adjusted analytical framework and the research question. In chapter 3 the methodological approach is shown, which is divided into 3 different phases. After having done an online inventory in first section of chapter 4, a selection for an in-depth analysis is made, followed by a presentation of the supporting networks. Chapter 4 is continued with a AFN chases and ended with presentation of the network of networks. In the next chapter 5, the categorisation of the AFNs in Oldenburg is shown by first exploring the underlying dimensions 'proximity', 'type of interaction' and 'type of exchange' within the selected AFNs in Oldenburg and secondly by exploring consumer involvement practices. Both sections are complemented with a synthesis. In chapter 6 a discussion is presented. First, a reflection on the research and its methodology is made; hereafter new insights are discussed in order to answer the research question. The third section of this chapter includes a theoretical reflection. In chapter 7 conclusions are drawn.

2. Categorising the Diversity of AFNs: Theoretical Approach

The research is based on the theory of three articles (Renting et al., 2003, 2012; Venn et al., 2006), which are presented in this chapter. First, the categorisation of Renting et al. (2003) is introduced for extending short food supply chains (SFSCs) using the underlying dimensions ‘proximity’, ‘type of interaction’ and ‘type of exchange’. This is complemented by the theory of Renting et al. (2012) and Venn et al. (2006) to further discuss active and passive consumer involvement. An analytical framework is developed and presented taking into account the underlying dimensions and the consumer involvement theory. In the last section of this chapter the research question, its sub-questions and the research objective are announced.

2.1. Theoretical Approach

2.1.1. Understanding the Underlying Dimensions ‘Proximity’, ‘Type of Interaction’ and ‘Type of Exchange’

The different forms in which AFNs are distributing food throughout the chain is elaborated by Renting et al. (2003) looking at the different mechanism for extending short food supply chains (SFSCs) in time and space. He distinguishes between ‘face-to-face SFSCs’, ‘proximate SFSCs’ and ‘extended SFSCs’ (Figure 2.1), but notes “that one business may be involved in supplying one or more of these different supply chains” (Renting et al., 2003, p. 399).

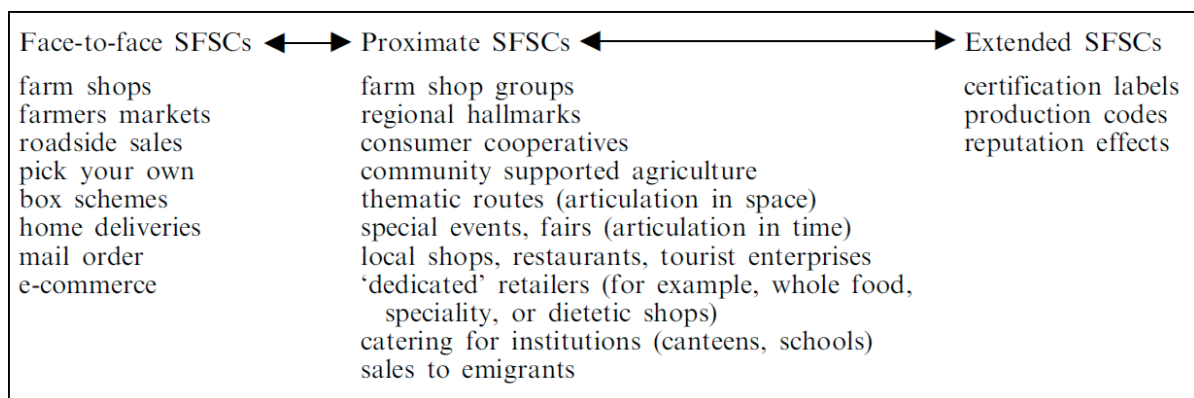


Figure 2.1: Different mechanisms for extending SFSCs in time and space (Renting et al., 2003, p.399)

To be able to understand the AFN types with these three categories, the underlying dimensions of 'proximity', 'type of interaction' and 'type of exchange' need to be understood. The '**proximity**' between producer and consumer is relevant in this diversification. So, how close are consumer and producer in terms of space? Although, the 'face-to-face SFSCs' seem to have the closest proximity, it is not the case for all AFN types Renting et al. (2003) sorts in this category. He states that the definition of direct sales corresponds with the 'face-to-face SFSCs' category. Other marketing concepts like box schemes and home deliveries fall in this category as well, because they are often restricted to individual farms. However, when looking at proximity in terms of space, farm shops, pick your own, roadside sales and community supported agriculture (CSA) seem to be closest. The spatial proximity can also be transferred throughout the food product itself, by making aware of the local nature at the point of purchase. The regional identity plays an important role in extending the network, whereby the cultural proximity can be integrated as well.

The second dimension refers to the formation of (new) relationships or interactions. This '**type of interaction**' can be established through a direct face-to-face interaction in which trust and authenticity is mediated. But, the relation can also be created through group interaction or cooperatives or even more impersonal interaction with the use of intermediates, like restaurants or institutions (certification), which are called 'proximate SFSCs' or 'extended SFSCs'. So, how institutionalised and formalised are these interactions? 'Face-to-face SFSCs' have a more informal character as trust and authenticity is created through personal interactions. However, not every market structure, Renting et al. (2003) placed in this category operate with the same level of formality. 'Pick your own' have a less formal character than farmers markets, but box schemes and home deliveries are more formal as you need to apply for it.

The above mentioned definition of direct sales Renting et al. (2003) uses to characterise 'face-to-face SFSCs' fall in the dimension of '**type of exchange**'. This dimension is about transactions that occur between consumers and producers, like food or information transactions. Food can be exchanged directly or indirectly. For example, in case of farmers markets, pick your own and consumer cooperatives, consumer get

their food directly from the producer. With an indirect exchange often an intermediary is involved, like a local shop, restaurant or even an organisation which uses certification labels. In some cases the producers get the food transaction in motion, through e.g. box schemes or regional hallmarks. However, here two aspects come into place to identify the different types of exchange; food quality and communication. As food is exchanged, the quality of it needs to be communicated through the chain. In some cases it might be that the way how food will be exchanged depends on the quality of the food. If the food is fresh and perishable, it is more likely that it will be distributed in a direct way. But, thinking of processed food like cheese, the length of the chain will be longer as more chain points are involved. Therefore, the duration of food transaction might be longer than unprocessed food.

The manner of how information is communicated within the networks will differ due to the presence of the other two dimensions. In close relationships, the exchange of information is done through personal interaction. In more extended relations, communication at the point of sale or through a product label will be used. However, this latter communication method is often “embedded with value-laden information when it reaches the consumer” (Renting et al., 2003, p. 400).

Nevertheless, these three dimensions seem to differ from each other, they are also closely intertwined. It is difficult to separate them strictly, because one dimension will be influenced by the character of the other two dimensions. The three underlying dimensions ‘proximity’, ‘type of interaction’ and ‘type of exchange’ seem to be of importance when analysing AFNs and the relationship between consumers and producers. These dimension can not only be identified out of the categorises Renting et al. (2003), but also other scholars use these dimensions when describing, defining and categorising AFNs. Jarosz (2008) defines AFNs by its shorter distance between those two end chain players, whereby the dimension of ‘proximity’ is clearly of relevance. Furthermore, she characterises AFNs by their food purchasing venues that lie outside the concentrated conventional area. This corresponds with the dimensions of ‘type of interaction’ and ‘type of exchange’. Another definition that is used by her is that certain food quality features that are expressed within these alternative channels. Also here, the presence of the dimension ‘type of exchange’ is expressed. Also Tregear (2011) uses those dimensions in her argumentations, although she makes critical notes about several AFN definitions, characteristics and assumptions. For example, she writes that in AFN literature assumptions are made that face-to-face interactions,

like farmers markets, create conditions for high quality interaction and that due to the direct contact the information gathering is more richer and reliable (Tregear, 2011, p. 426). She does not question the existence of the dimensions, but the degree of the characteristics of these dimensions and how they are linked to each other.

2.1.2. Understanding Active and Passive Consumer Involvement

In another article Renting and colleagues (Renting et al., 2012, p. 300/1) defines consumer involvement. 'Co-production' or 'co-sumption' is created through close negotiation between consumers and producers and depends on the level of how much consumer get involved in production practices, and on the level of how much the producer get involved in distribution and marketing activities. 'Co-producers' thus get more actively involved in food production itself and decide on production and production standards. Whereas, 'co-sumers' have influence through their purchasing choices. In this category, consumers stay more in their passive role without having a closer relationship. However, their choices are made consciously and are influenced "by increased knowledge about food production processes and reskilling of consumers" (Renting et al., 2012, p.301).

Also, Venn et al. (2006) introduces a new categorisation of AFN, focussing on various types of consumer-producer relationships and the nature and level of consumer involvement. The differentiation is based on the relative 'connectedness' of consumers to the process of food production. She distinguishes between four categories (Table 2.1). First the 'producers as consumers' category, in which food production and consumption is in the hand of the same person and thus the categories of 'producer' and 'consumer' become more vague (e.g. community gardens, food cooperatives). The agency of consumers becomes more present by the increased existence of food procurement that is initiated by consumers, their willingness to find their own solutions, strengthening the establishment of participation and decreasing the image of consumers as passive members (Venn et al., 2006, p.254). The second group is called 'producer-consumer partnerships', in which risk and rewards are shared among the members (e.g. CSA). The arrangements are mutually beneficial through which consumers gain a certain amount of control and agency. In those first two categories consumers shift from passive to active participants and come thus more engaged and involved in food production itself.

The next category is labelled 'direct-sell initiatives'. The relationship between producer

and consumer is close and the level of ‘connectedness’ is seen through either face-to-face interaction or spatially extended chains (internet), whereby the middlemen remain banished. Examples are farmers markets, adoption schemes, box schemes and producer cooperatives. The consumers gets the possibility to actual meet the producer and “to procure food with visible provenance” (Venn et al., 2006, p.255). The moment of ‘connectedness’ between consumers and producers, production activities and its location takes place at a single moment. Yet, this single moment is often repeated once a week and thus happens on a regular basis. The last category of Venn et al. (2006) ‘specialist retailers’ enables producers to sell their produce more directly to consumer than through the conventional chain, like specialist wholesalers and tourist attractions. An intermediary pays much attention to communicating the origin of food, production methods and the provenance. A direct relationship between

Table 2.1: Categories of consumer-producer relationships (Venn et al., 2006, p.256).

Category	Explanation	Examples
Producers as consumers	Schemes where the food is grown or produced by those who consume it. Often promote healthy lifestyles. Extent of commercial orientation varies. Produce is usually sold on a local level but may be targeted at specific groups, e.g. low incomes, ethnic minorities.	Community gardens Community centres with specific food projects Community food cooperatives Allotment groups
Producers-consumer partnership	Partnerships between farmes and consumers, where the risks and rewards of farming are shared – to varying degrees – due to subscription or share arrangements	Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
Direct sell initiatives	Farmers or producers cut out middleman and sell direct to consumers. Can be direct face to face or over the internet.	Farmers markets Farm gate sales Adoption/rental schemes Mobile food shops Box schemes Producer cooperatives
Specialist retailers	Enable producers to sell to consumers more directly than through conventional supermarkets. Often sell high value-added, quality or speciality foods and may be targeted at tourists.	Online grocers Specialist wholesalers Tourist attractions

producer and consumer will not be established. But still, the mediated information provides consumers with details about their purchased food and thus can create 'connectedness'. Consumers in these last two categories remain in their consumer role as passive participants, although 'connectedness' is communicated.

A comment to the name of the first category of Venn et al. (2006) needs to be made. She calls the first category 'producers as consumers', which indicates that producers become consumers. However, she meant to indicate consumer engaging in production activities, which is normally done by producers. So the name of the first category should be 'consumers as producers'.

2.2. Adjusted Framework for Analysing the Diversity of AFNs

To be able to examine operational AFNs, the relationships between consumers and producers and consumer involvement within operational AFNs in Oldenburg, a new analytical framework is developed (Figure 2.2). The framework is adjusted from the categorisation of Renting et al. (2003, 2012) and Venn et al. (2006). Although, the theory forms the basis of this research, it is questioned in how far the theory is still applicable.

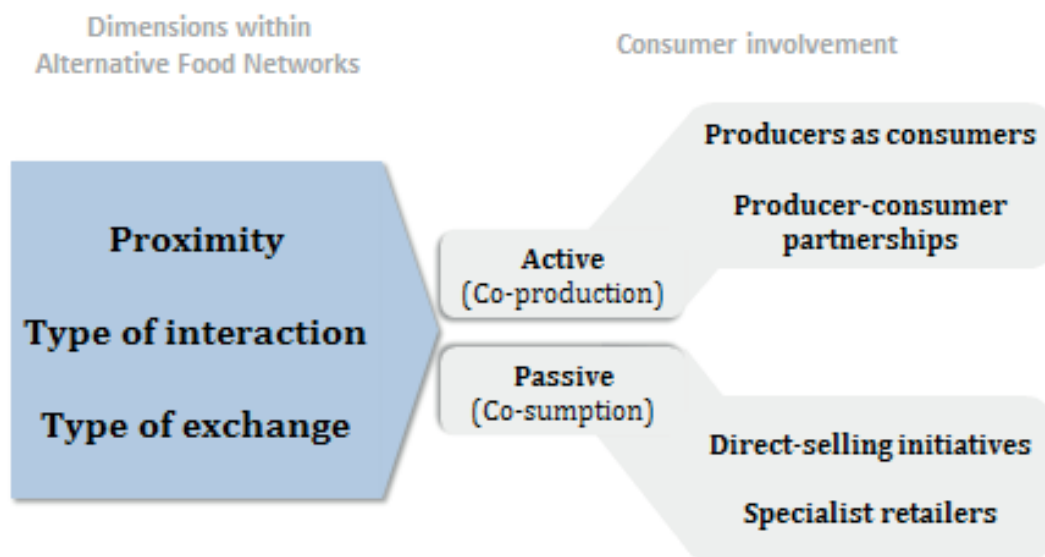


Figure 2.2: Adjusted framework for analysing the diversity of AFNs - adapted from Renting et al. (2003), Renting et al. (2012) and Venn et al. (2006).

The starting point of this research are the underlying dimension of Renting et al. (2003); 'proximity', 'type of interaction' and 'type of exchange'. AFNs have different characteristics that correspond to these three dimensions. By identifying those characteristics, the operation of the AFN is clarified and thereby gives an impression on the nature of consumer involvement. The second part of the analysis focusses on consumer involvement, which can rather have an active or a passive nature according to Renting et al. (2012). In the case that the consumer involvement is active, the consumer-producers relationship can have two different forms; 'producers as consumers' or 'producer-consumer partnerships'. If the consumer involvement has a passive nature, the relations between consumer and producer can be categorised in either 'direct-selling initiatives' or 'specialist retailers' (Venn et al., 2006). By analysing the characteristics of the operational AFNs, their categories are identified. It should be noted that it is possible that within one AFN different relationships can be present.

2.3. Research Question

The aim of this thesis is to investigate AFNs in the area of Oldenburg, Germany, in order to gain more insight in AFN categorisation and to discover if current AFNs categorisation is still applicable. This is done by an online inventory, a preliminary categorisation, an in-depth analysis of AFNs characteristics based on interviews and observations and a final categorisation. This is complemented with an exploration of the underlying dimensions 'proximity', 'type of interaction' and 'type of exchange' to analyse consumer-producer relationships and with an exploration of consumer involvement practices. Therefore the main research question is:

How can consumer-producer relationships in operational AFNs in Oldenburg be categorised?

Two guiding sub-questions were used throughout the research:

- a. How does the categorisation by Renting et al. (2003) and its underlying dimensions apply to the operational AFN in Oldenburg?
- b. Which nature and level of consumer involvement can be seen in the operational AFN in Oldenburg?

Assuming a great heterogeneity of AFNs in Oldenburg with unique as well as common characteristics diverse forms of consumer-producer relationships will be presented. The operationalisation of the research is to investigate operational AFNs in Oldenburg, to identify characteristics of those AFNs, to identify different forms of consumer and producer relations, to identify consumer involvement within those AFNs and to reflect critically on the theory of Renting et al. (2003, 2012) and Venn et al. (2006).

3. Methodological Approach

This chapter presents the qualitative and empirical research design of the thesis, which is divided in 3 phases. First, the approach for the online inventory and the preparation of the in-depth analysis is presented. The second phase gives information about the field work and thus how the research data was collected. In the last phase the analytical approach is described. In this thesis a multiple case study approach is used to identify the characteristics of AFNs, consumer-producer relationships and consumer involvement.

3.1. Phase 1 - Inventory & Preparation

The start of this research is an online inventory of AFNs in Oldenburg. The delineation of the empirical area is the borders of the municipality of Oldenburg. In addition the neighbouring municipalities in the rural area around Oldenburg were included to the empirical area. Those belong to three counties *Landkreis Oldenburg (Hude, Hatten & Wardenburg)*, *Landkreis Ammerland (Edewecht, Bad Zwischenahn, Wiefelstede & Rastede)* and *Landkreis Wesermarsch (Elsfleth)* (Figure 3.1).



Figure 3.1: Empirical area. Adapted from Google (2015).

The starting point for the inventory is 6 AFNs that are chosen based on personal knowledge:

- 🌿 *Ecocion* (Ecocion, 2016);
- 🌿 *Kinderkochklub* (Slow Food, 2016a);
- 🌿 *Bauernmarkt* (Bauernmarkt in Oldenburg, 2016);
- 🌿 *Öko-Wochenmarkt* (Stadt Oldenburg, 2016);
- 🌿 *Kösterhof Hofladen* (KösterHof, 2016);
- 🌿 *Studentenwerk Oldenburg 'Alternative-Essen'* (Studentenwerk, 2016).

To identify the characteristics of those AFNs guiding questions are used (Table 3.1). For each characteristic the corresponding dimensions 'proximity', 'type of interaction' and 'type of exchange' of Renting et al. (2003) are added. After the characteristics of those AFNs were collected, the online inventory was extended. Hereby, terms like 'regionale Lebensmittel Oldenburg', 'regionale Lebensmittel Bad Zwischenahn', 'Hofladen Oldenburg', 'Bauernmarkt Oldenburg' are used to complement the online inventory. The collected data of each AFN are noted in an Excel sheet (Appendix A). Often one AFN referred to or collaborate with another AFN, which resulted in more AFNs to list up in the inventory (snowball method). Also, I made use of two websites, that listed up AFNs in Oldenburg: *KOSTBAR* (Kostbar, 2016) and the 'Genussführer' of *Slow Food Oldenburg* (Slow Food, 2016b). Some of the AFNs appeared to be lifestyle programmes, which don't have food provisioning as their main objective (Appendix B). AFNs that did not fall in the empirical area were collected on another Excel sheet (Appendix C). The information density on the internet was sometimes limited, thus some of the information listed are based on assumptions. After the online research for the inventory did not result in any new AFNs a preliminary categorisation is developed, using the categories 'face-to-face SFSC', 'proximate SFSC' and 'extended SFSC' of Renting et al. (2003). If possible the nature of consumer involvement was indicated within the inventory.

After the online inventory was completed, 7 AFNs are selected for further analysis.

Table 3.1: Characteristics for online inventory

Characteristic	Question	Represented dimension
1 Market form	How does the AFN describe itself?	Proximity Type of interaction Type of exchange
2 Moment of connection	How do consumer and producer meet each other?	Proximity Type of interaction
3 Communication	How is information communicated?	Proximity Type of interaction
4 Formality	How formal is the AFN? E.g. Subscription, payment in advance, etc.	Type of interaction
5 Distribution chain	How is the food distributed? How many 'chain points' are in between producer and consumer?	Proximity Type of exchange
6 Consumer involvement	Does the consumer get involved in food production or has influence in decision making?	Proximity Type of interaction Type of exchange

The selection criteria are that each AFN needs to provide food via different market forms. Therefore, the moments of connection will differ as well as the distribution channels. Within the 7 selected AFNs, the idea was that each category of Renting et al. (2003) needs to be present. However, during the online inventory it appeared that only 4 AFNs have a 'extended SFSC' character. This category is excluded from the research as it focusses on the relationship between consumer and producer and consumer involvement. The AFNs of the inventory identified as 'extended SFSC' would approximately give not much new insights on this matter, because the core business aspect of those AFNs is health or fair trade. A last criterion was that half of the AFNs need to have an indication of active consumer involvement.

During the research one of the selected AFNs was not able to make time available for an interview. Therefore another AFN was selected. Furthermore, the responses on the interview requests went not as fast as assumed. Therefore, an additional AFN was included as well. In the end 8 AFNs agreed on an interview.

3.2. Phase 2 - Field Work

8 AFNs are analysed in more detail with the use of in-depth interviews and observations. The analysis focussed on the characteristics of each AFN in order to complement or adapt the information gathered during the online inventory. Those characteristics form the basis to check how the underlying dimensions of Renting et al. (2003) correspond to the selected AFNs and how those AFNs fit within this categorisation. During the interview a guiding topic list helped to discover the needed characteristics (Table 3.2). Additionally, details on governance structures and processes are collected to identify more AFN characteristics. Governance structures are those structures which show how the AFN is organised, the wider network the AFN is operating and its legal status. On the other hand, governance processes are the way in which the AFN is governed. This can be seen in how the roles are divided, how decisions are made and which its contractual arrangements exist (Roep & Wiskerke, 2012). The use of a topic list allowed to customize the questions according to the AFN, probe questions and gave freedom to change the topic depending on the response. Moreover, it helped the respondents to answer openly and gave the respondents the opportunity to choose their own direction. The interviews are conducted with one of the main 'responsible' persons, e.g. owner, initiator or active member. The topic list included the operation of the AFN, governance structures, consumer and producer and their relationship. Within the operation part the following points were important: market form, type of food, distribution chain, formality, distance of operation, frequency of operation, begin of AFN/development, cooperation with other AFNs, organisation of special events/lifestyle programmes that go beyond food provisioning, problems/restrictions and social integration. Furthermore, the organisation of the AFN, the wider network and its legal status were noted. To analyse the relationship between consumer and producer, the moment of connection and way of communication are part of the interview. Moreover, type of consumer and their motives as well as the type of producer and their motives are included. Lastly, ways of consumer involvement are discussed. Hereby, a difference is made between active and passive involvement. Within the active consumer involvement part, the following aspects are raised during the interview: involvement in production activities, negotiation/influence in AFN, financial involvement, responsibilities, sharing of knowledge and resources and individual as well as group tasks and roles. On the other hand, for passive consumer involvement the information flow, increased

awareness (purchase decisions) and increased knowledge (reskilling) are discussed. All interviews are recorded.

Table 3.2: Topic list & coding tree

Characteristics	Market form	Ch.mark	
	Food attributes	Ch.attr	
	Distribution chain	Ch.chain	
	Formalities	Ch.form	
	Distance	Ch.dist	
	Frequency	Ch.freq	
	Organisation/governance	Ch.org	
	Begin of AFN development	Ch.dev	
	Cooperation/network	Ch.net	
	Side activities	Ch.side	
	Problems/restrictions	Ch.prob	
	Legal status	Ch.leg	
	Social integration	Ch.int	
Relationship	Moment of connection	R.mom	
	Communication	R.com	
Consumers	Type of consumers	Co.typ	
	Motives	Co.mot	
	Consumer involvement	Active involvement	
		Production activities	Co.ai.pr
		Negotiations/Influence	Co.ai.inf
		Financially involved	Co.ai.fin
		Responsibilities	Co.ai.res
		Sharing knowledge and resources	Co.ai.sha
		Individual tasks and roles	Co.ai.it
		Group tasks and roles	Co.ai.gt
		Passive involvement	
		Information flow	Co.pi.inf
	Increased awareness (purchase decisions)	Co.pi.ia	
Increased knowledge (reskilling)	Co.pi.ik		
Producers	Type of producers	P.typ	
	Motives	P.mot	
	Individual tasks and roles	P.it	
	Group tasks and roles	P.gt	

Additionally to the online inventory and AFN interviews, expert interviews are conducted. The first interview was with a researcher of the *nascent* study. This study dedicates themselves to regional projects and initiatives of sustainable food economy, which question the common forms of external food provisioning and which contribute to responsibility communities in the sense of pro-sumption. Therefore their main target is the investigation of promising examples of transformative economies in sustainable food. Hereby, they investigate new forms of cooperation and integration between producers and consumers, to elaborate on the sustainability potentials and to check the spatial transmission of those models (Nascent, 2015).

Secondly, the *Eine-Welt-Promotorin* of the *Ökumenische Zentrum Oldenburg* was interviewed, who works for a global sustainable development regionally. Hereby, climate change, resource exploitation and economic crisis are topics they address to rethink. By supporting advice and coordination offers, networking of actors, developing campaigns, giving political impulses and gain public attention to those issues, she works on a global sustainable development. For example, this means for the region around Oldenburg, she works on global impacts of agriculture in the region and on regional alternatives (VEN-NDS, 2016).

The third interview was with the organiser of *ProZept e.V.*, which is a project business office for future orientated regional development. They organise and coordinate information stands at fairs and other events. Another task is the distribution of organic knowledge through e.g. employee education. Lastly, they organise a network of organic manufacturers, farmers, unions and speciality shops. This was done at the moment of research via the workshop *Bio-Entwicklung Nordwest* (ProZept e.V., 2016). The participation in this workshop and a student organised conference of the university Oldenburg *Nachdenkstatt* (Nachdenkstatt, 2015), delivered additional background information and insight about the current issues, processes and problems of regional food provisioning and its further development.

Those interviews helped to understand the background processes of developing an AFN within the city of Oldenburg. Also, those interviews gave new input for the inventory and the analysis. Those interviews are recorded and transcribed. Relevant information has been highlighted for later analysis.

During the AFN interviews new AFNs came to light and were added. After the interviews were completed, participatory observations are done. Preferably, this observation took place at the moment when consumer and producer get in contact or the moment of consumer involvement. Thereby, information are confirmed and added to the gathered information during the interviews. Also, new insights of the AFN and the nature and level of consumer involvement are gained. During the observation the jotting method was used to write down notes. Those jottings were re-written into field notes and coded afterwards. To get an even better impression on the consumer involvement, short, unplanned interviews or conversations were hold during the observation.

3.3. Phase 3 - Analysis

All interviews are transcribed and coded. The interviews are executed in German and varied in duration between half hour and one and an half hour. The transcriptions of those interviews are also done in German. A coding tree was used for the coding of the interview transcriptions (Table 3.2). The information of the interviews is translated into English in a later stage when converting the notes of each AFN into written cases.

The collected data from the online inventory, AFN interviews, observations and expert interviews are used to build up cases, in which the characteristics of each AFN are summed up. This is done by, first, to review the coding in order to be able to compare the cases. The coded data of each AFN transcript was collected, grouped and translated into English. The grouped data was then converted into a written case. Those cases form the basis for the analysis and are presented in chapter 4.

Thereafter, the AFN cases are analysed using the adjusted analytical framework (Figure 2.2, p.9). The analysis is based on the underlying dimensions of Renting et al. (2003) and the categorisation of Renting et al. (2012) and Venn et al. (2006). From the collected data an analysis is made in how far the underlying dimensions 'proximity', 'type of interaction' and 'type of exchange' of Renting et al. (2003) are present in the AFNs. This resulted in whether the AFNs can or cannot be categorised into 'face-to-face' or/and 'proximate' SFSC. The preliminary categorisation is then compared with the latter categorisation. All AFNs are analysed individually and also compared to each other by formulating a synthesis. Those findings are presented in chapter 5.1. Secondly, the type of consumer involvement was analysed using of the

theory of Renting et al. (2012) and Venn et al. (2006). Renting et al. (2012) speaks of 'co-producers' and 'co-sumers', which is referring to active or passive consumer involvement. Venn et al. (2006) sets out various consumer-producer relationships. She distinguished between four different types of relationships; 'producers as consumers', 'producer-consumer partnerships', 'direct selling initiatives' and 'specialist retailers'. The first two represent active consumer involvement and the last two passive consumer involvement. On the basis of the collected data it is analysed how active and passive consumer involvement is present in the selected AFNs. Hereby, consumer practices of the AFNs are discussed and links to both theories are made. The analysis is closed with a synthesis about the different consumer involvement practices. Those findings are presented in chapter 5.2.

4. Description of AFNs in Oldenburg

In this chapter the AFNs in Oldenburg are presented. First, a summary of the inventory is given, followed by the selection of 8 AFNs for further analysis. The supporting network of AFNs in Oldenburg is introduced, followed by an in-depth presentation of AFN characteristics. In the last section of this chapter the network of networks is presented.

4.1. Inventory

During the online inventory 100 AFNs are identified within Oldenburg and its direct rural area (Appendix A). In Table 4.1 the size and the population of each municipality is shown to give an impression of its scale. It can be seen that most of the AFNs are located inside the city of Oldenburg. Secondly, *Bad Zwischenahn* has 9 AFNs. Thereafter, *Hatten*, *Hude* and *Wardenburg* have each 6 AFNs in their area. 3 AFNs are found in *Wiefelstede* and *Rastede* and only one AFN in *Edeweicht* and none in *Elsfleth*.

Those AFNs have various market forms, which can be seen in Table 4.2. Here, the preliminary indication of Renting et al. (2003) categories is also shown. The numbers of the market forms given in Table 4.2 do not correspond with the number of AFNs

Table 4.1: AFNs in Oldenburg and surrounding municipalities

	Area (ha) (01.01.2014) (LSN Online, 2016a)	Population (01.01.2015) (LSN Online, 2016b)	AFNs of inventory
Oldenburg	10229	161.491	62
Bad Zwischenahn	12973	28.103	9
Wiefelstede	10602	15.810	3
Rastede	12305	21.796	3
Elsfleth	11515	9.044	0
Hude	12463	15.992	6
Hatten	10356	13.864	10
Wardenburg	11867	15.673	6
Edeweicht	11351	21.708	1
Total			100

categorised according to Renting et al. (2003), because some AFNs have multiple market forms.

Table 4.2: Market forms of AFNs in Oldenburg and rural area

Market forms	Renting et al. (2003)		
Farm shop / Farm sales	28		
Weekly market	21	Face-to-face SFSCs	39
Delivery service / Online shop / Box service	13		
Road sales / pick your own	3		
Organic shop / local shop / vegan shop	20	Proximate SFSCs	38
Local restaurant / local café	6		
Catering (for schools, kindergarten, etc.) / Food truck	7		
Special event	4		
Consumer cooperative	1		
CSA (In development)	1		
Fair trade shop / health store	4	Extended SFSCs	4
Food sharing / Cooking club	4	Cannot be categorized according to Renting et al. (2003)	22
Transition Town movement	1		
Extensive grassland-orchard systems	2		
Allotment gardens	3		
Urban garden / community garden	8		
Manufactory / Local bakery	4		

39 of the 100 AFNs can be placed into Renting et al. (2003) category of 'face-to-face SFSC'. This are AFNs like a farm shop, in which consumers and producers meet directly in the shop and food products are sold directly. Another AFN form is weekly markets. Some of them are organised in a union like the *Verein Oldenburger Marktkaufleute e.V.*. The next market forms of delivery service, online shop or a box scheme are often seen in combination with market forms of farm shop or local shop. Only a few 'pick your own' and road sales are found, which often are in extension to the farm shop.

In the next category of Renting et al. (2003) 'proximate SFSC' 38 AFNs are identified. Local shops, but also organic and vegan shops sell food of regional producers or wholesalers to consumers. The food incorporates special characteristics, which are used in communication, like organic, local or vegan. Other market forms that are found in Oldenburg and fall into this category are local restaurants and cafes. They often use regional products and use this in their marketing communication. The same is true for caterings for schools or kindergartens and food trucks at events. Also special events and consumer cooperatives make use of the local nature of products in their communication. Furthermore, there is one CSA in development, which is done at a farm, which uses weekly markets and a box scheme as their market channels.

In the last category of Renting et al. (2003) 'extended SFSC' only 4 AFNs are found in Oldenburg. Those four are all shops that use reputation effects. Two of them are *Reformhäuser* and the other two are fair trade shops.

22 AFNs could not be placed into the categories of Renting et al. (2003) as their market forms do not correspond with those market forms used in the categorisation of Renting et al. (2003). This market forms are: Food sharing or cooking club, transition town movement, extensive grassland-orchard systems, allotment gardens, urban or community gardens, manufactories and local bakeries.

It appeared that 3 AFN can be categorized in more than one category. For example, one AFN uses a delivery service for the own products, but at the same time are active in catering channels.

4.2. Selection for In-Depth Analysis

From the inventory 8 AFNs are selected for further analysis (Table 4.3). The selection is based on the following criteria. Firstly, the AFN need to provide food. Secondly, the AFNs need to differ in market form and thereby represent the first two categories of Renting et al. (2003). Also at least one AFN that could not be categorised according to Renting et al. (2003) was included in the selection. Another criterion is that the AFNs differ in the moment of connection and in the way how food is distributed. The last criterion is that the half of the AFNs needs to have an indication of active consumer involvement. In the section Detailed Description of AFNs Characteristics those 8 AFN are presented and an indication of the categories of Renting et al. (2003) is given.

Table 4.3: Selected AFNs with characteristics and preliminary categorisation

AFN name	Category of Renting et al. (2003)	Market form	Moment of connection	Distribution chain	Consumer involvement
1 Himpl Hof	Face-to-Face	Farm shop Home delivery service Delivery service for schools & businesses Weekly Market	In the shop At home At location At the market	Own production, local bakery & organic wholesaler	Passive
2 Wurzelwerk	No category	Community garden	In the garden	Own production	Active
3 Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort	Face-to-face	Weekly market Farm sales Delivery service CSA (in development)	At the market At the farm At home n/a	Own production	Passive/ (Active in development)
4 Ecocion	Proximate	Organic shop Home delivery service Delivery service for schools & businesses	In the shop At home At location	Direct from four regional producers & organic wholesaler	Passive
5 Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH	No category	Manufactory with direct sales	At events In restaurants or shops	Extensive grassland-orchard systems & local restaurants/ shops	Passive/ Active
6 Studentenwerk	Proximate	Catering to university	In the canteen	Direct from four regional producers and organic wholesaler	Passive
7 Food Co-Op	Proximate	Consumer collective	In the shop of Ecocion	Via Ecocion	Active
8 Genuss im Nordwesten	Proximate	Special event	At the event	Direct from regional producers	Passive

4.3. Supporting Network

During the interviews it appeared that the AFNs in Oldenburg are impacted by a few civil society groups, organisations and events. Those together with the AFNs influence the development of regional food provisioning via different (alternative) channels. In this section some of them are introduced as they are mentioned several times later in this chapter.

Firstly, KOSTBAR (translation: valuable, precious) is a booklet that is published by the union *transfer e.V.*, which works on media issues in favour of a healthy environment. This booklet contains vouchers and a list of shops, businesses, etc., which fit under the heading of 'regional, organic and fair'. A lot of the AFNs found during the inventory are listed in this booklet. However, not only food shopping and eating places are listed, but also recreational, clothing and living enterprises. The publishing union is active in the area of sustainable, regional food production and communication (Kostbar, 2016). Secondly, the *Slow Food Oldenburg Convivium*, which is often present at several food events during the year and organises a lot of activities in and around Oldenburg (Slow Food, 2016c). They are in contact with a lot AFNs and set up a recommendation list ('*Genussführer*') of regional producers, manufacturer and restaurants. During the interview it appeared that one of the selected AFN is closely related to Slow Food. They also initiate more AFNs that are listed in the inventory.

As a third group, the union *ProZept e.V.* appeared several times during the interviews (ProZept e.V., 2016). It is a project business office, which works on future orientated, sustainable, regional development. They do this through organisation and coordination of events. They organise networks of organic producers, manufactures, enterprises and associations; and are part of these networks. The distribution of professional knowledge about organic agriculture is done through e.g. employee education of an organic wholesaler. Another example of the organisation of a network is the workshop *Bio-Entwicklung Nordwest*, which they organise together with the *transfer e.V.* The goals of this workshop are: to collect ideas and spheres of activities for a dynamic organic and regional development. The development should include production and processing areas as well as consumer communication and information. Another objective of this workshop was to coordinate and integrate this idea within existing

networks and unions. Therefore, a group of different interests groups were invited. The next group are scientists from the *Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg*, who set up a research project called *nascent*. This research is executed together with the University of applied science Munich, which “(...) focuses on the potentials for transformation towards a sustainable food production (...)” (Nascent, 2015). Hereby they analyse initiatives at a micro level, at a local community level and at a regional ecosystem level (Pfriem, Paech, Müller, & Kropp, 2013). Two of the selected AFNs are also investigated by this research project.

A next organization or influential person is the *Eine-Welt-Promotorin* of the *Ökumenischen Zentrum Oldenburg* (VEN-NDS, 2016). She works for a global sustainable development regionally. Hereby, climate change, resource exploitation and economic crisis are topics they address to rethink. By supporting advice and coordination offers, networking of actors, developing campaigns, giving political impulses and gain public attention to those issues, she works on a global sustainable development. For example, this means for the region around Oldenburg, she works on global impacts of agriculture in the region and on regional alternatives. An example is the initiation of the *SoLaWi group* (SoLaWi Oldenburg, 2016). *SoLaWi* is the shortcut for ‘Solidarische Landwirtschaft’ (community supported agriculture). She addressed the audience after a presentation about community supported agriculture that this concept is also needed in Oldenburg and asked if there are people who would like to work on this matter the coming time. In June 2015 this group started to work regularly on the establishment of a CSA in Oldenburg. The farm this group is working with is also one of selected AFNs.

The last influential group is the *Nachdenkstatt*, which is a conference organized by students of the *Carl von Ossietzky university of Oldenburg* (Nachdenkstatt, 2015). During this event experts, students and citizen of Oldenburg come together in workshops with different topics all related to sustainability. Also the topic of food is addressed here. AFNs present themselves and give insights in their organisation. During this conference a lot of networking between AFNs occurred.

4.4. Detailed Description of AFNs Characteristics

In this section the selected AFNs and its characteristics are presented. General information of the AFNs is given like market forms and which type of food they are marketing. The distribution chain and the network the AFNs are operating are explained. Furthermore, the distance and the frequency of the operation are presented as well as the formality, the organisation structures and problems. Also, the beginning of the AFNs and the development is described. Additionally the consumer and producers types and motives are explained. In the end of each presentation an indication of the categorisation of Renting et al. (2003) is given.

4.4.1. Himpsl Hof

The *Himpsl Hof* is a small scale family owned organic farm situated outside the borders of Oldenburg, in the municipality of *Edewecht*. The farm is certificated organic by *Bioland* standards and grows 50 different vegetables on arable land and in the greenhouse. The farm has a flock of 225 laying hens in a mobile house. Their business is to market their own produced food directly to consumers via a subscription box or online shop, which is delivered at home. They sell their products also via their farm shop and at a weekly market. However, the market they are attending lies outside the empirical area. Additionally they provide basic schools with fruit and offer the possibility of the subscription boxes for schools, kindergarten and hospitals. The *Himpsl Hof* has some marketing channels that are currently not used. They give the possibility of community pick up points and also would deliver to schools, kindergartens and hospitals. The demand for regional vegetables for hospitals or kindergartens is low. At moment of research, they only delivered fruit to two businesses.

Via the online shop and partially in the farm shop customers are able to choose from a much wider product assortment than just the products they grow themselves. The *Himpsl Hof* trades with products from an organic wholesaler and bread from two organic bakeries in the region. Sometimes they exchange products with other regional producers. For example another farmer grows tomato plants for them, because the *Himpsl Hof* has not the capacities to grow them. During school holidays the customers from Oldenburg visit the farmer shop unregularly. The *Himpsl Hof* thinks that the effort to come to farm shop is too big if there are enough alternatives in Oldenburg itself. However, this is different for customers from *Cloppenburg*. There aren't much organic

shops. This farm is listed in the regional voucher booklet *KOSTBAR*. Furthermore, they were in contact with the *Slow Food* network of Oldenburg. Slow Food members wanted to a tour on the farm. However, the contact did not sustain to organise such an activity.

The two farm owners divide the tasks of the daily organization. The man is in charge of the subscription boxes, delivery service, field work, repairing work and the coordination of the employee. The woman is working in the farm shop, orders for subscription boxes, wholesale orders and takes care of their 3 children. An important aspect in their farming activities is that they grow products that they like to eat themselves. Also being honest and flexible with customers is needed and wanted. They know their regular customers by name. The orders are delivered with branded buses on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. They drive along special routes in *Oldenburg, Edewecht/ Bad Zwischenahn, Cloppenburg, Westerstede* and *Friesoythe*. The boxes can be ordered on a weekly basis, but also every other week or unregularly. Deliveries twice a week is not possible due to the delivery routes. Sometimes problems with the orders for the subscription boxes occur. They solve it by providing credit note vouchers.

Next, to their regular marketing activities they participate in several special events like a Thanksgiving market or the 'Unimarkt' at the University of Oldenburg. They gave regular interns at the farm. Pupils of the 'Freie Waldorfschule' have the possibility to do an internship at the *Himpsl Hof*.

The family took the 'Bioland' farm over in 2008. Organic production is an important factor in their live. By producing organic, they want to protect the soil and increase sustainability. First, they grew a lot storage vegetable for the cafeteria in Oldenburg and for two private owned supermarkets. Now, all vegetables are marketed directly to consumers with the exception in case of overproduction. A reason for this change was that the private supermarkets were taken over by a bigger supermarket. They did not want to contribute to large scale supermarket chains, because in their opinion they destroy the market with their prices. Another reason is that they do not want to raise their children in a world that is controlled by multinationals. They support the option to choose freely. In the case of overproduction they sell their products to their wholesaler.

Over the time the farm business had developed in the direction of the delivery service with regular orders. In the past years they got advises from professionals. However, it was not that helpful as expected.

From the inventory the *Himpsl Hof* seemed to be categorised in the 'face-to-face SFSC'. The market form Renting et al. (2003) uses in this category can be seen again in the description of the *Himpsl Hof*. They have a home delivery service, a farm shop and are selling their products at a weekly market. They also offer the home delivery service for schools and kindergartens, which Renting et al. (2003) places in the category of 'proximate SFSCs'. However, he explains for the 'face-to-face SFSCs' category that "home deliveries offer some possibility to extend the reach of this form of SFSC, but mostly these remain restricted to individual farms" (p.400). Therefore, the argument is that in this case 'home delivery for institutions' can be also placed in the 'face-to-face SFSCs' category as it is restricted just to the *Himpsl Hof*.

4.4.2. Wurzelwerk

Wurzelwerk is an urban community garden of two parcels within an allotment garden. On this 500 m² parcel members are gardening twice a week. The garden is run organic and grows about all fruits and vegetables that can grow in this climate. The harvested food is cooked and eaten together. Two bee hives are integrated in the garden.

All the food that is grown in the garden is shared among the members. Sometimes they process it in the garden or members take the food home. The seeds and plants they have in the garden are donations from local shops or in case of the old apple varieties from a private breeder. The bee hives belong to one member and therefore the honey is sold among the members.

The *Wurzelwerk* is an open group run as a union with a committee. However this is only a regularity requirement and all members are equal. Nonetheless, the committee exists of the founding members and the most active ones. Members can donate a volunteer amount to the garden. A guiding value of 12 Euro is set to cover the costs for the rent of the allotment garden and other expenses. Further financing is covered by the funding of a foundation and external donations. The garden is run openly. Members do not have to commit themselves fully. They follow a credo that everyone can do as much as they want. Next to the gardening hours they meet every other week to discuss issues that are not directly linked to gardening activities. These meetings

are called 'plenums'. Issues that are being discussed are projects, organisation of other meetings and activities, financing issues, the well-being of members and the progress of the garden. If during these meeting decisions have to be made, the present members will decide about it. Given that fundamental decisions need to be made, more opinions are collected in advance. However, future plans are made by future members. In the past year they organised a reviewing meeting of the first year. In this gathering they discussed how people feel about the garden, why do they come into the garden, what goes well and what needs improvement. Other ways of how the *Wurzelwerk* is organising itself is via an e-mail distributor. They have an internal list for all active members and an external list for friends of the garden. The organisation of this distributor list is also a task that is divided among the members. Other tasks are the organisation a meeting room in winter season, or responsibility for the finances. The members celebrate the start and the end of the season. Additionally, working groups are formed to build a clay oven, organise a bee workshop and to prepare the gardening hours.

At moment of research, most members of *Wurzelwerk* were students and studied sustainable related programmes. However, some members are professionally occupied and thereby broadened the age range. A few members had professional practical experiences with gardening and some members did not have any experience at all. The motive of the members to contribute in the gardening activities that they want to show food can be obtained via alternative ways.

Next to the gardening the *Wurzelwerk* participates and organizes several activities on the side. These activities have the objective to appreciate nature and environment and to show healthy and conscious ways of nutrition. Thereby, they want to give an impulse for alternative food production through education, civic engagement and cultural programmes. The projects that take place inside the garden are to bring people in closer contact to the garden and in contact with food production. Often it is directed to children to stimulate knowledge exchange through generations; like groups from the vacation passport or groups from youth culture work. However, some activities are directed to the members and friends of the garden, e.g. a workshop about how to prune an apple tree, workshop to make lip balm of beeswax or is linked to an assignment of the students (compost and raised beds). Furthermore, the celebration of season`s beginning and end and a *Kohlfahrt* (*kale tour, a common regional activity*).

They also participate in external activities for public relation purposes. For example they had a stand at the cultural summer festival or the anniversary of castle's garden of Oldenburg. Additionally, the members distributed seed bombs and plants in the city during celebration of the castle's garden in the city to create more awareness. Another example is the alternative orientation week at the university, in which new students can visit the community garden. Lastly, the *Wurzelwerk* agreed to participate in the *nascent* study of the University of Oldenburg.

In October 2013, they started process of creating an urban community garden. First, they wanted to have an area that is owned by the city. However, no suitable location could be found due to problems with ownership relations. They found an unused parcel in an allotment garden. This parcel was not used for 5 years. But the idea that the urban community garden is organized by the neighbourhood and defines the scene of the city is rather limited. Their goal is to create a garden in which the work is regularly looked after, they produce more food, design an attractive garden and to be able to organize more projects in the garden. They think of projects with school children, like from a project week in schools or from a school garden working cooperative. To organize they want to cooperate with the *RUZ (regional environmental educational centrum)*. The *Wurzelwerk* initiated by students and they want to have more diverse members of different ages and also employed members. However, mouth to mouth propaganda is a bit difficult as most of the members have a network of students. They want to attract other members via side activities like mentioned above. One member will leave the garden, who has a private parcel that is already incorporated in the community garden. The *Wurzelwerk* will take over this parcel in the future.

The network of *Wurzelwerk* is quite big. On the one hand they exchange with other local initiatives, which make food (production) subject of discussion; like Food coop, Slow Food Oldenburg, KOSTBAR, transition town, nascent research project, workshop group about organic development in Oldenburg, RUZ (regional environmental education centrum in Germany), NABU (regional nature and environmental conservation union in Germany), CSA farm Pente, Fora e.V. On the other hand organisations that help them to operate; like *Bringenheimer Saatgut*, *Die Kräuterei Bioland*, botanical garden Oldenburg, *Stiftungsgemeinschaft Anstiftung & Ertomis*.

The problems they face are structural problems like how to organise themselves.

One problem is referring to the organisation and implementation of projects. In the beginning small working groups are made and work out a plan together. But at certain times during exams or when personal issues prevail that the priority of the project gets less. Therefore it gets chaotic. Structures and preparation guide lines could be developed to help those working groups in the organisation. Furthermore, they mentioned that is important that everyone needs to feel responsible and not that only one member takes care of the whole project. Another problem that is linked to this issue is that the communication among all members needs to be improved. It happened that not all members knew all information about a current project and only a few knew what was actually going on. Next to this, the members are a bit anxious about the neighbouring parcels of the community garden. If the parcel that belongs to one *Wurzelwerk* member, will be rented by someone else who is not that pleased with the maintenance of community garden. They are worried that this person would be a narrow-minded allotment gardener and would destroy the compost and beds they built up on this parcel.

The *Wurzelwerk* cannot be categorised according to the market forms Renting et al. (2003) uses. The *Wurzelwerk* is an urban community garden, which is not listed.

4.4.3. Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort

3 families run this bio-dynamic farm together as a community. The farm includes 60 hectares of which is 33 ha grassland, 23 ha arable land and 3 ha for vegetables. The farm has 28 milking cows, 30 pigs, a small sheep herd, a small goat herd and a greenhouse. A generation change will take place in the next year and 3 younger families will run the farm community. At this moment, their main products are vegetables, dairy products and bread. The harvesting is done on Tuesdays and Fridays. However, they still have a broad assortment of own products, e.g. 17 different dairy products. All their food is marketed on different markets, through a farm box which is delivered and on Friday afternoon they hold an on-farm sale. The new generation is in negotiation to run a CSA next to the present activities. The farm community set out several goals. First, they want to protect and increase the fertility and health of soil, plant, animal and human. They want to form the landscape and produce high-quality food through value-preserving craftsmanship. Another objective is that they want to develop new forms of social togetherness and give children and the youth possibilities to learn practically about agriculture.

On Wednesday they sell their products at the *Ökomarkt* in Oldenburg and on the market in Delmenhorst. On Thursday they sell their food at the market on the *Pferdemarkt* in Oldenburg. On Friday they attend two smaller markets in Westerstede and Jever, on which they only sell dairy products and bread, because another organic farmer is selling vegetables there. On Friday afternoon they have an open farm with on-farm sales for 3 hours. On Saturday they sell their food again the market on the *Pferdemarkt* in Oldenburg and the market in Delmenhorst. The farm box can be ordered on a weekly basis, every other week or at individual times. To order this farm box a registration is needed and an individual account will be created on the online shop of the farm community Grummersort. The radius in which they deliver these boxes is about 20 to 30 kilometres.

On the farm community three juridical forms exist. The first one includes the agricultural business on the farm including horticulture and cheese manufactory and is a *Gesellschaft bürgerlichen Rechts (Alliance of civil rights)*. The second form is the trading business. With this form the farm community is able to do other farm related activities at the farm like processing activities from flour into bread and meat into sausages. On a farm the first step of processing is allowed, but not the second and third step. For example, the farm is allowed to turn milk into cheese, but not flour into bread, because the first processing step is the grinding of the grain into flour. Hereby, baking bread is a second step. Therefore, the second step processing is done by trading business. They have the opinion that they can only exist as a community if they go beyond the traditional farming activities like agriculture and horticulture. By including refinement, processing and direct marketing into their business they can sustain due to the different profit margins, of which normally other businesses profit from. Also a farmer is not allowed to market more than 30% of trading products, which is another reason the trading business is established. The third juridical form is the non-profit union *Hof Grummersort Landbau und Pädagogik e.V.*, which is owner of land, soil and farm. This union set out goals like to stimulate civic education and be charitable. Now, the farm business is renting the land, soil and farm from the non-profit union by agreeing to pursue the union goals. The non-profit union is not allowed to favour individuals and thereby the economic flows are strictly separated. Managing a farm together in a community has certain obligations. The different juridical agreements and the ideals need to be on the same line for everyone. The ideals of Rudolf Steiner “Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood”, which are incorporated in bio-dynamic agriculture, are also

incorporated in the organisation of the farm community Grummersort. Every working area needs to be independent, can work on its own and has an individual economic feedback. However, the farm community also has the freedom to keep a working area up if it is not economic viable, because they think of it as an important working area. It means also that the farm as a broad range of own products. This diversity creates interesting working places for them and their employees. However, this also has some drawbacks that the employees get sometimes overloaded with work. The three families that manage the farm is living according to the principles of Rudolf Steiner and are interested in Anthroposophy. Their children get the Waldorf education. They see the quality of live in diversity. This is shown the diversity of food they produce and also in the diversity of work. But still, one person is responsible for a certain task, e.g. someone is in charge of bakery, someone coordinates the farm box, another one does the marketing and some else organises the pedagogic work.

The farm community Grummersort was bought in 1979 by a group of students. The farm they took over was already run bio-dynamic, but it was not clear if they wanted to continue it. They started with a small sheep and goat herd to make cheese and grew vegetables. All products were sold at the market in Oldenburg. Two years later new people joined whereas other left the farm community and 3 families stayed to run the farm as a community. With the introduction of new people the idea of managing the farm on bio-dynamic standards was strengthened. At that time bio-dynamic and organic agriculture was a minority and they were one of the pioneers, who farmed according to this principals. Later on a cheese manufactory was integrated in a small room, for which later an actual manufactory was build. In a few years later they build a bakery and improved the cheese manufactory. In 1987 they set up the union and started to sell their products also at the Delmenhorst market. Couple years later they started with the processing of meat products like sausages. However, their main farm activities stayed the same as in the beginning. In 1997 the trading business was set up. In 2016, a new generation will be run the farm and the recent families will step back into the second row. At moment of research the conditions under which the new generation will take over the farm was negotiated and a preliminary contract will be signed in March 2016. This takes quite some consideration due to the three juridical forms. The new generation is in contact with a group a consumers (called *SoLaWi*) to develop a CSA at the farm community Grummersort.

The CSA will only be a part of the farm activities. The recent generation already

though about this idea in the past, but was not convinced enough, because Oldenburg was too small. However, now this idea got more attention and the communication and organisation is in development. The CSA can guarantee a fixed income. They plan to sell on-farm milk, but this can be problematic due to the milk regulations. In the summer they plan to visit the farm together and clarify all open questions and want to make an agreement to proceed together.

Due to the non-profit union the farm community Grummersort is doing pedagogic work with school classes especially with schools for children with special needs. Schoolchildren of the Rudolf Steiner schools learn in 4 afternoons during 3 hours practically on the farm. Every Thursday a group of 15 to 16 year old children come to the farm and help them as far as it is possible. Mostly the children have small tasks to keep them occupied like sweep the stables or curry the animals. Also, children of basic schools can come to the farm for workshops about topics like 'from grain to bread', 'from cow to cheese' or 'from sheep to yarn'. Furthermore, it is possible to follow a 3 week internship on the farm. During this time the interns live on the farm and learn diverse aspect of bio-dynamic farming practices. The farm has apprentices for the education of the *Demeter* association. One family of the farm community took two disabled persons into their family; a 40 year old man and a 20 year old girl. The non-profit union is also stimulating civic education. Thus, the farm opens his door every Friday afternoon at the same time as the on-farm sales. During this time, the customers are able to visit the stables, the greenhouses and take to the farmers to get a perception of the farm and the activities. Next to this, the farm community offers divers activities over the year. In summer, they hold a big summer festival with a lot of children activities like baking, rope making, forging, making pottery, etc. Also adults can participates in tours on the farm, e.g. about the cheese manufactory, greenhouses, bee-keeping tours and other thematic tours on the farm. This festival is very popular and in 2015 more than 3.000 guests came to the festival. At other times during the year, the organise days to learn about bio-dynamic farming through lectures or readings, show movies, host concerts for animals and humans and have a Thanksgiving celebration with neighbouring farmers. It is also possible that groups come to the farm. In the past it was done by the *Landfrauenverein*, a bicycle association and *Stadtgrün Oldenburg*. Also, the farm community *Grummersort* is listed in the voucher booklet *KOSTBAR*. Next to these activities, the farm community takes care of several hedgerows on their land. The wood that remains after pruning is used in their wood gasifier. The farmers

of the farm community see themselves as landscape maintainers and soil preservers. The generated energy generates heat, which is used for the heated greenhouses.

Most customers of the farm community Grummersort are families with children. Nonetheless, the wishes and ideas of those customers are still diverse. Some want to enjoy buying their groceries and feel attracted by a colourful and nice arranged market stall. Whereas others think of this as too commercial and want to have a simple stand with mostly regional products. Another consumer type is also attracted by the diverse product assortment including exotic products. Still, they can distinguish between three types of customers. In the past a lot of customers bought bio-dynamic products out of environmental concerns or due to personal health problems like allergies. A newer phenomenon is that customers buy bio-dynamic food out of quality concerns and can be placed in the *Gourmet* category. For the planned CSA, they explained that the traditional market customer is most of the times not suitable for CSA and possibly need to find a new consumer category. The consumer group which is in communication with the farm community explained that the reason why they want to participate in a CSA is to appreciate the farmer and his work. By giving the farmer a fair price they want to show it.

From the inventory the *Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort* was placed into the category of 'face-to-face-SFSC'. The interview confirmed this. The market forms this farm community is operating in are; selling their products at several weekly markets, having farm sales on Friday afternoons and having a box delivery service. Those forms can be found back in the market forms Renting et al. (2003) uses in this category.

4.4.4. Ecocion

Ecocion is an organic certified shop with a delivery service for subscription boxes located in Oldenburg. The delivery service is for private persons as well as businesses and kindergartens. Recently they stopped with the market stall at the weekly market in *Bloherfelde*, a district of Oldenburg. They provide approximately 800 clients every week with a subscription box. There are different forms of boxes. It is possible to order a surprise vegetable and fruit box or to have a basis of certain products of a fixed value which can be supplemented with products out of the shop if desired. Furthermore, the customers can choose between a regional box and a normal box which also has products that come from outside Germany. The assortment is quite broad from

fresh regional fruits and vegetables over dairy products to shelf live products. Even it is possible to purchase cleaning products, cosmetics and pet food. All products are certified organic by the European Standard, but some are certified above this standard by association like Bioland or Demeter. All exotic products are also certified FairTrade. *Ecocion* uses an own labelling system to make to the customers visible where the food is coming from. 'BVH' (Bio von hier – organic from here) is used for the regional products from a radius of 60 km around Oldenburg. 'RN' (Regional Niedersachsen – regional Lower-Saxony) is used for all products out of Lower Saxony, like the apples of the 'Alten Land' near Hamburg. And the last label 'D' is for all products which are have their origin in Germany.

Ecocion works closely together with four regional producers (*Socialer Ökohof St. Josef Papenburg, Biolandbetrieb Karl-Heinz Hanken, Biolandbetrieb Obstgarten zur Alten Schule, Bio-Bäckerei Barkemeyer*). In this way, it pays off for both sides and they can profit from the better margins. Other products they purchase from the regional organic wholesaler *Kornkraft* and *Naturkost Elkershausen*. The distribution of the subscription boxes is free from a value of 15 Euro onwards. *Ecocion* delivers on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday in Oldenburg and its surround area, like *Sandkrug, Wardenburg, Bad Zwischenahn, Westerstede, Wiefelstede, Wahnbeck* and *Hatten*. The boxes can be ordered on a weekly basis but also every other week or unregularly. Due to the certification of the shop itself, they are allowed to repack products into the boxes without packaging and the organic label. They use re-useable boxes for the subscription boxes for which the customer need to pay a deposit. Products that need packaging are packed in paper bags or sensitive foods like leafy vegetables are packed in organic, GMO-free corn bags. However, if customers don't want packaging they can include the article 'Tüten brach ich nicht' (I don't need bags) in their online shop.

In the shop everyone can buys food. No registration is required. For the subscription boxes registration is needed, like name, address and the box type. The payment is done afterwards at the end of a month. If customers of the subscription boxes purchase food in the shop, the costs are also registered on their account and don't have to pay for in the shop. Businesses use more a fruit boxes with easy eatable fruits for at work. *Ecocion* is run as an 'OHG' (*Offene Handelsgesellschaft – open partnership of at least two legal persons*). The two owners know each other already a long time; they worked

together at a regional organic wholesaler of local producers. The close contact to local producers was created in that time. The wholesaler got bankrupted and together they started *Ecocion*. They wanted to give an alternative and are satisfied that they can integrate their ideals into their own business. Protection of the environment, fair trade and regional trade are important aspects that are included in *Ecocion*. By cutting out the wholesaler for fruits and vegetables, farmers get a fair price. The contact with those farmers is really important for them. Together with the four producers they develop every year an agricultural growing plan to organize who is producing what and also to give feedback which products are needed more and which products were doing it less. Also, they experiment together with the farmers, e.g. they grew watermelons. The customers liked the idea, but it was difficult and the climate is not really suitable for growing watermelons. *Ecocion* is investing in the farmers by paying them in advance. The tasks are divided between the two owners. One is responsible for the shelf-live assortment and the delivery and the other one organizes fruits and vegetables and thereby the contact with the four regional producers. Small decisions can take each one individually, because they know each other for a long time, but big decisions are discussed and taken together.

Ecocion is 11 years in operation. The first 6 to 7 years was difficult, because they could not make a living out of it and needed to work side jobs. It grew slowly in that time. But, recently the organic shop gets more customers, whereas their market stall turn over got less. The market stall needed a lot of work and organization, that's why they stopped with it. At moment of research, *Ecocion* was renovating another location that is three times as big as the current storage. The current storage facilities are too small. Some products are stored in the shop itself and the packaging of the subscription boxes take also place in the shop, which is inconvenient and can be improved. In the future, they could think of new ways to involve customers in their business, but it is too soon to know how it could be implemented. But, there is the idea of pre financing which is done at the moment by *Ecocion* and could be done by consumers. Or a sort of partnership involvement could also be an interesting way. Still, this needs to be planned in the future.

Ecocion was initiated in Oldenburg the *Bio-Brotbox* together with two businesses *Brot & So* and *Kornkraft Naturkost*. Several other businesses and organization like *Slow Food Oldenburg* and *KOSTBAR* supported this project. This project provides

an organic lunch box for children who has their first day at school and is organized in Germany. In 2014 it was the first time Oldenburg provided a lunch box. In 2015 1.800 children in Oldenburg got a lunch box. The organisation of the *Bio-Brotbox* is on a voluntary basis and money and food is donated. Next to this, *Ecocion* provides schools with school fruit with is a government stimulated programme in the Lower-Saxony. Also they donate food for events like low budget cooking for people with less money and donate money to *Slow Food Oldenburg*. Furthermore, they agreed to participate in the *nascent* study of the University of Oldenburg. Also, they are in contact with *KOSTBAR* and provide food for the food cooperative *Food Co-OL* in Oldenburg. However, they do not organise or participate in other activities, because time is a crucial factor in the management of *Ecocion*. So, only if there is time available they participate in e.g. the Regionalmarkt of the *Volkshochschule*.

From the inventory the indication was that *Ecocion* fits into the category of 'proximate SFSC'. This was also seen in the interview. Renting et al. (2003) places box schemes in the 'face-to-face SFSC', however those box schemes are often restricted to individual farms. For *Ecocion* this is not the case, four farms and two wholesalers provide them with products. *Ecocion* operates as an intermediary between consumers and producers. Next to the box delivery services, they have an organic shop and deliver products to institutions like kindergartens, but also businesses. These two market forms are listed by Renting et al. (2003) in the 'proximate SFSCs' category. Thereby, the category 'proximate SFSCs' seems right for *Ecocion*.

4.4.5. Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH

The *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* is set up to produce regional apple juice out of apples that come from semi-natural, extensive grassland-orchard systems. It is an important criterion that they use natural and untreated apples from the region. Those semi-natural, extensive grassland-orchard systems often have a great diversity of apples, which normally would not have a use. The two owners want to produce a product from the region for the region. That the reason why the juice is only sold in Oldenburg. Sometimes they mix also other fruits like quinces or pears into the apple juice, but to keep the naturalness in the juice it is only heated until pasteurisation (78°C) and has no additives.

The apple juice is branded under the name *Olmost* and sold in restaurants and

small shops only in Oldenburg. The grassland-orchard systems are maintained by the local environmental organisation NABU (*Naturschutzbund Deutschland*) and the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* supports them. However, it is also possible that private persons juice or donate their apples. People need to make an appointment for the juicing. Juice making is free of charge if the private persons donates 2/3 of the juice to the brand Olmost and keep 1/3 for him. Once, the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* got enquiries of commercial apples farmers, but they declined it out of the reason that they only want to produce natural, environmental-friendly apple juice. Another possibility to juice apples is at several farm events on which the two owner stay with their mobile fruit-juice producing plant. Hereby no registration is needed; however they commented during the interview that it could be a good idea to introduce.

The mobile fruit-juice producing plant was for example integrated in the farm festival of *Hof Ahlers*. This event was very good attended and the juice making was used at lot. The two owners needed to juice apples even the day after, because many people wanted turn their apples into apple juice. Another small event developed over time in a neighbourhood in Oldenburg. It started by the request of an old couple to juice their apples. The neighbours noticed it and wanted to do the same. The next time, tables and chairs were put on the street and a small apple celebration started. The neighbourhood ate fresh apple pie with fresh apple juice. Furthermore, the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* organised activities for members of NABU and also school classes. They learned about apples and the process of producing juice. They picked their own apples and made their own juice, which they could take home. Another activity they organised together with NABU was an apple take in for private persons and within a few hours they had own apple juice. Hereby, a registration was required. The regional adult education centre (*Volkshochschule*) organises a regional trade fair *Aufgetischt!* in Oldenburg. The *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* participated in this event, which was a great possibility to make new contacts and increase their network. The owners gave a presentation to the *Food Co-OL*, are in contact with the people behind *KOSTBAR* and the regional selling points of *Olmost* like *Tafelfreude*. Furthermore, one owner is an active member of the *Slow Food* network in Oldenburg and of *Genuss im Nordwesten*.

However, this business is only a hobby for the two owners next to their normal occupation. They use nine weekends to run this manufactory. They don't want to grow

any further or extend their product range to *Schorlen* (juice with sparkling water). It would be too much work. They run this business without paying themselves. Actually, it costs them money to run it. Their turn-over is not much and if the money is needed for product third party insurance and guaranteeing of the legal status as a *GmbH* (*Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung* – company with limited liability). They need to fulfil certain hygiene requirements such as the use of disposable cloths during juicing production. In the running of the organisation they use also a division of tasks. One person is responsible for the juicing and the other one does the bottling. They use small bottle for restaurants and bag-in-box systems for private persons. The *Slow Food* mentality also is presented in the idea of the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH*. They want to preserve varieties and also taste the differences. The communication with other likeminded people and education of children gives them energy and joy to continue their business. By producing a product from the region for the region, they want to create more awareness and appreciation for the region. However, something they would like to change is the way of packaging. At moment of research, they used a bag-in-box system for 5 litres. These are plastic bags and create waste. Nonetheless, they cannot afford another system like re-usable glass bottles. It would also be unpractical, because their business is not big enough to handle such a system. Another aspect they thought of, but is not in proportion to their business output, is organic certification. There are too much fixed costs and paper work to connected. A little problematic is that they have sometimes motivation related problems to run this business. On the one hand it is their hobby and they can put as much or as less time in it as they want and on the other hand they like to work outside in the nature and work with your hands instead of your brain.

The *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* started in fall 2013. In the beginning they wrote a business plan, however in reality the business was different and so they could not use it. They don't have a business philosophy or criteria. In the first year of operation they needed to find the right locations to procure their resources from, but in the second year this was not needed anymore. They were already known and even needed to reject some offers due to work overload. In the operation they changed the type of juice producing plant from a baler to a basket press. Additionally they worked more efficiently over time and got used to the handling of the machine. Before, the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* was initiated, one owner set up another network, which was called *Oldenburg umzu Kulinarisch*. However, this network does not exist

anymore, only on paper. The goal of this network was to connect farmers and producers with local restaurants. During this time he got insights about the existence of several regional food products and juice was not present in the surroundings of Oldenburg, yet. Next, he noticed in Oldenburg several semi-natural, extensive grassland-orchard systems exist. Some of them got abandoned due to the end of project funding in 2009. Together with this insight and the personal motivation to do something practical, related to craftsmanship, he started together with a friend this manufactory. With their business they want to stimulate people to support the work of NABU and the maintenance of those semi-natural, extensive grassland-orchard systems.

From the inventory the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* could be categorised in all three categories of Renting et al. (2003). But after looking at the market forms they use the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* does not fit in any of these. Firstly, they are as the name already implies a manufactory of apple juice. The juicing is done also at special events. They sell their branded apple juice through local restaurants and shops. On the other hand, they use special selected apples; the apples come from an extensive semi-natural grassland orchard system. None of those can be seen back in the market forms Renting et al. (2003) uses. For a part it could fit into the form of 'dedicated retailers', but then it needed to have the name of 'dedicated producers'. Therefore, the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* cannot be placed into the categorisation of Renting et al. (2003).

4.4.6. Studentenwerk

The *Studentenwerk* is a public law institution (*Anstalt des öffentlichen Rechts*) and exists of 13 different departments. One of these departments is responsible for the gastronomy on the universities. It coordinates the 6 canteens, 4 coffee bars and 1 cafeteria at the Carl von Ossietzky University Oldenburg, Jade University with the locations Wilhelmshaven, Emsfleth and Oldenburg and the university Emden-Leer. The *Studentenwerk gastronomy* follows a sustainable concept. The concept was 6 principles: organic certification, animal welfare, sustainable fishery, regional products, fair trade and seasonality.

The *Studentenwerk* is not a part of the university. It works independent, but executes tasks in the name of the university, like the organisation of food. In 1981/1982 the *Studentenwerk* asked students to fill out a survey. Among other questions, they

were asked about their satisfaction of the meal offers in the canteen. The result was that students wishes for more fresh products, organic products and whole food products. The director of the university took this wish seriously and asked the head of gastronomy of the *Studentenwerk* to start working on these issues. During that time organic food and whole food nutrition was a big new trend in society. The head of gastronomy needed to get to know what this implied. She holds a lot of conversations with several organisation and associations. Out of it, subjects of ecology and sustainability developed. For them it means that it is not only organic food but also regionally sourced. So, one year later in 1983 the first *alternative Essen* was sold in the canteens. Later, during conversations with the canteen chefs the question came up why they still purchase meat and other animal products from intensive livestock farming systems. The chefs often had often problems with abscesses and blue turned meat. From that point on, they included animal welfare standards in their concept. This concepts developed slowly further over the time and needed much preparation work. For example, the collaboration with regional producers took time, because first of all land and seedlings were needed. It took time until they could deliver their first products. In the beginning they collaborate with about 15 different regional farmers as they needed big quantities and the individual farmers could not deliver such quantities that time. This implied also some problems. The size of the products varied a lot and the small ones fell through the kitchen machines. Another products were half eaten by mice or the weight wasn't right or the deliveries wasn't on time. This resulted in conversations and negotiations to solve these problems. These days they do not face any of these problems anymore. Nowadays, they work with 4 regional farmers (*Hofmolkerei Elke Dehlwes*, *Biolandhof Karl-Heinz Hanken*, *organic farm of Helmut Heinemann* and *Bioland-Gemüsegärtnerei Steenken*), an organic wholesaler located in the region (*Kornkraft*) and a trading company of fair trade products (*El Puente GmbH*). All farmers are certified organic according to the European standards. Some of them are also certified by the association Bioland. The head of gastronomy chose those producers based on distance and visits them regularly. Regional is where you can obtain the product first in your surroundings. Another aspect that got more and more common over the years is the availability of vegetarian and vegan meals in the canteens. In 2015 the animal welfare organisation *PETA* rewarded the canteen of the *Studentenwerk* for their vegan friendly canteen offers. The gastronomy of the *Studentenwerk* has also a patisserie, in which they mill whole-wheat and bake fresh bread and pastry. The meals that students can buy at the different locations vary

between 1.80 and 3.95 Euro. However, some of the meals also cost 7 Euros, but this are the meals that are sold in the 'Culinarium'. This is one of the canteens, in which they sell more expensive food. For the future, they have plans to renew and renovate the kitchen facilities as they originate from the year 1970. It is planned for 2017/2018. One of the reasons for renovating the kitchen facilities is that they want to use energy more efficiently and want to use sustainable energy sources.

The *Studentenwerk* celebrated its 30 anniversary couple years ago. During these days they offered a special meal for almost the price from 1983. Furthermore, a market was organised. All farmers and producers, which deliver food to the *Studentenwerk*, were present. Students could talk to them and get informed about all different aspects. Also, the organic association Bioland and the association for animal welfare standards Neuland attended the market. Next to this, they organised a podium discussion. The *Studentenwerk* has not enough time to organise such events more regularly. However, once per semester they organise a tour through the canteen and the patisserie. And recently, they started a project *Zu gut für die Tonne* (too good for the trash). This project aims to decrease food waste in the canteen. For example, they adjust the meals to the amount of students by plating the food only if students visit the canteen. Food that is already on a plate cannot be used again. Also they hang out posters in the canteen to create awareness for food waste. Thereby, they want to stimulate students to think about food waste also at home. The head of gastronomy participated in a conference in Paris called *Printemps Bio*. There, she gave a presentation about the work of the gastronomy of *Studentenwerk* and its sustainable concept.

From the inventory the indication of a 'proximate SFSC' was made for the gastronomy of the *Studentenwerk*. This is confirmed by the interview. The *Studentenwerk*'s gastronomy fall into the market form of catering for institutions. They organise the canteens and cafes of the 3 universities with different locations.

4.4.7. Food Co-OI

The *Food Co-OI* is a student initiated food cooperative with about 70 members, which order in community groups. These community groups are often living communities of students. It started as a vegan food cooperative, but later incorporated also dairy products and eggs. Although the food cooperative wants to create a direct relationship with producers and cut out all intermediaries, at this moment they order their products

at a regional organic shop *Ecocion*. Therefore, the *Food Co-Op* is able to choose from a broad range of organic products that *Ecocion* provides. Pieces and bundles orders can be made depending on the type of food they order; fresh or shelf-life products.

Due to the fact that the food cooperative has no own storage facility, they obtain products via *Ecocion* every other week. The food cooperative get 17% discount because of bundle orders. However, 2% of the prices are used for regular costs to organize the food cooperative. By ordering bundles, the food cooperative wants to make organic food available for people with less money. The ordered products are separated from the main products of the organic shop and stored until the individual community group member pick it up on Tuesdays between two and six o'clock. However, in some occasions the food cooperative is able to obtain food directly from producers. This was the case for hazelnuts, oregano and apples. Once they also purchased clothing material.

The *Food Co-Op* is an open group, which new members can join after a first meeting. They organise their orders via a FoodSoftware, which is developed by a food cooperative in Berlin. Every member has an account with a prepaid on it. There is no minimum order value. The community groups need to organise themselves. Bundle orders need to communicated via the FoodSoftware to ensure the whole bundle is divided. Every 10th of the month the food cooperative organizes a meeting to communicate about current topics and negotiated the further development. Participation in the meetings is not obligatory but desirable, to make sure that a pure consumption attitude is not wanted in a food cooperative. During the meetings a protocol is kept and stored on their internal blog. If decisions need to be made, it will take place during these sessions. The meetings are also used to discuss problems and come up with solutions like the storage problem. At this meetings the group uses plenary signs like raising both hands next to your head and turn them quickly to show agreement. Other communication tools are the internal blog, a mailing list and the FoodSoftware. For the organization of the *Food Co-Op* there are different tasks involved: import community group orders from the FoodSoftware into the system of *Ecocion*, separate groups on Tuesdays for pick up, administration of mail and bank account, participation in monthly meetings, organization of side activities and organization of the internal blog. However, the separation of orders at *Ecocion* is sometimes difficult due to some practical issues like suitable containers to divide the bundle orders. Furthermore, they create separate

groups to coordinate activities like visiting an apple farmer. Another new instrument the food cooperative has introduced is a buddy system. One member can act as guarantor for other in case of unavailability. New members are attracted at special meeting after the start of the winter semester. New members need to be present during one meeting to get to know each other and explain the food cooperative concept. Thereafter, they get access to the FoodSoftware and internal blog.

The *Food Co-OI* was started by a group of students, which had heard from other food cooperatives in Berlin, Freiburg and Bremen. At that time such a food cooperative didn't exist in Oldenburg. Their aim is to purchase food directly from regional producer, but due to the problem of storage, they started to obtain their products from a regional organic shop. The connection were made because one member of the food cooperative works at this shop and asked if they are willing to cooperate. Currently, the food cooperative wants to make a next step to circumvent their intermediary to obtain fresh food directly from the producer and thus is searching for a storage location. There were already searching for a suitable location, but could not find one. At point of research they were searching for a cellar. But, this can be also problematic, because someone needs to be present at time of deliveries, which can vary in time. The group wants to try it with one producer. Another thought the food cooperative has is to cooperate with e.g. *Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort*, which has a market stand on the weekly market in Oldenburg. And to order products from them and pick it up on the weekly market would be convenient for both. For the organization of the food cooperative active members are needed. However, active involvement was low at point of research and only a core group of about 7 – 10 people took over the responsibilities. However, for the future they want to establish a more sustainable food cooperative, which has a higher involvement of members and can stand by itself. Furthermore, they want to visit the farm and get to know the farmers.

As mentioned earlier, the *Food Co-OI* was started vegan and therefore has a lot of vegan and vegetarian members. Due to the fact that the food cooperative was started by students, about 80 percent of the members are students. Their motive of being a member is that they want to get closer to food production and get to know the people behind it. Supporting organic products and follow a regional value chain approach are some other core elements of the food cooperative and its members. Through the elimination of intermediaries and bulk orders they want to make organic

food available for people with less financial resources, like students. An ideal that is indirectly expressed by them is that they want to constrain the market power of bigger parties and want to act self-determined. By showing people how they can obtain food via an alternative, they want to create awareness.

In the beginning of the initiation of the *Food Co-OI* had a list with several regional farms they would like to cooperate with. Nonetheless, they are not familiar with all farms in the region, but are starting to contact producers. Furthermore, they are in close contact with *Slow Food Oldenburg* and other initiatives like *Wurzelwerk* and *Schippeldisko*. They participate in information markets like the *Unimarkt* and *Markt der Möglichkeiten* at *Nachdenkstatt* to network with other initiatives and attract new members. Both activities take place at the University in Oldenburg and show the student bases character of the food cooperative.

The *Food Co-OI* was placed into the category of 'proximate SFSC' during the inventory. The *Food Co-OI* is a consumer cooperative, which purchases their products through another AFN *Ecocion* and occasionally they buy products direct from the producer. Therefore, the category of 'proximate SFSCs' seems right for the *Food Co-OI*.

4.4.8. Genuss im Nordwesten

Genuss im Nordwesten is a fair that takes place every two years and organised in the *Park der Gärten* in Bad Zwischenahn. In 2015 80 different producers were present at the fair and visited by over 5.000 people on one day. They organised a podium discussion about food and agriculture in change, show cooking and a cooking class for children. This was the eighth time the fair was organised and run under the slogan of '*Essen ist eine politische Handlung*' (Food is a political act). This consumer and delight fair has the goal to stimulate and care of regional food culture. They want to prevent that small-scale producers disappear in the region. *Genuss im Nordwesten* also proclaim the ideal that good food is an example of quality of live. Small-scale farmers and producers from North-West Germany are supported. Together they represented a broad range of products: fruits, vegetables, mushrooms; bread; vinegar and oil; fish, meat and poultry; dairy; herbs and spices; honey, jams, mustard and chutneys; beer, wine and spirits; juice; sweets; delicate foods like coffee and pasta. Also some art was shown at the fair and NGOs were present. However, also some producers from North-East Germany and from the Netherlands participated at *Genuss im Nordwesten*.

The visitors of the fair came to the market to taste all the different products. Most of them were already informed about some of the regional producers and knew that the producers come from the region. Also, about 50 children visited the fair and participated in the cooking classes. The products were donated by *Hof Eyting*. Also, children learned something about herbs and medical plants. The podium discussion went not that smooth as a lot of like-minded people visited the fair. The organisation invited some people for the discussion. However, those with a different perspective cancelled. So, the intended controversial discussion could not be held. Only, until the point some conversional farmers in the public raised their choice. This was the point, vision and goal of *Genuss im Nordwesten* could be shown clearly due to the different perspective given earlier.

Genuss im Nordwesten evolved out of the regional *Slow Food* groups (convivia) of Bremen, Oldenburg, Osnabrück, Ostfriesland, Diepholz and Cuxhaven. In the first couple years this fair was organised by the *Slow Food* groups and without sponsors. The organisation and the event were dependent on volunteers. They needed to have a juridical form if they wanted sponsors. Only *Slow Food* Germany has a form of a union, but not the regional groups. Therefore, the four groups of Bremen, Oldenburg, Osnabrück and Ostfriesland initiated the union *Genuss im Nordwesten e.V.*. The groups Diepholz re-organised and decided to drop out and Cuxhaven stopped its group. They set up this union with charitable goals and the purpose to organise events together with regional, small-scale producers. The union has a chairperson and a treasurer and everyone in this union works voluntary. The first 6 times the fair was organised in Cloppenburg in the *Museumsdorf Cloppenburg*, but in 2013 they changed location. The reason was that Cloppenburg is not a place that is associated with good food, because almost all large-scale animal husbandries are located there. Also, financial issues influenced this choice. The location in Cloppenburg was owned by the municipality and therefore could not give a part of the entrance money to the *Genuss im Nordwesten e.V.* The new location is in Bad Zwischenahn and private owned GmbH. The *Genuss im Nordwesten e.V.* can rent the park for free and coordinates the fair together. Also, the ticket price income is divided between the two. Further financial income was generated through a stand fee of the exhibitors, which lay between 50 and 120 Euro depending on the size of the stand. These exhibitors needed to fulfil certain criteria, which correspond with the criteria of *Slow Food*.

Due to the fact that *Genuss im Nordwesten* exist of *Slow Food* members only, the network is rather extended. For example, one member is also the owner of the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH*. Furthermore, they are in close contact with the publisher of *KOSTBAR* (it's a voucher booklet for regional and sustainable products). He moderated the podium discussions. The adult education centre *VHS* (Volkshochschule) is a partner in the organisation of this fair. But also, *Genuss im Nordwesten/Slow Food* worked together for the organisation of another regional fair *Regionalmesse Aufgetischt!* With is located at the building of the *VHS*. *Genuss im Nordwesten e.V.* organises together with other organisations another fair in Bremen called *Fisch und Feines* (a fair for sustainable delight). Furthermore, there are a lot of contacts that are linked to activities of *Slow Food* itself, e.g. to *ProZept e.V.*, *Kulturetage*, *Hof Eyting*, *Hof Reuter*, *Food Co-op*, *Nachdenkstatt* and *Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort*. From the inventory *Genuss im Nordwesten* was placed into the category of 'proximate SFSC'. The interview confirmed this. *Genuss im Nordwesten* is a special event, which Renting et al. (2003) listed in the category of 'proximate SFSCs'.

4.5. A Network of Networks

Throughout the interviews it appeared that the AFNs are collaborating on different levels with each other. Hereby, it can be proposed that there is an internal network and an external network, which can be called a 'network of networks'. The internal network is more related to its own governance and organisation, whereas the external network is about transfers of products, knowledge exchange, participation and cooperation with other AFNs. A representation of the network of networks is shown in Figure 4.5.

The transfer of products and thereby increasing the sales of the AFNs can be seen in the cooperation of the *Food Co-Op* and *Ecocion*. The *Food Co-Op* is buying their products via *Ecocion*. This is also done by the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* and several AFNs of the inventory.

An example of knowledge exchange can be seen in the fact that *Genuss im Nordwesten* is initiated out of *Slow Food Oldenburg*. The criteria for the producers to show their products at *Genuss im Nordwesten* are in line with the criteria for *Slow Food Oldenburg*. Knowledge is exchanged more indirectly between the AFNs with the use of other civil society groups. But, knowledge exchange is also presented in other attributes of this network of networks like participation and cooperation with other AFNs.

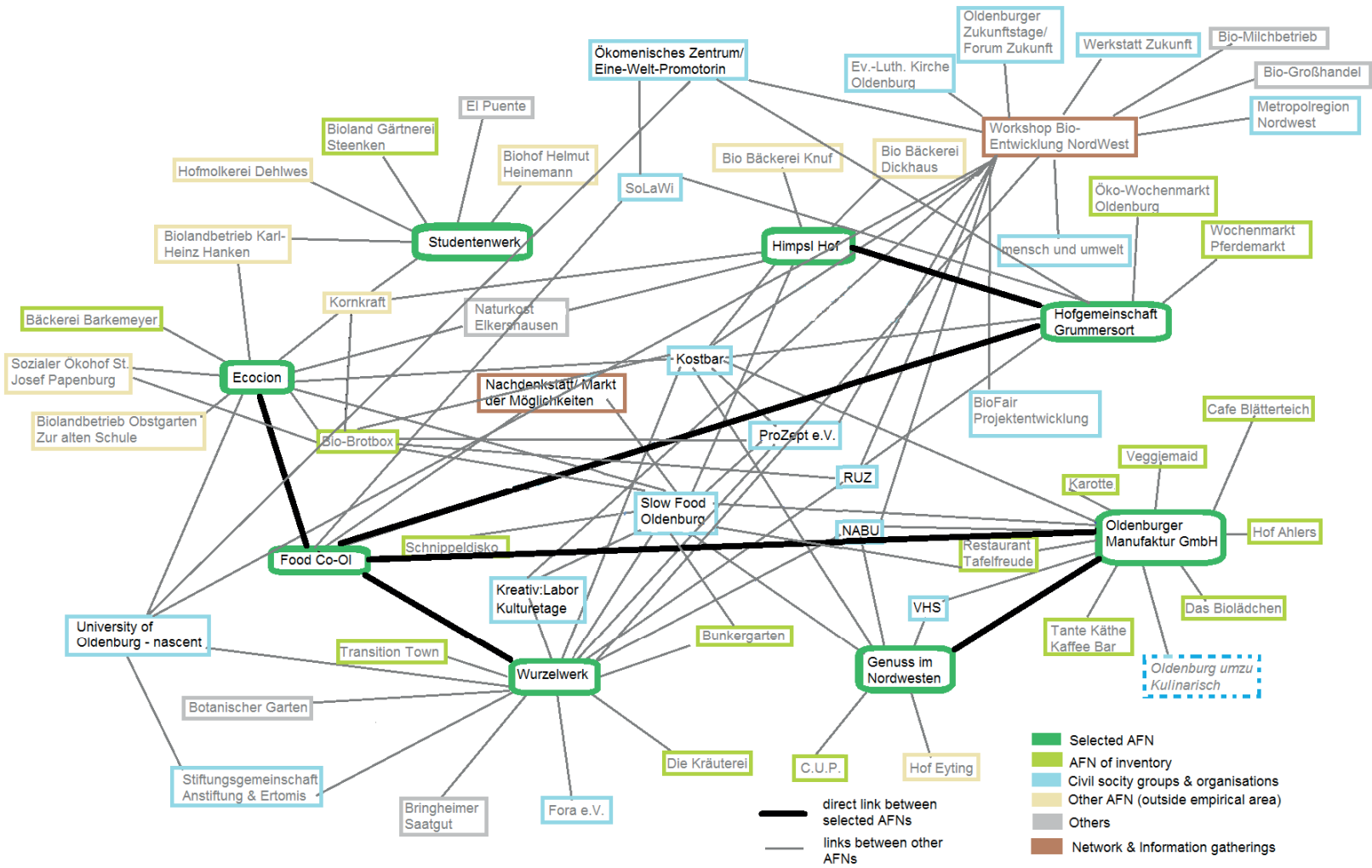


Figure 4.5: Network of networks

The next attribute seen in the network of networks, is the participation with another AFN. It can be seen in the fact that some people are member of two different AFNs; the *Wurzelwerk* as well as the *Food Co-Op*. Another example is that the owner of the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* is also involved in *Genuss im Nordwesten* and *Slow Food Oldenburg*.

Lastly, the cooperation with others is shown in different ways in the network of networks. It is also supported by other organisations and/or civil society groups. *Ecocion* together with other two other AFNs initiated the *Bio-Brotbox Oldenburg* and are supported by divers other AFNs, business and organisations in and around Oldenburg; *KOSTBAR*, *ProZept e.V.*, *RUZ*, *Slow Food Oldenburg* and *Sozialer Ökohof St. Josef*.

AFNs are supported by other organisations and/or civil society groups. At moment of research, the *SoLaWi group* negotiates with *Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort* to build up a CSA. They are supported by the *Eine-Welt-Promotorin/Ökumenischen Zentrum*. A member of the *SoLaWi group* is also members of *Food Co-Op* and presented the *SoLaWi* concept at the *Markt der Möglichkeiten* at *Nachdenkstatt*. Furthermore, the *Eine-Welt-Promotorin* participated in the workshop *Bio-Entwicklung Nordwest*. In this workshop many more participated, like *Wurzelwerk*, researchers of the research project *nascent*, *NABU* and *RUZ*. However, there were a lot more organisations who participated in this workshop (Hüasers, 2015).

Some of the development of AFNs is new, but also some of them are already established some years. The oldest AFN is the *Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort*, which started in 1979. A couple years later in 1981/1982 the *Studentenwerk* started with their alternative meal concept. Those two AFNs said they were impacted by the trends and developments of whole food nutrition and first steps to organic agriculture. The next AFNs started from the year 2000 onwards. *Genuss im Nordwesten* started in 2001, *Ecocion* in 2004 and the *Himpsl Hof* in 2008. The other 3 AFNs, *Wurzelwerk*, *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* and *Food Co-Op*, were initiated around the year of 2013. This shows that there is also cooperation possible between older and newer types of AFNs.

The examples show that AFNs cannot be seen strictly apart from each other. They must be seen in a broader picture, as they cooperate a lot with each other. The AFNs are entangled and support each other.

5. Categorisation of AFNs: Analytical Chapter

In this chapter the categorisation of AFNs in Oldenburg is presented using the adjusted analytical framework (Figure 2.2, p.9). Remarks are made in how far the categorisation still applies to the investigated AFNs in Oldenburg. The first section (5.1) places attention to the underlying dimensions 'proximity', 'type of interaction' and 'type of exchange'. Whereas the second section (5.2) sheds light on consumer involvement. An overview of the categorisation is shown in Table 5.1.

In the first section, the categories and the underlying dimensions 'proximity', 'type of interaction' and 'type of exchange' of Renting et al. (2003) are analysed in more detail. Renting et al. (2003) uses the categories 'face-to-face SFSC', 'proximate SFSC' and 'extended SFSC' to differentiate AFNs and link them to market forms. In this analysis the AFNs in Oldenburg are analysed by discussing the underlying dimensions for each AFN and link them to the categories of Renting et al. (2003). Thereafter a synthesis is made. Throughout the analysis it appeared that AFNs, its operation and practises are far more complex than it can be indicated through categorisation. On the one hand using market forms to explain an AFN is not enough, as they often operate in more than just one.

On the other hand categorisations often give only an impression of an AFN and do not correspond with the entire operation of an AFN. During the analysis it appeared that sometimes a clear line between the different categories cannot be made. In the second section of this chapter, consumer involvement is analysed with the use of theory of Renting et al. (2012) and Venn et al. (2006). Renting et al. (2012) speaks of 'co-producers' and 'co-sumers', which is referring to active or passive consumer involvement. Whereas Venn et al. (2006) distinguishes between various consumer-producer relationships of which the first two represent active consumer involvement and the last two passive consumer involvement: 'producers as consumers', 'producer-consumer partnerships', 'direct selling initiatives' and 'specialist retailers'. AFNs are analysed by looking at the different practices of consumer involvement. Also, this section is ended with a synthesis. The analysis of the AFNs in Oldenburg has shown that the categorisation often cannot grasp the complexity of the different practices within each AFN.

Table 5.1: Overview of categorisation

AFN	Market forms	Renting et al. (2003)		Venn et al. (2006)	
		Dimensions	Categorisation of SFSC	Active and passive consumer involvement	Consumer-producer relationships
Himpls Hof	Farm shop, box scheme, market	Close, personal, direct	Face-to-face	Co-sumers	Direct selling initiative
Wurzelwerk	Community garden	n/a	n/a	Co-producers & Co-sumers	Producers as consumers
Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort	Box scheme, farm gate sales	Close, personal, direct	Face-to-face	Co-sumers	Direct selling initiative
	CSA (<i>in development</i>)			Co-producers	Producers as consumers
Ecocion	Box scheme, organic shop	Distanced, impersonal, indirect	Proximate	Co-sumers	Specialist retailers
Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH	Manufactory with direct sales	Close, personal, direct & distanced, impersonal, indirect	n/a	Co-sumers	Direct selling initiative / specialist retailers
Studentenwerk	Catering for institutions	Distanced, impersonal, indirect	Proximate	Co-sumers	Specialist retailers
Food Co-Op	Consumer cooperative	Distanced, impersonal, indirect	Proximate	Co-sumers	Direct selling initiative / specialist retailer
Genuss im Nordwesten	Special event	Close, personal, direct	Face-to-face	Co-sumers	Direct selling

5.1. Exploring the Underlying Dimensions ‘Proximity’, ‘Type of Interaction’ and ‘Type of Exchange’ within AFNs

Himpsl Hof

From the inventory, the *Himpsl Hof* seemed to be categorized in the ‘face-to-face SFSC’. The market form Renting et al. (2003) uses in this category can be seen back in the description of the *Himpsl Hof*. They have a home delivery service, a farm shop and sell their products at a weekly market. Also, they offer a home delivery service for schools and kindergartens, which Renting et al. (2003) places in the category of ‘proximate SFSCs’. However, he explains for the ‘face-to-face SFSCs’ category that “home deliveries offer some possibility to extend the reach of this form of SFSC, but mostly these remain restricted to individual farms” (p.400). Therefore, I would argue that in this case home delivery for institutions can be also placed in the ‘face-to-face SFSCs’ category as it is restricted just to this individual farm.

Looking into the underlying dimensions, it can be noted that the *Himpsl Hof* sells their products directly to the consumer through different market forms. The ‘spatial proximity’ between producer and consumer remains close as the *Himpsl Hof* organises the sales by themselves. Hereby, the main focus is on the sales of their own produced food. Additionally they sell wholesaler product. However, the ‘proximity’ degree varies due to the different market forms. Logically, the closest ‘proximity’ is reached in the farm shop, whereby the consumers get an impression of the farm itself. At the weekly market the ‘proximity’ is a bit more extend, but still close as the producers sell their products themselves on the market. The home delivery service for private persons and for institutions have a more distanced ‘proximity’. The consumers get only indirectly in contact with the producers. The products are overhanded by the driver of the *Himpsl Hof* delivery bus. However, no actual contact with the producers is established. Still, the ‘spatial proximity’ is transferred through the food of the *Himpsl Hof*. By making aware of the local nature of the products a closer ‘proximity’ between consumer and producer is created. To be able to do so, a ‘type of interaction’ needs to take place. Most of the times the *Himpsl Hof* makes use of personal interaction. This personal contact is built in the farm shop and at the market. Consumers have the possibility to get in a conversation with the producer and get more insight. But, in case of the home delivery service the ‘interaction’ is less personal as it is created through the online shop

and occasionally via telephone. Here the 'interaction' is more formalised than in the farm shop or at the market. Consumers need to register themselves to be able to get access to the online shop to order a subscription box. The last dimension that needs to be looked at in the creation of a relationship between producer and consumer is the 'type of exchange'. Hereby, products and information are exchanged. The *Himpsl Hof* exchanges it directly. As seen in the other two dimensions, the relationship is close and personal; therefore the food only can be exchanged directly. The home delivery service has also a direct 'type of exchange', because the delivery is done by employee of the *Himpsl Hof* and not by an external business. Some of the subscription boxes are even picked up at the farm shop. General information is communicated via the website, through flyers and with use of mouth to mouth communication and thus indirectly. The same counts for the communication for the home delivery service. Hereby, information is transferred via the online shop, through the letters in the boxes and the website. All other information is communicated directly to the consumers, which is their main part of communication. Producers and employees communicate personally with their consumers in the farm shop and at the market.

Although some small differences in the degree of the dimensions were seen, it can be noted that the *Himpsl Hof* operates with a close 'proximity' to its consumers, handle a personal 'interaction' and use a direct 'exchange'.

Wurzelwerk

The analysis of the *Wurzelwerk* using the underlying dimensions of Renting et al. (2003) is problematic. First, they cannot be categorised according to the market forms Renting et al. (2003) uses. The *Wurzelwerk* is an urban community garden, which is not listed and therefore falls out of the spectrum of AFNs used by Renting et al. (2003). As mentioned in previous chapter, the *Wurzelwerk* members operate as producers in the garden and as consumers. The dimensions 'proximity', 'type of interaction' and 'type of exchange' look at the relationship between producers AND consumers. Therefore, it is not possible to analyse the *Wurzelwerk* with those dimensions as producers and consumers are represented by the same person. It would result into an interpersonal discussion.

Nonetheless, the relationship between members of this community garden could be analysed with the use of the underlying dimension. However, this is a different approach and does not fit in the scope of this research. Therefore, the categorisation of Renting et al. (2003) and its underlying dimensions do not apply for the *Wurzelwerk*.

Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort

From the inventory the *Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort* was placed into the category of 'face-to-face-SFSC'. The market forms the farm community is operating in are; sales at several weekly markets, farm gate sales on Friday afternoons and box deliver services. Those forms can be found back in the market forms Renting et al. (2003) uses in this category.

The market forms the *Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort* uses are all linked to direct sales. This requires a close relationship with the consumer and can be seen at this farm. On Friday afternoons consumers can buy products at the farm, can visit the farm and talk with the producers. It shows that the 'proximity' between consumer and producer is very close. At the market the 'proximity' is more extended, but still close. The *Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort* values it that the farmers and producers sell products from time to time at the market and hold conversation with the consumer. The box delivery service has an even more distanced 'proximity'. Consumers get only in contact with the producer through the products. The same degrees in 'proximity' can also be seen in the 'type of interaction'. The more closely the relationship between consumer and producer is, the more personal the 'interaction' is. At Friday afternoons during the farm gate sales a high personal interaction can be established. Whereas at the market the 'type of interaction' is restricted to the information the producer gives to the consumer. On the farm information can be strengthened by contact with the surrounding and farm animals (visual input). The 'interaction' that takes place through the box delivery service is limited to impersonal contact. This contact is created through the online shop and the delivery of the products. For all market forms the last dimensions 'type of exchange' is done directly. However, the degree in 'directness' differs and is influenced by the other two dimensions. The 'type of exchange' is the most direct at the farm gate sales and the least direct through the delivery service. During the farm gates sales, families meet on the farm and have small get-togethers. This shows that the farm and its producers communicate personally and create a certain intimate sphere, which is pleasant to come together. The box delivery service is done by the farm community itself, which can still be seen as a direct exchange of food. But, information is communicated differently and the two dimensions are also different. The 'type of interaction' is impersonal; therefore the consequence is that the 'exchange' of information is done indirectly. Yet, with some exceptions to calls the farm community receives of consumers regarding questions to the box delivery service.

All in all, it can be said that the *Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort* establishes a close, personal and direct relationship with its consumers. Next to the market forms through, the farm community organises several activities for consumers on the farm. Those activities increase the dimensions to an even more close, personal and direct relationship.

Ecocion

The indication made during the inventory was that *Ecocion* fits into the category of 'proximate SFSC'. *Ecocion* provide a box delivery service. Renting et al. (2003) places box delivery services in the 'face-to-face SFSC', however with the note that those box schemes are often restricted to individual farms. For *Ecocion* this is not the case, four farms and two wholesalers provide them with products. *Ecocion* operates as an intermediary between consumers and producers. Next to the box delivery services, they have an organic shop and deliver products to kindergartens and businesses. These two market forms are listed by Renting et al. (2003) in the 'proximate SFSCs' category. Therefore, the category 'proximate SFSCs' fits the best for *Ecocion*.

As *Ecocion* operates as an intermediary between producer and consumer, the 'proximity' between those is spatially distanced. Generally, producer and consumer do not get in contact with each other, only indirectly through the products. However, to create some kind of connection between producer and consumer, *Ecocion* uses a labelling system for their products. The labels indicate if the product was produced regionally ('Bio von hier'), within the borders of the federal state ('regional Niedersachsen') and in Germany ('Deutschland'). Additional to the first label 'Bio von hier' (BVH) they give the name of one of their regional producers. However, not all products with this label have a name linked to it. The other two dimensions are closely linked to each other, because the 'interaction' between producer and consumer is established through the 'exchange' of the products. The 'type of interaction' that takes place between consumers and producers is only impersonal, as *Ecocion* mediates the interaction. Consumers of the subscription box have a more formalised contact with *Ecocion*. Consumers order their products through the online shop and receive those products at home. And *Ecocion* has a formalised contact with the producers, from whom they order products frequently. In line with the previous, the 'type of exchange' is indirect. Products are distributed and information about producers is communicated via the intermediary *Ecocion*. Though, they try to close the spatial gap between producer

and consumer by communicating recent news about products and producers to the consumer through the weekly email and on their website. Occasionally open farm days are communicated to the consumers.

The contact between *Ecocion* and their producers is closer, more personal and more direct, but the contact between consumers and consumers stay in a distanced, impersonal and indirect way.

Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH

The *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* could be categorised in all three categories of Renting et al. (2003). But after looking at the market forms Renting et al. (2003) uses the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* does not correspond to any of these.

Firstly, they are, as the name already implies, a manufactory of apple juice. The juicing is done also at special events, like an open day at a farm. Furthermore, they sell their branded apple juice through local restaurants and shops. On the other hand, they use special selected apples with limited availabilities. The apples come from extensive semi-natural grassland orchard systems. None of those can be seen back in the market forms Renting et al. (2003) used. Partly, it could fit into the form of 'dedicated retailers', but then it needed to have the name of 'dedicated producers'. Therefore, the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* cannot be placed into the categorisation of Renting et al. (2003).

Due to the different operations of the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* the 'proximity' differs. When juicing is done at special events the contact to the consumers is close, whereas no contact to consumers exists through the sales of the branded juice to local restaurants and shops. On the other hand, the contact to potential consumers is created through activities. Children or members of the *NABU* participate in collecting apples on the orchards and help to juice those apples. Here, the 'proximity' is very close. The local nature of the product is an important aspect in their business. Making aware of this and communicate it to consumers creates a closer 'proximity' between consumers and the product. Not only the first dimension varies a lot, also the second and the third dimension. The 'type of interaction' can be personal as well as impersonal. The 'type of interaction' is personal at the special events and during activities and is more distanced and impersonal through sales to restaurants and local shops. Hereby, the brand name *OLMOST* is used to market the apple juice, which is a more formalised 'interaction' than the organisation of activities. Food and information can be 'exchanged' directly and indirectly. Direct 'exchange' can be seen at events like

the farm festival or activities with children. An indirect 'exchange' is seen at sales at restaurants, shops and via their website.

In summary, the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* has a close, personal and direct contact with consumers as well as a distanced, impersonal and indirect relation with consumers.

Studentenwerk

From the inventory the indication of a 'proximate SFSC' was made for the gastronomy department of the *Studentenwerk*. They manage the canteens and cafes of the 3 universities on different locations. Thus, fall into the market form of catering for institutions.

The *Studentenwerk* collaborates with regional producers. However, students, who are the consumers, do not get in contact with them. The *Studentenwerk* operates an intermediary, who processes the food into meals. Therefore, producers and students are more distanced from each other and thus have a more extended 'proximity'. An exception was the 30ste anniversary of the *Studentenwerk*, during which a producer market was hold. Students and producers could get in contact with each other. However, this only happened once. In general, the 'interaction' between producer and consumer is impersonal and institutionalised. The 'proximity' is more distanced, so the consequence is that the 'interaction' between producer and student is created by another operator. The *Studentenwerk* executes the task of catering for the university. Thus, the 'interaction' is formally organised. Again, the exception was the producer market during the celebration of the 30ste anniversary. Here, the 'interaction' was personal. In line with the two previous dimensions, the last dimensions 'type of exchange' is indirectly. Food and information about the producers are distributed and communicated via the *Studentenwerk*. The products are sold in the canteens and cafes, whereas information is communicated indirectly via the homepage and posters. So, for the gastronomy department of the *Studentenwerk* the 'proximity' is distanced, 'interaction' is impersonal and the 'exchange' is indirect.

Food Co-OI

The *Food Co-OI* was placed into the category of 'proximate SFSC' during the inventory. The *Food Co-OI* is a consumer cooperative, which purchases their products through another AFN *Ecocion*. Occasionally they buy products direct from the producer.

At moment of research the consumer cooperative purchased their products mainly via *Ecocion* and thus do not have a close relationship with the producers. So, the 'proximity' is rather distanced. However, this is different when the *Food Co-Op* buys products direct from the producer. Hereby, the contact is close. The *Food Co-Op* values this close contact a lot and seeks to create more such relationships. In this occasional close contact, the 'interaction' is personal and 'exchange' is direct. However, in the more usual way of food provisioning this is different. *Ecocion* provides the consumer cooperative with the same type of food and information as their regular customers (see above). So, the same impersonal and indirect relation counts for the relationship between the producers and the *Food Co-Op*. However, a formal character of 'interaction' can be seen in the fact that a membership is required to purchase products via the consumer cooperative. Yet, the *Food Co-Op* works on shifting the relationship to a closer, personal and direct one.

Nonetheless, at moment of research the relationship between consumers and producer was distanced, impersonal and indirect.

Genuss im Nordwesten

From the inventory *Genuss im Nordwesten* was placed into the category of 'proximate SFSC'. *Genuss im Nordwesten* is a special event, which Renting et al. (2003) listed in the category of 'proximate SFSCs'.

This special event gives consumers the opportunity to meet producers face to face. So, the 'proximity' between consumers and producers is close. In this close contact, the created 'interaction' is personal. Consumers can randomly choose producers at the event to start a conversation with. The two formal aspects in the creation of this relationship between consumer and producer are that: the consumer needs to buy an entrance ticket and the producers need to fulfil the requirements of Slow Food. Consumers can buy products at the event. Thereby, the 'exchange' of food and information is direct. Consumers can talk to the producers and can get directly information about the product.

The analysis of the dimensions has shown a close, personal and direct relationship between consumers and producers, which are characteristic for a 'face-to-face SFSC'. However, Renting et al. (2003) places special events in the 'proximate SFSC' category. So, by analysing the dimensions and the description of *Genuss im Nordwesten*, this AFN can be placed into the category of a 'face-to-face SFSC'.

Synthesis

From the analysis of the underlying dimensions of Renting et al. (2003) it came forward that often the character of one dimension directs the degree of the other two dimensions. An AFN shows either a close, personal and direct relationship between producer and consumer, or a distanced, impersonal and indirect relation. It can be seen that those AFNs that can be placed into the 'face-to-face SFSC' category show a close, personal and direct relationship between consumer and producer. Those AFNs listed in the 'proximate SFSCs' category represent a relationship that is more distanced, impersonal and indirect. However, *Genuss im Nordwesten* seemed to be a 'proximate SFSCs' according to its market form. But after analysing the dimensions, the relationship between consumer and producer had the characteristics of a 'face-to-face SFSC'. This shows that categorising AFNs according to its market form is not sufficient.

Furthermore, the analysis has shown that there is a variation in the characteristics of a relationship. For example, the *Himpsl Hof* and the *Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort* are both categorised into the 'face-to-face SFSC' category with a close, personal and direct relationship between consumers and producers. Both operate in the same market forms, which show also a similar variation in the degree of the dimensions. At the farm the contact is more personal than through a delivery service. The same variation can be seen for the 'type of interaction' and 'type of exchange'. So, the closer the relationship between consumer and producer is, the more personal the 'interaction' is and the more direct the 'exchange' is.

Nonetheless, the degrees of the dimensions can shift and do not necessarily be similar when comparing AFNs. For example, the way how the relationship between consumer and producer is created is different for the *Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort* and *Genuss im Nordwesten*. Both have a close, personal and direct relationship. However, the first AFN creates the relationship through the direct exchange of products, whereas the last AFN focuses on direct exchange of information. The same counts for more distanced relationships. The *Studentenwerk* represents a far more distanced relationship between consumer and producer as the *Food Co-Op*. The first one focusses more on the exchange of products. The *Food Co-Op* values the exchange of information equally as much as the exchange of products.

Nonetheless, two AFNs could not be placed into the categories of Renting et al. (2003). For the first one, *Wurzelwerk*, the dimensions could not be analysed, because it requires a producer and consumer. The *Wurzelwerk* represents both sides in one person. So, there is no consumer-producer relationship. For the second AFN, the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH*, the dimensions differ according to the operation. Therefore, it could be seen as these AFNs operate in a 'face-to-face SFSC' and a 'proximate SFSC'. However, the market forms Renting et al. (2003) uses do not represent the operation of the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH*.

Another aspect that needed attention in this analysis is the quality of food that is exchanged. It could be stated that close, personal and direct relationships exchange is fresher, perishable products. And thus distanced, impersonal and indirect the relationships exchange more shelf-life products. However, all AFNs operate mainly with fresh, perishable products. Most of them expand their assortment with shelf-life products. Thus, the market form does not change due to the quality of food.

In summary, the underlying dimensions 'proximity', 'type of interaction' and 'type of exchange' are still relevant for the analysis of consumer-producer relationships. Yet, there is a dynamic in the degree of those dimensions. The degrees of the dimensions can shift and do not necessarily be similar when comparing AFNs. By indicating for example a close relationship ('proximity'), it can have different expressions. The question is raised what is close of how close the relationship can get. Being in contact with the producer at a market stand or ordering the produce directly from the producers is described at a close relationship. However, when a consumer visits the farm and buys there the products isn't it much closer? Similar differences can be seen for the other two dimensions. So, the underlying dimensions are still relevant, but do not grasp the complexity within those dimensions anymore.

This analysis of AFNs in Oldenburg has shown that the diversity of AFNs got richer and more complex. The underlying dimensions cannot be used in newer forms of AFNs like community gardens. In those newer AFNs the distinction between consumer and producer is not always present. So, analysing AFN according to its consumer-producer relationship is not sufficient anymore. When there is no consumer-producer relationship, it cannot be analysed and a different approach is needed.

5.2. Exploring Consumer Involvement within AFNs

In chapter 4 already came forward that consumers are differently involved in the operation of AFNs. According to the theory of Renting et al. (2012) these forms of involvement can be divided into two groups. A distinction is made by referring on the one hand to 'co-producers' as consumers, who are actively involved in food production practices. Whereas 'co-sumers' influence the AFN passively through their purchase decisions. Those purchase decisions are guided by increased knowledge and increased awareness about food production. Also, Venn et al. (2006) refers to the nature and level of consumer involvement. The differentiation is based on the 'connectedness' of consumers to the process of food production. She sets out four categories to describe various relationships; 'producers as consumers', 'consumer-producer-partnerships', 'direct selling initiatives' and 'specialist retailers'. The first two categories represent a shift in the role of the consumer. Consumers get more actively involved and engaged in food production. Those two categories are in line with the 'co-producers' term Renting et al. (2012) introduced. In the last two categories, consumers remain in their consumer role as passive participants. This corresponds to the 'co-sumers' category of Renting et al. (2012). In the following, forms of consumer involvement are discussed that are present in AFNs in Oldenburg. First examples of active consumer involvement are presented followed by examples of different forms of passive consumer involvement.

The first AFN that show forms of active consumer involvement is the *Wurzelwerk*. It is a community garden, in which the members produce their own food. They are actively involved in food production by managing garden activities. This AFN can be placed into category of 'co-producers' of Renting et al. (2012) and in the 'producers as consumers' category of Venn et al. (2006). They learn how to garden from each other, but also harvest, process or cook some of the food, like preserving kale or harvesting honey. Furthermore, they learn other aspects that are linked to food production like composting skills and planning and organization skills. Next, to the active involvement in food production, members of the *Wurzelwerk* are actively involved in several other aspects. They discuss and negotiated about tasks in the garden. All decisions within the garden are made by members. During the plenum the responsibility lays on all present members to make decisions. However, if fundamental aspects needed to be

negotiated all opinions of members are collected before a decision will be made. For example, the organisation of a project or how to handle the wicker in the garden, are decisions that need full approval. For small or big projects, the members take over responsibilities and divide tasks in working groups. The *Wurzelwerk* build a clay oven and organised a bee workshop in working groups. Also weekly activities in the garden are prepared in small groups. They share their knowledge and resources. The bees belong to one member, who shares them with the rest. All food that is harvested in the garden is shared among the members. Members can donate money to the *Wurzelwerk*. The community aspect is important. They want that everyone can get along with each other. After one year of the *Wurzelwerk* they had a feedback session in which came forward that most people come to the *Wurzelwerk*, because the community is very pleasant. They do not only share their knowledge and resources with their own people, but also with other non-members. Organising projects, like the 'Ferienpass Aktion' or participating in the *nascent* study of the University of Oldenburg are examples of sharing knowledge with external people. Most projects are planned in advance, but still a lot of projects are executed by the 'learning by doing' principle. They noticed that their organisation of bigger projects needs improvement. More responsible members need to take care of the planning and implementation of the projects and need to do that during the entire period. In the past, it often occurred that one of the responsible persons had other priorities and dropped out. Other members needed to take over these tasks although they did not 'signed' up for it.

However, the *Wurzelwerk* engages also in passive consumer involvement. They contribute to increased awareness by providing information and also contribute to increased knowledge by giving workshops. They bring regularly people in the garden with projects. For example, they hold a bee workshop, a pruning workshop together with external people. But, also children groups visit the garden often. At moment of research, they were thinking about collaborating with a school on a regular basis to bring them closer to nature and to food production. By working in the garden, the children get educated in a subtle way. During the 30st anniversary of the *Schlossgarten* they distributed plants and seed bombs in the city of Oldenburg and had an information stand. Also members increase their knowledge about gardening through participation

in workshops. The *Stiftungsgemeinschaft Anstiftung und Ertomis* organized workshop about composting. Furthermore, they participate in the *nascent* study, which gives them the possibility to learn from other community or urban gardens and get new input.

For the *Food Co-Op* the active involvement is different, because this consumer cooperative organises the provision and distribution by themselves and in collaboration with another AFN *Ecocion*. To organise the food provisioning, they organise a monthly meeting to discuss and negotiate current issues. For example, they negotiate about organizing a storage location to be more independent. They discuss what the requirements for such a location would be and how to coordinate direct deliveries from regional farmers. Every member can participate and be a part of the food coop by having different tasks and different responsibilities. The involvement in the *Food Co-Op* is on a voluntary basis, however preferable. Participation is wanted in order to create a better perception for the organization of the food cooperative. So, they wish that every member take this responsibility to participate in meetings and to remember each other to actively participate. One reason for this is that decisions are made within the monthly meetings. In those meeting members have the possibility to talk about the tasks, coordination of bundle orders, communication issues and food. Also, it is possible that members introduce new producers during these meetings. If everyone agrees on a new producer, they order some samples to try the product and if possible visit the producer.

However, the range of active involvement can vary a lot even can go more into passive involvement. The use of a buddy-system allows members to involve more passively in the food cooperative and have more a consumption attitude. However, this attitude is not desired by the *Food Co-Op*. Nevertheless, they want to give members this freedom to participate as actively as it is possible and they don't want to follow strict rules on what to do. The food cooperative communicates through different channels; the 'FoodSoftware', an internal blog, mail and wikis. They want to increase the awareness and knowledge of members about regional producers and alternatives ways of food provisioning. Often they participate in markets, on which they have an information stand to communicate this to the other people. And to attract new members into the group. Furthermore, they organize 'Becoming a member'-meetings in which they inform new people about the concept and the idea behind a food cooperative. The

knowledge the *Food Co-Op* has about where to buy their food is created through discussions and individual exchange. Therefore, members of the food cooperative make purchase decisions through this increased knowledge and awareness.

Thus, the *Food Co-Op* members are involved actively and passively. And can be placed in two categories of Venn et al. (2006): 'direct selling initiatives' and 'specialist retailers'. As a 'direct selling initiative', the AFN eliminates the middlemen and farmers sell their produce directly to consumers. They "facilitate closer producer-consumer relations with the actual food producer, either through face to face or spatially extended supply chains (...)" (Venn et al., 2006, p.255). On the other hand, the *Food Co-Op* uses *Ecocion*, an organic shop, as their food source. Thus, *Ecocion* functions as an intermediary between consumer and producer. Also, they do not get regularly in contact with the farmers, which *Ecocion* collaborates with. So, the category depends on the *Food Co-Op* distribution channel.

The *Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort* works together with a group of consumers on the development of a CSA (*SoLaWi*). Hereby, consumers are highly involved in the organisation. This farm will undergo a generation change. At moment of research a preliminary contract for the take-over of the farm was set up and further negotiation will take place in following year. Approximately, the farm will be in the hands of the new generation halfway of 2017. The farmer explained what need to be taken into account with this take-over, as the farm has several different business parts (three legal forms). The farmer of the new generation is already in negotiation with the consumer group about different food production issues. They talked about possibilities of a vegetarian or vegan variation of the CSA. As the farm is run from a bio-dynamic perspective, animals can't be excluded from the farm, because they are part of the production cycle. Therefore, a vegetarian or vegan CSA variation is only viable if they also finance the livestock at the farm. The wish of consumer for such a concept is there, but needs more negotiation. No vegan vegetable will be available, as they are fertilised with animal manure. Furthermore, they discussed how to solve the transportation issue. For being a sustainable, it is not the best idea that each individual consumer rides with the car each week to the farm. The farm is situated in a rural area, which is not easy to reach. So, ideas of a depot, collective pick up or a subscription box approach were raised. The consumer group will finance the CSA concept, but intend to finance more. In meetings they discussed animal adoptions and ways to finance the land through cooperative or small guarantors. The farmer explained that mostly through the animal

adoptions a part of the land will also be financed, but if the consumer wishes to get more into, he would make a calculation. Also, consumers said that they want to pay more for their products in comparison with regular 'market' customers. They argued that the whole idea of the CSA concept is to re-appreciate the work of a farmer with fair prices. Another issues that was discussed is that consumers could sign in for the CSA to register they interest in this concept. The next step would be how to get them from being interested to a committed participation. They agreed on a farm visit and activities to get to know the farm. In the summer a big summer festival will take place, which would be an ideal moment for the consumers to get an impression. Other ideas were that consumers help with the harvest and plant tomato plants. This would create a connection; because this would be the plants consumer get their tomatoes from in the following year. Lastly, they discussed communication and media attention aspects. The group divided up tasks to create a website, make flyers and a newsletter. It can be seen that consumers are actively involved in the establishment of this CSA. They are talking about being financially involved and share responsibilities. Here, the category 'consumer-producer-partnerships' of Venn et al. (2006) fits. The consumer group discusses together with the farmer the process and implementation of this CSA on a regular basis.

However, the current activities that take place at the *Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort* have a passive consumer involvement character and are linked to the direct sells of this farm. Therefore, the current operation can be placed in the 'direct selling initiative' category of Venn et al. (2006). Throughout the interview, it appeared that the farm community is responsible for a lot of different activities to inform consumers and increase their awareness. Every Friday afternoon, the farm community is open for everyone who would like to get a perception of the farm and its activities. People can talk to the farmers and employees. Over the year, they organize activities on the farm. During the annual summer festival children can participate in a baking workshop, make ropes, making pottery or forging. For adults the farm organises tours through the cheese manufactory, the greenhouse, the bee-keeper give a tour and sometimes these tours are orientated towards a certain subject. Furthermore they give concerts for animals and humans at the farm or in stables and show movies about topics related to bio-dynamic or organic farming; for example the movie 'The Farmer and His Prince'. Schools classes or other groups can come to farm for workshops and seminars, like 'from grain to bread' or 'from cow to cheese' workshops. Not only on the farm,

consumers get informed, but also at the market. The *Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort* values it a lot that farmers and producers take the time to sell the products themselves at the market. This gives them the possibility to give consumers answers about certain questions, but also to receive feedback. Looking at the theory from Renting et al. (2012), it can be said that the *Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort* has currently 'co-sumers' as their consumers, but will have in the future also 'co-producers'.

Another different form of active consumer involvement can be seen at the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH*. They provide consumers with the possibility to contribute to the production of the apple juice. With the organisation of apple picking and pressing activities often children get actively involved. However, those activities are only done at a low scale. Also, this kind of active consumer involvement on a low scale through activities is also done by other AFNs. The *Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort* organises also several workshops for school children as well as other workshops throughout the year. The *Himpsl Hof* provides internship possibilities and also the *Wurzelwerk* organises workshops in the garden, which contribute to an increased knowledge by consumers. Yet, this form of active involvement is just limited to the occasional organisation of workshops or activities. Thus the active consumer involvement is not done regularly. Therefore, it contributes more to the increase of knowledge and awareness of consumers than to actual food production. Therefore, I would argue that is an active form of passive consumer involvement, which increases knowledge through personal experiences. Thus, the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* can be placed into the category of 'co-sumers'. Furthermore, they sell their juices under the name *OLMOST* in regional restaurants and shops. Consumers get informed about the story behind the product and also about the organization *NABU*. So, this AFN can be placed into the 'specialist retailers' category of Venn et al. (2006), but also in the 'direct selling initiatives', as they sell the juice also directly to consumers. Consumers get informed about the juice and process during workshops or other activities. School children learn about how apple juice is made and ecologic aspects of the extensive grassland-orchard systems. Also members of *NABU* participate in the production and learn about these aspects. Also, consumers can let their apples be juiced. Here, people get the possibility to get involved in the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* is by donating a part of their apples (juice). Thereby, they finance indirectly the maintenance of the extensive grassland-orchard systems of the *NABU*, which are the source of the apple juice of the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH*. All those aspects, increase

knowledge and awareness of consumers about food production. And thus consumers of the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* are 'co-sumers', although sometimes they have 'co-producer' characteristics.

It can be seen that although the three AFNs above are placed in the 'co-producers' category, they contribute also to increasing the knowledge and awareness of consumers. This can be seen in the fact that they organise activities and communicate on different levels with consumers.

The *Himpsl Hof* stimulates consumers to increase their knowledge and awareness about organic food production by conversations in the farm shop and at the market, but also through indirect communication in their online shop. According to Venn et al. (2006) the *Himpsl Hof* is a 'direct selling initiative', which allows a close consumer-producer relationship through either a proximate or a more extended supply chain. The consumers of the *Himpsl Hof* can have influence through their purchase decisions and their increased knowledge. For example, consumers can ask for certain vegetables that the farm grows. A female customer wanted to purchase tomatoes of a specific variety. So, the *Himpsl Hof* responded to this wish and bought a bunch of this plant species and grew it in their greenhouse. So, the consumers of *Himpsl Hof* can be called 'co-sumers' according to Renting et al. (2012). However, as mentioned above, a kind of active consumer involvement is also possible at the farm. High school students can follow an internship on the *Himpsl Hof*.

Consumers of *Ecocion* are passively involved and impact the farmer through conscious purchase decisions. *Ecocion* provides information about the food origin. They are used an own labelling system for their products. In the previous chapter, it is mentioned that *Ecocion* uses the 'Bio von hier' (organic from here), 'regional Niedersachsen' and 'Deutschland' labels. Providing consumers with this information makes them more aware about the regional character of food. So, *Ecocion* can be placed in the 'specialist retailers' category of Venn et al. (2006), as intermediaries "enable producers to sell to consumers more directly than through conventional supermarkets" (p.256). *Ecocion* cooperates with four regional producers, which delivery direct to them. Next, to this they send a weekly mail to all customers. In this mail they provide more detailed information about certain products, their availability or issues related to sustainable food consumption. For example, they inform about "Samenfeste Sorten" and why they are important. This information flow stimulates consumers to increase their knowledge and awareness. Furthermore, some active

involvement is also possible. *Ecocion* already gives consumers the choice to reduce waste by selecting the article 'Tüten brauch ich nicht' (I don't need plastic bags) in the online shop. *Ecocion* and its customers are concerned about plastic use and the environmental impact of it. Therefore, they asked *Ecocion* to reduce their plastic by introducing paper bags without the visible window. This new product line was included in their assortment. Next to this, *Ecocion* is open for new product suggestions. If the product is not yet in their assortment, they can include in their assortment under the conditions that it is available.

The *Studentenwerk* initiated the 'Alternativ Essen', which is developed out of a wish of students. A survey among students had shown the wish of a different approach to the canteen offers. This can be seen as an active involvement in the organization of the *Studentenwerk*. Students influenced the canteen offers by their wishes. Later on the *Studentenwerk* introduced the sustainability concept in the canteens. Nowadays, students can write feedback notes or comment via an app on the canteen offers. Furthermore, students are informed about the origin of the canteen food. Producers are presented at the website. This shows that they fit in the category of 'specialist retailers' of Venn et al. (2006). She states that 'specialist retailers' "pay close attention to food provenance and methods of production" (p.255). Once, producers could inform students themselves during the celebration of 30 years of the sustainable concept. Students had the chance to talk to them and get a better perception. Also, the *Studentenwerk* increases the awareness of students about food waste in the canteen through posters.

This shows that the *Studentenwerk* offers several information to students to turn them into 'co-sumers'. However, not all information are related to just food production, but also to sustainable issues like a vegan diet and food waste.

The main focus of the culinary event *Genuss im Nordwesten* is to provide consumers with several different information. Firstly, the contact with the stand holders on the event allows visitors to talk to the farmers of manufactures. By holding conversations with the producers, consumers can get to know e.g. why certain products are more expensive than others. This increases their knowledge and awareness. This AFN can be placed into the 'direct selling initiatives' category of Venn et al. (2006). They want to show what good food is according to *Slow Food*. Secondly, they hold podium discussions with experts and try to involve consumers in this discussion. Also, educating children and

teach them how to cook and show them different vegetables, is an important aspect of this event. As a third point, they give information to the visitors for the purpose of more intelligent purchase decisions. They communicate to the visitors that everyone should buy their food more regional. An example to do this is to choose your favourite food and buy this once a week directly from a farmer. They say it is the choice of each individual to either choose for industrial food or for regional food.

This shows how *Genuss im Nordwesten* contributes to better purchase decisions of consumers and becoming a 'co-sumer'.

Synthesis

Consumers can be involved in different ways in the operation of AFNs. The different practises are shown in Table 5.2, which are dynamic forms of active involvement. Some practices indicate a higher active involvement than others. Active involvement can take place through growing and harvesting food, like in the case of the *Wurzelwerk*. Also, the processing of food can be done by consumers like at the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH*. They help with the juicing of apples. Furthermore, consumers can be involved actively by organising the logistics and distribution of food, which is seen at the *Food Co-Op*. Another form of active involvement can be seen in the establishment of a CSA with the *Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort*. Here consumers are involved in negotiations about the development of the CSA. Additionally consumer can be financially involved in the operation of an AFN. For example by donating money, use animal adoptions and give a fair price to the farmer. Another form of active involvement can be seen through taking over responsibilities, like act as guarantors through the use of the buddy-system of the *Food Co-Op*. Or take over tasks in the operation of the AFN, like working groups at *Wurzelwerk*. The last form of active involvement is through the sharing of knowledge and resources. Most of the AFNs organise workshops and activities for other people in order to share their knowledge. *Ecocion* and *Wurzelwerk* are participating in the current *nascent* research project. However, Renting et al. (2012) defines 'co-production' only "as the influence of consumers on production activities (...)" (p.300) with "real negotiations and agreements on the production patterns and on their ethical standards" (p.301). In the examples given above, active involvement takes place, however cannot be directly linked to food production. Thus, those activities fall out of the scope of Renting et al. (2012) definition. This would result in that the activities that take place at for example the *Food Co-Op* would not be seen as active involvement.

Table 5.2: Consumer involvement practices

	Consumer involvement practices	Examples
<p style="text-align: center;">Active Consumer Involvement</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↑ High</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓ Low</p>	Food production	Growing and harvesting food Maintaining the garden Composting
	Processing	Cooking Processing apples into juice
	Organisation	Coordinate transportation/deliveries/bundle orders Organizing depots/collective pick up points/subscriptions Set up working groups Creating media attention (make flyers, websites, newsletters)
	Negotiation	Divide tasks among members Plan meetings, activities, feedback sessions Discuss current issues (need of storage unit, request for vegetarian/vegan CSA concept) Introduce new producers/farmers
	Responsibility	Organising and coordinate operation and activities of AFN Committed participation in CSA Act as guarantor (Buddy-system) Take the lead within working groups, take over tasks
	Sharing knowledge and resources	Share knowledge and resources within and outside the AFN Participation in research Organising workshops/activities
	Finances	Donate money/products (apple juice) Animal adoptions Financing the land through cooperative shares or small guarantors Provide fair prices to the farmer
	Personal experiences	Helping with planting, harvesting and processing (apple juice) Participating in activities/workshops (bee keeping, pruning, cooking) Providing education/children activities (from cow to cheese workshop) Participate in tours/seminars Participate in discussions (podium discussion)
	Personal contact	Visit the farm/talk with the farmer Visit events, markets, meetings, summer festivals, open days, information stands Learn from others through conversation (exchange with other urban gardens)
	Individual requests	Ask for a specific varieties (tomato variety) Suggest new products/packaging (paper bags without plastic windows) Communicate wishes/giving feedback (fill in surveys) Provide choices (to reduce (food) waste)
	Information	Read websites, letters, mails, labels, product packaging Use different communication channels (FoodSoftware, blog, wikis, mail) Watch documentaries/films

On the other hand, passive consumer involvement has also different forms. In all cases consumers are informed about production methods and issues related food production, which contribute to a greater awareness and lead to more informed purchase decisions. However, the ways how consumers are informed can differ. Firstly, information is provided through written material, like websites, letters and labels. *Studentenwerk*, *Ecocion* and *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* use this form of communicating information to the consumer. Information can also be provided to consumers via a personal contact. This face-to-face relationship, in which information is exchanged personally, can be seen at *Genuss im Nordwesten*, *Himpsl Hof* and *Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort*. Thus also knowledge and awareness are increased more directly. Furthermore, consumers can have influence through their purchase decisions. This influence can be expressed through individual requests or suggestions.

For example, a consumer of the *Himpsl Hof* asked if they can grow a specific tomato variety for her. They followed this wish. Another example is that the *Studentenwerk* received feedback from students through a survey, in which they expressed a wish for fresher, healthier and organic meals. This resulted over time in a sustainable concept. Lastly, consumers can participate in activities to increase their knowledge and awareness. Through participation consumers receive information more personally and thus more actively, because they experience it themselves. This can be seen as more active approach of increasing knowledge and awareness. This was for example seen at *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH*, *Himpsl Hof* and *Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort*. However, Renting et al. (2012) states that “co-sumers thus remain in the role of consumers who impact through purchase decisions without closer relationships (...)” (p.301). However, in the last examples, a close relationship with the producer does exist and consumers are in personal contact with the producer. The perception of consumers staying in their passive consumer attitude is thus not always true. When they participate in activities and get themselves informed to increase knowledge and awareness, they come out of this passive attitude.

Thus, the approach of looking on either active or passive consumer involvement to categorise AFNs is not enough. Those two forms are overlapping. First of all, there are so many different ways of how consumers can get involved. The definition of ‘co-sumption’ and ‘co-production’ by Renting et al. (2012) seems limited. Also Venn et al. (2006) states that her “first two categories do represent marked shifts in consumer

engagement with the process of food production” (p.255). However, active involvement does not only implicate involvement in actual food production but also in the entire organisation around food provisioning. And passive involvement can take place through e.g. active participation in workshops. Thus, the black and white categorisation does not represent the consumer involvement practices anymore. The examples above have shown that active involvement does not only mean that consumers involve in food production. Consumers can also be (actively) involved in the operation of the AFN through organising, negotiating, taking over responsibilities, share knowledge and resources and by being financially involved. An overlap of active and passive involvement can be seen e.g. in the organisation of workshops. Here an exchange of information takes place. This exchange can be mutual and all workshop participants are involved actively. However, the participation also contributes to increase knowledge and awareness, which was seen as a passive involvement. Yet, this is a dynamic exchange and requires both forms of involvement. On the one hand consumers share their knowledge and on the other hand consumers listen and collect new information. Another example of this overlay can be seen that consumers can shift in their attitude. This attitude is not static. They can be actively involved in one task, but stay passive in another. For example, consumers can coordinate orders and organise the transport of the product, but stay more in a passive attitude when it comes to get them informed. Thus are more likely to use written material than experience it themselves. Thus, passive consumer involvement is also different in the above given examples than in the definition by Renting et al. (2012). Consumers can also have a direct relationship with the producer in order to increase their knowledge and awareness to make better informed purchase decisions. If consumers visit an event or an open farm day they get informed directly and personal. Furthermore, consumers can influence the producer through their purchase decisions also in other ways, like communicating wishes.

There are so many different forms of consumer involvement. By looking at consumers practices of how they get involved a more nuanced approach is gained rather than categorising it in either active or passive. Of course, some of those practices indicate a shift in attitude, but it is not sufficient to generalise one practice to the entire AFN operation.

6. Discussion

This chapter firstly presents a reflection on the research and its methodology. Secondly, the gained insights are discussed in order to answer the sub-questions and main research question. As a third section a theoretical reflection is made.

6.1. Methodological Reflection

The conducted research and analysis were adapted over time and came out differently than planned. It was planned to have two interviews rounds, the first one supposed to focus on AFNs characteristics and the second on consumer involvement. However, it appeared that the planning of the first round of interviews went not as fast as hoped and some interviews were planned weeks ahead due to a busy schedule on the interviewee side. This led to the decision to keep it on one interview per AFN and include the subject of consumer involvement as time was a limiting factor. Furthermore, the time of the investigation was not suitable to conduct all observations. Some of the AFNs are mainly in operation in the summer time (growing season). The research was conducted from October to December. And *Genuss im Nordwesten* is only in operation every second year, therefore it was not possible to perform an observation. The purpose of the observation was to get insights about consumer involvement. Yet, consumer involvement happened only occasionally and unplanned at some of the AFNs. This was difficult to plan. Another point that needs to be addressed is that the data in the inventory contains some subjective interpretation as websites did not have all needed data available. Thus, the inventory cannot be guaranteed to be complete and in some parts accidentally be selective. Furthermore, it appeared during the analysis that practice theory is a useful approach for this research. If it was integrated in the beginning of the research it could have delivered more directed insights and possibly results. This approach is discussed later in this chapter.

6.2. Research Findings

Nevertheless, this research contributed to valuable insights. The analysis of the AFNs in Oldenburg showed that categorisation of AFNs is not that simple. The theory and its categorisation are based on different characteristics. Renting et al. (2003) uses the supply chain approach and categorises 3 types (face-to-face, proximate and extended

short food supply chains). Within this categorisation market forms and the dimension of 'proximity', 'type of interaction' and 'type of exchange' are relevant. Whereas Renting et al. (2012) focuses on consumer involvement by indicating either an active or passive nature, using the terms 'co-producers' and 'co-sumers'. Lastly, Venn et al. (2006) sets out the 4 types of relationships between consumer and producer, whereby also a clear distinction is made between active and passive nature of consumer involvement. However, in the analysis it appeared that categorising AFNs based on one or a few particular characteristic does not represent the complete AFN. Over the last years, AFNs got more diverse and more complex. The need to simplify their operation in order to categorise them, seems short-sighted. Those categorisations above cannot be used for some of the newer AFN types or gives only a partial indication of an AFN. It occurred that the needed characteristics to categorise AFNs were not always present in those newer forms. But, also traditional AFNs (direct selling AFNs) have evolved and cannot be easily categorised. First of all, market forms are based on the fact that there is a market transaction involved in the operation. However, some AFNs have more than one sales channel (*Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort*), don't operate within the traditional sales channels (*Food Co-Op*) or don't even sell their products (*Wurzelwerk*). Furthermore, the dimensions used by Renting et al. (2003) are relevant for AFNs with a strict separation between consumer and producer. AFNs without this twofold cannot be categorised with the use of this dimensions. This issues around the consumer-producer dichotomy is also been discussed by different scholars. Already in 1980 Alvin Toffler (as cited in Renting et al., 2012, p.302) introduced the concept of 'pro-sumption'. He stated that the separation between consumers and producers becomes more and more fuzzy. Also more recently, other scholars argue to overcome the binary thinking of 'consumers' and 'producers' (Tregear, 2011). Therefore the concept of 'civic food network' (CFN) was introduced (Renting et al., 2012), whereby it is indicated that "the rich variety of forms of citizens engagement in food provisioning within CFNs make clear that the traditional distinction between 'producer' and 'consumers' is becoming increasingly obsolete (...)" (p.301). Following this, attention turns to another concept 'food citizenship'. It seems that those two, the overcoming of the consumer-producer dichotomy and the concept of 'food citizenship', are connected. Baker (2004) argues that commitment to 'food citizenship' can support the food systems, especially sustainable local production and local communities. However, 'food citizenship' is also expressed

modestly in traditional AFNs, whereby the separation of 'consumers' and 'producers' is present, like farmers' markets or community supported agriculture (Lockie, 2009, p.194). One of the issues linked to 'food citizenship' is the gaining of a voice. Suffrage is also present in the different AFNs in Oldenburg. The *Food Co-Op*, *Wurzelwerk* and the *SoLaWi* group (*Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort*) show differently that negotiations take place whereby every participant can express their thoughts. However, this is also shown in the influence consumers can have on the operation of an AFN. For example, the introduction of special paper packaging material at *Ecocion* or the initiation of the alternative meal concept expressed by student wishes at *Studentenwerk*, show that consumers have a voice. Listening to consumers and act upon those wishes or concerns, show that consumers have suffrage within an AFN. Lyson (2005) stated that "[c]ivic agriculture has the potential to transform passive consumers into active food citizen. A food citizen is someone who has not only a stake but also a voice (...)" (p.97). Together with the concept of civic food networks, Renting et al. (2012) set out a categorisation for consumer involvement by referring to co-production (co-producers) and co-sumption (co-sumers), which are new expressions of food citizenship. However, the analysis of AFNs and its consumer involvement has shown that using the terms 'active' and 'passive' as two opposites neglect the diversity of forms of consumer involvement. There are many different forms of consumer involvement and to categorise consumer involvement within an AFN as either 'active' or 'passive' seems as a little rushed. As a remark, active consumer involvement does not only implicate consumers involve in actual food production but also in the other parts of food provisioning. Anderson, McDonald, Gardiner, & McLachlan (2014) also stated that "citizen participants in CFNs cooperate and control most, if not all, of the steps from farmer to consumer" (p.80). On the other side, passive involvement can take place through active participation. Several examples of this variety in consumer involvement are described in the previous chapter. In line with this, consumer involvement was also seen in more traditional AFNs forms. This is contrary to the argumentation of some scholars, who state that CFNs provide space for participation and thus food citizenship in contrast to traditional AFNs (Anderson et al., 2014; Renting et al., 2012). So, this research showed that within an AFN many different practices are present that express consumer involvement. It is possible that consumers can get involved actively and passively within an AFN. However, further analysis is needed to strengthen and complement this.

6.3. Theoretical Reflection

To understand the differences of how consumers can get involved the application of 'practice theory' is useful. By looking at different consumer practices rather than categorising them into either 'active' or 'passive', a more nuanced insight is gained. Of course, some of those practices indicate a shift in attitude, but it is not sufficient to generalise one practice to the entire AFN operation. McIntyre & Rondeau (2011) state that "[f]ood provisioning is a construct that extends food choices research by examining the sociocultural and environmental context in which food consumption actually occurs (...). It includes a breadth of complex activities, including the acquisition, preparation, production, consumption and disposal of food, where technical skills (e.g. growing, shopping, meal planning, food preparation, cooking) and resources are tacitly coordinated (...)" (p.117-118). This approach was also supported by Veen (2015), who notes that "the concept of food provisioning practices enables us to overcome the producer-consumer dichotomy, as it does not confine people to either one of these categories but treats them holistically as people undertaking activities" (p.70). Following this, it appears that many scholars use 'practice theory'. 'Food citizenship' is the practice of behaving upon food-related issues, which strengthen the development of a sustainable food system (Wilkins, 2005). Whereas Lockie (2009) sees "food consumption practices as expressions of citizenship, (...) activities that speak not only of individual tastes and preferences, but as (...) [those] that speak also of collective moral rights and responsibilities" (p.194). Also Warde (2005) looks through the lens of theory of practices and state that they "(...) are conditional upon the institutional arrangements characteristic of time, space and social context" (p.139). In this context, it is clear that over the past time an evolvement of consumer involvement has taken place. This development in practices can be also seen in the fact that newer AFNs are initiated that fall out of the scope of traditional economies. Gibson-Graham (2008) introduced the concept of 'diverse economies'. As above mentioned, a categorisation is always based on some particular characteristics as those give direction to certain field of interest. Also, through the lens of 'diverse economies' AFNs or their practices can be categorised. Diverse economies are seen as economies that go beyond the market economies (alternative market, non-markets, alternative paid labour, unpaid labour, alternative capitalist enterprises and non-capitalist enterprises) (Gibson-Graham, 2008, p.4). Most of the AFN researches often only focus on the formal market

and neglect the informal market. In this light, several practices that are described in the previous chapter can be seen as forms of diverse economies. For instance, the *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* cannot be categorised according to the theory used for this thesis. However, when using the diverse economy approach, this AFN can be seen as a non-capitalist enterprise, which is self-employed however unpaid labour. The *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH* does not gain for profit and is done as a hobby. They use an alternative market, a semi-natural extensive grassland-orchard systems, as a supply for their apple juice. Another example is the *Wurzelwerk*, which operates fully in the unpaid labour, non-market and non-capitalistic area. The gardening is done on a voluntary basis, is run from a community perspective and food is exchange with members of the garden. Those could be identified as 'third generation' AFNs. Other examples of a high level of voluntary labour, alternative market transaction and alternative capitalist enterprises are the *Food Co-Op* and *Genuss im Nordwesten*. Thus, categorising AFNs whereby all the different characteristics are included is difficult, if not even impossible. When categorising AFNs and their practices it should be made explicit which characteristics are used and what the purpose of such a categorisation is. Additionally, it should be noted that always some AFNs are excluded from the categorisation as they do not fulfil the chosen categorisation criteria. Nonetheless, it can be an attempt to include as many AFNs as possible within a categorisation in order to describe and distinguish the diversity. For example, categorising AFNs according to their food provisioning channel rather than their marketing channels or their consumer involvement practices rather than by its nature could be alternatives. A marketing channel implies a monetary transition, which is not always given. In this way a community or urban garden can be included as well as a manufacturer. Moreover, consumer involvement should be described by its practices rather than by its nature ('active' or 'passive'). Such a categorisation could look like: consumer involvement through food production, through processing, through organisation, through negotiation, through finances, through responsibility, through sharing knowledge and resources, through personal experiences, through individual requests, through personal contact or through information. Within those categories different practices can exist (Examples are shown in Table 5.2). In this way, different practices of how consumers get involved can be included in the categorisation. Some of them indicate a more active approach than others. It could be also an interesting attempt to investigate producer involvement practices within AFNs. Analysing consumer involvement gave examples of how consumers overcome their 'consumption' attitude. But, how do

producers involve in the AFN operation and thereby overcome their 'production' or 'supplier' attitude? This could result in a new perspective to overcome the consumer-producer dichotomy, as it might give new examples 'citizen engagement', as both sides can be accounted as 'citizens'. As Welsh & MacRae (1998) already stated that there is the need to conceptualise food as more than a commodity and people as more than just consumers (p.240). This calls for a different view on the producer's side. The perspective of farmers within newer AFN or CFN has not gained as much attention as the consumer side (Anderson et al., 2014; Jaklin, Kummer, & Milestad, 2015).

A last point to address is that AFNs with their food choices and food provisioning practices can stimulate development. The analysis of AFNs in Oldenburg also shed light on the existence of network of networks; a collaboration between individual AFNs and cooperation with different local actors. It gave the impression that AFNs act within an internal network (AFN operation) and an external network to cooperate and stimulate development. Norberg-Hodge et al. (as cited in Seyfang, 2006, p.386) noted that "[t]he 'new economies' favours 'socially embedded' economies of place. This means developing connections between consumers and growers, boosting ethical capital and social capital around food supply chains, educating consumers about the source of their food and the impact of different production methods, creating feedback mechanisms which are absent when food comes from distant origins, and strengthening local economies and markets against disruptive external forces of globalisation". Also, (active) consumer involvement "(re-)construct[e] alternative systems of food provisioning" and thus "(re-)building linkages between civil society and markets", but also civic engagement is "shaping public opinion, culture, institutions and policies by communication, lobbying and political activism", which "[create] new connections between civil society and (local) public institutions" (Renting et al., 2012, p.300). Furthermore, a lot of activities described in chapter 4 and 5 are linked to education or other lifestyle programmes. Some of them provide workshops for schoolchildren (*Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort*, *Wurzelwerk*, *Oldenburger Manufaktur GmbH and Genuss im Nordwesten*), whereas others take in interns (*Himpsl Hof*) or initiate healthy, organic school lunches (*Ecocion*). These are some examples that show that the network around AFNs increases and moves beyond food provisioning itself. Aspects as education, environment, health and social interaction are more included within network of networks and are addressed by local grassroots movements. Those active players simulate a bottom-up growth of this network. In Oldenburg those are civil society movement or NGO's are *Slow Food*, *KOSTBAR*, *SoLaWi group*,

Werkstatt Zukunft, *Oldenburger Zukunftstage* and *NABU*, but also research and education groups like the University of Oldenburg and *RUZ*. Other supportive groups are religious groups like the evangelic church Oldenburg and *Ökumenisches Zentrum* as well as offices that work for public administration or regional development as the *Metropolregion Nordwest*, *BioFair Projektentwicklung* and *ProZept e.V.* It could deliver interesting insights to analyse this network of networks of cooperation. To investigate which civil society organisations are involved in this network and examine ways of cooperation. Hereby, the structures, processes and practices could show how the network around AFNs contributes to development. Also, “CFN in many cases develop and build upon linkages with other new social movements and conceptual innovations related to different societal and economic spheres, such as de-growth, transition town movements, solidarity economy districts, place-based development, ecofeminism, etc. In this regard, the development of new thinking and alternative practices around food often seems to represent an accessible area of experimentation, with the capacity to foster development of new discourses and forms of citizenship” (Renting et al., 2012, p.293). Seyfang (2006) saw that “[ecological citizenship] motivates private consumption choices, but at the same time speaks to a need for collective action to build new social infrastructures” (p.394). Hassanein (as cited in Booth & Coveney, 2015) gave a different angle on this matter by stating that active participation can be seen as ‘food citizenship’ practices that stimulate the improvement of the food system (p.18).

Altogether, this is a shift from seeing food networks not anymore as alternative but as a sign towards sustainable transition (Hinrichs, 2014) and as transformative (Antoni-Komar, Lautermann, & Pfriem, 2012). Currently, this is subject of a current research project in Oldenburg, called *nascent* (Nascent, 2016). The network of networks represent that there is a much more happening around AFNs.

7. Conclusions

The analysis of AFNs in Oldenburg showed that categorisation of AFNs is not simple and straight forward. Different characteristics are used for different categorisations. It appeared that categorising AFNs based on one or a few particular characteristic only captures AFNs partially. Over the last years, the variety of consumer-producer relationships within AFNs got more complex as well as their operation. AFNs not only got more divers in the forms of consumer involvement practices but also in their (non-) market orientation. The need to simplify their operation in order to categorise them, seems like a hasty conclusion.

The underlying dimensions 'proximity', 'type of interaction' and 'type of exchange' used by Renting et al. (2003) are relevant for more traditional AFNs with a strict separation between consumer and producer. AFNs without this twofold cannot be categorised using of those dimensions. Also the greater diversity within AFNs made the use of those dimensions and thereby the categorisation into 'face-to-face SFSCs' and 'proximate SFSCs' less accurate.

Categorising consumer involvement with the terms 'active' and 'passive' as two opposites, neglect the diversity of consumer involvement forms. Active consumer involvement does not only implicate consumers involve in actual food production but also in the other parts of food provisioning. On the other side, passive involvement can also take place actively through e.g. participation. By looking at different consumer practices rather than categorising them into either 'active' or 'passive', a more nuanced insight is gained. Of course, some of those practices indicate a shift in attitude, but it is not sufficient to generalise one practice to the entire AFN operation.

As AFNs evolve, the forms of consumer involvement got more diverse, also the variety of consumer-producer relationships got more complex, even to the extent that there is no such distinction anymore. In those cases, the categorisations based on the consumer-producer dichotomy cannot be applied to the newer AFNs. However, also the more traditional AFNs with a separation between consumer and producer evolve and cannot be easily categorised. Thus, categorising AFNs whereby all the different characteristics and the diversity within AFNs are included is difficult, if not even impossible. When categorising AFNs and their practices it should be made

explicit on which characteristics it is based and to what purpose the categorisation is made. Additionally, it should be noted that always some AFNs are excluded from the categorisation as they do not fulfil the chosen categorisation criteria. Nonetheless, it can be an attempt to include as many AFNs as possible within a categorisation in order to describe and distinguish the diversity. For example, categorising AFNs according to their food provisioning channel rather than their marketing channels, or by their consumer involvement practices rather than their nature, can be seen as an alternative approach.

Lastly, AFNs do not stand on their own anymore. The increase of the network of networks show a shift from seeing food networks not anymore as alternative but as a sign towards sustainable transition and as transformative. The increased number and forms of relationships and collaborations indicate that AFNs are part of a greater network than just the network of an individual AFN. Within this greater network NGO's, civic movements, religious groups, public administration offices and research and education facilities are included. AFNs are not limited to food provisioning anymore. Lifestyle programmes and other related issues as sustainability, health, community-building and environment protection are more and more part of the AFN operation. Hereby, food is a tool to provide information to gain a greater goal such as sustainable development.

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Appendices

A. Complete Inventory

	AFN name	Renting et al. (2003)	Post-code	Location	Market form	Moment of connection	Communi-cation	Formality	Distribution chain	Consumer invol- vement	Weblink
1	Die Kräuterei	Face-to-face	26121	Oldenburg - Alexanderstraße	Farm shop	In the shop	Direct in shop	None	Direct, partly own production	Passive, consumer buy products	www.kraeuterei.de
				Oldenburg -Rathausmarkt (Friday)	Weekly market	At the market	Direct at market stall	None			
					Online shop	Delivery	Indirect via webpage	Account			
2	SuperBio-Markt	Proximate	26121	Oldenburg - Alexanderstraße	Organic shop	In the shop	Indirect via webpage and facebook	None	Indirect and direct ?	Passive, consumer buy products	www.superbio-markt.com
3	Reformhaus Bühring	Extended	26121	Oldenburg -Heiligegeiststraße	Health store	In the shop		None	Indirect	Passive, consumer buy products	www.reformhaus-buehring.de
4	Käthe`s Spezialität-tenkaffeebar	Proximate	26121	Oldenburg - Lindenhofsgarten	Food truck - catering for events	At the food truck/event	Indirect	None	?	Passive, consumer buy products	www.tante-kaethes.com
5	Samenkorn	Proximate	26121	Oldenburg - Katharinenstraße	Organic shop	In the shop	Direct in shop	None	?	Passive, consumers buy products	no website
6	Bunker-garten	No category	26121	Oldenburg - Leo-Trepp Straße (PFL)	Urban garden	In garden every Thursday	In garden	None	Direct	Active	http://bunkergarten-oldenburg.blogspot.nl/
7	Wochenmarkt Pferdemarkt	Face-to-face	26121	Oldenburg - Pferdemarkt (Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday)	Weekly market	At the market	Direct at market stall/ indirect via website and newsletter	None	Directly from different producers, Wochenmärkte in Oldenburg „Verein Oldenburger Marktkaufleute e.V.“	Passive, consumers buy products	http://www.oldenburger-wochenmaerkte.de/pferdemarkt/

8	C.U.P.	Proximate	26121	Oldenburg - Lambertistraße	Catering	At location	?	?	?	Passive?	http://www.cup-oldenburg.de/de/startseite.html
9	Tafelfreuden	Proximate	26121	Oldenburg - Alexanderstraße	Local restaurant and hotel	In restaurant	Indirect?	None	Direct from regional, organic producers	Passive	http://felfreuden.de/index.php?id=11
10	Kleingärtner-Verein Oldenburg e.V.	No category	26121	Oldenburg - Nadorst	Allotment gardens	In the garden	Direct	Membership	Own products from allotment gardens	Active	http://www.kleingarten-oldenburg.de/html_seiten/S02_garten.htm
11	Bauernmarkt	Face-to-face	26122	Oldenburg - Rathausmarkt (Friday)	Weekly market	At the market	Direct at market stall/ indirect via webpage	None	Direct from regional producers	Passive, consumer buy products	http://www.bauernmarkt-in-oldenburg.net/
12	Öko-Wochenmarkt	Face-to-face	26122	Oldenburg - Julius-Mosen-Platz (Wednesday)	Weekly market	At the market	Direct at market stall/ indirect via webpage	None	Direct from regional producers	Passive, consumer buy products	http://www.oldenburg.de/microsites/wochenmaerkte/private-wochenmaerkte.html
13	Veggiemaid	Proximate	26122	Oldenburg - Gartenstraße	Vegan shop	In the shop	Direct in shop/ Indirect via website, facebook, twitter, blog	None	? Organic products, bakery Knuf	Passive, consumer buy products, meetings at events and „stammtisch“	http://www.veggiemaid.de/
14	Contigo	Extended	26122	Oldenburg - Staustraße	Fair trade shop	In the shop	Indirect in the shop	None	Indirect ?	Passive, consumer buy products	www.contigo.de
15	Weltladen	Extended	26122	Oldenburg - Kleine Kirchenstraße	Fair trade shop	In the shop	Indirect in the shop	None	Indirect ?	Passive, consumer buy products	http://weltladen-oldenburg.de/?page_id=15
16	Ols - Oldenburger Brauerei GmbH	No category	26122	Oldenburg - Stau	Local restaurant	In restaurant	Direct at restaurant	None	Own beer production, and direct from regional producers, in-regional supermarket	Active, through investments (Genussgutscheine)/ passive, consumer buy products	www.ols-brauerei.de

					Manufactory with own brand	?	Direct				
17	FoodSharing Oldenburg	No category	26122	Oldenburg - Bahnhofsweg (Kulturetage)	Food sharing	Different locations	Indirect via webpage	Member/account	Consumer pick up the food	Active, consumers share their food or producers their 'left-overs'	https://foods-sharing.de/
18	Walkenhorst Reformhaus	Extended	26122	Oldenburg - Hauptstraße	Health store	In the shop	Direct in shop	?	?	Passive, consumers buy products	no website
19	Wochenmarkt Rathausmarkt	Face-to-face	26122	Oldenburg - Rathausmarkt (Thuesday, Thursday, Saturday)	Weekly market	At the market	Direct at market stall/ indirect via website and newsletter	None	Directly from different producers, Wochenmärkte in Oldenburg „Verein Oldenburger Marktkaufleute e.V.“	Passive, consumers buy products	http://www.oldenburger-wochenmaerkte.de/rathausmarkt/
20	Schnippeldisko	Proximate	26122	Oldenburg - Bahnhofsweg (Kulturetage)	Special event	At the event	Direct at the events	None	Direct from regional producers	Active	no website
21	Hallo Grünkohl	Proximate	26122	Oldenburg - Rathausplatz	Special event	At the event	At the stands	None	Direct and indirect from regional producers	Passive	no website
22	Naturkost Olga	Proximate	26123	Oldenburg - Donnerschweer Straße	Local shop	In the shop	Direct in shop	Members	Direct from regional producers	Passive, consumer buy products	no website
								Non-members			
23	Seidenspinner im Lindenhofgarten	Proximate	26123	Oldenburg - Nadorster Straße	Local restaurant (organic)	In restaurant	Indirect	None	Regional and organic through ?	Passive, consumer buy products	http://www.restaurant-seidenspinner.de/
					Catering	At location		?			
24	Senfonie - Oldenburger Senfmühle	Face-to-face	26123	Oldenburg - Donnerschweer	Weekly market	At market stall	Direct	None	Own processing	Passive, consumer buy products	http://www.senfonie.eu/epages/61767503.sf/de_DE/?-ObjectPath=/Shops/61767503/Categories

					Local shop	In the shop	Direct	None			
					Online shop	Delivery	Indirect	Account			
25	Der Nudel-laden	Face-to-face	26123	Oldenburg - Ammergaustraße	Local shop	In the shop	Indirectly via facebook	None	?	Passive	no website
					Weekly markets	At market stall					
26	Denn's Biomarkt	Proximate	26123	Oldenburg - Nadorster Straße	Organic shop	In the shop	?	?	?	Passive	http://www.denns-biomarkt.de/
27	VHS Regionalmesse - Aufgetischt!	Proximate	26123	Oldenburg - Karlstraße	Special event	At the event	Direct at the event	None	Direct from regional producers	Passive	no website
28	Dries-Hof	Face-to-face & Proximate	26125	Oldenburg - Waterenderweg	Catering to hospitals, kindergarten, schools, cafes and icecream-cafes	Delivery	Indirect via webpage and via delivery	Subscription	Direct from own farm (factory)	Passive, consumer buy products	http://www.diershof.de/
					Delivery service	Delivery	Indirect via webpage and via delivery	Subscription			
29	Interkulturelle Garten Ohmstede	No category	26125	Oldenburg - Ohmstede	Community garden	In the garden	Directly	?	?	Active, food production, gardening	http://www.oldenburg.de/startseite/buergerservice/soziales/integration/projekte/interkulturelle-gaerten.html
30	Schumacher Frischgemüse	Face-to-face	26125	Oldenburg - Westeresch	Online shop	Delivery	Indirect	Account	Direct from own production	Passive	https://www.frischgemuese.de/
					Box service	Delivery	Indirect	Subscription			
					Farm shop	In shop	Direct in shop	None			
					Weekly markets	At market stall	Direct at market stall	None			

31	Kösterhof	Face-to-face	26127	Oldenburg -Vahlenhorst	Farm shop	In the shop	Direct in shop	None	Direct sales	Passive, consumer buy products	http://www.koesterhof.de/Der_Hof/der_hof.html
32	Blätterteich	Proximate	26127	Oldenburg - Alexanderstraße	Local café	In the café	Indirect	None	Direct from local producers/wholesaler	Passive, consumer buy products	www.blaetterteich.de
33	Interkulturelle Garten Dietrichsfeld	No category	26127	Oldenburg -Dietrichsfeld	Community garden	In the garden	Directly	?	?	Active, food production, gardening	http://www.oldenburg.de/startseite/buergerservice/soziales/integration/projekte/interkulturelle-gaerten.html
34	Hof Oserloh	Face-to-face	26127	Oldenburg - Scheideweg	Farm shop	In the shop	?	None	Own production and additional products from wholesaler	Passive	http://www.gemuesehof-osterloh.de/seite%202.html
					Weekly markets	At market stall					
					Box service (own pick up)	At pick up point (farm shop or market)		Account			
35	Kleingärtner-Verein Bürgerfelde e.V.	No category	26127	Oldenburg - An de Bullwisch, Grünteweg, Im Dreieck	Allotment gardens	In the garden	Direct, expert available for advises	Membership	Own products from allotment gardens	Active	http://www.kleingaertnerverein-buergerfelde.de/index.php?id=3
					Project school garden	In the garden	Direct	?		Active, school children	
36	Studentenwerk Oldenburg „Nachhaltigkeitskonzept“	Proximate	26129	Oldenburg - Uhlhornsweg, Ofener Straße, Wechloy (& Wilhelmshaven, Elsfleth, Emden)	Catering at university	In the canteen	Indirect at point of sale and via website	For students only ?	Direct from regional producers	Initiation is active, because of students wishes, now passive through buying meals	https://www.studentenwerk-oldenburg.de/de/gastronomie/oekologie-im-studentenwerk/30-jahre-alternativ-essen.html

37	Hof Hopkes	Face-to-face	26129	Oldenburg - Bloherfelder Straße	Farm shop	In the shop	Direct in shop/ indirect via posters and webpage	None	Direct from own farm (slaughter)	Passive, consumer buy products	www.hof-hopkes.de
38	OLMOST - Oldenburger Manufaktur	No category	26129	Oldenburg - Bloherfelder Straße	Manufactory with own brand	In local restaurants	Indirect via local restaurants	?	Direct from own orchard (factory)	Passive, consumer buy products	www.ol-manufaktur.de
						Delivery	Direct via delivery	?			
39	Wurzelwerk - Offener Gemeinschaftsgarten Oldenburg	No category	26129	Oldenburg - Haarentor	Community garden	In the garden	Direct	Volunteer & member	Own production	Active, involvement in food production	http://www.wurzelwerk-ol.de/
40	Food Co-OL	Proximate	26129	Oldenburg - Uhlhornsweg (university)	Consumer cooperative	Through groups that pick up orders at Ecocion	Direct - monthly meetings (every 10th)	Member	Cooperation with ecocion	Passive & active ?	http://www.foodcool.circinus.uberspace.de/wordpress/
41	FoodSharing Oldenburg	No category	26129	Oldenburg - Uhlhornsweg (AStA)	Food sharing	Different locations	Indirect via webpage	Member/account	Consumer pick up the food	Active, consumers share their food or producers their 'left-overs'	https://foodsharing.de/
42	Supper Club	No category	26129	Oldenburg - Uhlhornsweg (university)	Cooking club	?	Via community forum of university	Registration	?	Active and passive	https://elearning.uni-oldenburg.de/dispatch.php/course/details/index/35a497ed-ef98ff993f9aaf-3d06ed1872?set_language=en_GB
43	Denn's Biomarkt	Proximate	26129	Oldenburg - Uhlhornsweg	Organic shop	In the shop	Direct in shop	?	?	Passive, consumers buy products	http://www.denns-biomarkt.de/

44	Interkulturelle Garten Bloherfelde	No category	26129	Oldenburg - Kennedystraße	Community garden	In the garden	Directly	?	?	Active, food production, gardening	http://www.oldenburg.de/startseite/buergerservice/soziales/integration/projekte/interkulturelle-gaerten.html
45	Wochenmarkt Bloherfelde	Face-to-face	26129	Oldenburg - Bloherfelder Straße (Wednesday, Friday)	Weekly market	At the market	Direct at market stall/ indirect via website and newsletter	None	Directly from different producers, Wochenmärkte in Oldenburg „Verein Oldenburger Marktkaufleute e.V.“	Passive, consumers buy products	http://www.oldenburger-wochenmaerkte.de/markt-bloherfelde/
46	Stadt-bäckerei Schröder	Proximate	26129	Oldeburg - Ammerländer Heerstraße	Local bakery	In the shop	?	None	?	Passive	http://www.stadtbaeckerei-schroeder.de/
47	Naturgarten Marschweg	No category	26131	Oldenburg - Marschweg	Urban garden	In the garden	Direct	Project of NABU	Natural pond, berry shrubs, herb garden and fruits trees	Active, youth and children groups	http://www.nabu-oldenburg.de/projekte/obstwiesen.php
48	Gartenfreunde Evers-ten-Bloherfelde e.V.	No category	26131	Oldenburg - Marschweg	Allotment gardens + culinary evenings	In garden and during monthly meetings in the club room	Direct	Membership	Own products from allotment gardens	Active	http://www.kgv-oldenburg.de/
				Oldenburg - Ziegelstraße							
				Oldenburg - Kennedystraße							
49	Eversten Market Management e.V.	Face-to-face	26131	Oldenburg - Blücherstraße	Weekly market	At the market	Directly at market stall	None	Direct from regional producers	Passive	http://www.wochenmarkt-eversten.de/
50	Interkulturelle Garten Kreyenbrück	No category	26133	Oldenburg - Anden Voßbergen	Community garden	In the garden	Directly	?	?	Active, food production, gardening	http://www.oldenburg.de/startseite/buergerservice/soziales/integration/projekte/interkulturelle-gaerten.html

51	Wochenmarkt Kreyenbück	Face-to-face	26133	Oldenburg - Klimgenbergstraße (Wednesday, Friday)	Weekly market	At the market	Direct at market stall/ indirect via website and newsletter	None	Directly from different producers, Wochenmärkte in Oldenburg „Verein Oldenburger Marktkaufleute e.V.“	Passive, consumers buy products	http://www.oldenburger-wochenmaerkte.de/markt-kreyenbrueck/
52	Genuss im Nordwesten e.V.	Proximate	26135	Oldenburg - Emil-Pleitner-Gang	Special event	At the events	Directly	Origin from Slow Food Bremen, Oldenburg, Osnabrück und Ostfriesland	Regional producers and Slow Food members ?	Passive	http://www.genuss-im-nordwesten.de/index.php
53	Bio-Brotbox Oldenburg	Proximate	26135	Oldenburg - Sandweg	Catering to schools	Delivery	Indirect	?	Indirect from ecocion, Kornkarft & Brot & So	Active through organisation during the distribution and through donations	http://bio-brotbox-oldenburg.de/
54	Brot & So	Proximate	26135	Oldenburg - Dragonerstraße	Local shop	In the shop	Direct	None	From regional producers?	Passive	http://brot-und-so.mehlhof.de/
55	Hofladen Paradies	Face-to-Face	26135	Oldenburg - Borchersweg	Farm shop	In the shop	Direct	None	Own production incl. Christmas trees	Passive	http://gparadies.wix.com/hofladen-paradies
56	Ecocion	Proximate	26135		Box service	Delivery with individual selected times	Indirect via webpage and in the box	Subscription	Direct from regional producer „Sozialer Ökohof St. Josef Papenburg“, „Biolandbetrieb Karl-Heinz Hanken“, „Biolandbetrieb Obstgarten zur Alten Schule“, „Bio-Bäckerei Barkemeyer“, organic wholesaler „Kornkraft“, wholesaler „Naturkost Elkershausen“	Passive, consumer buy products	http://www.ecocion.de/

				Oldenburg - Hundsmühler Straße	Organic shop	In the shop	Direct in shop/ indirect via posters and webpage	Subscription and without			
				Oldenburg -Bloherfelder Wochenmarkt	Weekly market	At the market	Direct at market stall/ indirect via webpage	None			
					Catering for kindergarten and businesses	Delivery with individual selected times	Indirect via webpage and in the box	Subscription			
57	Veggiemaid	Proximate	26135	Oldenburg - Damm	Vegan snackbar	In local restaurant	Direct in shop/ Indirect via website, facebook, twitter, blog	None	? Organic products, bakery Knuf	Passive, consumer buy products, meetings at events and „stammtisch“	http://www.veggiemaid.de/
58	Hof Reuter	Face-to-face	26135	Oldenburg - Holler Landstraße	Farm shop	In the shop	Direct in the shop	Subscription	Direct from own farm	Passive, consumer buy products	http://www.hof-reuter.de/
59	Iss Fisch Fischfachgeschäft	Proximate	26135	Oldenburg - Bremer Heerstraße	Local shop	In the shop	Direct in the shop/ indirect via facebook	None	Direct from local small fishers	Passive, consumer buy products	no website
60	Oldenburg im Wandel	No category	26135	Oldenburg - Breslauer Straße	Transition Town movement	Every three weeks	Indirect via email/ direct at meetings and events	?	?	Active	http://www.oldenburg-im-wandel.de/
61	Interkulturelle Garten Blankenburg	No category	26135	Oldenburg - Blankenburger See (Zentralen Ausländer- und Aufnahmebehörde)	Community garden	In the garden	Directly	?	?	Active, food production, gardening	http://www.oldenburg.de/startseite/buergerservice/soziales/integration/projekte/interkulturelle-gaerten.html

62	Alhambra VoKü	No category	26136	Oldenburg - Hermannstraße	Food sharing	In community centre, every Thursday at 20.00	?	None?	?	Passive?	http://www.alhambra.de/
63	Kösterhof	Face-to-face	26160	Bad Zwischenahn - Ofen	Farm shop	In the shop	Direct in shop	None	Direct sales	Passive, consumer buy products	http://www.koesterhof.de/Der_Hof/der_hof.html
	Kösterhof	Face-to-face	26160	Bad Zwischenahn - Wehnen	Road Sales & Pick your own	At the road stall	Direct at the field	None	Direct from field	Active, picks own food	http://www.koesterhof.de/Der_Hof/der_hof.html
64	Hof Ahlers	Face-to-face	20160	Bad Zwischenahn -	Farm shop	At the farm	Direct	None	?	Passive	http://www.ahlershofladen.de/
65	Ton scharpen eck	Proximate	26160	Bad Zwischenahn - Neuenkruger Damm	Local restaurant	In restaurant	?	None	Products from own field and direct from regional producers	Passive, consumer buys meals	www.ton-scharpen-eck.de
66	Fritz Krüger	Proximate	26160	Bad Zwischenahn - Industriestraße	Online shop	Delivery	?	Account	?	Passive	http://www.fritzkrueger.de/index.php/home.html
					Local shop	In the shop	Direct in the shop	None	?		
67	Fischerei Rabben	Proximate	26160	Bad Zwischenahn - Dreiberger Straße	Local shop	In the shop	Direct in the shop	None	?	Passive	http://www.fischerei-rabben.de/
68	Alte Obstwiese	No category	26160	Bad Zwischenahn - Wehnen	Extensive grass-land-orchards	?	?	Project of NABU	Old varieties of fruit trees	?	http://www.nabu-oldenburg.de/projekte/obstwiesen.php
69	Neue Obstwiese	No category	26160	Bad Zwischenahn - Wehnen	Extensive grass-land-orchards	?	?	Project of NABU	Old varieties of apple, pear, cherry and zwetschge trees, wild shrubs for natural protection for insects	?	http://www.nabu-oldenburg.de/projekte/obstwiesen.php
70	Biolädchen Petersfehn	Proximate	26160	Bad Zwischenahn - Mittellinie (Petersfehn)	Local shop	In the shop	Direct in shop/ indirect via webpage	None	Indirect	Passive, consumer buy products	www.dasbiolaedchen.de

					Delivery service	Delivery	Indirect via delivery & webpage	Subscription	Direct - two time a week	Passive, consumer buy products	
71	Vollkornbäckerei Oberahner Mühle	No category	26160	Bad Zwischenahn - Birkenweg (Kayserhau-serfeld)	Local bakery	At market stall	Direct	None	?	Passive	no website
72	Janßen Hof	Face-to-face	26180	Rastede - Pantinenweg	Farm shop	In the shop	Direct	None	Own production	Passive	http://jansen-hof.de/
					Café	In the café	Direct				
73	Bioland Gemüse-gärtnerei Steenken	Face-to-face	26180	Rastede - Kreyenstraße	Farm shop	In the shop	Direct	None	Own production	Passive	http://www.bioland-steenken.de/
					Weekly markets	At market stall					
74	Gut Loy	Face-to-face	26180	Rastede - Dorfstraße (Loy)	Pick your own	In the field	Direct	None	Own production	Active	https://gut-loy.de/
					Farm shop	In the shop				Passive	
75	Himpslhof	Face-to-face	26188	Edeweicht - Waterkamp	Weekly market in Westerstede & Oldenburg (Pferdemarkt)	At market stall	Direct	None	Own production	Passive	http://www.himpsl-hof.de/
					Farm shop	In the shop	Direct	None			
					Box service/online shop	Delivery	Indirect	Account			
					Box service for schools, kindergarten, hospitals and catines	Delivery	Indirect	?			
76	Hof Stolle	Face-to-face	26203	Wardenburg - Sandkruger Straße	Farm shop	In the shop	Directly	None	Directly own production and regional producers	Passive, consumers buy products	http://www.hofstolle.de/
					Farm café	In the café					

77	Speckmann-Hof	Proximate	26203	Wardenburg - Achternholt	Local shop	In the shop	Direct in the shop	None	?	Passive	www.speckmann-hof.de
78	Naturkost vor Ort	Proximate	26203	Wardenburg - Friedrichstraße	Local shop	In the shop	?	?	?	Passive	no website
79	Thees Joachim Obst- und Gemüsebau	Face-to-face	26203	Wardenburg - Marschweg	Farm shop	In th shop	Direct in the shop	None	Own production and other products	Passive	http://www.thees-hof.de/pages/seiten.php?Seite=home
80	Hundsmühler Markt	Face-to-face	26203	Wardenburg - Achternmeerer Straße	Weekly market	At the market	?	None	From Urhof Dannemann and Lethe-Hof	Passive	no website
81	Urhof Dannemann	Face-to-face	26203	Wardenburg - Huntloser Straße	Farm shop	In the shop	Direct in the shop	None	Own production	Passive	http://www.urhof-dannemann.de/
82	Bio-Bäckerei Barkemeyer	Proximate	26209	Hatten - Neuhatter Staße (Kirchhatten)	Local shop	In the shop	?	None	?	Passive	http://bauernfrische.prozept-ev.de/bauernfrische/index.php?p=3&action=viewportrait&id=22
83	Marktgärtnerei Erdfrüchte	Face-to-face	26209	Hatten - Landschulheimweg (Sandkrug)	Weekly market (Rathausplatz & Julius-Mosen-Platz)	At market stall	Directly	None	Own production	Passive	http://www.erdfreuechte.de/
					Farm shop	In the shop					
84	Hof Schohusen	Face-to-face	26209	Hatten - Ostritrumer Straße (Kirchhatten)	Box service	Delivery	Indirect	Subscription	Own production and other regional products	Passive	http://www.lebenskultur.de/abokiste
					Farm shop	In the shop	Direct in the shop	None			
85	G.u.G. Hennes Kamerunschafe	Face-to-face	26209	Hatten - Huntloser Straße (Sandhatten)	Farm shop	In the shop	Direct in the shop	None	Own production	Passive	http://www.kamerunschafe.net/
86	Der kleiner Hofladen	Proximate	26209	Hatten - Bümmersteder Straße	Local shop	In the shop	Direct in the shop	None	?	Passive	no website

87	Hof Eickhorst	Face-to-face	26209	Hatten - Steinstraße	Farm shop	In the shop	Direct in the shop	None	?	Passive	http://www.hof-eickhorst.de/
88	Hof Stolte-Brüers	Face-to-face	26209	Hatten - Schmeder Straße (Schmede)	Farm shop	In the shop	Direct in the shop	None	?	Passive	no website
89	Hof Wieting	Face-to-face	26209	Hatten - Ziegeleiweg (Munderloh)	Farm shop	In the shop	Direct in the shop	None	Own production	Passive	http://www.hof-wieting.de/
				Hatten - Munderloher Straße	Road sales	At the road stall	Direct				
90	Köhrmann-Hof	Face-to-face	26209	Hatten - Mühlenweg (Sandkrug)	Farm shop	In the shop	Direct	None	Own production	Passive	www.koehrmann-hof.de
91	Büffelfarm	Face-to-face	26209	Hatten - Narzissenweg (Sandkrug)	Organic farm shop	In the shop	Direct in the shop	None	Own production	Passive	http://www.bueffel-farm.de/index.html
92	Biobäckerei „Butterfly“	No category & Proximate	26215	Wiefelstede - Hauptstraße	Local bakery	In the shop	Direct	None	?	Passive	http://www.butterfly-biobaekerei.de/index.html
					Weekly markets (Pferdemarkt, Bloherfelde, Rastede, Sande, Jever, Wilhelmshaven)	At market stall	?	None			
93	Eytje-Hof	Face-to-face	26215	Wiefelstede - Zwischenahner Straße (Gristede)	Farm shop	In the shop	Direct	None	Own production and additional regional products	Passive	www.eytjehof.de
					Weekly market (Bauernmarkt)	At market stall	Direct	None		Passive	
94	Gristeder Hof	Proximate	26215	Wiefelstede - Heller Landstraße (Gristede)	Local restaurant	In restaurant	?	None	Direct from local producers	Passive	www.gristeder-hof.de

95	Haverkamp's Hofkäserei	Face-to-face	27798	Hude - Vossberg (Hurrel)	Farm shop	In the shop	Direct in the shop	None	Own production	Passive	no website
					Weekly market in Oldenburg (Bauernmarkt), Hude, Hundsmühler Markt & Delmenhorst	At the market	Direct at the market				
96	Ihr Bio Laden	Proximate	27798	Hude - Parkstraße	Organic local shop	In the shop	Indirect, via own label „Bio von hier“ and website	None	Indirect via own wholesaler but from regional organic producers	Passive	http://www.biovonhier.de/IhrBioladeninHude/team-und-markt
97	Hofgemeinschaft Grummersort	Face-to-face	27798	Hude - Wüstring - Hauptmoorweg	Weekly market (Pferdemarkt, Julius-Mosen-Platz & Westerstede)	At the market	Direct at the market	None	Own production	Passive	hofgemeinschaft-grummersort.de
					Farm sales	In the shop	Direct in the shop	None			
					Box service	Delivery	Indirect	None			
					CSA in development						
98	Pfeffer & Minze	Proximate	27798	Hude - Wüstring - Bahnhofstraße	Local shop	In the shop	Direct in the shop	None	?	Passive	http://www.pfeffer-und-minze.de/
99	Gevert's Naturwaren	Proximate	27798	Hude - Holler Landstraße	Farm shop	In the shop	Direct	None	?	?	no website
100	Kleine Käsekiste	Proximate	27798	Hude - Am Klosterkiel	Farm shop	In the shop	Direct	None	?	?	no website

B. Lifestyle Programmes

AFN name	Location	Market form	Weblink
Kinderkochklub	at school in Oldenburg	Cooking class for children	hwww.slowfood.de/slow_food_vor_ort/oldenburg/kinderkochklub
Slow Food Convivium Oldenburg	Oldenburg		www.slowfood.de/kinder_und_jugendliche/vor_ort/oldenburg
Essgarten	Harpstedt	food garden	www.essgarten.de
Plan Bee	in and around Oldenburg	project for wild bees	www.nabu-oldenburg.de/projekte/plan-bee.php
Zentrum Prinzhöfte e.V.	Prinzhöfte (near Wildeshausen)	permaculture garden	www.zentrum-prinzhoefte.de
Bauerngärten	Edeweicht	gardens	www.bauerngaerten-nordwest.de

C. AFNs Outside Empirical Area

AFN name	Location	Weblink
Sozial Ökohof St. Josef	Papenburg	www.sozialer-oekohof.de
Biolandbetrieb Karl-Heinz Hanken	Vechta (Goldenstedt)	www.hofladen-bauernladen.info/adressen/bioland-hof-karl-heinz-hanken-goldenstedt__1599.php
Biolandbetrieb Obstgarten zur Alten Schule	Vechta (Eydelstedt)	
Eekenhof	Varel (Büppel)	www.eekenhof.de
Hof Helms	Wildeshausen	
Hof Pleus	Klein Henstedt	www.hof-pleus.de
Lethe-Hof Böckerman	Großenkneten (Bissel)	www.lethe-hof.de
Meyer Hof	Großenkneten (Huntlosen)	www.meyer-hof.de
Archehof Thoelen	Ovelgönne	
Der Schäferkarren	Ostrauderfehn-Holtermoor	www.der-schaeferkarren.de
Hof Butendiek	Stadtland-Seefeld	www.hof-butendiek.de
Beckerstaedter Bio-Ei	Beckstedt	
Biohof Bakenhus	Großenkneten	www.biofleisch-bakenhus.de
Bioland-Betrieb Langen	Börger	www.biolandhof-langen.de
Obsthof Lüdders	Drochtersen	
Thülsfelder Bauernkäserei	Garrel	
Fisch- und Feinkost Reis	Nesse	
Imkerei Rieken	Jade-Schweiburg	www.imkerei-rieken.de
Kleiner Wilddieb	Großefehn	www.kleiner-wilddieb.de
Hofgut Grünenkamp	Varel-Grünenkamp	

Die Nudelei	Bevern	www.dienudelei.de
Die kleine Backstube	Großenkneten	
Käserei Coldewey	Seefeld	
Imkerei Honigsüß	Badbergen	
Hofmolkerei Dehlwes	Lilienthal	
Deutsche See	Bremerhaven	
Bioland-Bauer Gerdes	Schortens	
Schippers-Hof	Varel	www.schipper-hof.de
Nordwind Tofu	Ganderkesee	www.nordwind-tofu.de
Herrenholzer Naturlamm	Vechta - Goldenstedt	
Warband	Westerstede	www.warband.de
Gut Sannum	Großenkneten	www.haus-sannum.de
Restaurant Schalotte	Großenkneten - Huntlosen	
Seefelder Mühle	Stadland-Seefeld	www.seefelder-muehle.de
Hof Moorfreude	Stadland - Seefelder- deraußendeich	
Landschlachtereie Gorges	Stadland	
Bäckerei Wieting	Stadland	
ONNO e.V.	Rhauersfehn	www.onno-net.de
Norddeutsche direktvermarktung e.V.	Hildesheim	norddeutsche-direktvermarkter.de
Regionalbewegung	Germany	
CSA Hof Pente	Bramsche	www.hofpente.de
Moorhof Stalling	Ovelgönne	www.moorhof-stalling.de
Hofkäserei Michelbrand	Visbek	www.SiebenZiegen.de

Schäferei Moormann	Vechta - Goldenstedt	www.herrenholzer-naturlamm.de
Krekes Käse Hof	Westerstede	53463.webhosting15.1blu.de
ProRegion Wesermarch/Oldenburg e.V.	Stadland - Schwei	www.proregion.info
Hof „Am Fuchsberg“	Westerstede	no website
Bioland Baumschule	Cloppenburg - Höltingshausen	www.bioland-baumschule.de
Kartoffelvielfalt	Ganderkesee	no website
Kornkraft Hosüne	Großenkneten (Huntlosen)	www.kornkraft.com
Vom Hahneberg	Uplengen	
Hof Eyting	Varel	www.hof-eyting.de