



# **“It’s like having three children when it comes to cooking with my husband”**

– Gendered food work in Community Supported  
Agriculture consumer households

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Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, SLU

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# “It’s like having three children when it comes to cooking with my husband” – Gendered food work in Community Supported Agriculture consumer households

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## Abstract

Within the last decades, alternative food production networks (AFN), which oppose the well-documented social, economic, and environmental flaws of the conventional food production system, have received increased attention by scholars. Yet, notions of gender often remain overlooked. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) focuses on creating close relationships between producers and consumers of food by sharing the risks and rewards of food production. This thesis aims to examine gendered labour division in consumer households of CSA by using the Welsh Vale Farm CSA scheme as an example. Examining labour division entails answering the following research questions: *How is food work divided between the household members with regards to gender? Which role does receiving a weekly vegetable bag play in the gendered housework with food? Do household members perceive a change in their work with food?* In affiliation with Cardiff University's T-GRAINS research project, face-to-face interviews were conducted and subsequently analysed using the voice-centred relational method. This method consists of three different readings of each interview; each reading focussing on different parts of the narrative. For this research, the readings focussed on the overall plot, the voice of 'I' and the socio-cultural domain, which consisted of the socio-cultural and the corporeal domain introduced in Allen & Sachs' (2007) conceptual framework. The findings of this study suggest that in the predominantly white, middle-class and well-educated households participating in CSA, women take on the majority of responsibility for food work, which aligns with findings of previous gendered food scholarship. Participation in CSA schemes particularly increases the mental care work of the household; however, the women interviewees do not necessarily perceive this as an additional burden. Yet, participation in CSA schemes and the associated increased workload also has implications on *doing gender* on a household level. Ultimately, I also argue that CSA schemes may be sites of *undoing gender* as well. The study shows how deeply connected notions of gender and food as a part of care work continue to be in Western societies. Additionally, considering gender as a category in food research may shed a different light on broader phenomena such as AFNs.

*Keywords:* gender, doing gender, undoing gender, community supported agriculture, CSA, Wales, voice-centred relational method, socio-cultural domain, corporeal domain



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## Abbreviations

AFN	Alternative Food Production Networks
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
SLU	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
T-GRAINS	Transforming and Growing Relationships within regional food systems for Improved Nutrition and Sustainability (= British research project affiliated with this thesis)
UK	United Kingdom

# 1. Introduction

Not only since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, food consumption patterns have changed visibly. This trend comes as a result of an ever more changing attitude towards food consumption. Within the last decades, consuming food has become an increasingly symbolic act, particularly in Western societies. On one hand, there are the conventional food production systems, oriented towards market competitiveness. However, conventional food production systems have become subject to increasing concerns, including “food safety issues, the obesity epidemic, and the culinary and aesthetic value of food, as well as social and environmental externalities associated with conventional food chains” (Sonnino & Marsden, 2006, p. 183). On the other hand, there is a rise of alternative food production networks (AFN) whose actions largely rely on ecological, health and/or nutritional factors, countering the issues of conventional food production systems. Further, AFN's are also aiming to reconvene trust between consumers and producers and redistribute value within the network (Whatmore et al., 2003). These shifts have led to the emergence of AFNs in academic research, which marks a shift away from a focus on the production of food towards consumption and the consumer as active agents in the networks (Watts et al., 2005). In this binary dualism of AFNs versus conventional agriculture, any food producing network not fitting into the large-scale, high-yield, and market competitive narrative, can be labelled an AFN. As this is quite a generic definition, there is, thus, no universal scheme these networks follow. Hence, they come in a myriad of shapes, such as farmers markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) or local veg-box schemes (Jarosz, 2000; Sonnino & Marsden, 2006).

In the UK, the T-GRAINS (*Transforming and Growing Relationships within regional food systems for Improved Nutrition and Sustainability*) research project aims to explore if a UK-based food system can provide healthy and sustainable diets to its consumers, to ultimately increase healthy diets made up of regionally sourced food. Further, they ask if the resilience in the food system can be increased through strengthening social capital among actors of the food system. While supporting the T-GRAINS project in Cardiff and conducting interviews for case studies in the CSA scheme, I noticed that more women who were part of a CSA scheme were interviewed than men, and women appeared to be more involved in providing food for the household. In AFNs as well as in conventional food

production, the role of gender remained overlooked for a long time, even though gender constitutes a ubiquitous and highly political factor in this arena (Hovorka 2013). However, notions of gender affect the work with food not only in the household, but also in the production of food; yet, the work with food in the household remains more “directly and immediately relevant to the arena of local consumption” (Little et al., 2009, p. 203). Simultaneously, food work is not only influenced by notions of gender, but is also heavily influenced by other factors, such as race, socio-economic class, and culture. However, as the members of the case study CSA scheme present a relatively homogenous group in terms of race and class (see Chapter 4), corresponding to the white, middle-class CSA member previously described by various authors (e.g. Cairns & Johnston, 2015; DeLind & Ferguson, 1999; Little et al., 2009; Som Castellano, 2016), the focus of this research will be gender.

As a result, I decided to focus my research on gendered labour division in CSA households, through the example of case studies in South Wales. South Wales was chosen as a study region as its agricultural landscape is shaped by small-scale, local food businesses, as opposed to the large-scale production found in the rest of the United Kingdom (UK). By applying the voice-centred relational method, this thesis aims to *examine the gendered labour division in CSA households* by outlining the individual narrative of households participating in CSA schemes to answer the following research questions: *How is food work divided between the household members with regards to gender? Which role does receiving a weekly vegetable bag play in the gendered housework with food? Do household members perceive a change in their work with food?*

### *Terminology*

For this research, 'woman' and 'man' are used as adjectives instead of male and female, as all participants self-identified as woman and man. Female and male used as adjectives refers to the sex the participants are born with rather than their gender identity and excludes judgement on the individuals' gender traits. Using 'female' and 'male' as adjectives states that a person is born a man or a woman, while 'woman' and 'man' is used to refer to character traits that tend to be attributed to a certain sex. Feminist studies highlight that sex refers to the biology, while gender refers to the characteristic traits of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' – which can be different from a person's sex. Gender is not rooted in biology and can be altered, as gender is defined as the “process through which differences based on presumed biological sex are defined, imagined, and become significant in specific contexts” (Nightingale, 2006, p. 171). However, through patriarchal thought, sex and gender tend to be used interchangeably (Inglis & Thorpe, 2012). Functionalist thinkers stated that men and women have opposing but complementary psycho-socio-cultural characteristics, which were later conceptualised as the essence of

‘masculinity’ or ‘femininity’. Further, this binary divide into only two categories does not represent the diverse reality of gender. As touched on above, a person might not identify with their sex, yet besides women or men there are myriad other ways that a person can self-identify as. Non-conformity with this binary system of male/female or man/woman is however heavily penalised in most societies on many levels while intersecting with other personal traits such as sexual orientation, class, or race. However, as all the participating interviewees self-identified as women or men, this will be the terms that will be used in this thesis.

## 2. Background

This chapter aims to provide a context in which to locate this research. Thus, to take a closer look at the concept of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), with a focus on CSA in the United Kingdom (UK), where this research is located.

### Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

Just as many other AFN schemes, the idea Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) originates from the range of well-documented problems of the present conventional food production system (Ostrom, 1997). The concept, which originated in Japan and Europe out of a lack of supply of healthy, organic vegetables, in its simplest form is merely a direct contractual agreement between a farm and a group of consumers. The basic idea of the growing social movement in predominantly Western societies, is creating a system of strong, close, mutually beneficial and supportive relationships between local farmers or growers and consumers (Abbott Cone & Myhre, 2000; Ravenscroft et al., 2012; Saltmarsh et al., 2011). The consumers, oftentimes called ‘shareholders’, ‘members’ or ‘subscribers’, financially commit to the farm by purchasing a ‘share’ in advance of the growing season. This guarantees them a regular share of whatever the farm produces, thus, if the yield is meagre, they will get less and if it is lavish, they will receive more (Gorman, 2018). The farmer, on the other hand, is secured an income for the duration of the upcoming season, in other words, an access to a reliable market (Abbott Cone & Myhre, 2000; DeLind & Ferguson, 1999; Ostrom, 2008). The core produce of those schemes is usually organic vegetables, however, other products might be included as well, such as honey, flowers or, increasingly, livestock produce like dairy or meat (Abbott Cone & Myhre, 2000; Gorman, 2018).

In this sense, box schemes, where the consumer is provided with a regular box of vegetables, could be considered as a form of CSA. However, CSA schemes particularly in the UK, voice a strong desire to be differentiated from box schemes, as CSA schemes perceive themselves to “‘properly’ sharing the risk and rewards of agriculture and/or having a ‘proper’ connection with and individual farm or farmer” (Gorman, 2018, p. 176). This “‘proper connection” is often established by offering

face-to-face interactions like working opportunities on the farm, for example to help plant, harvest, and deliver vegetables. Depending on the specific organization of the farm, this can be a defined financial commitment to the membership or just on a volunteer basis (Abbott Cone & Myhre, 2000). Through their face-to-face interactions around activities on the farm, CSAs are first and foremost a local institution, building a community around food and how it's grown, prepared and consumed (DeLind & Ferguson, 1999; Ravenscroft et al., 2012).

As already touched on above, CSA schemes, similar to the overarching AFNs, do not follow a strict pattern but define themselves by what they seek to achieve, which is the mutually supportive relationship between communities and the producers of their food. The way this is achieved may vary from one scheme to another, accounting for diversity across many dimensions and a uniqueness to every scheme (Saltmarsh et al., 2011; Volz et al., 2016). Accordingly, the general definition of what is considered a CSA is kept vague. Both Saltmarsh et al. (2011) and Volz et al. (2016) define CSA in their writings, each describing different aspects in more detail. Saltmarsh et al. (2011) define it as “any food, fuel or fibre producing initiative where the community shares the risks and rewards of production” and go on in specifying that this share of production might be through “ownership, investment, sharing the costs of production, or provision of labour.” (Saltmarsh et al., 2011, p. 4). Thus, this definition highlights the means through which risks and rewards are being shared. The focus of Volz et al.’s (2016) definition is the means of production, which is generally “on a small and local scale [...] providing quality food produced in an agroecological way” (p. 8), further specifying that the direct partnership between a group of consumers and producers is based on long-term agreements. At the core of both definitions stands the sharing of risks and rewards of farming activities between consumers and producers. By combining the different elements of the definitions provided by Saltmarsh et al. (2011, p. 4) and Volz et al. (2016, p. 8), CSA can be defined as:

The direct partnership between a group of consumers and producer(s), forming an initiative producing food, fuel or fibre, where the community shares the risks, responsibilities and rewards of farming activities through long term agreements, e.g. ownership, investment, sharing the costs of production, or provision of labour. Generally operating on a small and local scale, CSA aims at providing quality food produced in an agroecological way.

Yet, according to Volz et al. (2016), some of the values at the core of this definition are to be perceived as continuums rather than absolutes. Responsibility sharing, for example, can vary from a purely financial responsibility to providing labour and knowledge. There are thus no predetermined principles that need to be complied with (Volz et al., 2016). Further, as Ravenscroft et al (2012) put it, “‘local’ is both a relative and a contested term” (p. 3), suggesting that contemporary forms of CSA may operate on similar global scales as other forms of farming. In their

understanding, the emphasis of this concept lies in “forging particular connections [...] between people, land and food” (p. 4). As the definition of CSA in most cases is deliberately kept quite vague to include all initiatives where the community has a stake in production, identifying the exact number of schemes currently operating is nearly impossible. Further, many farms operate privately and quietly, catering only to a small number of consumers, and are therefore not included in statistics (Gorman, 2018).

This already hints at the idea that CSA schemes are not an attempt to radically change the entire food system on a large scale, but rather pose a social and economic alternative to conventionally produced food (Saltmarsh et al., 2011). While they do contain the potential for radical systemic change, they often do not “come to grips with the actual extent of the change needed to realise their goals” (DeLind & Ferguson, 1999, p. 192). According to DeLind & Ferguson (1999) as well as Ostrom (1997), this aligns with the concept of “new social movements”, which are not interested in breaking with larger institutions like the state or the economy entirely. Rather, they seek to transform them in order to “open up space for the expression of identity, plurality and greater social autonomy” (DeLind & Ferguson, 1999, p. 192). The members of said new social movements often come from the middle class and are concerned with lifestyle issues on an economic level, rather than a political or identity level. Further, most of the members are far away from making any kind of public political statement about “changing the food system, let alone the [neoliberal] economic system” (Ostrom, 1997, p. 22). However, this precise neoliberal economic system is perceived as being responsible for the issues that CSA aims to pose an alternative to (Watts et al., 2005). Yet, participating in a CSA scheme may increase their members’ “understanding of food, the challenges faced by farmers, the needs of the environment, and the potential role informed citizens can play in reshaping food and economic systems” (ibid.). In this sense, CSA schemes are place-focused, seeking autonomy from the conventional food production system, yet remain lifestyle-oriented movements (DeLind & Ferguson, 1999). Accordingly, the socio-economic diversity among the members remains relatively low, with most of the members being white and coming from a middle-class, urban, highly educated background. An increasing number of members also come from rural towns, which are located near the farms. The reasons for them to join are myriad, yet mostly the result of a complex interplay between reasons rooted in self-interest, such as organic and high-quality vegetables, and social values, like the critique of the conventional food production system (Ostrom, 2008). However, according to Ravenscroft et al. (2012), wider social, cultural or economic issues are ultimately not challenged by CSA schemes, yet they can be perceived as agents of change as they bring their members to build strong communities and relationships around food and farming.

## Community Supported Agriculture in the United Kingdom

As the definition of CSA is very broad and the schemes themselves often operate on a small level, many of them remain unrecorded by statistics (Gorman, 2018). As a result, there are no precise numbers in the UK or let alone Wales, where this research is located. A rough estimation by Volz et al. (2016) counted around 80-100 schemes, feeding an estimated 10,000 eaters in the entire UK. As of 2019, only nine CSA schemes in Wales were members of the CSA Network UK. This already indicates that, compared to other forms of AFNs such as farmers markets, CSA schemes are still a niche phenomenon in the UK (Saltmarsh et al., 2011).

The first CSAs in the UK were established in the 1990s, following the Japanese and European model (Volz et al., 2016). Many of the active CSA schemes in England are linked to an umbrella organization, the Soil Association, which also helped establish the CSA Network UK. The CSA Network UK is a co-operative owned and lead by a group of CSA farms (CSA Network UK, 2019a). The co-operative has a charter, which defines common values of principles that their British member CSA schemes agree to follow (CSA Network UK, 2019b). The key elements of their definition follows the one presented in the previous section, with an emphasis on the creation of mutual support that “goes beyond a straightforward marketplace exchange of money for goods” (Volz et al., 2016, p. 110). The network identifies three pillars that define the core values of the interaction between producers and consumers, summed up in Figure 1.

People Care	Earth Care	Fair Share
A fair and steady income for the producer and a relationship based on trust with the consumers/members. Access to healthy food at affordable prices.	A chance for the land and biodiversity to flourish due to ecological farming methods and shared interest in these methods of production.	A share in the harvest of healthy (mostly organic or biodynamic), local and low carbon produce; a connection with the producer, the land and each other. This includes a commitment to support the farmer through both good and poor harvests.

*Figure 1. The three pillars of CSA.*

Besides these core values, they also outline common practices, which member schemes generally follow. Yet, farms may decide to follow all of them or only a few (CSA Network UK, 2019b). According to Volz et al. (2016), not all the CSA member schemes agree with all the practices. In fact, the only agreed factor was the aim of producing quality produce and sharing the rewards with the community (p. 113). Common ground practices include the relationship between the members and the farm as well the shared risk through a pre-arranged agreement between members and the farm (ibid.).

Even though the specific implementation varies across the different schemes, patterns of organization can be identified, suggesting that most of the farms are either farmer-led or consumer-led, however, further distinctions into sub-categories can be made (Gorman, 2018; Saltmarsh et al., 2011; Volz et al., 2016).

The farmer or producer-led initiatives represent a ‘top-down’ approach to CSA. Existing farmers initiate and manage the scheme, offering their produce to a community, the members of the scheme. In these producer-led subscription schemes, the members are usually not involved in any management decisions, but only provide financial support (Gorman, 2018; Saltmarsh et al., 2011). Here, the producer and the consumers share the risks and rewards by advance payments (Saltmarsh et al., 2011). Another option of governance is a community-owned enterprise. The community takes on the direct responsibility for the production, labour is provided by volunteers and/or professionals, which are employed by the collective enterprise. At time of harvest, the produce is distributed to the community or sold for the benefit of the enterprise (ibid). In other cases, the community itself may found an enterprise that works closely with an already existing farmer. This way, the long-term supply of produce is secured for the community. The last way of organizing a CSA scheme is a community-owned enterprise, however, the produced agricultural goods are not necessarily distributed among the community members but rather sold to third parties (Saltmarsh et al., 2011; Volz et al., 2016). While the first way of governing scheme is a ‘top-down’ approach, the latter three can be considered ‘bottom up’, since the key driver for initiation is a community of people interested in issues around local food production or generally sustainability. In these ‘bottom up’ initiatives, the lines between who is producing and who is consuming become blurry, as members who support the farm may also be involved in the agricultural production or other activities. Yet, this is the most common form of governance in the UK (Gorman, 2018).

### 3. Gender and Food Work

This chapter of the thesis will take a closer look into food labour in the context of household gender relations, in conventional as well as alternative food production networks. Eventually, this will piece together into the conceptual framework guiding the analysis of the collected data (see Chapter 4).

#### Food, Gender, and the Household

As Hovorka 2013 argues, gender as well as food are “power-laden realms that produce and reproduce difference and inequality between men and women through their connection” (p. 125). Even though she explicitly distances her approach from a “women-only” point of view, she does acknowledge that closer attention needs to be paid to women in this context, due to their “frequent and disproportionate subordination” (Hovorka 2013: 125).

It is widely acknowledged that women carry the responsibility for the majority of social reproductive work, inside the privacy of households as well as outside of them (Szabo, 2011). Social reproductive work describes the range of activities and responsibilities required to maintain private and public life on a daily basis, as for example the availability of adequate food and clothing for a household. This reproductive work is not limited to acts within the household but happens in various institutions in different ways (Szabo, 2011). Historically, little (monetary) value has been put on women’s social reproductive labour, despite it being essential to the functioning of the larger capitalist economy as well as the day-to-day routine of the individual households (Cairns & Johnston, 2015; Szabo, 2011). Food work, which includes all the physical, emotional, and mental labour needed to provision and prepare food, is thus an essential part of social reproduction work as it enables the household and its members to go on with their day-to-day routine.

Arguably, within recent years there has been a shift towards men taking on more responsibility in this arena and women simultaneously increasingly entering the paid labour force outside of the home while decreasing their involvement in social reproduction work. Yet, this shift has not been enough to close the gender gap in food provisioning as, even though men might do the work, women still remain

responsible to ensure the task has been completed (Som Castellano, 2015, 2016). Other developments were equally insufficient in closing this gender gap, as exemplified by the emergence of convenience food, which was largely advertised as the ultimate time saver. While these new types of easily prepared foods certainly did enable a larger amount of women to enter the paid labour force, research suggests that the time saved was merely shifted to other food labour activities like grocery shopping and cleaning up (DeVault, 1991). Further, highlighting the intersection of class, gender and race, convenience foods were often only accessible to white upper-middle class women, enabling them to enter the paid workforce and merely transferring their care work to often poor women, immigrant women or women of colour (Allen & Sachs, 2007). Hence, changes in employment patterns as well as the change in food consumption and preparation do not seem to have caused a change in the gendered allocation of household food work, with women remaining responsible for most social reproduction work including food (Little et al., 2009). At this point, it is necessary to explore further which specific activities food work entails and how the fact that the responsibility remains with one gender might be problematic.

As already touched on above, food work involves a range of physical, mental and emotional labour (Som Castellano, 2015). The more visible physical tasks include grocery shopping, unpacking and stacking the groceries, cooking, serving meals, and cleaning up afterwards. Yet, behind this set of physical tasks stand more mental and emotional tasks to perform, like planning or coordinating meals, which is a constant act of juggling and strategizing (DeVault, 1991). This mental food work often exceeds the concrete execution of the physical task, as e.g. the preparation of one meal might require a process of constant, careful planning throughout the day (ibid.). As this part of food work often happens in between other activities or looks like the performance of another activity unrelated to food work, the mental dimension of food work remains unacknowledged and literally invisible to everyone who is not involved in it and might even not be perceived to actually be work by the ones doing it (Cairns & Johnston, 2015; DeLind & Ferguson, 1999; DeVault, 1991). Another dimension to food work is the emotional labour that goes into it. Food provisioning constitutes a primary form of care work for most women (Som Castellano, 2016). A household meal is not simply an act of providing any kind of food for other members of the household, but food that satisfies them. Thus, preferences in tastes and nutritional requirements need to be considered, which makes the preparation of a meal like a puzzle that needs to be solved in a different way every day. For parents, specifically mothers, this means making each meal appealing to and appropriate for their children. The needs of children change constantly, as do their tastes, so parents must put effort into staying informed about suitable foods for their children. This often happens at the expense of their own preferences. The food chosen for the household subsequently might not reflect their

own preferences, but the ones of their children and partners. By not adhering to those preferences, they risk provoking tensions, arguments or even violence in the household. Planning a meal is hence not just a simple matter of decision making, but a complex activity, through which women are supposed to express their love and care for the household. In this way, food work can reinscribe women's subordination on a household level (Allen & Sachs, 2007; DeVault, 1991). Certainly, this is also a way for men to express their care and love, yet, women tend to be deemed a failure if they do not care about food. If women ignore food, not only on a household level, they are judged for not caring about their own or their children's health, exposing herself and her family to risks for diseases, or not caring about the planet. Men and masculinities, on the other hand, are not connected to food work in the same "demanding, penalizing and emotionally potent ways" (Cairns & Johnston, 2015, p. 174). Performing food work is still one of the primary forms of care work, it also exemplifies how women express femininities and "do gender" in their daily activities (Som Castellano, 2016).

## AFNs and Gendered Labour Division

Women's expression of care is not limited to the dimension of the household or only directed towards its members or other human beings. Their socialisation to care about their surroundings extends to the outside of the household to community building as well as caring for the environment and community. In this sense, community is not to be understood as a matter of friendship, but of connection and heightened social responsibility (Cairns & Johnston, 2015; DeLind & Ferguson, 1999). Given that women remain responsible for most of the feeding and caring work in the home, it is no surprise that they often carry the "bulk of responsibility" (Abbott Cone & Myhre, 2000, p. 191) in AFNs in general, but also in CSA schemes specifically. Women are "at the forefront" (Allen & Sachs, 2007, p. 13) of ethical consumption, yet, their involvement remains largely invisible, in research conducted as well as in everyday life. Participation in AFNs requires additional labour, visible as well as invisible. Som Castellano (2016) argues that particularly consumers of local food experience an increase in food work, as they are often more interested in procuring a broader environmental as well as social mission (p. 450). Further, participation in local food networks is often not just a change of consumed items, but also a different way of cooking and eating routines, for example more cooking from scratch and the use of less pre-prepared items, which means an increased effort is put into preparing a single meal, which per se already assumes the existence of a certain skill. Women who are involved in local food systems are also believed to have an increased intentional rather than habitual routine consumption, paying more attention to perceived consequences of their purchases in terms of their social and environmental effects. Ethical consumption, thus,

constitutes yet another extension of women's care work (Cairns & Johnston, 2015; Little et al., 2009). Plus, the ongoing research required to make informed, adequate food choices can be considered another, additional form of invisible food labour (Cairns & Johnston, 2015).

However, this is not to say that this gendered division of responsibility is without exception a burden for every woman. First, the arena of food is where many women think critically about the capitalist economic system, the conventional food systems and even gender and race inequalities, which often inspires them to seek possibility to make a change (Cairns & Johnston, 2015). Additionally, having a gatekeeping function and being in the position to control which food reaches the household is an act of empowerment to some women. Yet, in the end, deeply gendered meanings may be ascribed to food practices, affecting not only women but also men. The realm of food can be "both oppressive and transformative, a site of injustice and a vessel for people's hopes for change" (ibid., p.130). However, despite women's resistance to the conventional food system, as farmers as well as consumers, feminist issues of changing the core of the structure that subordinates women in the first place does not lie at the heart of most AFNs (Allen & Sachs, 2007). Similarly, CSAs do not have the specific issues of gender inequality in the food system in their agenda, yet, they could serve as a catalyst or agent of change in this realm as well.

## 4. Theoretical Frameworks

### Food Work and *Doing Gender*

In their influential article “Doing Gender”, West & Zimmerman (1987) argued that gender is not to be understood as a role, a set of traits or a variable, but as “exhibited or portrayed through interaction, and thus be seen as ‘natural’, while it is being *produced as a socially organized achievement* [emphasis added]” (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 129). Thus, gender is not something that individuals *are*, but something that they *do*. An underlying set of normative conceptions that vary across time, location, and social situation, guides what needs to be done in order to behave as man or women. Accordingly, gender is continuously socially reconstructed, reproduced, sustained and legitimized as a ubiquitous, fundamental aspect of social interaction (Deutsch, 2007; Julier & Lindenfeld, 2005). In this sense, members of at least contemporary Western societies learn that making a distinction between acts connoted as “womanly” and acts connoted as “manly” is important and fundamental. These acts become so ingrained into our interactions that individuals do not perceive them as socially constructed, but as a “natural” expression of gender and are, thus, often unaware of even practicing them (Cairns & Johnston, 2015; Julier & Lindenfeld, 2005). However, while *doing gender* occurs on the micro level of individuals, the characteristics or what is defined as “manly” or “womanly” are set on a macro level of social structures (Som Castellano, 2015). This makes *doing gender* not just a performance between individuals, but a collective process of production and reproduction (DeVault, 1991). However, this does not mean that *doing gender* builds up on a static set of social structures. If anything, *doing gender* underlies the dynamic change of fluctuating contemporary norms, which may be subject to revolutionary change (Deutsch, 2007). But how is *doing gender* relevant to household food work?

Many scholars have pointed out the close relation of *doing gender* and social reproduction (among others Cairns & Johnston, 2015; DeVault, 1991; Som Castellano, 2015; Szabo, 2011; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Defining gender as a practice embedded into everyday interactions means that performing food labour is inevitably intertwined with performing femininity, which means that members of

households learn to associate the work of feeding with feminine practices (Cairns & Johnston, 2015; DeVault, 1991). A household's food practices, ideals, and habits then may become key facets of the way we do gender on a daily basis, and engaging in these traditionally female tasks in turn reproduces gendered norms, male privilege and structures of oppression (Cairns & Johnston, 2015; Som Castellano, 2015). The broad patterns of women taking responsibility for care at home is pervasive, as the household becomes a source of learning and participation in gendered activities for children (DeVault, 1991). According to DeVault (1991), there are two major ways of how notions of gender stereotypes are passed on in the household: first, through children observing parents and kin. Hence, girls are predominantly recruited into "womanly" feeding activities at an early age. The author argues that while there are certainly other ways of "recruiting" (p. 96), the influences of mothers and mothering are especially prominent. Relating to this, the second way of passing on gendered stereotypes on a household level is through mothers observing the activities of other mothers. This is not to say that boys and fathers do not learn and teach caring skills, however, this does not happen in the compelling sense that this is their duty. Thus, through engrained food practices, women become socially constructed to accept the responsibility of food provisioning. Food work becomes a primary form of care work and, in return, we see food work as a primary expression of femininity (Cairns & Johnston, 2015; DeVault, 1991; Som Castellano, 2016).

## Gender in Food Networks: The Material, Socio-cultural and the Corporeal – A Theoretical Framework

Based on the assumptions outlined in the previous sections, Allen & Sachs' (2007) argue that the relevance of gender in food networks is especially evident within three domains: the *material*, the *socio-cultural*, and the *corporeal*. The *material* describes the connections and experiences with food in the labour market, thus, aspects of gender relations in agricultural production. The *corporeal domain* largely covers women's relationship with eating in relation to their bodies, covering perception of bodies, heavily influenced by the media, as well as issues of health and nutrition (Allen & Sachs, 2007; Little et al., 2009). The third domain is the *socio-cultural*, which connects directly to the field of consumption, as it describes their work with food in the private sphere (Allen & Sachs, 2007). As mentioned above, the consumer plays a crucial role in AFNs, which is why the *corporeal* and the *socio-cultural* domain require further explanation in this context. None of the interviewed participants was directly involved in the agricultural production of food, therefore, an additional explanation of the *material* domain was omitted from this chapter.

Essentially, the *socio-cultural* domain refers to women's work in the private sphere, thus, comprises the issues outlined in the previous chapter. However, coming back to Hovorka's (2013) warning of adopting a "women-only" perspective, it is important to consider that the classification of food (care) work as predominantly ascribed to women does not only impose an increased workload on women, it also poses constraints to men in this field (Julier & Lindenfeld, 2005). Gender relations are a powerful and dynamic dimension in the realm of food, but, as in many other fields, attention is paid mostly to women's positioning and their examination while masculinities often remain stagnant and overlooked (ibid.). One example where this is evident is the relationship to meat-eating, vegetarianism and veganism. Eating and preparing meat in most Western societies is strongly associated with notions of masculinity. Adopting a vegetarian or vegan diet as a man is thus often seen as emasculating and as challenging the hegemonic discourse (Nath, 2011). Regarding food work in the private sphere, Allen & Sachs' (2007) *socio-cultural* domain states that a new domestic masculinity has emerged (Rezeanu, 2015). This includes the involvement of men in food related activities, e.g. the preparation of meals. Meah & Jackson (2013) argue that this is a redefinition of masculinities, which is, however, often not an act of nurturing the family but rather a hobby or a lifestyle option. The increased participation in food labour is a selective choice of particular domestic tasks, not a democratization of household labour. Yet, the choice of which tasks are undertaken by which family member tends to remain with the women of the household, granting them power in the kitchen (Allen & Sachs, 2007; Rezeanu, 2015).

The *corporeal* domain is concerned with the relationship of women with eating and health risks. Women's perception of their own bodies is another central element of their construction of femininity, as they are simultaneously constantly exposed to the contradicting sides of being thin on one hand and overconsumption and obesity on the other. As a result, the identities of women, thus, are often tied to diets and their relationship with food (ibid.). Both sides, however, constitute important drivers of food choices, as especially the latter does not only concern the individuals, but all members of the household (Little et al., 2009). Thus, the lines between the two conceptual dimensions become blurry, as, besides nourishing and caring for their own bodies, women further have the responsibility to make sure that healthy, nutritious food gets to the entire household. Besides providing care and nourishment for the household, providing food becomes an act of maintaining identity for women (Som Castellano, 2014).

Using Allen & Sachs' (2007) conceptual dimensions as a framework for analysis will help bring in line the participants' answers concerning the perception of CSA membership with overriding categories, in order to understand how they fit into a larger picture of household food labour, *doing gender* and issues of local food

consumption. While other frameworks only cover *either* theories of food consumption, such as Stern's Value-Norm-Belief theory (Stern, 2000) *or* theories of gendered behaviour, such as West & Zimmerman's *doing gender* framework introduced earlier (West & Zimmerman, 1987), Allen & Sachs' (2007) framework in combination with the method chosen for this thesis enables an in-depth understanding of households' food behaviour with respect to issues of sustainability and gender.

However, besides notions of gender, other factors such as socio-economic class influence which foods are attainable for which households, and how household labour is divided between family members. In their US study on gender, social class and women's employment, McGinn & Oh (2017) claim that the cultural idea for the middle and upper class is more supportive of maintaining traditional gender relations, and even values intensive mothering and women adjusting careers to uphold expectations of traditional gendered labour division. Lower class women, however, are expected to defy traditional gender roles and maintain their employment status while raising their children (McGinn & Oh, 2017). Thus, depending on access to certain resources, expectations on women's involvement in household labour differ. Yet, Rezeneau (2015) argues that "doing the same spatial practice in the same place inside the home, people from one social class can signify it as *doing gender* while people from another social class as *undoing gender* [emphasis added]" (p.26). This highlights that access to (financial) resources is a determinant in whether a practice is reinforcing prevalent gender roles (*doing gender*) or deconstructing them (*undoing gender*). Ultimately, however, essential to understanding whether a practice is *doing gender* or *undoing gender* is the individual perception of the situation, in other words if women perceive a particular practice as oppressive or not (ibid.).

## 5. Methods and Research Design

This chapter will outline the methodology used to *examine the gendered labour division in CSA households*. This includes some basic factors, which had to be considered before actually starting the research process, as well as reasoning for the specific choices in research design, data collection methods and analysis. Since the research for this thesis was conducted in the context of a larger research project, this will be presented as well.

### The T-GRAINS Research Project

This research was developed in the context of the T-GRAINS (Transforming and Growing Relationships within regional food systems for Improved Nutrition and Sustainability) research project. This two-year project involves multiple institutions with interdisciplinary researchers located across the UK, with the project lead being at Cardiff University in Wales. The aim of the project is to explore whether a UK-based food system can provide healthy and sustainable diets to its consumers to ultimately increase healthy diets consisting of regionally sourced food. Further, the project explores whether resilience in the food system can be increased through strengthening social capital among actors of the food system.

The project builds its case on the background of an unsustainable, unhealthy, and environmentally harmful food system, which has the prospect of intensifying extreme climate events, inequality when it comes to access to safe and nutritious food as well as environmentally degrading practices in agriculture. Further, they argue that various trends have constructed a “place-less” foodscape, disconnected from social demands and an ecological basis of distinct territories. To counter this, the project aims to take a “placemaking” approach to ask for the potential of a local-to-regional food system in the UK and how producers, retailers and consumers can be connected to create a transformative food system, which is socially, culturally, and economically sustainable. The overarching hypothesis of the project is thus the following:

A localised (regional-based) UK food system can provide healthy and sustainable diets, and [...] resilience in the system can be achieved through strengthening social capital among food system stakeholders. (Personal communication)

In order to explore this hypothesis, over a period of two years, research is being conducted in East Anglia and South Wales, two contrasting study regions in the UK. East Anglia on the Eastern coast is dominated by arable land and horticulture. South Wales, on the other hand, is dominated by small farms and livestock systems (Volz et al., 2016). In each region, two sample farms, which have established differently operating Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) schemes and supply a small number of customers with varying degrees of connectivity, have been selected based on their respective size. The farms' costumers as well as the farmers themselves pose the participants of the case studies, who will be interviewed four times throughout the project's duration (twice per year) in order to track their habits over time. The part of the project that this thesis is affiliated with, aims to analyse how the establishment of direct relationships between producers and consumers of food impacts the individual households' food work.

## Worldview and Research Approach

According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), the approach chosen for a research project depends on a range of different factors. These can include the researcher's philosophical assumptions, personal experiences, the resources available to them as well as the potential audience. Simply based on some of these factors, such as the resources available and the given time frame, long, in-depth research could be excluded as an option for this thesis.

My personal underlying worldview would not strictly fit into the four categories suggested by Creswell & Creswell (2018). I would argue that my personal beliefs, which shaped this research, are rooted in a constructivist-transformative worldview. The social-constructivist worldview seeks to identify how individuals construct meanings out of their day to day lives by listening carefully to what the participants are saying or doing when put in certain situations. At the same time, social and historical factors as well as the researcher's own personal, political, and historical background should be considered (Creswell & Creswell 2018). However, as this study is primarily concerned with nuances of women's oppression in household allocation of food work, there is undoubtedly an underlying transformative worldview, as this one is concerned with unveiling patterns of oppression. Yet, this research does not have a political agenda for change at its heart (ibid.).

However, both worldviews are centred around the idea of listening to the voices of individuals and how they make meaning out of their day-to-day experiences. Thus,

the research design and methods should be able to reveal patterns of how participants construct gender through their work with food. In order to examine the experience of gendered labour allocations in households participating in CSA schemes, this thesis is built on a qualitative case study research design using semi-structured interviews as a research method as well as a data analysis method that emphasises the role of the researcher in the research process.

## Interviews

The T-GRAINS project gave me the option of integrating questions that would serve my research aim into their questionnaire. However, this also meant that most of the questions asked in the interviews were not specifically designed to inquire gender differences, but rather focused on wider patterns of food consumption in CSA member households. The questionnaire used for the interviews consisted of 23 questions that were organized in three main topics: the CSA membership, food purchased for the household, and food consumed in the household. However, by looking at the interviews through a gendered lens, insights about gendered dynamics in the household can be deducted as well. The complete questionnaire can be found in Appendix II.

As the T-GRAINS research project aimed to analyse the data retrieved from these interviews quantitatively as well as qualitatively, the questionnaire was structured in a way that would allow both. This was also true for the questions that aimed to support this research. Thus, some of the questions were closed-ended, with predefined categories that could easily be answered and later be converted into numbers and assessed quantitatively (Creswell & Creswell, 2019). Other questions were deliberately left open-ended to give the respondents the opportunity to speak about their experiences in more detail. However, the interviewers were always encouraged to ask more in-depth questions where they felt it was necessary. The general idea was to gain deep, insightful information that could later also be organised into categories.

For the T-GRAINS project, over 50 interviews with CSA members of four different schemes in the two case study regions in the UK were conducted either face-to-face or over the phone. The interviews were conducted by different members of the Cardiff-based T-GRAINS team, consisting of the project's principal investigator, a research associate, a research intern and myself. Each of us was responsible for conducting the interviews of one of the CSA farms. Because the analysis of all interviews would have exceeded the scope of this thesis, I decided to focus on just one CSA membership scheme, the Vale Farm's scheme, where most interviews were conducted face-to-face rather than over the telephone. This was perceived to

leave more room to improvise and explore topics that only came up during the interview in more detail, and consequently would contain more in-depth information about the households. Of the total 18 households participating in the CSA scheme, eight were selected for this project. This had several reasons: first, these interviews were conducted within a similar stretch of time. A first set of participants was interviewed in summer, at the beginning of the harvesting season. The second group was interviewed in winter, as they had just experienced the potential effects of the CSA scheme on their household, even if they had only started the membership the same year, as a result of the end of the season. The interviews only constituted one part out of a set of methods of data collection used by the T-GRAINS project, but I decided to only consider the interviews, as they gave me deeper insights into the participants' experiences, values, and attitudes (Silverman, 2015).

The selected interviews were conducted between December 2019 and January 2020 by the principal investigator. Except two, all participants were interviewed in their homes, often with other family members, like partners or children, around. Thus, the interviewees were situated in familiar surroundings that were closely linked to the topic of the questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2019; Wilkinson, 1998). The other two interviews took place at two local cafés. Of the eight interviews, three were conducted with heterosexual couples, the other five interviewees were women, who were in heterosexual relationships. However, if the main interviewee's partners were around at the time of interviewing, they would also comment on questions or support the main interviewee (Table 1). The interviews were recorded and lasted between half an hour and one hour and 45 minutes. Before starting the interview process, every participant signed a consent form, which explained the purpose of the T-GRAINS study, including the specific contents and the duration of the study, the processing of the collected data and the assurance of their anonymity. Maintaining their anonymity was guaranteed by deleting their original names and replacing them with pseudonyms in each file used for analysis as well as published papers. Besides the participants', the farm's as well as the owners' original names were replaced with pseudonyms as well. All the participants were informed about these processes through an oral explanation before the interview too.

For the subsequent qualitative analysis of the data, I carefully transcribed the interviews, word by word, as the nuances in their choice of words would be relevant to the chosen method of analysis. This was done by using the software MAXQDA (Mattissek et al., 2013). As the interviews revealed some patterns in choice of language, particularly in the choice of personal pronouns such as 'I', 'we' or 'they', the Voice-Centred Relational Method was used as a tool of analysis. The computer software QSR NVivo 12 was used to help organise, sort and code the data. Personal pronouns as well as Allen & Sachs' (2007) domains introduced in the previous

chapter served as categories, in which the information subtracted from the interviews was sorted into.

## The Voice-Centred Relational Method

As the participants showed some interesting linguistic nuances, which suggested some valuable insights into the households' gendered labour division, the voice-centred relational method was used to analyse the interviews.

The voice-centred relational method is a tool to analyse qualitative data, initially developed to interpret interviews (Berglund et al., 2018; Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). It is concerned with the somewhat random process of researchers following certain leads while leaving aside others, a process that Creswell & Creswell call "winnowing" (2019, p. 268; Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). According to Mauthner & Doucet (1998), during the analysis of the collected data, the researchers are confronted with themselves and their central role in shaping the private lives of the participants into public theories. Thus, the method aims to perceive the interview as a "collective relational achievement" (Berglund et al., 2018, p. 322) by acknowledging the interplay of the participants, the ones that are speaking, and the researchers, the ones that are listening. Through its focus on attempting to listen to different voices, the method is deeply rooted within broader tradition of feminist research (Berglund et al., 2018; Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). In order to hear the participant's voices more clearly, their stories are reviewed from a number of different perspectives (Paliadelis & Cruickshank, 2008). This is done by a set of different readings of the interviews, usually three or four, that each focus on a different topic. The readings are not fixed, which allows the adaption of the method according to the specific aim of research projects. Certain elements of the method can be picked up and emphasised, others can be omitted entirely (Giwa et al., 2014; Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). Yet, at the heart of the method stands the idea of 'relational ontology', which describes the notion that individuals are embedded into a complex web of social relations, which they transform and are mutually transformed by (ibid.)

In the following section, the different readings, that have been adapted to fit the context of this research aim to *examine the gendered labour division in CSA households*, will be outlined.

### The First Reading

The first reading consists of two different parts: the overall plot and the reader's response. In this case, the first reading was expanded to include my personal expectations as well.

### *Overall Plot*

The first of the three readings intends to capture the overall story of the interviewee. This includes the main plot as told by the respondent, its main characters, existing tensions and their consequences from the participant's perspective as well as their own understanding. And further, if existing, contradictions within the plot, potential subplots and recurrent images and metaphors (Paliadelis & Cruickshank 2008; Mauthner & Doucet 1998). This reading is similar to many other methods of qualitative data analysis (Mauthner & Doucet 1998). In the context of this research, the first reading included gathering general information on the interviewees, such as household members, their age, and occupations as well as how they found out about Vale Farm's CSA scheme. But also, more detailed information about their living arrangements, for example, recent relocation to the village or health issues.

### *Reader's Response*

A central element of this reading is the "Reader's Response" to the overall plot of the interview. After carefully reading for the overall plot, the researchers record their reaction, attempting to note how they are socially, emotionally, intellectually located in relation to the respondents (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). The aim here is to highlight the role that the researcher takes on in the social construction of the research reality and lay down evidence for others to see how their own assumptions and views might influence the interpretation of the data as well as the way they write about the interviewees (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998; Paliadelis & Cruickshank, 2008). Berglund et al. (2018) claim that if the researchers did not reflect on themselves, their assumptions would reflect themselves in other ways. Thus, recording the researcher's response to the interviews serves to grasp the "blurred boundary between the narrative and their own interpretations" (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998: 12). The main task for the researchers therefore lies in reading the narrative on their own terms, which means placing themselves, their personal, political and theoretical background in relation to the interviewee (ibid.; Paliadelis & Cruickshank, 2008).

Both the overall plot and the reader's response are essential in understanding the individual narratives of the interviewees, the subsequent readings as well as their representation in this paper. Due to the limited space available, the extended first reading including the reader's response was omitted from this main body of text and can instead be found in Appendix I. However, a summary of the participants' overall plots will be presented along with the introduction of the Vale Farm CSA scheme.

### *Expectations*

The core idea of the Voice-centred Relational Method is that the researchers' personal background has influences on the interpretation of the research, which is why a central element of the method is the reader's response (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). With the reasoning outlined above, I would argue that stating the researcher's expectations on the findings of the readings is just as important, as these expectations would additionally filter the outcomes which construct the narratives of the research. That section will contain a brief summary of my expectations on the findings in order to make the research process as transparent as possible.

### **The Second Reading – The Voice of 'I'**

The second reading aims to capture the participants' experiences and feelings as well as further how they speak about and present themselves (Berglund et al., 2018; Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). In the case of the Vale Farm CSA participants, this primarily meant reading for how they experience their role in household food provisioning and which specific duties they take on. This is done by the identification of personal pronouns or, in other words, reading for sentences containing words like 'I', 'me', 'myself' (Giwa et al., 2014; Paliadelis & Cruickshank, 2008). These words then centre the reader's attention to the terms that the interviewees perceive and present themselves (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). Further, the shift between 'I' or 'me' to 'we', 'they' or 'you' is identified as a way of understanding how the interviewees think others perceive them, how they perceive others as well as how they would like to be perceived (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998; Paliadelis & Cruickshank, 2008). The aim of this second reading is thus to create space for the participants to speak for themselves before the researcher speaks about and for them. Further, this reading gives a deeper insight into the private lives of the participants, highlighting on meanings they assign to individual processes, responsibilities, dilemmas and relationships central to their domestic lives (ibid.). This reading is one of the key elements distinguishing the Voice-Centred Relational Method from other qualitative methods of data analysis. Due to its use of the second reading to understand the participants day-to-day reality, this method is particularly appropriate for feminist research.

### **The Third Reading**

In their in-depth reflection on working with the Voice-Centred Relational Method, Mauthner & Doucet (1998) define the first two readings as the “‘staples’ of the method in that researchers using this method of data analysis would always undertake [...]” (p.16). For the following readings, they provide two options: reading for relationships or reading for cultural context. Depending on the research

topic and the scope of the research, both or only one can be conducted. Given the large number of interviews to be analysed with this rather time-consuming method, the reading for the cultural context was considered more relevant. Further, the reading was adapted to better meet the interests of the research aim (Giwa et al., 2014).

The aim of the reading for cultural context was the placement of the participants' experiences into a broader social, political, cultural and structural context (Giwa et al., 2014; Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). On one hand, this reading included searching for the use of words such as 'should', 'ought', 'right', 'wrong', 'bad' and 'good'. By using these words, the participants were speaking through cultural norms and values of society or, in the case of the Vale Farm CSA participants, the perceived norms and values of the scheme. In the next step, the reading aimed to analyse if the interviewees perceived those norms and values as enabling and empowering or constraining in their day-to-day experiences.

Another tool to better place the interviewees' experiences in a broader socio-cultural context is the theoretical framework by Allen & Sachs (2007) introduced in Chapter 4. Again, this framework has been adapted by omitting certain elements, such as the *material* domain as none of the interviewees was involved in the material production of food, and by adding other elements, such as the consideration of masculinities in the domains.

## Limitations and Validity

Working closely with another research project brought along certain advantages. For example, the recruitment of participants was immensely facilitated, as the project had already established contacts with the CSA schemes as well as their members. Thus, not attracting enough research participants was not a risk that needed to be considered in the planning of this research. Another crucial element of research that did not need to be specified was the ethics. As the T-GRAINS project is a large-scale and long-term project, data security and ensuring the anonymity of the participants is carefully secured on a high level, obeying to the Cardiff University research ethics standards.

The decision to analyse interviews that I had not conducted myself was closely connected to the decision to only use face-to-face interviews. The interviews that were conducted face-to-face with the participants were perceived to contain more information about their day-to-day lives. As all interviewees lived in a very rural part of South Wales that is hard to access without a car and having the interviews conducted by someone else eased accessing the interviewees' houses. Further, the

interviewer was aware of my research aim before conducting the interviews. Through her years of expertise with interviewing, she was able to follow up interesting remarks about gender dynamics to a certain extent as well. And ultimately, this research was planned to be conducted in February and March 2020, precisely the time when the pandemic caused by the new Corona Virus hit Europe, including the UK. This had massive implications for household food work, caused by a lockdown and scarcity of certain items in supermarkets due to panic buying. The interviews used for this research were conducted just before the virus reached Europe. Thus, in most cases, the interviews used for this research were able to capture the normality of household patterns that have developed over a long period of time and were not influenced by external forces.

However, integrating this research into the project also imposed certain limitations. For one, by not conducting the interviews myself, there was only little room to further explore any interesting remarks of gendered dynamics that emerged during the individual interviews, as this was not the focus of the T-GRAINS project. Further, since the response rate to the interviews to the T-GRAINS project was not as high as expected, there was no opportunity to involve the participants into other types of data collection outside of the methods conducted by T-GRAINS. For example, as gender is believed to be created through interaction, one-on-one interviews could be perceived as removing the participants from natural interactions and thus social context. Therefore, focus groups, where participants explore potentially common experiences through interaction, could have brought some additional insights (Wilkinson, 1998).

Nonetheless, collaborating with the T-GRAINS project was perceived to bring more advantages to this research through its direct connection to various farms, which functioned as gatekeepers for providing the interview data of a large number of member households. Thus, the choice between a big set of data was available for data analysis.

This large database using interviews of the same structure with participants in different membership schemes which were conducted by various researchers, also contributed to the validity of the findings. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), triangulation is the primary strategy used to ensure the validity of data. The data used for this research was continuously compared to the findings of the other farms included in the T-GRAINS project. Further, using a method specifically designed to highlight the role of the researcher in the research process adds validity to the findings of this study. Another advantage that came with cooperating with a decentralised and interdisciplinary team of researchers was the increased reliability or, in other words, assurance of consistency to the research approach. With a team of researchers this large and dispersed, every step concerning transcription, coding

and data analysis had to be documented and kept as transparent as possible so that each team member would be able to reconstruct the steps behind the results (ibid).

## 6. Vale Farm – A Short Introduction

This fifth chapter aims to give a short introduction to the case study's CSA scheme, Vale Farm. Vale Farm is a family owned Welsh agricultural business. It was initially founded by the current owner's parents as a conventional livestock and cattle farm, however, they converted it into an organic production in 2000. The shift to organic production also included a focus on the conservation of the surrounding wildlife. The environmental farming includes the management of the farmland to work with the natural habitats of birds, flowers, and wild animal species. The farm is now run by Mary and James, who have children that go to school in the nearest village.

### Vale Farm's "5 Mile Veg"

For the last couple of years, the farm has started to grow vegetables over the summer and autumn and has built up a CSA scheme to sell to the local community. The idea of risks and rewards being shared by farmers and consumers is established by the members of the scheme paying for their bags in advance of the season or in three months instalments. The scheme is set up for members who live within a five-mile radius of the farm, hence the name, yet, surplus vegetables are sold in a small farm shop. The bags are available weekly in two different sizes, small and large, and need to be pre-ordered two days before the regular pick-up times, usually Thursdays from 2-6 pm. The farm offers scheduled visits to the farm, for example for school classes, as well as public open days, often tied to specific events such as lambing or bird surveys. Members of the CSA scheme are regularly invited to come to the farm to help with harvesting, planting or to support with other work related to vegetables. By only growing vegetables during summer and autumn, the CSA scheme stops for a few months during the winter, but the farmers stay connected with the CSA members through a WhatsApp group throughout that time. The WhatsApp group is also used to inform the members about other volunteer opportunities, remind them to pick up their bags at the farm and update them on other farm activities. Further, the group is used as a space to exchange recommendations for recipes to be made of unknown vegetables with some of the

participants reporting that they share pictures of the meals prepared from the produce.

In its structure, the CSA scheme set up by Vale Farm is a farmer led initiative, as James' and Mary's farm existed in the village long before they decided to establish a CSA scheme. Further, the members are not involved in any management decisions but primarily support the farm financially through their advance payments. Through the CSA-exclusive harvesting opportunities as well as the WhatsApp group, a close relationship between the members and the farm is established, which distinguishes the Vale Farm scheme from a simple box scheme. Even though the farm is not listed with the CSA Network UK, its methods of operating align with the network's core values (see Chapter 2.2). Vale Farm aims "to offer good, healthy and sustainable food to families who live around the farm. Simple as that." (Vale Farm, n.d.). This statement perfectly aligns with the one common practice that most of the CSA schemes could agree on, which is producing quality produce and sharing the rewards with the community (Volz et al., 2016, p. 113).

The scheme also carries characteristics of the new social movements described by DeLind & Ferguson (1999) and Ostrom (1997). New social movements are not interested in overthrowing larger institutions, but rather transform the existing ones. In the case of Vale Farm, this expresses itself in the farm's aim to provide an alternative to vegetables and meat of the conventional food system on a local scale, rather than working on a transformation on a national or even global level of the entire system. Further, the members participating in the Vale Farm CSA scheme also show the characteristics described by Ostrom (1997), like affiliation with the socio-economic middle class, highly educated backgrounds and concernment with lifestyle issues on an economic rather than on a political level (Ostrom, 1997).

## The CSA Member Households

This section aims to provide a more detailed picture of the Vale Farm member households, specifically of the interviewees' overall plots. These depictions are based mostly on the voice-centred relational method's first reading. As the scheme supplied more members than the ones interviewed for this project, this section will also draw on data collected for the T-GRAINS project.

For the first round of interviews, the ones which were considered for this research, the Vale Farm CSA supplied 18 member households which had between one and five members. A more detailed insight into the households' composition can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Composition Vale Farm Households

Households	N° of children <sup>1</sup>	N° of households	Members per household
Couples without children	-	7	2
Single raising parent	1	1	2
Couples with children	2	7	4
	3	2	5

As none of the household had any extended kin, such as parents or siblings, or non-kin living with them, the maximum number of household members was five. However, some of the interviewees were related to one another and one of the interviewees used for this research talked about her brother and his wife being part of the scheme, while another person had her mother taking part in the scheme as well. Of the total 17 interviews conducted for the T-GRAINS project, 12 were with women and 5 with men. However, for some of the participants, their partners were present during the interviews. Some of them remained in the background and were only involved in answering the questions very little, but some of them were equally answering questions and part of the interview. It was in fact the observation of the ratio between men and women interviewees that initially drew my attention to the gender dynamics of CSA member households.

The interviews selected for this project represented a quite homogenous group in terms of ethnicity, as they were all white. However, the group could be divided in terms of age and children living in the household. Of all interviewed households, only two had women working a full-time job in the paid labour force, however, only one of them had children living with her in the household. Four of the interviewed households had children under 18 living with them in the household, with only one of those children not going to primary school anymore. One of the interviewees and her partner had adult children, who were not living in the household anymore. The remaining two interviewees did not have any children. Some basic demographic information is summed up in Table 1.

<sup>1</sup> Underaged, living in the household.

Table 2. Interviewed Households

Interview	Pseudonym	Age	Children <sup>2</sup>	Occupation	Adjusted Income <sup>3</sup>
Interview 1	Percy & Anna	40 & 40	3	Environment Advisor & “Household Manager”	£15,625
Interview 2	Nia & Jac	39 & 40	2	Civil Engineers	£35,714
Interview 3	Rebecca	43	2	Bookkeeper	£32,143
Interview 4	Alan & Diana	61 & 59	-	Retired	£50,000
Interview 5	Sophia	37	-	Government Inspector	£45,000
Interview 6	Claudia	59	-	Practice Manager	£50,000
Interview 7	Viola	47	2	Primary School Teacher	£25,000
Interview 8	Carla	49	-	Currently not employed	£20,000

Yet, the first reading of the voiced-centred relational method is concerned with the personal stories of the participants, which is more than just the basic demographic presented here. One of the recurring storylines that came up with all the participating households with children living in them, was their connection to the farm through their children, as the members’ children went to the same school as the children of Mary and James, the owners of the farm (Interview 1-3 & 7). Thus, their communication would extend the CSA related interactions to private interactions around the school. Other interviewees reported being friends with or neighbours of other participants (Interviews 5, 6 & 8) and, as already mentioned above, others had extended family participating in the scheme (Interview 2 & 7). Only Percy and Anna as well as Alan and Diana, who had just recently moved to the area, did not report any other connection to other farm members through channels other than the scheme. Further, except Sophia and Carla, all interviewees lived in the village closest to the farm and would thus see each other around there from time to time (Interview 4). This gives the impression that different communities already existed outside of the schemes, that were now connected through their interest in sustainable and local food production. All interviewees

<sup>2</sup> Underaged, living in the household.

<sup>3</sup> Per year after taxes. The questionnaire initially just asked for an estimation in brackets of £10,000, ranging from < £20,000 to > £50,000. This estimation was subsequently adjusted by using the OECD equivalence scale, in order to analyse households with different compositions. The scale aims to reduce the wealth gap by adjusting a household’s income based on its size and composition, assigning different values on adults, second adults and dependents. This can be used to calculate how much income is needed in different households to achieve the same standard of living. A detailed instruction of this process can be found in Anyaegbu (2010).

were part of the “5 Mile Veg” WhatsApp group, but not everyone actively participated by contributing regularly.

However, some of the households were already connected to the farm through the meat box scheme that the farm also offers. For some of the interviewed members, this is how they found out and signed up for the vegetable bag scheme (Interviews 1, 3, 4-6 & 8). Others found out about the scheme online, for example through the farm’s social media channels or simply through passing by the farm and seeing their advertisements (Interview 1, 3). Another means through which members found their way to the CSA scheme was by word of mouth, in other words hearing about the scheme from friends or extended family members that were already a part of the scheme. Claudia e.g. found out through her neighbour Michelle, and Viola was given farm vegetables by her mother and decided to join as well (Interviews 6 & 7).

Part of the overall plot was also their reasons to participate in the CSA scheme, which were just as diverse as the ways they found out about it. While for some specific health issues, such as cancer treatments or high cholesterol, were the key drivers (Interview 6 & 8), others mentioned taste and specifically the childhood memories that the taste of the vegetables brought (Interview 5 & 6). All interviewees reported supplementing their weekly share of vegetables with food items bought at other places. Most of them bought at large supermarket chains, as they explained they posed some kind of convenience to them, be it being on their way to work, specific items they had available, or their range of products. However, the participants also mentioned sourcing food from other places, which would be considered alternative food producers, such as zero waste shops, farmers markets or other local farm shops. Additional drivers which led interviewees to join the CSA scheme, as well as household’s grocery shopping patterns and food consumption will be explored in the following second and third readings’ findings section of this thesis.

## 7. The Second & Third Reading – Findings

As the primary aim of this research is to *examine the gendered labour division in CSA households*, the findings of the interviews will be primarily divided into men respondents and women respondents. However, other patterns based on other characteristics than gender emerged during the different readings. These include parameters like age or children living in the household. Accordingly, patterns that may be linked to those characteristics other than gender will be paid attention to in these chapters as well.

### Expectations

As already mentioned in the Methods chapter of this thesis, at the heart of the voice-centred relational method stand the interview participants as well as the researcher. Therefore Mauthner & Doucet (1997), in their version of the method, included the recording of the reader's (the researcher's) response. Including my response to each of the interviews would, again, exceed the scope of this thesis. However, I have argued that the recording of the researcher's expectations before analysing the interviews is just as essential to the transparency of the research process as recording their responses to it. Therefore, I would like to briefly outline what I expected to find during the readings of the interviews.

When I first listened to the pilot interviews conducted with other members of the scheme, who were all women except one heterosexual couple, this ratio between the number of men and women interviewees immediately stood out to me. Thus, I was expecting a similar ratio in the selected interviews – an expectation that turned out to be accurate. Based on the superficial literature scan that I carried out as well as the lectures on gender relations that I had attended throughout my master's programme, I was expecting women to be at disadvantage to some degree. However, when I discussed this idea with friends and fellow researchers in Cardiff, I had the impression that I was underestimating men in the sense that they took on much more responsibility than I thought they would. Especially in the context of alternative food production, I was expecting this to an even greater degree, as I

thought the participants in those schemes would have a general awareness of underlying issues of oppression in our current economic system, as that is the primary concern of certain types of AFNs.

However, as Mauthner & Doucet (1998, p.7) point out, data analysis is not a discrete phase of the research process but an ongoing process throughout the research process, meaning that it could be influenced by external factors as well. In my case, my expectations before and during the analysis of the collected data were influenced by my long-term involvement with the T-GRAINS project. As I was supporting their team with interviewing CSA members and members of the public in East Anglia and later with preparing the data for the quantitative analysis, I already had a superficial overview of the answers given by participants of other CSA schemes. This first overview generally coincided with the superficial literature scan and showed that women were the primary food providers of most households. Accordingly, I was expecting to find the same patterns in the interviews selected for this project but with some hope, that the participants would have a general awareness about their food work behaviour. In general, I can deduce that I may have been focussing on finding subtle signs of women's oppression as well as signs of restrictions to men's ability to express their identity because of society's standards.

Of course, the argument of data analysis being an ongoing process remained true throughout the different readings of the voice-centred relational method, which is why I also recorded my response to each interview. My responses to each of the interviews can be found in Appendix I.

## The Voice of 'I'

The reading for the voice of 'I' is primarily concerned with examining how the interviewees talk about themselves (Berglund et al., 2018; Mauthner & Doucet, 1998; Paliadelis & Cruickshank, 2008). Most participants, men and women, had the tendency to use the pronoun 'I' more often than 'we' or other pronouns. Yet, there were some slight differences between how the men interviewees and the women interviewees use those pronouns, as well as differences in how interviewees with children and interviewees without children used them.

### Gendered Differences

With both men and women, reading for the pronoun 'I' primarily gave some insights into which activities the interviewees undertook, and in that sense also which responsibilities and tasks they assigned to themselves in the household's day-to-day food provisioning, including those taken on in the context of the CSA

membership. For the women, this included tasks such as planning, cooking meals and grocery shopping (Interviews 1-3, Interview 6). Oftentimes, these also include things that they do for other members of the household, for example buying organic meat or milk for their children or cooking different meals to cater to everyone's needs and preferences (Interviews 1 & 2). Another task that most of the women interviewees assigned to themselves by using the pronoun 'I' was the decision-making around food sourcing by gathering information on sustainability as well as health aspects of the food and coordinating them with the tastes of the household members (Interview 2, 4, 6, 7).

In the context of the CSA membership, besides indicating which organisational responsibilities they took on, this was often the only time that the women interviewees used the pronoun 'I' to voice personal feelings and interests, such as interest in animals or land management, as well as activities offered by the farm, e.g. the bird survey (Interview 3 & 5). Thus, the women predominantly used the pronoun 'I' to indicate activities and tasks that they *do* rather than to indicate things that they *are* or *feel*. If they did speak about their own characteristics, it was often in comparison to other CSA members. Rebecca, for example, did this when saying that she is not "that clever of a cooker [sic]" or not "that creative" compared to other members of the scheme, who make chutneys and give feedback to the farm (Interview 3). Another female, Sophia, felt that she was "inadequate" compared to other members (Interview 5).

The men interviewees also gave insights into tasks that they take on in their households' labour with food by using the pronoun 'I'. However, their responsibilities appeared to be more specific, such as buying and preparing meat or baking bread (Interview 1, 4, 6). One task that both main men interviewees spoke about extensively using the pronoun 'I' was giving advice or feedback on a weekly basis (Interview 1, 4) and being involved in discussions with the farm owner James on topics such as the cultivation of vegetables (Interview 4). Both male interviewees painted a much more detailed image of their preferences, hobbies and areas of perceived expertise with their use of the pronoun 'I' compared to the majority of women interviewees.

Giving feedback to the farm was a topic that was spoken about using the pronoun 'we' by some of the women interviewees. This, as well as other cases of using 'we' to indicate decision-making processes, gives the reader the impression that the speakers perceive their households as units with the same interests, priorities and hobbies (Interview 2). Some women also used the pronoun 'we' when speaking of eating habits that the household has achieved, as for example eating less meat, eating organic or having fewer cheats (Interview 1 & 2). Generally, during the interviews with women members, the topic of meat was often something that was

spoken about using the pronoun 'we' (Interviews 1-5). This stands in contrast to the pronoun 'I', which the male interviewees predominantly used to indicate that processing meat falls into their range of responsibilities.

The use of the pronoun 'I' proved to be a good indicator of which tasks the interviewees assigned to themselves. However, several of the women used the pronoun 'we' instead of 'I' when speaking about tasks that elsewhere in the interview, when explicitly asked about, proved to be their responsibility. This included activities such as cooking (particularly adapting recipes), grocery shopping, and preparing food for consumption (Interview 1 & 3). Similarly, the male interviewees often used the pronoun 'we' for tasks that are in fact performed by women household members. This becomes apparent when Percy speaks about cooking with the vegetables provided by the bag and said "we tailored our methodology to turn something that we wouldn't perhaps enjoy that much into something we liked" (Interview 1), suggesting that the task of planning and cooking meals is a joint effort in their household.

Yet, in more specific instances, he explained that "I actually don't know... I can't remember what she did there" or "Anna found a fantastic recipe", implying that it is actually his spouse who is responsible for "tailoring [their] methodology" (Interview 1). Percy's answers throughout the interview were guided by this discrepancy between his idea of labour allocation in the household and the actual labour allocation in the household, which was only revealed when his wife joined the interview. While this interview is quite an extreme case, similar tendencies can be found in the interview with man interviewee Alan. He did recognise that his wife is the one adapting the recipes or finding new ones, yet in other situations, such as decisions around grocery shopping, he used the pronoun 'we' even though later, when asked explicitly, it became clear that these are actually tasks that his wife Diana takes on (Interview 4).

As already touched on above, the pronoun 'we' was used by the female interviewees predominantly for activities that the household does together, such as general food consumption or cooking, and particularly activities around the CSA scheme, such as visiting the farm or looking at the animals (Interview 1-3, 7). With households that had young children, some of the woman interviewees referred to themselves and their partners as 'we', mostly when speaking about their role as parents. In these cases, the pronoun 'we' was used to highlight a difference in food habits or activities from their children, for example a meat-free diet (Interview 2). Only the interviewee Rebecca used the pronoun 'we' to refer to herself and her two children as a way to separate their routines and habits from the father's food choices, which differed a lot from the healthy, vegetable-based meals cooked from scratch by the mother and the children. Interestingly, in the same interview, the

mother also used the pronoun ‘we’ to refer to herself and her daughter, “the girls”, and ‘they’ to refer to her husband and her son, “the boys”. She predominantly did this as a way to explain characteristics that “the girls” have, such as being chatty, which tasks they take on in the household, such as ordering food items and the “interesting things” or, for “the boys”, their lack of interest in cooking. However, the pronoun ‘they’ was mostly used to refer to the children in the household, other members of the scheme, especially if there were no children in the household, or the owners of the farm Mary and James.

### Childless Households vs. Households with Children

At this point, there exists a distinction between the households with children and without children. The above example of Rebecca, who used the pronoun ‘we’ to refer to her children and herself, as well as other households with children, mostly used the pronoun ‘they’ to refer to their children and ‘we’ when speaking about their household. Besides household activities or general food consumption, female interviewees with young children in the household often used the pronoun ‘we’ to speak about preferences, for example apples in Rebecca’s case. In this instance, she started her sentence by saying “I like local apples [...]” but immediately reworded this as “[...] we like local apples” (Interview 3), thus turning from voicing her own preference to presenting it as her entire household’s preference. As already touched on above, the mostly woman interviewees, who spoke through this mode of thinking, conveyed a picture of a household with the same interests and priorities around food provisioning. The same tendency showed with the older households, who no longer have any children in the house. However, the households without children did not seem to have the tendency to *groupthink*<sup>4</sup>. In these interviews, much more could be told about the female interviewees’ preferences, habits and, in Sophia’s case, insecurities (Interviews 5 & 8).

While the interviewees in households with children predominantly used the pronoun ‘they’ to speak about their children, the ones without children further used the pronoun to speak about other households participating in the CSA. Some of them also explicitly stated that they did not perceive themselves as active members of the community (Interviews 4-6 & 8). The reasons for that varied, Carla for example was not aware of the idea of creating a community around the scheme and Sophia felt that, due to the demographics of her household and her lack of experience around farming, she would “look stupid” and did not “feel like [she fits] into that group at all” (Interview 5). The older households without children further used the pronoun ‘they’ to speak about generations other than theirs, to which they

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<sup>4</sup> *Groupthink* is defined as “a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group” (Janis, 1972, p. 9). As individuals express themselves in this mode of thinking, the strive for unity overrules the “motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action” (ibid.).

also attribute certain characteristics, such as increased use of technology. In Claudia's case, she seems to perceive a younger generation as providing food for their children irresponsibly and based on convenience rather than nutritional value. This is opposed to her own generation and maybe her children, who "were the last ones that actually ate food that was actually made from scratch" (Interview 6). Even though Claudia just refers to those other generations as "people", the topics she is speaking about when she mentions "them", are usually connotated with her understanding of women's responsibility, such as cooking from scratch or knowledge about different vegetables and their preparation. Thus, her critique of perceived shortcomings of other generations is thus not directed at "people" but women in particular.

## Cultural Context and Social Structures

In this third reading, the interviewees' experiences are placed within a broader social and cultural context (Giwa et al., 2014; Mauthner & Doucet, 1998) in accordance with Allen & Sachs' (2007) theoretical framework. As none of the interviewees have a background in agricultural production, the *material* domain of the framework was omitted from this reading. Thus, this reading consisted of reading for the *socio-cultural* domain, which describes the intersection of gender and the work with food in the private sphere, and the *corporeal* domain, which is primarily concerned with the relationship of women to their bodies (Allen & Sachs, 2007). Again, gender was not the only parameter that influenced these domains; the age of the interviewees and whether or not they had children could also be linked to their differing responses.

### The *Socio-Cultural* Domain

With most of the interviews, the explicit questions on labour allocation between the household members as well as the findings of the second reading for the voice of 'I' gave some insights into the gendered labour dynamics of food provisioning within the participating households. Most of the households showed a traditional division of labour with most of the responsibility for food provisioning being taken on by the woman or, in some cases with daughters, the women. This was found in almost every household, no matter the employment status or the presence of children in the household. The occupational status of the women included full-time jobs (Interview 2, 5, 6), part-time occupations (Interview 3 & 7) and no employment in the paid labour force for various reasons, e.g. retirement or being "in-between" occupations (Interviews 4 & 8). One of the women also worked as a "house manager", which also meant that she is not a part of the paid labour force (Interview 4). In another situation, one of the women explicitly stated that she gave up her

former occupation for another one where she could work part-time and from home to take care of the “munchkins”, her two children (Interview 3). Of all households, only two had women working a full-time job in the paid labour force, however, only Nia had children living with her in the household. In this household, both parents were only able manage working a full-time job because they had the option to outsource daytime childcare to Nia’s mother. Yet, each of the household’s men was holding – or had retired from – a full-time occupation.

### *Mental Work and the Equalisation of Gendered Household Food Work*

For most of the women, the act of food provisioning included a range of different activities, such as planning meals, going grocery shopping, preparing and cooking meals, and budgeting the household’s food expenses. Combined with additional household tasks, such as childcare and cleaning for some of the women, these responsibilities made up for an unpaid ‘second shift’ besides their paid occupation (Interview 3), or even another full-time job (Interview 2). While the participants’ answers at times suggested that for some of the households some of the tasks were shared between the partners, the reading for the voice of ‘I’ as well as the answers to more explicit questions revealed that the lion’s share of the organising, mental work remained with the women. For example, in Anna’s case, this included catering to and coordinating the different requirements of household members in terms of likes, dislikes and nutritional value. The sum of these leads to her having to cook a few different meals every day and tricking her children into eating healthy food they would usually not like (Interview 1).

While the pattern cannot be found to this extent in other households, the mental work behind food provisioning is evident in the other households, too. Especially when it comes to decision-making of various kinds, for example where to go and what to buy from the shops, it is primarily the women of the households who are responsible. With Alan and Diana, this showed when they spoke about the scenario of being in the shop and having to choose between organic and non-organic produce and Alan asked his wife “what do we do?” (Interview 4). Or, in Viola’s case, she said that “I just tell him the reasons why. And then he just agrees with me” (Interview 7).

In order to make reasonable and informed decisions for the benefit of the whole household, someone in the household needs to educate themselves on the sustainability of food items, including the use of plastic, seasonality, locality and organic cultivation. This affects long term decisions, such as asking the farm owner Mary and finding out about organic milk sourcing, as well as on-site decisions in the supermarket about plastic packaging and prioritizing certain characteristics over others. In most households, this is a responsibility the women take on. Nia, for example, spoke about where she sources her milk from, saying “[...] I need to find

out. [...] I need to ask Mary [...]" (Interview 2). Also on the issues of food sourcing options, Claudia was researching some options that her neighbour had recommended to her after the interview: "hence the computer is up. I'm gonna [sic] go this afternoon now and get in contact with them." (Interview 6).

Thus, besides the physical work of preparing the meals and going grocery shopping, the women interviewees undertake a vast range of mental work to ensure adequate food provisioning for their households. While some of the households suggest that much of their labour with food in the private sphere, especially cooking and preparing meals, is divided according to availability, it is important to highlight that this is only a fraction of the activities that make up food provisioning.

As for the men of the households, one narrative that kept resurfacing throughout the interviews was their contribution to the household's food work. The men, just as the women household members, took on certain food provisioning responsibilities. Yet, their responsibilities were usually restricted to a specific set of activities, such as the preparation of meat, picking berries or baking bread (Interview 1, 3, 4, 7). In the worst case, the men's activities and preferences added some extra workload to the women's responsibilities, such as with Rebecca, who explained that "It's like having three children when it comes to cooking with [her husband]" (Interview 3). But even in the households that appeared to at least try to divide their labour somewhat fairly among them, the issue of mental labour resurfaced. In Nia and Jac's household, for example, the responsibility to cook is with whoever gets home first. As Jac said that "every time you forget something, you say 'can you just nip in and get it'. So, I spent half an hour yesterday buying extra milk or whatever", it seems like he also takes on responsibilities when it comes to grocery shopping. Yet, while it might seem like an equalization of household labour, it is in fact not, as firstly, it is only one particular task that he is undertaking which, secondly, his wife Nia has given him (Interview 2). A similar dynamic can be observed with Claudia and her husband. While Claudia explicitly says that they both participate in preparing the main meal, she also mentions that her husband is her "commis chef", thus only taking on basic instructions, the mental workload is entirely Claudia's to carry. Despite this limited responsibility, the main men interviewees explained in detail their contribution to the household's food work, which included making their own bread and getting the perceived best ingredients for it or cooking jam from the self-picked berries (Interviews 1 & 4). Compared to the range of responsibilities that their spouses hold; these only represent a selective choice of food provisioning tasks. Further, also in the households with a women interviewee, the men often only perform tasks instructed to them by their woman partners, such as grocery shopping for specific items (Interview 2-4).

### *Meat*

Another topic that came up in some interviews was the consumption of meat (Interviews 1, 3, 5, 7). This topic was predominantly linked to men. Either indirectly, for example by Rebecca saying that her husband was “definitely a carnivore” (Interview 3) or directly with Percy (Interview 1). In the case of Percy, the issue of meat consumption closely relates to the topic of labour allocation in the household, as Percy is the one responsible for the purchasing and preparation of meat. Yet again, this cannot be interpreted as an act of democratisation of household labour, since he is the only one eating meat in his household. His wife Anna is a vegetarian and, according to her, the children do not really like meat and only have it if their father has it. His meat consumption stands in stark contrast to his claim of being an environmentalist (Interview 1). On the other hand, there is Viola’s household that recently adopted a vegetarian diet through the incentive of the 17-year old son. Unlike Anna, Viola is not willing to cook a different meal for each family member, which is why the household stopped buying meat altogether. For her, this is not a problem, as she was a vegetarian when she was younger, and her man partner does not mind “as long as it tastes nice” (Interview 7).

Unrelated to any gendered dynamics, other interviewees spoke of their meat consumption in relation to sustainability or animal welfare standards (Interview 3, 5). Sophia mentions the importance of animal welfare in her food provisioning several times, but also mentions that both she and her partner have become “a bit more squeamish about animal welfare stuff. [But] not to the extent [they will] stop eating them [sic]” (Interview 5). A similar dynamic can be observed with Rebecca, who thinks it is important that her kids learn how the meat they consume is produced, which is why she takes them to the farm to look at the animals. As a result, her children do not like the thought of animals being killed, although if their father eats meat, they will still have it. Rebecca herself does not “have a problem with eating meat”, she just does not like the idea of the animals suffering during the killing (Interview 5).

### *CSA-Membership*

Membership of the Vale Farm CSA scheme adds another layer of activities and tasks to the already existing ones in household food provisioning. In addition to the general labour with food in the private sphere already touched upon in the previous section, the participants mentioned additional tasks that need to be taken care of through the CSA membership. These include picking up the vegetables from the farm during a designated time slot as well as returning the empty bags to the farm on time. As the vegetables are usually much dirtier than the ones available at the supermarket, more time needs to be scheduled for meal preparation. As Anna says, it takes “a lot of time washing [and] a lot more time [scrubbing] it, peeling,

chopping” which generally makes it “definitely more time consuming” (Interview 1). Further, as the members receive fresh produce every week, much more planning is required to use up as much of the produce as possible before the next bag arrives. According to different interviewees, the vegetables received in the bag dictate their weekly meals, which means that recipes need to be developed and adapted to whatever is in the bag. Almost all interviewees reported that they had received vegetables in the bag that they were not familiar with and then had to research how to prepare them (Interview 1, 4, 6, 7). Plus, the members of the scheme have a common WhatsApp group, of which all the interviewees were part, through which the owner connects with the members, and members also connect to each other by posting recipes and pictures or coordinating pick-ups. Thus, the CSA membership does bring a set of additional tasks with it, which need to be managed by the households.

The previous analysis of household food provisioning responsibilities already revealed that most of the day-to-day responsibilities are taken on by the women of the households, with the men only performing selected tasks. The same pattern can be observed with the responsibility for the activities tied to CSA membership. In Rebecca’s household, for example, her husband is the one responsible for the collection of the bag, yet this is only so she can get the kids into bed (Interview 3).

However, most of the women did not perceive the CSA membership and its associated additional labour as a burden. On the contrary, most of them described receiving the veg box as making things easier for them for various reasons. Nia, for example, explained that receiving a weekly set of vegetables from the farm poses an easy solution, as this takes a part of the responsibility to source sustainable and healthy food away from her because “you know you’re doing it right” (Interview 2). And even though the household cooks from scratch six days a week, the recipe ideas provided by the farm in the WhatsApp group were quick and easy the first time they tried them. She also explained that cooking and adapting to the new vegetables gets easier over time, which takes the stress out (Interview 2). Diana also perceives receiving a box with vegetables every week as helpful and making things easier for her, as she does not have to think about what to buy every week (Interview 4). Sophia explained that she sees the vegetables provided by the farm as simplifying her cooking as it is “shrinking [the endless] possibilities” between which she previously had to decide what she would cook. Now she has a list of recipes to cook, which are quite basic, and thus require less time to make (Interview 5). Claudia mentioned that the weekly vegetables motivate her to be more creative and inventive with her cooking, which she perceives as being a good thing. However, she also mentioned that they experiment with adapting her recipes on the weekends when there is more time available, implying that this does represent a more time-consuming activity. Additionally, with her husband only being her

“commis chef”, it seems that it is her responsibility to come up with ideas. This also reveals that she sees it as part of her responsibility to improve her cooking for herself and her household, a challenge that she nevertheless enjoys (Interview 6). A similar feeling was voiced by Viola, who also indicated that she is expected to put effort into being creative and evolving her cooking when saying she “got stuck in a little bit of a wrap [...]. Just going back to the same sort of meals [...].” which is why “[she] had to go make something different” with the unfamiliar vegetables. Yet, she has been told by her family that her cooking has improved and, even though she never thought that she would enjoy cooking, she did enjoy experimenting with the recipes provided by the farm owners in the WhatsApp group (Interview 7). The general idea that was conveyed by the interviewees was that, even though the preparation of the vegetables is more time consuming than processing conventional produce, receiving a regular vegetable box from the local farm reduced the time spent on grocery shopping and eased the decision-making of food sourcing. Further, Rebecca also mentioned that even though it initially seemed more expensive to receive the vegetable box, in the long run it has brought down her weekly shopping costs (Interview 3).

#### *Other Households & Doing Gender*

The reading for cultural context also includes reading for dominant and normative conceptions, in this case of the stereotypes of a Vale Farm CSA household. Some of the interviewees spoke about their perception of and communication with other members of the scheme through the WhatsApp group (Interview 1, 5, 8). All the interviewed households were part of the group, mostly the women. Besides reminders to pick up and drop off the bags at the farm, one prominent topic that seems to be shared in the group concerns questions about preparing the sometimes unfamiliar vegetables. While some of the members enjoyed this aspect of communication, others perceived it as “annoying” (Interview 8) or even somewhat intimidating.

The interview with Sophia gave some deep insights into what she considers to be the stereotype of a Vale Farm CSA member, which was in part confirmed or expanded by other members (Interview 2, 3, 5). Sophia’s household consists only of her and her partner, the couple does not have any children. However, having children is one of the characteristics that both associate with being a member of the scheme. Sophia recounted their experience of going to one of the events on the farm and how they felt “really stupid” around everyone with small children. Sophia also perceives a certain familiarity among some of the other CSA members as well as the owners of the farm, who she described as “a bit of a gang” (Interview 5). This is again rooted in their children, as some of them visit the same school as the farm owners’ children. In addition, those households who do not have children living with them, at least also live close to the farm in “the village” (Interview 5) and seem

to know each other more because of this. The activities on the WhatsApp group, where the members upload pictures of the meals they have prepared of the vegetables provided by the farm, make Sophia feel a bit “inadequate” compared to the others, as she keeps her dishes simple because she does not have the time to cook elaborate meals. Nia also voiced similar experiences of interactions with other CSA members, namely her brother and her sister-in-law, who she describes as an “angelic” household, making Nia and her partner “feel guilty about everything” (Interview 2). In the context of the CSA activities she also mentioned that they do not participate “as often as [they] *should* have [emphasis added]”, suggesting that she also has an idea of how involved a member of the scheme should be (ibid.). However, Nia does recognise that it is not due to a personal failure that the household cannot live up to the standards set by her sister-in-law, but a lack of time rooted in her full-time occupation. Her sister-in-law, on the other hand, only works part time and, accordingly, has more time to invest in sustainable food sourcing options and live up to those standards. Rebecca also describes how she is “not that clever a cooker [sic]” compared to what she sees on the WhatsApp group, although she thinks it is a nice way to learn (Interview 3). She also spoke about the general expectations of society on parents:

“It feels like the government wants it all. You have... both parents have to go out to work to pay their mortgage, but then there is no help for childcare costs. And then we are criticised for sending children to childcare and not looking after our elderly relatives. We can’t do it all! We either have one full time worker and one at home, who does the family stuff, or you know, survive.” (Interview 3)

Thus, she does recognise external forces to some degree, rather than seeing them as personal issues as well, and described them as constraining.

Another issue that can be found in some interviews is the reproduction of household gender roles. Several of the women reported the influences of their *mothers* specifically, not their fathers, in the context of food sourcing and cooking. As already mentioned before, Claudia touched on this issue as she spoke about the shortcomings of younger generations when it comes to cooking for their children. Throughout the interview, she gave away some information about the division of labour in her parents’ household, where her father was responsible for growing vegetables and her mother for processing them. She also stated that she is “very lucky that [her] mother taught her how to cook”, confirming that cooking was the responsibility of the women. Presumably this is a pattern that she passed on to her own children as the dynamic still exists in her own household (Interview 7). Claudia also explained that her and maybe her children’s generation are probably the last ones to know how to cook from scratch, indicating that she also passed this tradition on to her children.

Rebecca's household is another example that shows how gender specific activities and roles are developed from an early age. Throughout the interview, she referred to her husband and her son as "the boys" or "the men in [their] house" and herself and her daughter as "the girls" (but not "the women"). She then proceeded to assign certain characteristics and activities to each of them, such as "being chatty", taking care of the "interesting things" of the CSA membership and interacting with other members of the scheme ("the girls"), and being reluctant to eat vegetables and less interested in cooking ("the boys").

## The Corporeal Domain

The second domain that was focused on during the third reading was the corporeal domain. This domain describes the physical and emotional relationship between women and food (Allen & Sachs, 2007). The authors claim that this is one of three domains where women remain disadvantaged, yet only a few interviewees spoke about things that would fall under this domain.

Most of the households with children only mentioned the relationship between bodies and food with regard to their children, focussing their concerns on their children's needs (Interview 1-3). This also extends to man interviewee Percy, a father of two children, who struggles with balancing his family's health with his environmentally healthy food requirement. He used the example of a banana, which is not sustainable in terms of carbon emissions but the "children have to be healthy, so bananas are a quick fix" (Interview 1). For Percy, participation in the CSA scheme is therefore a way of ensuring that his children are "eating good quality food [that has] not been affected by potentially nasty chemicals" (Interview 1). For Rebecca, membership in the scheme is also part of "wanting to eat more healthily and responsibly". She also does not mention her own relationship with food but mentions that her increased awareness of health increased through having a baby and "just [wanting] what's best for their tummies" (Interview 3).

In the households without children, the main topics concerning the relationship between bodies and food were specific health issues, such as Claudia's husband's high cholesterol or Carla's cancer treatment. In both cases, their respective health was a "key driver" to pay increased attention to which foods reach their bodies and ultimately their membership in the Vale Farm CSA scheme (Interview 6 & 8). For Carla, this increased concern with her own health and body is a reason to travel longer distances between various places to purchase the specific items she wants (Interview 8). Carla is the only interviewee who explicitly spoke of her own body, as opposed to Claudia, who adjusted her cooking as well as her own diet to cater to the needs of her husband (Interview 6). In the interview with Diana and Alan, the factor of age added to this, with Diana saying that as you get older "you can't eat

the volume without putting on loads of weight” (Interview 4). Yet, none of the men or women interviewees mentioned being on a specific diet with the aim of losing weight. The reasons for specific diets, e.g. veganism, vegetarianism or plant-based diets, were rather rooted in concerns around environmental sustainability or animal welfare (Interview 2, 3, 7).

## 8. Discussion

This penultimate chapter aims to raise my findings to a more general level and relate them to the issues discussed in the background chapters of this thesis. Further, in this part, I intend to answer the research questions: first, outline the gendered labour division around food provisioning in CSA membership households, second, which role receiving a weekly vegetable bag plays in the households' food work and ultimately if the members perceive a change in their work with food.

### Gendered Division of Food Work in CSA Households

The findings of the second and third readings suggested that very much of the issues raised by other authors (e.g. Cairns & Johnston, 2015; DeLind & Ferguson, 1999; DeVault, 1991; Ostrom, 1997; Som Castellano, 2015, 2016) also applied to the members of the Vale Farm CSA scheme. This started with the traditional division of food work, which was found, at least in tendency, in almost all households. In other words, women were mostly responsible for the physical as well as mental tasks involved in food work, regardless of their employment status in the paid labour force. Nia, for example, is only woman able to have a full-time occupation outside her household because she outsources childcare and food work to her mother. While this does not confirm the claims made by various authors that care work is often outsourced to poor, immigrant and/or women of colour, it is yet again outsourced to another woman (Allen & Sachs, 2007; Cairns & Johnston, 2015). For other women interviewees, the responsibility of caring work they took on cumulated into a "second shift" (Som Castellano, 2016), keeping them at home to take care of their children and the household work. As DeVault (1991) also explains, once the decision of a 'house manager' is made, they inevitably also take on responsibility of food work. This seems to be the case for each of the households with women not taking on a full-time employment in the paid work force.

Various scholars have claimed that involvement in AFNs, and particularly CSAs, results in an additional workload for the primary care worker of the household (Allen & Sachs, 2007; Som Castellano, 2016). Simply based on the tasks outlined

by the interviewed participants, this was accurate. Additional tasks that they described were physical as well as mental in their nature. However, a much larger part of additional tasks through the CSA membership seemed to be mental labour, like the coordination of the pick-up times, using up all the vegetables provided by the time the next bag would arrive as to not to waste them and communication with the farm. Yet, the participation in the Vale Farm CSA scheme posed one significant advantage seldom considered in other scholars' writings, which is that they sell more than just vegetables, as the farm also provides a meat box scheme. Several of the participants also bought or at least had bought that meat box regularly before. Thus, by sourcing meat and vegetables from Vale Farm, two major food groups are covered in terms of ethical consumption. This could mean in return that less time and effort need to be put into educating themselves on ethical food sourcing in order to make an informed and reasonable decision for the benefit of the whole household. Further, the farm cooperates with a local bakery to sell sourdough bread at their farm shop. Another aspect of mental care work that was perceived to decrease through the CSA membership is the decision-making around meal preparations. Different strategies were applied by the women to explain this. The bottom line was that through the regular provisioning of vegetables, their cooking routine had adapted to a much more basic palette of meals that they made small modifications to, depending on which vegetables were in the bag. Thus, counted by the number of tasks, membership in a CSA scheme might increase the mental and physical workload, the primary food workers of the Vale Farm CSA often did not seem to perceive it as such.

## Men's Responsibility

The role of men in household food work often remains overlooked by scholars. Yet, a recurring theme that emerged during the interviews was the role of men in the household and their involvement in the household's food work. Similar to what Meah & Jackson (2013) argue, it appeared as if men's responsibilities in the household were mostly restricted to a specific set of certain tasks. These tasks either showed to be more of a lifestyle or hobby than an actual contribution to the household's food work, such as picking berries or baking bread, or they were tasks given to them by their women partners, for example the occasional stop at the supermarket for top ups. This pattern aligns with Som Castellano's (2015, 2016) claim that men might *do* the task, but it is women who are *responsible* to ensure that the task has been executed. Even further, I would argue that women are also responsible to clearly assign the task to someone.

Accordingly, the best-case situation in the interviews was that men supported the household food work (if asked to). In the worst case, however, men's activities

around food in the household seemed to pose an additional workload to the women, which could also be found in the responses of the Vale Farm CSA members, confirming that there is still a gender gap when it comes to household food work. This also confirms the notion that the relationship between women, food and their spouses and children is often a complicated one, where choices are mostly made to satisfy other household members (DeVault, 1991). Yet, CSA membership and the activities on the farm connected, appeared to be an access point for some men to get involved with food and their households' food work.

## *Doing Gender & Household Food Work*

Another frequent point of discussion for many scholars is the connection between food and *doing gender*. As described earlier in this thesis, *doing gender* refers to the idea that gender is not something that individuals *are* but something that individuals *do*. Further, what is considered male and female is something that is learnt through social interactions and set on a macro level of social structures (Deutsch, 2007; Som Castellano, 2015; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Even though not explicitly spoken about in the interviews, several remarks made by participants related to this issue, of how food work relates to *doing gender*. DeVault (1991) claims in her influential study that there is one main source of learning how to 'do gender' through household food work: the observation of others who perform gender. The author claims that this happens through children observing their parents, particularly mothers, and second, mothers observing mothers. Both ways can be found in the Vale Farm CSA scheme participants' narratives.

The observation of other mothers' mothering in this case may be replaced by observing other women navigating the CSA scheme in their household. The Vale Farm "Five Mile Veg" WhatsApp group is an ideal (virtual) space to do that, as it moves a part of private food work to a more public level, so that other members of the scheme gain new insights into each other's otherwise private lives. This feature of observation and subsequent comparison is mentioned by participants who reported feeling "inadequate" in their performance of a CSA member because they are not "that clever a cooker [sic]" or not "that creative" (Interview 3, 5). The participation in the WhatsApp group, or more generally in the community of a CSA scheme, enables participants to observe and internalise the gender performance of other members. In the case of the Vale Farm CSA schemes, these gender performances included an increased workload for the primary food worker of the household, which ultimately supports the narrative of keeping up gender inequalities through food work.

The second way of observing is through observing kin in their performance of gender, especially relevant for children. None of the interviewees consciously reported involving their children into gendered food work activities, yet several women reported adapting food practices from their own *mothers*. Gendered practices, including food practices, are often deeply engrained into ways of being and relating to the world, while at the same time not always being well thought out or deliberately rehearsed (Cairns & Johnston, 2015). Thus, it is to assume that children learn how to express their gender through food work by observing the gendered performance of their parents, especially as they observe their mothers or other female kin, such as grandmothers during day-time child care, spending much more time working with food through their CSA membership, but lack to observe their fathers doing the same. This might also include, albeit unintentionally, encouraging girls from an early age on to get involved into cooking activities while not doing the same with boys. Or mothers themselves attributing characteristics such as being communicative, interested in being a part of a community and caring for it as well as being responsible for food provisioning activities to girls, which may contribute to the internalising of food work as an expression of gender and subsequently reproduction of gender roles on a micro level (DeVault, 1991).

Ultimately, one might ask the question, if it matters who takes on which realm of responsibility in the household, as long as both parents share it equally. Does it matter that she takes on the responsibility of household food work if takes on the equal share of managing their budget or fix things around the house? Further, some women in fact enjoy the act of cooking and choose to stay at home to take care of their family. Would it not be anti-feminist to judge them for their choices? And then, why should we complicate the private lives of individuals by making it political?

The second wave feminism, which developed in the 1960s and 1970s, was among others concerned with the notion that ‘the private is political’ in the sense, that “phenomena previously defined as non-political and ‘private’, were in fact highly political and therefore matters of public concern” (Inglis & Thorpe, 2012, p. 236). Already back then, women’s unpaid housework was perceived to be “both symptom and product” (ibid.) of wider patterns of oppressive gender relations. Arguably, society and gender relations have changed ever since, yet the notion of the personal being political remains true.

CSA schemes as part of the alternative food production movement operate on the same notion. The idea of making personal food choices that challenge the conventional mode of production may feel political and as a step towards transforming the food system. On one hand, it is a dangerous notion to withdraw oneself from a larger political context to believing a personal food choice can be

equated to social justice, as it romanticises simple acts as solutions to broader, more complex problems. On the other hand, it would be equally dangerous to discount it as meaningless (Cairns & Johnston, 2015). Thus, *doing gender* as well as changing food politics continuously needs to occur on the two inevitably intertwined levels of the personal and the larger, political context of oppression, power and inequality (Cairns & Johnston, 2015; Kahlert, 2012).

The CSA farm might also be a site where traditional activities of *doing gender* might be transformed. Presumably, through the strong connection of the farm and the school, which many of the CSA households' children visit as well, teaching children issues of food and sustainability is not a responsibility that mothers have to carry by themselves. According to remarks made by the interviewees, both boys and girls voiced strong feelings about issues of sustainability, such as animal welfare or carbon emissions. Participation in the CSA scheme reportedly increased the children's care for their environment, resulting in refusing to eat meat from an early age. As Nath (2011) argues, adapting a plant-based diet as a man may be considered as challenging the hegemonic discourse, as eating meat to this day is strongly associated with notions of masculinities. Yet, this is to be regarded with caution, as a change of diet may result in an increased workload for other women household members, who potentially have to carefully adapt their food work in order to cater to their changed needs. Accordingly, revaluing food work through actively encouraging men and boys to participate in food work further needs to be part of creating a more holistic, counterhegemonic masculinity (Cairns & Johnston, 2015; Szabo, 2013).

Thus, this change initiated outside the household needs to be further consolidated through observable action in the household. In this sense, it is Rebecca's husband setting an example for their children to eat meat as well as her division into "boys" and "girls" that in a way stands in the way of *undoing gender* in their household. *Undoing gender* defines the process of redefining ideas of what is considered 'manly' and 'womanly', which reduce differences in gender equality (Deutsch, 2007). Understanding gender and *doing gender* as a dynamic, multidimensional process which can be actively shaped on a micro level in the course of daily social interactions and routines, as well as on a macro level as institutionalised processes of social (re)production, implies that *undoing gender* must happen on both of these levels as well (Cairns & Johnston, 2015; Deutsch, 2007; Kahlert, 2012). If CSA schemes are not only perceived to be a source of local sustainable food, but also as a site of education appealing to boys and girls as well as to men and women alike, they hold the potential of initiating the process of *undoing gender* outside of the micro cosmos of the household. In this way, CSA participation might contribute to the "exciting revolution around gender roles" by creating new opportunities to do gender differently (Cairns & Johnston, 2015, p. 167).

## The “Organic Child”

In the third reading for Allen & Sachs’ conceptual *corporeal* domain, which describes “women’s physical and emotional connection to eating and food” (2007, p. 2), the findings suggested that only few of the interviewees made remarks about their own bodies, weight, or dieting. The few remarks that were made were tied to specific health issues such as high cholesterol or cancer treatments. However, a narrative that was addressed by interviewees with children was the connection to feeding children “what’s best for their tummies” (Interview 3).

This concern of providing healthy, nutritious food that is free of possibly toxic chemicals aligns with Cairns et al.’s (2013) figure of the “organic child”. The ‘organic child’ is an idealised figure, which describes the intersection of ideals concerning ethical food consumption and mothering. The result is an “idealised notion of a ‘pure’ child that is kept safe from the harmful impurities of an industrialised food system” (Cairns et al., 2013, p. 98). It is a cultural idea on the material dimension on one hand, that shapes predominantly mothers’ consumption practices. On the other hand, it is an ideological dimension, reinforcing the idea of childhood as ‘pure’ and uncontaminated. The increased awareness of the ramifications of food intake often begins with the pregnancy, a narrative that could be found in several of the women interviewees. Ultimately, this cumulates in the idea that mothers, through ethical consumption can preserve the ‘purity’ of their children and their well-being while at the same time take care of the environment and the people around them.

The interviewed parents, that is women as well as men, all expressed ideas of protecting the purity of their children through feeding them organic, sustainable food, which was often part of the motivation to join the CSA scheme. This suggests that this is not primarily a concern that falls into the responsibility of women, contradicting the notion introduced by Cairns et al (2013). Yet, as the finding showed that the majority of the households’ actual food provisioning remained with the women, the execution of this concern did, yet again, remain an issue of gendered labour division. The danger of not striving to achieve this implies the risk of being labelled an uncaring mother, unconcerned about their children as well as the environment, which may result in feelings of guilt and anxiety (Cairns et al., 2013; Cairns & Johnston, 2015). This then also circles back to the idea of *doing gender* by observing other women in their mothering practices through ethical food consumption. Particularly, the judgement of mothering practices may come from other women and mothers, as exemplified by the interviewee Claudia, who puts the blame for their failure to provide their children with nutritious food on women of younger generations (Allen & Sachs, 2007).

The other side of the “organic child” figure is the process of raising children to develop their own awareness of ethical food consumption. This idea was found in multiple interviews of the Vale Farm CSA membership scheme, as the farm purposefully offers farm days for the village’s school and is generally perceived to be very children and family friendly. Further, several women made remarks about the importance of their children knowing where their food comes from. Raising their children to be “self-governing” (Cairns & Johnston, 2015, p. 85) consumers is hence another responsibility that adds to the food work of women, particularly mothers. The children’s choices are then perceived to reflect their mothers’ choices of food consumption with the result that mothers are positioned as “individually responsible for ensuring their child’s optimal development” (Cairns et al., 2013, p. 113) as well as raising the next generation of healthy, responsible food consumers (Cairns & Johnston, 2015). Children being picky or preferring fast food over ethically sourced meals cooked from scratch might eventually be perceived as their mother’s failure (Cairns & Johnston, 2015).

Connecting this idealised figure to the *corporeal* domain, this means that women are not only supposed to take care of their own bodies, achieve having perfect (thin) and healthy bodies while constantly being encouraged to over consume (Allen & Sachs, 2007). Their responsibility expands to taking care of other bodies in the household as well. The ideal of the ‘organic child’ is one aspect of it that many women interviewees with children appeared to strive to achieve. Yet, I would argue that this responsibility of taking care of other bodies is not only limited to children, as solving the puzzle of meal provisioning also includes bearing in mind and adapting to health issues of family members, as exemplified by the high cholesterol of Claudia’s husband.

## Understanding AFNs in the context of Gender & Intersectionality

Among others, this thesis has outlined that the participation in CSAs as one type of AFNs requires an increased engagement compared to conventional food systems in the form of physical, mental and/or emotional labour (Bruce & Som Castellano, 2016). The overarching goal of AFNs is to create a food system that is environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable for producers as well as consumers (see Chapter 1). Even more precisely, AFNs suggest that through alternative ways of producing, distributing and consuming food, the future of food and even the system itself can be changed (Kessari et al., 2020). Yet, these networks currently only exist parallel to the dominant conventional food system, representing a niche alternative with restricted access. Arguably, some few products of AFNs are accessible more broadly, for example ecologically grown produce (Forsell &

Lankoski, 2014), but in order to strengthen and increase their impact and sustainability, there is a need for AFNs to expand and increase the number of people participating in them.

Starting with the side of the producers, other scholars have already argued (e.g. Bruce & Som Castellano 2016) that only technical improvements in cultivation methods for producers may not be sufficient to create sustainable and resilient AFNs. Rather, there is also a need for broader social and political changes (Bruce & Som Castellano, 2016). The findings of this thesis in particular suggest that it is especially *indirect* negative impacts of AFNs that threaten their potential of fulfilling their promise of sustainability (Forssell & Lankoski, 2014). In their study on sustainability performance of AFNs, Forssell & Lankoski (2014) define indirect impacts as “feeding into and reinforcing [...]” (p. 67) specific aspects of the food system. Relating to this, the findings of this research suggests that besides the various positive indirect and direct effects associated particularly with local food systems, participation in AFNs feed and reinforce traditional and potentially oppressing household gender relations.

Even though it has not been an explicit research aim of this thesis, at this point, I would like to raise the issue of intersectionality. Intersectionality is understood as the discrimination based on various characterisations, such as class, race, sexual orientation or ethnicity. As the group of participants is quite homogenous in their composition regarding race and income, only few statements can be made about these factors. Accordingly, no issues concerning any of those factors were brought up by the interviewees during the interviews.

Various scholars have pointed out the issue of class, race, ethnicity and gender in the context of food labour (Bruce & Som Castellano, 2016; Cairns & Johnston, 2015; DeVault, 1991; Som Castellano, 2015). AFNs in general, including CSA schemes, have often been criticised because of their exclusiveness, as members need to have access to certain resources in order to participate. For example, the membership in a CSA scheme can be costly. At Vale Farm, one bag of vegetable costs between £11 and £15, added up to four bags a month equals a price between £264 and £360 per 6-months season. However, due to intrinsic characteristics of sharing the risks and rewards, the consumer cannot estimate how much vegetables the bag will contain. Presumably, as all the participants of this study did, they would have to supplement their bag with additional purchases as well, resulting in a financial barrier to becoming a member.

While some schemes attempt to lower this barrier by offering reductions for members who are willing to contribute their labour to the farm, this may be another issue, as not everyone has the time to donate their time to this. This would, yet

again, be another addition to the physical labour that is associated with food work. The lack of comments on class or race issues by the participants of this study is thus not surprising, as they apparently belong to the exclusive group that has access to the financial capital necessary to participate in this kind of scheme. This is not to say that money was not an issue, in most of the interviews, money was raised as a minor topic influencing some of their decisions, but not to the extent that would indicate a struggle to make ends meet. This circles back to the idea of “new social movements” (DeLind & Ferguson, 1999; Ostrom, 1997), which are not interested in breaking with larger institutions like the state or the economy entirely. Their members are aware of issues in the system, yet seek to transform them rather than replace them, which makes them essentially lifestyle oriented movements (DeLind & Ferguson, 1999). As noted above, to fulfil AFNs’ promise of sustainability and to minimise their indirect negative impact, there is a need for a broader social and political change. CSA schemes as social movements can also be agents of change, as their participants have an initial awareness of the issues that the movement seeks to counter. As Cairns & Johnston (2015) argue, the arena of food is one where

“many women think critically about the corporate industrial food system, reflect on everyday food routines, bump up against gender and class inequality and often feel motivated to change” (p. 174).

The participation in CSA schemes may therefore not solve the indirect negative impacts at the intersection of food and gender outlined in this thesis; yet, it may inspire participants to expand their involvement into other forms and areas, for example gender inequalities in the food chain (Cairns & Johnston, 2015).

## Implications of the Coronavirus Pandemic

Similar to many other European countries, the UK was affected by the emergence of the Coronavirus pandemic. The British government asked its population to follow a set of lockdown rules, which included sheltering in place and only leaving the house to get food, for health reasons or go to work if you were not able to work from home (<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>). As this thesis was written while many of these lockdown rules were still in place, albeit relaxed, only very little research about the impact of the lockdown on AFNs, CSAs or their consumer household had been carried out. The T-GRAINS project was able to adapt their follow-up interviews to inquire households’ behaviour changes around food consumption, including aspects regarding Allen & Sachs’ (2007) conceptual categories. However, at the time of writing this, the follow-up round of the interviews had not been finalised for the Vale Farm CSA members, which is why the results discussed in this section are influenced by the answers given in the

follow-up interviews, but remain to some degree only hypothetical and do not reflect a thorough analysis.

Preliminary research suggests that the pandemic and the resulting lockdown have had an “unexpected positive effect” on food consumption on a household level (Principato et al., 2020, p. 1). Households’ spending on food items increased sharply; household food waste, on the other hand, decreased as a result of more careful planning, which was partly due to the scarcity of certain food items such as flour (ibid.; Baker et al., 2020). At the same time, in many households, a re-evaluation of big supermarket chains compared to small local businesses took place, leading to the adaptation of a perceived healthier diet in many European households (Laguna et al., 2020). Simultaneously, being under lockdown, new organisation of care and work time had to occur of necessity in many households, revealing and exaggerating once more the gendered division of household labour, including those outlined in this thesis (Hjálmsdóttir & Bjarnadóttir, 2020; Manzo & Minello, 2020). In their study on Icelandic heteronormative couples during the peak of the country’s lockdown, Hjálmsdóttir & Bjarnadóttir (2020) find that mothers took on greater mental work and intense emotional labour than their male counterparts, with the division of household tasks remaining on the mothers’ shoulders. The researchers conclude that “an unprecedented situation like Covid-19 can reveal and exaggerate strong gender norms and expectations towards mothers” (2020, p. 1). Equally, Manzo & Minello’s (2020) preliminary results suggest that the lockdown in Italy has aggravated household gender inequality. Both studies emphasise the key role that women, especially mothers, played in “making everyone feel calm and safe” (Hjálmsdóttir & Bjarnadóttir, 2020, p. 1) as well as “maintaining a degree of normalcy [...]” (Manzo & Minello, 2020, p. 121), in other words the key role of women’s emotional labour.

In terms of gender equality as well as foodscapes, Italy and Iceland present very different structures, yet, the findings of the two studies highlight the same issues. It is thus to assume that similar results could be found in the UK. Regarding Allen & Sachs’ (2007) conceptual *socio-cultural* domain, with the majority of the household members staying home and not going to school or work, additional meals need to be planned, organised, and prepared. As the preliminary results of the studies in Italy and Iceland suggest, this responsibility is potentially yet again taken on by the mothers of the household. Additionally, the pressure to take care of the communities and particularly small businesses, which might suffer economically from the lockdown restrictions, increases, and even more time needs to be invested in research and shopping in multiple places.

However, since the lockdown took place during the summer months, the member households had already paid for a weekly supply of vegetable, to be collected safely

outside the supermarket with the opportunity to chat with familiar faces. In this sense, participating in a CSA scheme might be perceived to be an advantage. Further, the Vale Farm's WhatsApp group helped to maintain a community, which can be crucial while quarantining or self-isolating. This also raises the question of how the CSA schemes coped with the lockdown and if their members predominantly decided to stay with them or decided to acquire their food from a different source for whatever reasons.

Another possible area of change triggered by the restrictions of the lockdown might be Allen & Sach's (2007) *corporeal* domain. The previous section showed that most of the women interviewed for this research did not speak about their own bodies' in relation to food, yet, hypothetically, this could change. As Constandt et al. (2020) found in their study that exercise levels have gone up during the Belgian lockdown, particularly with formerly low active adults (Constandt et al., 2020). On the other hand, as a woman interviewee reported during the T-GRAINS follow-up interviews, while spending most of the time at home, she perceived the household to eat more, specifically snack more between meals. This made her worry about her own body, putting on weight and staying healthy herself. However, it is still unclear if men experience the same effect.

As a return to what society experienced as "normal" before the outbreak of the pandemic is very unlikely, at least in the nearest future, a re-study of household gender relations around food, not only in terms of CSA membership, could yield interesting results and inform policies about the impact of another lockdown.

## 9. Conclusion

AFNs aim to oppose the socially and environmentally harmful practices of the conventional food system in one way or another. According to Allen & Sachs (2007), women in the food system remain disadvantaged in the *material*, the *socio-cultural*, and the *corporeal* domain and given the vast change that the food system has gone through, the continuity of gender inequality is remarkable (Cairns & Johnston, 2015). Building on this, the thesis' aim was thus to examine the gendered labour division in households participating in CSA schemes by conducting two analytical readings based on the voice-centred relational method including notions of the socio-cultural and the corporeal domain.

Aligning with previous food gender scholarship, the thesis found that women remain responsible for the lion's share of their household's food work, particularly the mental labour. This mostly invisible labour tended to increase through CSA participation, as more coordination for pick-ups, drop-offs and open days was required, as well as being an active part of the community, which happened mostly through the scheme's WhatsApp group. Men, on the other hand, only appeared to take on specific tasks that are often more of a hobby or lifestyle than actual contributions to the household's work with food. Or, they took on tasks that were given to them by their women spouses or in other forms rooted in the latter's mental work.

Yet, to answer the second research question of this thesis of which role receiving a weekly supply of vegetables played in the gendered housework with food and how the household members perceive this role, the interviewees did not perceive it as an additional burden. On the contrary, the thesis found that the members of the Vale Farm CSA scheme believed it to facilitate their food work to some extent. However, it still seems that their work is being *facilitated* and not *divided* more equally between women and men of the household. In this sense, the facilitation of food work through CSA only soothes the symptoms but does not get to the root of the problem. This thesis has also shown that even though the women did not perceive the increased workload as additional burden or even oppression of their gender, based on notions of *doing gender* and the idealised figure of the "Organic Child",

this might still contribute to uphold broader structures of women's subordination in society.

However, I have also argued that CSA schemes have the potential to function as a site of change not only for the food system, but also for gender relations, as they occupy a "meso level" between the macro level of broader social and political structures and the micro level of the household. CSA farms offer the opportunity to equally educate boys as well as girls on issues of sustainability, care work and food production. This, however, is not simply a by-product of CSAs but must be pursued actively by involving men and boys into food work activities, while at the same time valuing women's and girls' existing involvement into it. Thus, there should be a conscious development away from the notion of merely being a *new social movement* as described by Ostrom (1997) and DeLind & Ferguson (1999). Additionally, it is not enough to pursue change on this meso level, changes of observable gendered behaviours also need to occur in the privacy of the household as well as on the broader socio-political level.

#### *Further Research*

The discussion of this thesis also touched on issues of intersectionality, or rather the limited diversity of the examined CSA participant group. Thus, I would suggest that future research should absolutely comprise a larger sample size that is not as homogenous in its composition, so that possible intersections with class, sexual orientation and/or ethnicity could be examined in greater detail. As the voice-centred relational method proved to be a useful tool in identifying underlying gendered dynamics of labour division, the next step to this research would be conducting a similar study, but also comprising interviewees that are not (yet) part of a CSA scheme. This way, the ramifications of CSA membership on household food work could be highlighted. Concerning the methods used for this, the face-to-face interviews with participants could be supplemented by other methods, such as focus groups or long-term observations of the household's food behaviour. As the data constituting the base of this research was collected in a specific European context, the findings of this thesis should not be considered as universally applicable. Especially since fundamental changes have been caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, revealing fatal deficiencies in the food system, labour conditions in care work as well as oppression of minorities and intersectionality. Yet, I would still argue, that this research conducted here is a first step to analysing gender relations in households that participate in CSA schemes as it highlights how deeply intertwined notions of gender, *doing gender* and care work performed as household food labour continue to be.

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## Appendix I – Findings

# Interview 1 – Percy & Anna

## Reading 1 – Overall Plot

The first household consists of five members: the interviewee, a 40-year old man, Percy, who works as an environmental advisor, and his wife, Anna, also 40 years old, who is full time “house manager”. They have three kids, two sons of seven and three and their daughter is one. While Percy is definitely a meat eater, Anna is a vegetarian and the kids do eat meat, mostly if their father has it but they do not like it. Generally, the kids seem to be very picky with their food, as they neither like eating vegetables nor meat.

They have been members of the farm scheme only for a couple months; they joined in July of the same year. They had only moved to the area in the same year from the Valleys, a rural inland area in South Wales. Both are of Welsh descent, he speaks Welsh and calls himself “a proud Welshman”, with Anna’s parents living in the area as well, however, they only visit them irregularly. They live in St. Groom’s, only about ½ hour away from the farm by foot. When driving past the farm, they saw an advertisement for the organic meat boxes and the farm shop, which made them call in and buy some meat. In this instance, they were made aware of the veg box, which they then decided to sign up for. The interviewee names three main reasons for the household to join the scheme: first, because of the good quality food. Second, to support a local supply chain and third, to become part of a community, as they are new to the area. Yet, besides a coffee morning, they have not taken part in any of the volunteering activities due to lack of time. With time, he would like to think that he wants to be involved in what the farm does.

Most of the household’s food sourcing comes from an online weekly delivery pass by the supermarket ASDA. Both household’s adults have an app where, over the week, they can add items to a shopping cart, and it gets delivered between Tuesday and Thursday. The majority of the household’s food shopping is therefore online. This is for different reasons; among others it helps with the budget and saves the hassle of going to the shop. Thus, ASDA Delivery and the veg bag are the two major sources of food for the household. He started going berry picking in the summer, as he learned about the use of pesticides on conventional blueberry production.

## Reader's Response

This interview was the first in the analysis of the eight interviews, and it was quite an interesting one in many ways. It took place at their home and throughout the first two thirds of the interview, it was only the husband answering the questions, while his wife was busy in the background getting the children ready for school or bringing them to bed. She joined in on the interview in the last third and was mostly present for the questions about the household's general food provisioning patterns. Interestingly, the picture of the household and its food labour that the interviewee painted was very different to the picture that his wife described. For example, he claimed that he and his wife shared the responsibility for cooking. The answers that his wife gave suggested, however, that it was mostly her who did it and it became evident when they talked about how much fish they eat per week: She explained to the interviewer that at least once per week, she prepares a specific meal containing fish, as this is their children's favourite meal. Not only is he not aware that it is their favourite meal, he also does not know she makes it for them at least once a week. With this being one example, I as a reader had the impression that his answers were guided from an idealized version of himself, a Welsh environmentalist who pays great attention to sustainability. At times, I had the impression, that he wanted to impress the interviewer with his knowledge, shifting the conversations from the specific questions and patterns of his household to broader issues like milk sourcing and its market dynamics.

After my first reading, I had the idea that the household was living up to very traditional gender roles, with the mother staying home, doing most of the cooking and taking care of the kids while the father is only responsible for the meat, albeit being an environmentalist, and talking about politics in an interview. Overall, my impression after the first reading was very positive towards Anna and slightly negative based on Percy's answers.

## Reading 2 – The Voice of 'I'

The male as well as the female interviewee used the pronoun 'I' slightly more often than 'we' when speaking about their household. For both, the way they use those pronouns is a good indicator of their responsibilities they assign to themselves. However, Percy, other than his wife, used the pronoun 'I' to describe what he *is* as well as what he *does*. This includes, among others, being a signed-up member of the veg box scheme as well as the WhatsApp group, a proud Welshman and an environmentalist. She, on the other hand, used the pronoun 'I' mostly to indicate things that she does in the household, which are often things that she does for others in the household, for example feeding the kids, preparing different meals to cater

to the needs of different household members and “[cutting] back on what [she has] because [she wants] to make sure they’ve got enough”. In fact, she does not speak of herself as being something except the “the one who cooks”. Further, when he speaks of the things he does, it covers a broader field of activities, from giving feedback to the farm on a weekly basis, buying and preparing various kinds of meat in different ways up to making specific decisions around meat sourcing. However, this might be rooted in the different amount of times each of them spent answering questions and thus also the type of questions they answered respectively.

Both also use the pronoun ‘we’ to describe household food activities. Yet again, the way each of them used it differs slightly. Anna predominantly used it to describe ‘achievements’ that the family has made, like not really having cheats, going through a lot of fruit or spending less money on food. Speaking of household financial issues, Percy mostly used the pronoun ‘we’ as well, for example concerning their monthly ASDA pass, their weekly expenses or their family budget. Yet, he also tends to use the word ‘we’ describing activities that later turn out to be things that mostly his wife does, such as tailoring *their* cooking or *their* methodology to make do with what *they* have [emphasis added] or saying “we cook on demand”, when it turns out that it is actually his wife who does the cooking. This also comes through when he speaks of things that his wife does, as he often “can’t remember what she did there”. For most of these statements, Anna was not present in the room. So, when he speaks about her, she mostly addresses him directly, which is mostly telling of how he affects her labour with food, for example by adding extra work because “often they want lentils and you want something else”. When they speak of ‘them’ or use the pronoun ‘they’, Anna without exception means their children. Percy however, in some instances, indicates that he is referring to ‘the others’: big supermarkets, international food corporations or other organisations “dictating us”.

### Reading 3 – Cultural Context

The second reading thus already gives some valuable insights into household labour allocation around food. Yet, the third reading for Allen & Sachs’ (2007) helps to place them into broader *socio-cultural* contexts. The authors claim in their theoretical framework that gender plays into three realms of food provisioning, of which two were considered in this reading: the *socio-cultural* and the *corporeal*.

As indicated in the previous reading, Percy and Anna take different responsibilities for food provisioning, which can be sorted into the framework’s categories. With Anna’s main job being a “household manager”, she is responsible for most of the food provisioning. This includes cooking for the household, which she describes as

a “challenge”, especially hard because “usually, [she] got (sic) a little something around [her] leg [...]”, referring to her young child who constantly requires her attention. Further, she describes it as her responsibility to coordinate and cater to the different needs of her family, considering likes and dislikes in taste, but also making sure nutritious food reaches especially her kids. Again, she describes this as a struggle as “one doesn’t like this, one doesn’t like that, [she is] vegetarian so [she does not] eat meat”, which leads her to cooking three or four meals per day. Thus, she needs to trick her children into eating certain foods, for example a mixed vegetable pasta sauce or sweet potato pie, a measure that requires some extra mental work. Besides, she sees the (physical) development of her children as a direct result of her own diet and cooking; she sees a direct link between her own vegetarian diet, which lead to her avoiding cooking meat, and her eldest son’s perceived skinniness. This even makes her wish she was not a vegetarian.

Regarding the participation in the veg box scheme, she spends a “lot of time washing, [...] a lot more time [scrubbing] it, peeling, chopping” making the act of cooking “definitely more time consuming”. She feels that the vegetable box dictates the meals that the household consumes, because there are always vegetables, and she needs to work with whatever is there. However, she also explained that this “does take [...] a lot of the decision out of it” and she cooks a far more basic palette of food with whatever she has in her cupboard. Thus, while the preparation is much more time consuming, other food provisioning such as planning the meals now consume less time.

Her husband, on the other hand, takes on the traditionally male domain of buying, cooking and eating meat (Nath 2011). And throughout the interview, it becomes clear that it is only through him that the kids eat meat, even though Anna often “struggles feeding them because they don’t really like meat”. Further, his involvement into the household’s food provisioning is very restricted to a limited set of activities, as for example cooking meat, picking berries and cooking jam from them as well as popping “into the farm shop when passing from work” (Meah & Jackson, 2012). Yet, he appears to be the one who is in charge of vegetable box activities, including communication with other CSA members and the farm on the WhatsApp group, visiting the farm and picking up the bag. Percy, other than Anna, is also the one who talks about issues relating closely to the *corporeal* domain of the theoretical framework. He is more concerned with “knowing [they are] eating good quality food [that has] not been affected by [...] potentially nasty chemicals”. Yet, self-identifying as environmentalist, he does ask himself if it is “right that we are eating bananas when you think of the carbon?” but then, considering the household’s nutritional well-being on the other hand, his “children have to be healthy, so bananas are a quick fix”. While he does not mention his own relationship to his body and eating, he does bring up the connection of his family being healthy

various times. Anna, on the other hand, does not point out any of these issues, yet again, this might be rooted in the different types of questions asked at the time she joined the interview.

## Interview 2 – Nia & Jac

### Reading 1 – Overall Plot

This next household is a family of four: the female interviewee Nia, 39-years old working as a full time Civil Engineer, her husband, Jac, who is 40 and also employed as a Civil Engineer at the local authorities. Their children are seven and nine years old and, similar to other children of the CSA households, both go to the same school as the farm owners' children. As both parents work full time, she leaves the kids with her mother in the afternoon. Nia's brother and his wife are also members of the bag scheme and influence the couple to eat a more plant-based diet. Her brother and his wife do not have any children and the sister-in-law only works part time, which gives them plenty of time to research sustainable food consumption and live accordingly. While the children eat organic meat, both parents are vegetarians for climate change reasons and try to eat vegan whenever they can. Besides talking to her sister-in-law about the veg bag often, Nia is also part of the WhatsApp group, which she really appreciates for the recipe ideas. Further, they are friends with other members of the CSA scheme, just enough to go out to the pub with them and the farm owner.

Before they joined the Vale Farm CSA, they received their vegetables from another box scheme. However, due to their jobs in flood management, they are concerned with their impact on climate change and saw the Vale Farm CSA as a good opportunity to reduce their impact and support the local community at the same time. They found out about the vegetable box through various channels; she was already getting a meat box from the farm but also the children go to the same school, so she knows Mary as well as other CSA households. Overall, it was a matter of word of mouth. They mostly shop at Tesco's and Waitrose to supplement their vegetable box. About 60% of their online shopping is online through 'click and collect', where the consumers choose their items online and then merely go pick them up at the supermarket. Every now and then she goes to Marks & Spencer's for her work, as it's more convenient for her.

## Reader's Response

Overall, I had a positive response to the interview. At the time of interviewing, both Nia and Jac were in the room, yet Nia was the more dominant voice. I could really understand her insecurity when she talked about her relationship with her sister-in-law, who appears to be “angelic” when it comes to matters food sustainability. I think quite a few people are familiar with always feeling that they could do more and live a more sustainable lifestyle. At the first glance, they seemed to have a quite shared workload in the household, both trying their best to come together with the kids as often as possible.

## Reading 2 – The voice of I

As already mentioned, this interview was conducted primarily with Nia while her husband was in the room. While at first he was not very keen to answer questions, as he has “no clue because [he] wasn't there”, the interviewer as well as his wife encouraged him to participate since he also does “the veg bag stuff”. In the end, he did participate in the interview but mostly by adding up to the answers that his wife gave. In fact, Nia tried to include him into the conversation by pointing out things that he does “sometimes”, which is mostly shopping activities, for example picking up things at Waitrose on his way back from work or getting top ups that she forgot. Thus, this section is mostly concerned with the way Nia speaks about household food provisioning.

As in the interview with Percy and Anna, reading for the pronoun ‘I’ gives some insight into which food provisioning activities Nia considers to be her responsibility. Besides general food labour such as preparation, planning and cooking of some meals that she cooks, this also includes tasks specific to the CSA participation, such as picking up the veg bag and dropping of the empty bags for the farm to reuse. Further, she is also a member of the WhatsApp group, meaning that she is the one responsible for the communication with the farm as well as other CSA members.

Another responsibility that Nia takes on is the majority of the food shopping. As already mentioned above, Jac does support her with this, but most of the decision making of where to go and what to buy as well as the actual grocery shopping is left with Nia. That this is her responsibility shows in the way that she speaks about where they source food from; first, the reason why they shop online is “because [she works] full time” and second, she cannot source food from a farmers market because “just in Cardiff there is one [she] can get to”, not in Newport, where she works. Further, by using the pronoun ‘I’ she also implied that the decision for

sustainable choices as well as safety checking the food that she buys largely is her responsibility, because “[*she*] needs to find out” or “[*she*] needs to ask Mary” so that “[*she*] knows where it’s coming from” (emphasis added). Similar to Anna in the previous interview, she also used the pronoun ‘I’ to indicate that she is doing something for someone else, for example buying organic milk for the kids or giving her mother the “easy stuff” when she takes care of the children in the afternoon. Closely linked to this, Nia also spoke of things that she does that leads to something else happening. For example, she looks at the veg and they start googling for recipes. Nia also talked about things that she personally enjoys or is interested in, mostly related to activities around the CSA scheme, by using the pronoun ‘I’. This includes working with the veg patch, participating in the bird surveys or generally volunteering as well as participating in the CSA scheme. This is similar to the few instances that her husband used the pronoun ‘I’, which is to indicate things that he feels or that he personally notices.

More frequently than the pronoun ‘I’, Nia used the pronoun ‘we’. For one, she always used this pronoun when she speaks about the subject of meat, for example not eating enough meat to source a meat box or buying organic meat from Vale Farm. She also used ‘we’ when she talks about herself and her partner as parents, in this case ‘we’ was often accompanied by the pronoun ‘they’, or more specifically ‘the kids’, like when she explained that “we try and eat together every night, but the kids eat earlier”. Further, when Nia was speaking of ‘them’, she is often talking about the kids. But more specifically, it is often accompanied by the word ‘for’, indicating mostly things that are only for the kids, such as organic milk, pizza or meat from Vale Farm. However, mostly she used the pronoun ‘we’ when she spoke about things that the family does together, such as going to the farm to do some weeding or look at the animals. Thus, she often gave the impression that she sees the family as an entity that does things together and shares certain beliefs, goals, interests and activities, including concerns about the farm that they have the opportunity to address or her going to certain places because “they sell certain things that [they] like”. This also includes cutting back on her own interests, like doing the bird survey, because “we had other things on”. Also similar to Anna, Nia used ‘we’ to speak of achievements that the family had through participating in the CSA scheme, like eating healthier, and eating out less as well as being aware of the seasonality of food. In some instances, she also used ‘we’ when speaking about things that she does herself, often when talking about positive aspects of food shopping, such as buying organic, locally and seasonally.

## Reading 3 – Cultural Context

Again, by the way Nia used the different pronouns, a lot can be told about labour division around food provisioning in the household. This third reading shall place these insights into larger *socio-cultural* context using Allen & Sachs' (2007) theoretical framework as a guideline. Similar to Anna, in Allen & Sachs' (2007) *socio-cultural* domain, Nia is responsible for most food provisioning activities in the household. Yet, Nia is working full-time besides managing most of the household's food sourcing. Further, or due to her occupation, she and her husband share the responsibility for cooking, divided according to availability. While this might seem like a fair division of labour, it is important to keep in mind that cooking is only one aspect of food provisioning. Even though shared responsibility for cooking might seem like a just agreement, most of the mental work such as planning meals, making a shopping list and grocery shopping remains with the woman of the household. In Nia's case, this includes deciding where to go and what to get from the shop and the actual grocery shopping. Her husband emphasises this as he said that each time she forgets something, she asks him to pop into the shop and get it, which sometimes leads to him spending extra time at the shop getting top ups. This aligns with Rezeneau's (2015) claim that it might seem like an equalization of household labour, it is in fact not, as it is first, only one particular task that he is undertaking which, second, his wife has given him.

From the second reading for the voice of 'I', it became clear that deciding 'what to get from the shop' included educating herself on the sustainability of food items, including the use of plastic, seasonality and locality as well as organic cultivation. This includes long term decisions, such as asking Mary and finding out about organic milk sourcing, as well as on site decisions in the supermarket about plastic packaging and prioritizing certain characteristics over each other. In her case, Nia has found out that she generally prioritizes local over seasonal, yet she does not immediately know which one to choose when the local is packed in plastic. She explained that especially with big supermarkets like Tesco, it is "really hard" to shop there as everything is available and the consumer has to know what is in season, making it harder to know what to buy. Concerning this mental workload, the CSA veg bag poses an easy solution as the veg box takes a part of this responsibility away from her and "you know you're doing it right". When it comes to cooking with the vegetables provided by the CSA, Nia explained that even though having to cook from scratch six days a week, the recipes given to them in the WhatsApp group were quick and easy. Further she claimed that "the more you do them, the more ideas you get because you know it then", which ultimately takes some of the stress out.

The reading for cultural context also includes the interviewee's accounts voice and/or reflect dominant and normative conceptions of food and gender, often expressed by the words of 'should' or 'ought', which may signal the speaking in terms of or through cultural norms and values of society (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). In Nia's case, these cultural norms and values are often set (and met) by her sister-in-law Angela and her husband, Nia's brother. She describes them as an "angelic" household when it comes to food sustainability compared to themselves, making them feel guilty for their choices. While Nia did acknowledge that due to her full-time occupation and the two kids, it is hard for her to reach that standard, it still shows that she has a certain idea in her mind of how sustainable her food sourcing and consumption should be. This became evident when she was talking about her top up milk shopping, that she admittedly gets from the store, but from a specific brand, so "[she doesn't] feel too bad". Further, this idea extends to the membership of the CSA scheme, as for example when she describes how they volunteered "not as much as [they] should have". A recurring factor in this narrative for her was time, either because of her occupational status or her children's activities, as it constrains her ability to live up to these standards. She mentioned this about her choices to shop online, the challenges to cook at home from scratch, researching recipes and food sustainability and participation in volunteering at the farm.

As for Allen & Sachs' (2007) *corporeal* domain, Nia did not mention her own relationship to her body and eating at all, but all her concerns were focused around her children's needs, such as organic milk or Vale Farm meat. The motivation for Nia and Jac to become vegetarians was rooted in concerns about the environment and their efforts to eat a more vegan diet is due to her brother's influence.

## Interview 3 – Rebecca

### Reading 1 – Overall Plot

The household is made up of four members: The interviewee Rebecca, a 43-year old woman whose current profession is a bookkeeper, but previously she has been a social worker. Her work at the moment allows her to work part time and from home for some days of the week so she is able to stay home with the “munchkins”, her kids. Her partner is male, also 43 years old and works as a full-time web developer. Her son, Ben, is eight and her daughter, Rosie, is five. The household signed up for the CSA box after they had bought their meat at Vale Farm for a couple of years. Before signing up to the Vale Farm scheme they received a different veg box, but because of its long food miles she decided to sign up for a more local one. The motivation thus was to be as healthy as possible while being good to the earth at the same time with the veg bag being a part of eating more healthily and responsibly. She likes animals, being outside and “getting muddy” which are her main reasons to take part in most of the open days. Rebecca was born in ‘the village’, which is why she remembers Vale Farm being only a beef farm. Her husband is “definitely a carnivore” and she does not have a problem eating meat but cares about animal welfare. Thus, they all eat meat but have cut down on the volume of it in favour of a more plant-based diet. Yet, while the family eats dairy, she has turned to soymilk. The household does not get dairy from a local producer yet but from the supermarket. In addition to the vegetables, all of the household’s meat except for chicken comes from the farm, everything else is sourced from Lidl.

It is important to her that her children are educated about where their food comes from, which they also learn at school, and particularly her daughter does not like the thought of animals getting killed for food. Again, both her children go to the same school as Mary and James’s children, which is why she often sees the farm owners at school and at the playground. Rebecca is part of the WhatsApp group and appears to be quite involved in its activities, for example she is saving jam jars to give to other members who make chutney. Further, the household of one of the

kid's close friends is also part of the CSA scheme. She calls the group involved in the scheme an "extended friendship group".

## Reader's Response

My impression of the first interview was very positive, as I had the impression that she has a very positive and vivid energy. She laughs a lot about herself, and the answers she is giving. Throughout the interview, she invites her daughter Rosie, who is staying out of school because she is sick, to answer some of the questions. This conveys the picture of a very caring mother. At certain times, you could tell that she has a certain awareness of how government regulations can push people into poverty and how it regulates family life. Even though she does not mention feminism or broader structural oppression, I had the idea that she was conscious of them, however in the comfortable position to simply accept them as they are and not be outraged about them. Because, based on this first impression, her household seems to have a very traditional division of labour.

At this point, I think it is important to reflect about my own view on women's behaviour and ask the question if I would still react as positively to her answers and the content of the interview if she didn't fall into the common picture of women having to be happy and caring and loving, contributing to a community and carefully keeping up the mood in the spaces they are interacting with. I wonder if I would react different to interviewees who do not represent the stereotype of a softly loving and caring woman, if I would still interpret their answers in the same way. These questions came up quite early and will be considered in the readings of the other interviews.

## Reading 2 – The Voice of 'I'

In her interview, Rebecca used the pronoun 'I' slightly more often than 'we'. With both pronouns, there are some identifiable patterns, which give some insight into the household's labour with food.

Besides the questions directly concerned household responsibilities, Rebecca's use of the pronoun 'I' gives away information about which responsibilities she assigns to herself. It seems that she is entirely responsible for every aspect of food provisioning. This includes planning the meals or coordinating where and when to go grocery shopping, for example to call to Lidl on her way to the office or disliking online shopping as she would have to arrange to be at home. Further, she claimed that "her weekly shopping has come down", which implies that she considers this as her responsibility. Concerning the CSA, albeit executed by her husband, she

explained that “normally [she] remembers”, which means that the organizational process around it is also included in her range of tasks, including the communication in the WhatsApp group. In this context of speaking of the other CSA scheme members, she used the phrase “I am” to indicate two characteristics that she has: first, not being “that clever a cooker [sic]” and second, not being “that creative”. Here, she compared herself to the other members of the CSA scheme, members who make chutneys and come up with feedback or new ideas. Further, she indicated that most of the responsibility around childcare is hers by saying that her husband goes to pick up the veg “so [she] can get them into bed” or listing ASDA as a place where she goes or “[she has] to get clothes for the children” and “their vitamins [she] can only get in ASDA”.

A few times when she spoke about things that she likes, she modified her response to say ‘we’, either mid-sentence or in the following sentence, for example when she is saying, “I like local apples, we like local apples”. Rebecca did speak about her own interests, specifically when she spoke about her motivation to join the volunteering activities due to her interests in land management, the outside and animals. However, she used the pronoun ‘we’ when she speaks of preferences that cover a larger set of topics than just volunteering activities. She most often used the pronoun ‘we’ when speaking about anything that involves food consumption and sourcing in the household, such as specific meals that they would have, and which places they get their food from. Yet, especially when speaking about the food sourcing, she often used the pronoun ‘we’ instead of ‘I’ for activities that she earlier ascribed to her responsibilities. For example, referring to the CSA participation, she said that “[they] are trying stuff that [they] would not normally buy”, when earlier she stated that it was really her doing the grocery shopping.

Rebecca also used ‘we’ to indicate that she was referring to herself and her daughter Rosie as “the girls”, often paired with the pronoun ‘they’, in this case meaning “the boys”, which are her husband and her son Ben. In these cases, she then proceeded to explain the characteristics “the girls” have, such as being chatty, which tasks they take on in the household, which is ordering food and the “interesting things” or, for “the boys”, their lack of interest in cooking. At times, she also used the pronoun ‘they’ to refer to the children. Yet, she did not speak about herself and her husband as the parents, but rather spoke of herself and the children as ‘we’ and her husband as a person outside of that group. For example, when speaking about pre-prepared foods, she states that “[he] probably eats quite a lot of them in the day but [we] don’t”. He frequently gets mentioned as “my husband” or “Daddy” when she told about things that he does that differ from her and the kid’s routine, such as cooking his own, “less healthy food” and enjoying it or eating quite a lot of meat. By doing this, Rebecca painted a picture of her husband and his habits that is quite different to the rest of the family; she stated that he is definitely a carnivore but “[they] do

only have meat once a week”, he eats his own pre-prepared or other less healthy food while “we are trying to be as healthy as we can”.

Another context where she used the pronoun ‘we’ to indicate that she is part of a group, the community around the box scheme, often paired with the pronoun ‘they’, possibly to speak about the owners of the farm. For example, when she was asked if they learn how the veg bag is produced and she responds “I’d say we do, because they do invite people [...] we plant it, we are invited to plant it, aren’t we, and we know it’s managed in between”.

### Reading 3 – Cultural Context

Based on the first and second reading as well as on the question directly asking for the division of tasks between the adults, it becomes clear that Rebecca’s household follows rather traditional patterns of labour allocation around food provisioning. Right at the beginning, she states that she had to give up her original profession of a social worker for a part-time occupation as an accountant in order to take care of the “munchkins”, the kids. Thus, she explained that cooking at home is not a challenge to her, because she works part time and from home which makes life easier for her. This suggests that she would still consider it her responsibility even if she was still working full time. As indicated in the previous reading, other tasks of care work that Rebecca described as her responsibility are child care, planning meals, budgeting grocery shopping, doing the grocery shopping as well as communicating with other CSA members and the farm, figuring out how to prepare unknown vegetables in the bag and remember to pick up the bag on time. All this mental and physical care work apparently adds up to an unpaid, second shift of work that she would not be able to cope with if she had a full-time employment. Rebecca’s husband, on the other hand, only takes care of picking up the veg so she can get the kids into bed. This aligns with the claim presented in the theoretical framework where male members of the household only take over selected tasks of food provisioning and when they do, it is not an act of nurturing the family or democratization of household labour but happens at the expense of mental labour of the woman. Even further, he takes very little responsibility in the household’s food provisioning to the point where Rebecca claimed that “it’s like having three children when it comes to cooking with [her husband]”.

Another interesting gender dynamic in Rebecca’s household is the children’s interaction with food, particularly with the CSA. The second reading showed that at times, Rebecca would separate the family into “the girls” and “the boys”. Activities or tasks performed by “the girls” include the ordering and the “interesting things” of the CSA and the interaction with other members of the CSA at the

playground or at the village shop. Further she stated that her daughter Rosie, other than her son Ben, is more interested in helping her cooking in the kitchen, showing some curiosity which leads to conversations about strange looking veg, for example. “The boys”, however, are not so much interested in this kind of activity. Further, “the girls” are the healthy ones of the family, getting more than the recommended five pieces of vegetable per day, whereas “the men in [their] house” either reluctantly get their five, in Ben’s case, or not at all close, in her husband’s case. This separation of “boys” or “men in the house” and “girls” (but not “women of the house”) and their respective tasks and characteristics shows well how gender specific activities and roles are developed and encouraged from an early age on. Yet, both kids show interest in issues of (food) sustainability, with their mother emphasizing the importance of food education for both. Their father, however, “definitely a carnivore”, confirms the association of meat consumption and notions of masculinities in Western societies, which encourages the children to eat meat even though they both do not like the idea of animals being killed.

As mentioned in the previous readings, Rebecca did compare herself to other members of the CSA scheme when it comes to cooking and giving feedback. In another instance, she speaks about society’s expectations on parents or presumably women, which are impossible to fulfil:

“It feels like the government wants it all. You have... both parents have to go out to work to pay their mortgage, but then there is no help for childcare cost. And then we are criticised for sending children to childcare and not looking after our elderly relatives. We can’t do it all! We either have one full time worker and one at home, who does the family stuff, or you know, survive.”

This suggests that she recognizes external forces to some degree, rather than seeing them as personal issues, and described these expectations as constraining. Yet, in their household, they appear to be in the position to live up to these expectations.

As for Allen & Sachs’ (2007) *corporeal* domain, similar to other interviewees, the household’s participation in the box scheme is part “of wanting to eat more healthily and responsibly”. Yet, this only came up with and increased awareness through having a baby and “just [wanting] what’s best for their tummies” rather than being related to her own body and relation with food.

## Interview 4 – Alan & Diana

### Reading 1 – Overall Plot

This fourth interview was conducted with a heterosexual couple. The male interviewee, Alan, is 61 years old and retired from a job at a large company in the oil industry in 2016. The female interviewee, Diana, is 59 years old and also retired, yet she does not tell what her occupation used to be. They do have adult kids who do not live with them anymore. The couple had just moved to South Wales recently, before they used to live in other places in England, e.g. Oxfordshire. They receive a large bag on a weekly basis. Before they signed up for the vegetable bag scheme, they received a meat box from Vale Farm, who they found through the farm's website. They list several reasons why they signed up for it: first, they wanted to support a local farm that has good quality meat. Second, they used to have a vegetable garden many years ago which they enjoyed. They always wanted to go back to doing it but did not have the opportunity to do so, thus, the CSA and the farm are a much bigger substitute for their own garden. They have attended to all the open days, which they enjoy and where they communicate with other members of the scheme. They are members of the WhatsApp group as well, yet they "tend not to participate as much as others might do". Alan has frequent discussions with the farm owner about different aspects of growing vegetables, such as compost or advantages and disadvantages of raised beds or just planting in the ground.

He bakes their own bread from scratch, and they grow some beans in their garden. Whatever the vegetable bag cannot provide, they get at Waitrose in Cowbridge and Tesco's, latter because it is close to their house. However, the quality of the produce in the shops is not to their standard which is why they do not like buying vegetables there. While their daughters do use online shopping, it has not come into their lifestyle at all as they like to pick their own. Now that they are living in a rural place, it has made them more aware of animal welfare, which is why they now eat less meat but of better quality.

## Reader's Response

This interview had left me feeling emotionally quite neutral. I did not have overall positive nor overall negative impression. One factor could be that I personally can't really relate to them much, as I am much younger, have a different income, and race. Further, I have no one in my close surroundings who resembles them.

However, as this was the second interview conducted with a male CSA member and one of the things that I noticed about myself is that the way men spoke about other issues struck out to me, like the Welsh milk in the first interview or the topic of expanding James and Mary's farm in this case. Subsequently, the question arose of why does this strike out to me with male, but not female interviewees?

At this point, I would like to bring up the overall political context of this analysis. While I am typing this, many countries are in the middle of a lockdown due to the Coronavirus pandemic, or carefully opening up again. As if this state of emergency was not enough, within the last week the Black Lives Matter movement has become the second largest civil rights movements with (violent) protests taking place all over the world, demanding systemic action against structural racism. One thing that has been constantly emphasized by everyone involved in this movement, is to listen to the voices of oppressed and marginalized individuals. And while I certainly claim that women are still a marginalized group of society, I would argue that the voices of white women are heard more often than black women and certainly the perspective of white women is pervasive throughout society. Which is why at this point, it is quite hard for me to maintain a neutral view on an interview with a privileged, upper middle-class white couple.

## Reading 2 – The Voice of 'I'

With a couple that spends as much time together as they do, since they are both retired with no kids, it is hard to identify clear structures in their use of different pronouns. As they do almost everything together, a lot of their use of the pronoun 'we' was made in the context of activities that they do together, such as having a vegetable garden and growing vegetables in it.

It is especially Diana who used the pronoun to indicate a range of activities that they do together, mostly activities around cooking, grocery shopping and food consumption. These included adapting their recipes, going to certain shops such as Waitrose or eating less meat. Less of her use of 'we' was related to activities regarding the CSA. However, when she used the pronoun 'we' in context of the CSA, she often indicated their preferences, such as enjoying going to the open days

or trying things they did not think they liked. As Alan is the primary interviewee, his answers containing the pronoun 'we' were a bit more precise: for most of the activities around the CSA, such as signing up or the reason for doing it, he spoke of using the pronoun 'we'. Further, the activities on the WhatsApp group are also something that they do together, or rather not do, as they are "not into that kind of thing". Generally, when it comes to online activities, like the WhatsApp group, Facebook or online shopping, it is something he claimed they are "not into" or that "hasn't got into [their] lifestyle at all". In this sense, he also mostly used the pronoun 'they' to refer to the other members of the CSA and their activities in the WhatsApp group, or in another instance to his former colleagues taking pictures of their food.

As for the pronoun 'I' their use of it appears to be quite different. For her, the pattern that was mostly apparent was her way of voicing an opinion by saying "I think...", which was either followed by a sentiment that she has, such as being more aware about animal welfare or thinking about air miles. Or, she continued the sentence "I think" by explaining development that she noticed the couple has had, for example having less meat or consuming a broader range of vegetables. And even though she claimed that they do the grocery shopping together, her use of the pronoun 'I' showed here that she is the one making the decisions on which produce to buy, like trying to buy more of a fruit or vegetable when it's in season or just generally preferring to pick her own vegetables rather than buying them online. He, on the other hand, used the pronoun 'I' for a broad range of activities, that go beyond responsibilities in the household and food provisioning. These include, besides baking bread and purchasing the ingredients for it, a lot of interaction with James, who is running the farm. According to Alan, they have an ongoing discussion on how to grow vegetable best, he provides advice and, "just for the challenge", has conversations with him on how he is going to evolve his business. Thus, he conveyed an image of him being a man with a lot of expertise in various fields, hobbies and interests, which stands in stark contrast to the way that his wife used the pronoun 'I'.

### Reading 3 – Cultural Context

The couple appears to have a quite traditional division of labour when it comes to food provisioning. Just by the direct answers that they gave to the questions who is responsible for the grocery shopping and who is responsible for the cooking, a lot can be told about labour allocation in the household. Both of them agreed that she is the one preparing the meals, yet, often times they spoke about it in a way that makes you think they are doing it together, for example by saying "we just throw everything into a tray". And albeit claiming that they do the grocery shopping together, their answer clarified that he is merely supporting her. Further, in another

instance, he described a scenario where he has the choice between an organic and a conventional product and asked her “what do we do?”, meaning that it is her who mostly chooses the actual produce they will buy. Thus, it is again the woman of the household who performs the mental labour behind the actual execution of the task. However, their wording lead to believe that it is a decision they make together. This also applied to another task that he takes on, which is going to the shops alone, however he only “got sent out for specific items when there was a limited choice”. Thus, much of the mental labour had already been done by his wife, in this case thinking of what is needed, where to get it and further where it would be easiest for him to get it. Diana perceived receiving a box with vegetables every week as helpful and making things easier for her, as she does not have to think about what to buy every week.

Another noticeable pattern that could also be found in other CSA household was the selective choice of household chores by the men of the household, in Alan and Diana’s case that is his breadmaking. Throughout the interview, he explained in detail how he would bake the bread and where he would get the ingredients from. Alan explained that “[they] haven’t eaten bought bread for quite some time” and further, now that James and Mary have found someone who makes their own sourdough bread, he has to try and make sourdough bread as well, which he had been reluctant to do before. This shows that baking bread for him is not primarily a case of nourishing the household, but rather a hobby that he picked up when he retired.

Other than the household with kids, the couple spoke more about issues concerning the *corporeal* domain, which is largely concerned with the relationship with eating and health risks. As Diana put it, as you get older, “you can’t eat the volume without putting on loads of weight”. Which is why they have a portion plate to monitor the amount of food they are taking in. In contrast to the household with children, their concern about health issues is focused on their own bodies rather than the health of their children.

## Interview 5 – Sophia

### Reading 1 – Overall Plot

This household only consist of two people, a heterosexual couple. The interview was conducted with the woman, Sophia, who is 37 years old and working as a full-time government inspector. Due to her work, she is travelling for three out of four weeks. Her partner, Chris, is 41 years old and works as a full-time brand ambassador for a local Whisky distillery. His work entails tours through the distillery, Whisky tastings and “talking about Whisky”. The couple lives in Bridgend, which is about seven kilometres away from the farm.

She has heard about Vale Farm through her former boss. She proceeded googling them and then calling into the farm shop one day. Before signing up for the veg or meat box, she volunteered at one of the farm’s open days where, by the end of the day, they had a tour around the farm and learned about nature and the animals. She then signed up for a meat box first, as she was too late to sign up for the veg box. Though they had good experiences with the meat box and really felt like they were doing something good, they increasingly became aware of environmental impacts of meat consumption and decided they wanted to consume less meat in their household. Yet, they did not want to remove their support for James and Mary, which is why they transferred to buying more vegetables with them instead. Now they receive a large bag every week.

Besides going to the farm to pick up their bag every week, they went to a couple of open days and the lambing event together. More often than not, it is him who picks up the bag as she is away with work. Sophia does not know any farmers and no one in her family is related to farming, which is why she has not come across animals often when she was a kid. Yet, she is a big animal lover and wanted to see the lambs. She would like to go to one of the CSA volunteering Saturday on mornings, but she fears that she will be exposed with not having any experience with farming because she did not grow up around “it” and does not know James and Mary otherwise than the CSA scheme. She is also a member of the WhatsApp group, yet she sometimes feels intimidated by the content that other people share on it, confirming her feeling

of not fitting in or not being adequate. Sophia arranged for Carla, one of her “pals”, to be on the scheme as well.

Most of the household’s shopping is at Tesco’s and Sainsbury’s, as they are on the way to work and sometimes have particular items on offer that the household needs, such as cat food. They share the grocery shopping between them about half and half, depending on who has the time to go. Similarly, it is a joint decision how often and which items they buy organic. They have become a bit “squeamish” about animal welfare, but “not to the extent [that they’ll] stop eating them”.

### Reader’s Response

My reaction to her interview was very positive. As she was talking about her struggles to go out to the farm on a Saturday because she was afraid she wouldn’t be one of many anymore, I was reminded of all the times I had moved to a different place where I had to start all over again. I could highly relate to her struggles and her fear of judgement by the other CSA members. Further, the feeling of being inadequate to the cause compared to other members of the group is very common in spaces that term themselves alternative, at least in my experience. I was also impressed by their relationship, with her being away for most of the month. But while this may be difficult to analyse in terms of gender relations within the household, it might be interesting in terms of gender relations and general dynamics within the community.

### Reading 2 – The Voice of ‘I’

Unlike other interviewees, Sophia barely spoke of responsibilities she takes on in the household. Rather, her use of the pronoun ‘I’ told about her insecurities and doubts. Sophia appears to be very self-conscious about a lot of things around the CSA membership, rooted in her perceived lack of experience around gardening and animals. She explained that she has done “fairly any gardening in her own garden [...] if [she has] to go and help with the vegetables, [she doesn’t] know what to do” and further, she claimed that she would “look stupid” as she has not grown up around “this”, which is why she would not be sure what to do. This further applies to her communication on site with James and Mary, the farm owner, as she worries that she would be disturbing their work by asking questions. Overall, she says: “I just feel like a bit inadequate” and “I don’t feel like I fit into that group at all”.

In this context of self-doubt and particularly with regard to her feelings of inadequacy, she often used the pronoun ‘they’ as well, to indicate that she was worrying about the impression that she has on others, particularly other members

of the CSA scheme. For example, she felt like “oh no, they are going to think [...] why is she getting a veg box?” or that they might think that she is “weird”. The pronoun “they” is then mostly linked to other members of the scheme. However, sometimes she also used it to refer to Mary and James.

Sophia further used the pronoun ‘I’ to speak about dishes that she herself prepared, such as last-minute mashed potatoes to freeze in before the next veg bag comes, parsnip soup, as she has “a hobby where [she needs] loads of soup”. She explained that [she has] that list of like recipes” that she makes. Sometimes, in these instances, her “fellow” comes into play, whom she usually means when she used the pronoun “he”. Sophia rarely speaks of the responsibilities her partner takes on, she mostly mentions him if her actions would have an influence on him, such as doing online shopping or having a garden, as he would have to be at home for delivery or take care of the garden while he is away, or if his actions or preferences influence her activities, for example his dislike of stir fry leading to her making noodles instead. Thus, she mostly speaks of him as separated from her when it comes to adapting herself to his schedule and preferences.

However, she does use the pronoun “we” to indicate that she was speaking about something that she and her fellow do together. This includes anything that has to do with food sourcing, for example decisions on where to go and which items to get, including the joint decision to get the meat box as well as well as the vegetable box from Vale Farm, purchasing food online or buying directly from producers. Another issue that she frequently came back to using the pronoun ‘we’ is the couple having “reassurance about the food”, particularly when it comes to animal welfare standards. Another field where Sophia recurrently used the pronoun ‘we’ is when she was speaking about the general food consumption of the couple, including specific dishes like baked potatoes or salads or generally more vegetables. If they had, she often added the positive emotion which they had while consuming it, saying things like “we loved it” or “we loved them”.

### Reading 3 – Cultural Context

Due to the couple only spending about half of the time together, it is quite difficult to say a lot about labour allocation around food provisioning between the two of them. Yet, a lot can be told about the perception of a Vale Farm CSA member from Sophia’s point of view.

One of the few things she did explicitly mention about the labour allocation around the CSA, is that she is responsible for all the communication with other members of the CSA and with the farm. Further, it was her who was responsible for

researching the farm and getting in touch with them, even though the final decision to join the scheme was made together. As she usually is away for three out of four weeks, it is mainly her partner who is “juggling all the bits and bobs at home anyway”. However, for the time that she is at home, it is her who is responsible for the preparation of meals. As for the grocery shopping, Sophia believes that their weekly shopping, which they split between them, has come down as she already has a lot of food in the house and can avoid going to the shops. Further, by receiving a veg box, she perceives the vegetables provided by the farm simplified her cooking as it is “shrinking [the endless] possibilities” between which she would previously have to decide what she would cook. Now she has a list of recipes that she would cook, which is quite basic.

This leads to her idea or impression of which characteristics most of the other CSA members have. One of them is the preparation of elaborate meals, such as bread, current jam or sauerkraut. Sophia explained that the display of prepared meals on the WhatsApp group often makes her feel a bit inadequate. While she would feel left out if she were not a member of the WhatsApp group, the posts of other members put her under pressure to keep up, even though she does not have the time to do so.

While another member of the CSA described the farm and its activities as very friendly for families and children specifically, for Sophia as well as her partner, this poses a restraint to fully feel as members of the community. She told that her partner, who initially felt very uncomfortable at the live lambing event, pretended to be all grumpy and questioning why they were taking part because they have no kids. She said that they feel “really stupid” when they go to the farm around everyone with small children. Thus, to them, being part of the community, which supports the farm is closely linked to having a family with children. Further, Sophia believed that the other members are “a bit of a gang” because some of them live in the same village or even in the same neighbourhood. As she lives in the next bigger town, she did not know which village everyone was speaking about at her first day of volunteering, which made her feel excluded. Due to some of the participating households living in close proximity to each other and the farm as well as having children, some of their children go to the same school as Mary and James’s children. This led to a perceived increased familiarity between some of the households, which is another factor that caused Sophia to feel estranged from the group. Plus, since one of them announced that they would come to one of the CSA activities on horseback and Sophia herself has no affiliation to farming whatsoever, she feels insecure in talking to them as she fears that they might think she is “weird” because she does not know what to do. Thus, for Sophia, a typical member of the CSA group is a household with children, living close to the farm and being friends with Mary and James. Plus, they have experience with farming and animals and are elaborate

cookers. These are characteristics she does not conform with, which causes her to withdraw from the farm's activities and take up as little space as possible in the WhatsApp group. It seems like Sophia is very concerned about how other people, and especially other members of the CSA scheme, perceive her. While this is surely to some degree rooted in her shy personality, it is also that women are taught from an early age that they must not take up too much space.

## Interview 6 – Claudia

### Reading 1 – Overall Plot

This interview was conducted with a female 59-year-old full-time business manager, Claudia. The other member of her household is her husband Dave, who is 61 years old and works as a full-time accountant. Dave and Claudia both work at the same company. As she says: “We’re always together, [...] we do everything together except when he goes to football”. Claudia and Dave have 8 children between them, four each, however, they are all adults or at least do not live with them anymore.

The household found out about the veg bag scheme through their neighbour Michelle, who is also a member. However, they used Vale Farm years ago when it was still Mary’s father who ran the farm, to get their meat because they lived in St. Bride’s for a while. A reason for her to join the scheme was her father growing vegetables in their small backyard when she was a child; tasting James’s vegetables took her right back there. They now get a small bag once a week. She has not been a member for a very long time and due to her full-time job, she has not had the chance to take part in any of the volunteering opportunities offered by the farm. Yet, she does hope that she will get the chance to go in the future and help with whatever comes up. She is a member of the WhatsApp group as well, yet she does not communicate with other members of the scheme other than her neighbour Michelle. Michelle keeps her up about other sustainable food sourcing options, for example for eggs, dairy or bread, which she will research later if she is interested. However, her husband also bakes his own bread.

Besides the vegetables provided by the CSA, Claudia and Dave get their food mainly from Sainsbury’s and Waitrose. They used to go shopping at a farmer’s market in Porthcrawl, yet, they stopped going there because they were unhappy with the choice available at the market after they were forced to change their diet. As Dave was diagnosed with high blood pressure and cholesterol, the couple changed away from a rich, creamy diet to a fitter lifestyle including “clean eating” which is eating more fresh things “that are really good for [them]” and exercising

regularly. Further, they are trying to reduce meat consumption because of those health reasons and increase vegetarian meals into their diet.

## Reader's Response

I could tell that I was not reacting entirely positive to her interview. I am not sure why, as she seems like a lovely lady who cares about a wide range of different things. Yet, in my opinion, he had quite traditional views that remained relatively unquestioned and not reflected, for example cooking a full breakfast on game days for her son and her husband even though she is not accompanying them, or her statement about younger generations not caring about food. I felt, somehow, personally attacked by this. However, I thought that Claudia and her husband had quite a different approach to the scheme than the other women interviewees, as they only started getting the veg bag when their kids had already moved out, so they purely did it for themselves and their health. This was quite different to the other mothers or households interviewed. Again, I felt like I needed to remind myself that only because she doesn't act after the same principles as I do, it doesn't mean she is less of a feminist. Some people feel empowered by actions others feel oppressed by.

My impression is that she has a set of very strong, traditional beliefs that she lives by, which she thinks other people should live by as well, without considering if they actually are able to do so, given their financial/social context.

## Reading 2 – The Voice of 'I'

As already indicated, Claudia holds very traditional views including issues of food labour allocation. This is mirrored in her use of the pronoun 'I'. Claudia mostly used the pronoun 'I' to speak about her responsibilities, which include planning of the meals and cooking. Further, she assigned a lot of responsibilities around the veg box to herself, including picking it up at the right time and using up its ingredients before the next ones arrive. Further, this includes coordinating the pick-up times, for example communicating with James if she is unable to pick it up during the usual time slot on Thursdays. This then means that all communication with the farm and other members of the CSA is also her responsibility. Additionally, by using the pronoun 'I' she suggested that ensuring that healthy, sustainable food reaches the household also falls within the range of her responsibilities, as she said that “[she’s] gonna [sic] go this afternoon” on the suggestions that her neighbour Michelle gave her and her reason for buying organic food is that “[she knows] how it’s produced, which is a great help to [her]”. Thus, even though it is her husband who has health issues, it is she who must make sure his needs are met.

As she claimed that her and her husband are always together and thus do everything together, it is no surprise that mostly when she used the pronoun “we” it is to indicate that she was speaking about herself and her husband. This includes activities they do together, such as grocery shopping or exercising. She also spoke of ‘them’ when she was talking about the meals and specific food items the household consumes, such as the rich meals in their previous diets or just the consumption of milk, rather than speaking of other people. This context shows again that she perceives that planning the meals for the household is her responsibility, as she says that the veg box “makes [her] have to think what [they’re] gonna [sic] eat”.

Finally, Claudia used the pronoun ‘they’ mostly to speak about a generation other than hers. This seems to be a younger generation that she perceives to provide food for their children irresponsibly and out of convenience rather than with regard to nutritional value. This is opposed to her own generation and maybe her children, which “were the last ones that actually ate food that was actually made from scratch”. Even though Claudia just referred to those other generations as “people”, the topics she is speaking about when she mentions “them” are usually connotated with her understanding of female responsibility, such as cooking from scratch or knowledge about different vegetables and their preparation. Thus, her critique of perceived shortcomings of other generations is actually not directed at “people” but at women in particular.

### Reading 3 – Cultural Context

The previous reading already touched on the labour allocation around food provisioning in Claudia and Dave’s household. Yet based on the answers that Claudia was giving directly and indirectly, more information can be gained about their work with food in the private realm, or in other words what Allen & Sachs (2007) term the *socio-cultural* realm. But first, their household’s allocation of labour already gives some indications of the work in the private sphere.

With Dave’s health issues, the couple decided they would have to change to a healthier lifestyle, which includes exercising and a healthy diet. Yet, even though it is her husband who has the issues, it is Claudia who is responsible of making sure that healthy food reaches their bodies. This includes researching new food sourcing options and adapting recipes, increasing the amount of mental labour for her. While Claudia described the veg bag a spur to be more creative with her cooking, she also mentions that they experiment with adapting her recipes on the weekends when there is more time available. And since her husband is only her “commis chef”, thus only taking on basic instructions, the mental workload is entirely Claudia’s to carry.

Besides adapting her dishes to the changed dietary requirements on one hand and the weekly veg box on the other hand, she explained that “[she has] tried over the last few years to up my game and try new things”, and specifically concerning the veg bag, that it “has changed the way [she cooks], as it makes [her] have to think about what [they] are gonna eat [sic]”. It challenges her to be more inventive, which she perceives to be a good thing. This revealed that she sees it as part of her responsibility to improve her cooking for herself and her household, a challenge that she enjoys. Apart from dietary requirements and the veg bag, another consideration she has to make in her cooking are her husband’s preferences, as she said “on Sundays, he does like a potato. So, I try and give them that”.

Throughout the interview, Claudia also reveals a lot about traditions that she picked up from her parents, presumably. When she was a child, her father seemed to be responsible for growing the vegetables and her mother for processing them, in other words cooking. This tradition has been passed on to her, as she said that she was “very lucky that [her] mother taught [her] how to cook”. By adapting those patterns of labour allocation, she apparently passed them on to her children, as it is still a tradition that she cooks a full breakfast for her husband and her stepson before they go to watch football. For this occasion, her husband also bakes bread. This is again a perfect example for the specific choice of domestic chores by the male of the household rather than a democratization of household labour.

As for the Allen & Sachs’ (2007) *corporeal* domain, the relationship between food and bodies is a central topic throughout the interview, as health issues were an important part in their decision to get a vegetable box from Vale Farm. Yet, she rarely spoke of the relationship of her own body and food but rather how her husband’s diagnosis affected both of their daily lives. When speaking about this domain, she often used the pronoun ‘we’, as for example when she said: “we have lost three stone each” or “we have changed our diet to get healthy”. Only once, she did mention that she personally, with the change of diet and the exercising as an attempt to keep their weights down, does “[...] feel better now than [she] did ten fifteen years ago”.

## Interview 7 – Viola

### Reading 1 – Overall Plot

This penultimate interview was conducted with Viola, who is 47 years old and works as a part time primary school teacher. 46-year old husband Stephen works as a full-time maintenance technician. Stephen is in the room throughout the interview but does not get involved into answering the question too much. Viola and Stephen have two kids together: a son who is 17 years old and a daughter, who is 10. They are both students and their son has become a vegetarian recently. Viola thinks that he was heading towards becoming a vegetarian even before they started receiving the veg bag, but with the larger variety of veg she thinks that he realized that he likes much more different kinds of vegetables than he thought he would. Now the family is not buying meat anymore, only the daughter eats meat at her school lunch. The connection to Vale Farm happened through Viola's mother, who had already joined the scheme the year before and gave some of the vegetables to Viola, which she found very tasty. The household now gets a small bag on a weekly basis. It was also her mum who made her buy groceries directly from farmers markets, as she used to live in a small village and used to go to farm shops and bought local produce. When she moved to Wales, she wanted to keep that behaviour up, which made her daughter to do the same.

Viola herself has visited the farm as well as her daughter, who went with her school a couple of times. Like other CSA households the family lives in St. Groom's and their daughter visits the same school as Mary and James' kids. Usually she only goes up to pick up the veg and has a chat with Mary and James, but she would like to be more involved with what the farm does. She is also a member of the WhatsApp group, which is the way she communicates with other members of the scheme. She also used it as an inspiration for recipes.

## Reader's Response

Although only half an hour long, which is only about half as long as most of the other interviews, I felt like the interview held a lot of valuable information. Even though it was the woman who was interviewed, her husband was in the room for the whole time, pottering around in the background, only answering questions when asked by his wife or every now and then adding something to her answers.

Emotionally, I responded quite positively to it. Yet, I had the impression that she was one of the “core” members of the scheme, which were somehow quite connected among each other as well as with Mary and James through their kids, which is why I didn't really feel like she was giving me new, surprising insights. Thus, my response was not overwhelmingly positive, but more positive than neutral, I would guess. This is of course a bit risky in my opinion, as it somehow lumps her experiences together with other interviewees, which is exactly what this method is designed to avoid. Yet I had the impression that the interviewee managed to be quite reasonable with her choices, caring and trying to cater but not exaggerating anything.

## Reading 2 – The Voice of “I”

Similar to other women interviewed for this research, Viola mostly used the pronoun ‘I’ when she was speaking about responsibilities that she takes on in the household's food provisioning. This includes activities around the veg box, like going to the introductory talk as well as picking it up on Thursdays, as well as general tasks such as planning the food deliveries, picking up “odd bits that [she] needs during the week” or general cooking. Yet again, this includes a vast range of mental effort, such as deciding on the specific sustainability criteria or adapting or thinking of new recipes to the vegetables of the veg box. Other than some, however, she is not willing to cook different meals, which is why the entire family is eating a vegetarian diet now.

In the context of meat consumption, she used the pronoun ‘we’, indicating that the shift away from a meat-based diet is something that they are doing together. Again, similar to other interviewees, the general food consumption of the household appeared to be a topic that she usually talked about using the pronoun ‘we’. This includes introducing patterns like meat-free Mondays, sitting down together to eat or eating organic. Further, activities around the farm are something that the family does together, like being able to visit the farm, as she implied by using the pronoun ‘we’ whenever it comes to this topic. As it was mostly her son who drove the shift towards a vegetarian diet, Viola mostly meant him when she used the pronoun ‘he’.

As her husband was in the room during the interview, she mostly referred to him directly by saying ‘you’ rather than using the pronoun ‘he’ when speaking about topics that concern him as well.

### Reading 3 – Cultural Context

Again, from Viola’s use of the different pronouns as well as the overall plot, there is a lot to tell about the household’s work with food in the private sphere. As already outlined in the second reading, her responsibilities include a vast range of physical, but mostly mental tasks. Yet, there is more than responsibilities in Allen & Sachs’s (2007) conceptual *socio-cultural* domain. It seems that the household’s work with food in the private sphere is largely dominated by Viola’s decisions, activities and traditions. She explicitly stated that some of these traditions and decisions are influenced by her own mother, such as the reasons to buy directly from producers, which goes back to her mother’s own history. Thus, it seems like her mother has already been responsible for most of the food sourcing in the household, a pattern which apparently was adapted by her daughter’s household.

Viola seems to be holding all the decision-making power about food provisioning. This reveals itself for the first time, when she was asked about who is responsible for the decision to buy organic vegetables and she replies: “[...] this is sort of a joint decision. The organic stuff, though, isn't it [sic]. Well, I just tell him the reasons why. And then he just agrees with me.” This statement shows well the power that she holds in this realm. The decision when to go to the farm for the CSA activities are made by Viola, too, as she is asked by her husband “can we go now?”. Yet, this also shows that Viola is in charge first, with informing herself to make appropriate decisions that she can justify in front of other household members, and second, with coordinating the different activities of her children with other activities and prioritizing them over each other. This again is unpaid mental workload.

One section of Viola’s interview also showed the expectations on the food provisioner of the household to put effort into being creative and evolving their cooking. She told that she felt that she “got stuck in a little bit of a wrap [...]. Just going back to the same sort of meals [...]”. As the household started receiving the bag with a range of unknown vegetables, “[she] had to go make something different”, which ultimately led to her son becoming a vegetarian. However, she also claimed that she never thought that she would enjoy cooking, but she did enjoy the recipes and has been told that her cooking has improved.

## Interview 8 – Carla

### Reading 1 – Overall Plot

This last interview was conducted with Carla, a female 49-year old. Originally, she was working as an investment banking project manager. However, she is “in between at the moment” and not working. Her partner is male, 55 years old and a landscape gardener. They live together with their dog; they do not have any kids. The couple eats meat occasionally but very rarely, they are mainly pescatarians. The household already had an ad hoc arrangement with the farm before they organized it into a scheme. At the time, she was actively looking for local veg bag schemes and thinks she found out about the farm on Facebook. The arrangement simply consisted of picking up some veg from the farm every now and then, but now they regularly get a small bag every week. There were two main reasons for the household to join: First, what she terms as “usual reasons” like plastic packaging, organic cultivation of the vegetables, locally grown produce and the taste of the vegetables. Second, she had a cancer treatment in 2018/19 and ever since has been very concerned about organic food and being good to her body after chemotherapy. For Carla, together with her interest in fewer airmiles, this was the main driver to get the vegetable bag.

The household only joined the scheme later in the year, thus, none of the household members had the initial talk or a tour around the farm. She has only gone to the farm to pick up the bag but has not done any volunteering work. This is mainly because she never perceived James’s offers in the WhatsApp group, that she is also part of, as bag scheme activities. Only when she asked for clarification, she was made aware that the scheme was not just getting vegetables grown on the farm, but also involvement with a community around it. Thus, the whole concept of Community Supported Agriculture is quite new to her. With this new knowledge of this larger concept, Carla felt like she has missed out and she would like to be more involved, yet only on an ad hoc basis without any regular commitment. However, Carla would not like to have any more communication with other members of the scheme. In the

beginning of the interview, she mentioned that she was not really clear on its purpose and felt a bit annoyed and irritated by the topic discussed there.

As Carla lived across from a greengrocer until three years ago, she claimed that she was still much in the habit of getting whatever she feels like having that day. The household did not do any online shopping, as she likes to smell, feel and touch the produce. Rather, the food was sourced from a variety of different places, including discounters and supermarkets such as Lidl and Tesco's for staples like pasta and rice, but also markets and farmers markets in different villages or other independent shops for anything more specific or fresher. The ideal food purchasing would be a concept where specific requests could be made for the local veg bag, but it would have some surprises as well.

### Reader's response

All in all, I would say that I responded neither positively nor negatively to this interview. However, this is not because I was neutral but rather because there were aspects that I found relatable and positive and some that I found I reacted negatively to. One of the positive aspects that I found quite surprising was her cancer treatments, that she openly talked about as the source of her involvement with sustainable food. On the other hand, I found her refusal to interact with the community of the scheme a bit surprising, despite her unawareness of what the CSA scheme was about. Yet again, I need to reflect at this point if it is because she is not interested in the very basic meaning of the scheme as well as the vision of this particular scheme, to create a community around sustainable food provisioning. Or if she just behaves against the common idea that women have to be actively socially engaged in communities, enjoying communication with other members in order to be liked. While I had quite a negative image of her after my very first time listening to the interview, I actively decided to listen to it again with that break of stereotype in mind. Surprisingly, or not, at the second reading I noticed that I did react in a more positive way.

As for the theoretical views that I hold, I was unsure if the interview would hold a lot of information for me, as she was not working at the moment, which means that she has a lot of time, or had any kids that would need consideration or really any more people or animals that rely on her as food provider. While some of the couples still mentioned at least a pet or with the older couples, other family members that they interact with, she does not talk about any other relationship other than with James and Mary, not even her partner is mentioned a lot. Again, maybe this is why I did not react as positively to her as to others, because she did not define herself through the relations with others but rather talks about her needs and preferences. In theory, this is a great empowering step, which made me realise that in my mind,

there is still a discrepancy between my theoretical ideas and practice. However, I was hoping that maybe her cancer treatment would give some indications about sustainable food sourcing and health issues.

## Reading 2 – The Voice of ‘I’

As already noted in the Reader’s Response section of the previous chapter, Carla did not really speak about any relations to other people other than to Mary and James or her partner. Accordingly, she predominantly used the pronoun ‘I’ over ‘we’ or ‘they’. When she spoke of ‘us’ or ‘we’, she almost exclusively means herself and her partner. This then means that she did not see herself as a part of a community around the scheme at all, which she also explicitly stated right at the beginning of the interview. Carla’s use of ‘they’ underlined just that, as she mostly used it in the beginning to speak about the activities of the other members on the WhatsApp group.

Thus, the interview was much more centred around her own narrative, about things and activities she likes and dislikes as well as impressions and ideas, as for example her rather negative feelings about the WhatsApp group or her general like of food, which makes her explore the variety of options to find the produce she likes best. She also spoke more of her own characteristics and how they are reflected in her food behaviour, such as being a “fairly spontaneous sort of person”, which is why she does not plan her meals ahead but goes with whatever she feels like having that day. This increased use of the pronoun ‘I’, especially compared to other interviewees, gave a much more detailed image of her as a person, rather than her as a wife or household food provisioner.

Apart from this, she also spoke of responsibilities she holds within the household food provisioning patterns. Yet, at times she also mentioned that some of the routines she was describing have emerged just because she is not working, such as the decision of what to get from the shops. However, the couple decided to buy organic produce together and grocery shopping as well as cooking is divided between them. Her distinction of the use of the pronouns ‘I’ and ‘we’ further told that it is really activities that they do distinct from each other, as she always speaks of the recipes that she has experienced with or items that she purchases. However, this also means that she gives little insight into the household’s food practices, for example tasks that her partner takes on or activities that they do together.

## Reading 3 – Cultural Context

As already found in the first two readings of this interview, Carla speaks more about herself and her perception of things than her relation to other people, especially her partner. Further, their responsibilities appear to be divided between them quite equally, or at least she does not indicate that she takes on different or more responsibilities than her partner, other than planning their grocery shopping. Another factor to consider in their household is that they are currently in an exceptional situation as she is not working.

Carla and her husband are a middle-aged couple without any kids. Accordingly, their focus on in Allen & Sachs' (2007) *corporeal* domain is on their own bodies rather than on that of children or other household members, as it was often the case with households that had children. While Carla did not speak of her relationship with food under the influence of media or any restraining or enabling images, her own health seemed to be the “key driver” in the decision of which food to buy. Her own cancer treatment caused her to buy organic food in the first place, and later plastic free food. These two characteristics, organic and/or plastic free, influenced her food purchasing in a way that she would take on much more effort, such as going to several different places.

## I. Appendix – Research Tools

# Questionnaire T-GRAINS

**Transforming Food System Relationships:** co-creating desirable regional socio-ecological food relationships for sustainable and healthy UK diets

Dr. Angelina Sanderson Bellamy, project PI, Cardiff University

Dr. Alice Milne, Rothamsted Research

Dr. Adrian Clear, Northumbria University

Dr. Elliot Meador, Scotland Rural College

Dr. Susanna Mills, Newcastle University

Household members:

Relationship	Age	Profession	# of hours working/week

## Membership CSA

1. How did you find out about the Vale Farm CSA? (here the interviewer should probe about how much the interviewee knows about the CSA and how this knowledge came about)
2. Why did you choose to receive a vegetable box?
3. How often do you receive a vegetable box?
4. What benefits do you anticipate (or have experienced) from receiving a vegetable box?

5. Have you been to visit the farm?
  - a. How often do you visit the farm?
  - b. Who in the household visits the farm?
  - c. What do you do when you visit the farm?
  - d. How long does a typical visit last?
  
6. Have you taken part in any volunteering activities on the farm?
  
7. If you have, can you explain what makes you want to take part in those activities?
  
8. If you haven't what are the reasons for that
  - a. I like the idea but I don't have the time to get involved
  - b. I'm happy to support the scheme through buying the veg only
  - c. The timing of the opportunities doesn't suit my availability
  - d. I haven't been involved yet but hope to be in the future
  - e. There haven't been opportunities
  - f. Other - please explain
  
9. How often do you communicate with someone from the farm?
  - a. In what way do you communicate (email, phone, in person, FB, etc.)?
  - b. What kind of information is shared?
  - c. Do you learn about how food in the vegetable box is produced?
  - d. Do you discuss any opinions or concerns about the vegetable box with anyone at the farm?
  
10. How often do you communicate with other members of the CSA?
  - a. In what way do you communicate (email, phone, in person, FB, etc.)?
  - b. What kind of information is shared?
  - c. How valuable is this interaction to you?

**Food Purchased for the household**

11. Where do you do your grocery shopping (list all places frequented more than 1/month):
  - a. Why do you choose to shop in these places?
  - b. Do you purchase food online?
    - i. Why or why not?
    - ii. What percent of your grocery spending is through online grocery websites?

- c. Other than your vegetable box, do you buy food from farmers markets or directly from producers?
    - i. Why do you purchase food from farmers markets/ direct from producers?
    - ii. What percent of your grocery spending is on farmers markets/ direct from producers?
  - d. Are there other places you purchase food from, not mentioned above?
12. How often do you purchase organic produce?
- a. As often as possible (whenever I have the option)
  - b. Half of the time when I have the option
  - c. Less than half of the time when I have the option
  - d. Rarely or never when I have the option
  - e. It is not available
13. If you buy organic, what are your reasons for doing so?
14. Do you receive vegetables in your CSA box that you don't normally buy or eat?
- a. If so, which vegetables are these?
  - b. What do you do with these vegetables?
15. Before joining the CSA and receiving a vegetable box, were you familiar with which vegetables are grown in this region?
- a. Were there any vegetables that you received that you weren't familiar with?
    - i. If yes, which ones?
    - ii. Did you eat it?
    - iii. How did you decide to prepare the food for consumption (i.e. looked up a recipe, asked someone)?
16. Before joining the CSA and receiving a vegetable box, were you familiar with the seasonal production of vegetables (i.e. which vegetables can be grown at different times of the year)?
- a. If no, have you learned anything new about seasonal availability of vegetables?
17. How would you respond if you received a vegetable that is "imperfect" in shape or size?

- a. Would you eat this vegetable?

**Food Consumption in the HH**

- 18. How often do you eat a main meal of the day that has been prepared outside of the home?
  - a. <once per week
  - b. 1-2 times per week
  - c. 3-4 times per week
  - d. >4 times per week
  
- 19. How many days of the week do you prepare your main meal at home using pre-prepared foods (e.g. frozen pizza)?
  
- 20. How many days of the week do you prepare your main meal at home from basic ingredients (e.g. fresh fruit and vegetables, flour and grains)?
  - a. Do you find it a challenge to cook at home?
  - b. If so, what are the challenges?
  - c. Do you anticipate that receiving a vegetable box will impact this?
    - i. If so, how?
  
- 21. How often do you share main meals with others in the household?
  - a. Are there barriers to eating meals together?
  - b. If so, what are the barriers?
  
- 22. Do you anticipate that receiving a vegetable box will impact this?
  - a. Dairy:
  - b. Fruit and vegetables:
  - c. Fish:
  - d. Meat:
  - e. Pulses:
  
- 23. What bracket (£) does your total household income fall under:
  - a. <20,000 per year after taxes
  - b. 20,000-30,000 per year after taxes
  - c. 30,001-40,000 per year after taxes
  - d. 40,001-50,000 per year after taxes
  - e. >50,000 per year after taxes