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**Challenging food norms:
Understanding the dumpster diving culture in Gothenburg, Sweden**

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to study dumpster divers in Gothenburg, Sweden in order to explore the various motivations for diving in commercial containers and to provide deeper insights into the multifaceted culture of dumpster diving.

Methodology: Data triangulation combining in-depth interviews, ethnographic dives and netnography of online dumpster diving communities.

Findings: The empirical findings show that the main motivations to dumpster dive are threefold: economic, ideological and experiential. To food secure individuals the ideological and experiential motivations are far superior to the economic factor. Dumpster diving need not to be a practice of consumer resistance, but can be a pleasure-seeking act that takes place in both online and offline environments. In addition, dumpster diving creates conflicting situations in which divers must negotiate beliefs and solve tensions. Tensions arise when ideological beliefs and the desire to have fun overlap, when wanting to express and practice resistance yet having to be silent about it, when altruistic actions and egoism overlap, and when vegans get confronted with non-vegan food while diving.

Originality and value: This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the dumpster diving culture in Sweden, and the ways in which diving challenges food norms. It is unique among its kind and contributes to an understanding of the thrill-seeking aspects of consumer resistance and non-normative behaviours in a welfare society. Therefore, the study's results are of value to further research within this scarcely researched field.

Keywords: dumpster diving, anti-consumption, consumer resistance, experiential/hedonic consumption, food waste, Sweden.

"It's really exciting, you never know what you'll find." (Sam, 24)

Introduction

When it comes to environmental sustainability, welfare, and norm-breaking innovations, Sweden is internationally recognised as being one of the leading countries. Nevertheless, the Swedish consumer culture's unsustainable consumption patterns must also be addressed and questioned. There are many ways in which consumerism can be challenged, and one example thereof is those consumers who live off of the abundance of food, which is being wasted by supermarkets. This phenomenon is called dumpster diving and will be studied in this paper. Dumpster diving refers to the practice of gathering food, or other items, from containers or bins (e.g. Eikenberry & Smith, 2005). In society dumpster diving is a fairly unknown phenomenon, and a relatively new field within academia, which has gained little

attention. Although some research has covered dumpster diving (e.g. Fernandez, Brittain, & Bennett, 2011; Barnard, 2011; Carolsfeld & Erikson, 2013; Vinegar, Parker & McCourt, 2016), the quantity of research is still remarkably scarce. Previous research has been carried out in affluent societies such as New Zealand (Fernandez et al., 2011), New York City (Barnard, 2011), and Canada (Carolsfeld & Erikson, 2013; Vinegar et al., 2016). Thus far, the focus has often been on various homogenous groups such as freegans (Edwards & Mercer, 2007; Barnard, 2011; Pentina & Amos, 2011; Nguyen et al., 2014) and food insecure individuals (Eikenberry & Smith, 2005). Freeganism is not only limited to dumpster diving practices, but also involves resisting the capitalistic market by, for instance, living in abandoned buildings and voluntary

unemployment (e.g. Barnard, 2011). People that are faced with food insecurity have limited access to nutritious food, as well as limited possibilities to obtaining food in a way that society deems acceptable. The opposite situation, food security, implies never having to feel uncertain as to whether or not one can access nutritious food (Eikenberry & Smith, 2005). Another aspect that makes dumpster diving relevant to study is the fact that dumpster diving challenges the traditional linear view of consumption and turns it into a cyclical one, which Brosius, Fernandez and Cherrier (2013) have shed light on.

Since the existing literature mainly has covered affluent societies outside Europe, a continuation of the research on the diving community in Sweden is of great relevance, since the well-being of the Swedish population is regarded as being one of the highest in the world (OECD, 2015). In addition, there are large differences among countries in the Western world. What sets Sweden apart from the other affluent societies, is the welfare state and its institutions that are unique for the Nordic countries (Nygård, 2006). Compared to the countries that have previously been researched the Swedish welfare state offers an elaborate social safety net, which in theory prevents people from having to dive for economic reasons. Thus, the emergence of ideological and experiential motivations becomes more relevant to study. The mundane practices of acquiring and consuming food, combined with an active choice to resist grocery shopping, opens up for consumers' conflicting beliefs that need to be negotiated and solved.

The purpose of this paper is to study dumpster divers in Gothenburg, Sweden in order to explore the various motivations for diving in commercial containers and to provide deeper insights into the multifaceted culture of dumpster diving. In line with the most recent research on dumpster diving, the study will mainly focus on food secure individuals. This study is delimited to Gothenburg, Sweden, but aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the experiential aspects within both dumpster diving as well as the field of anti-consumption. The research questions that will be answered in this paper are "How do dumpster divers make sense of dumpster diving and its related activities?" and "How do divers handle the conflicting meanings of dumpster diving?"

Theoretical foundations

Since the mid 1980's the interest in cultural perspectives of consumer research and the understanding of its relevance has grown. When studying consumption from a cultural perspective the focal points of analysis are the ways in which consumers constantly construct, maintain, call into question, and re-negotiate their social realities in the marketplace (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006). This on-going creation and recreation of culture applies to both mainstream cultures, and anti-consumption practices and contexts (cf. Kozinets et al., 2010). The concept of culture is broad, and culture can be understood in various ways depending on the theoretical viewpoint. This study takes on a hermeneutic perspective by understanding how the divers understand their culture (Arnold & Fischer, 1994), create meaning and make sense of their everyday life. Cultural contexts are constantly being created and re-negotiated, and as a result the tensions that arise must be resolved (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006). Tensions and the interaction between conflicting meanings can for instance arise when an individual's beliefs and societal norms clash (Hogg, Banister & Stephenson, 2009). The dumpster diving culture will be analysed with theories relating to anti-consumption and consumer resistance, dumpster diving and experiential consumption, which are discussed below.

Anti-consumption

Consumer research has focused primarily on consumption, and less on counter cultures and anti-consumption (Kozinets et al., 2010). Nevertheless, future research on anti-consumption offers "truly exciting opportunities" (ibid, p. 230), for instance in regards to the wide range of different practices that are related to anti-consumption. The research covering anti-consumption and consumer resistance have often focused on various areas such as the resistance of certain brands e.g. deMcDonaldisation (Ritzer, 2004) and Nike (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2012), certain products through veganism (Wrenn, 2011), and resistance communities such as food-based resistance practices in the hipster community (Cronin, McCarthy & Collins, 2014), freeganism (Nguyen, Chen & Mukherjee, 2014; Pentina & Amos, 2011) and the Burning Man project (Kozinets, 2002a).

Anti-consumption is “about challenging the ideological primacy of consumption” (Kozinets et al., 2010, p. 228), which the phenomenon dumpster diving indeed does. Anti-consumption has also been defined as the “phenomena that are against the acquisition, use and dispossession of certain goods” (Lee, Roux, Cherrier & Cova, 2011). Further, Lee et al. (2011) claim that anti-consumption can be viewed as an action of restriction, rejection or reclamation. While restriction implies limiting one’s consumption in those cases where total anti-consumption is not possible (e.g. water usage), rejection is the avoidance of some goods. To reclaim, however, implies a change of the ideological perspective in which one acquires, uses, and dispossesses something, and can for instance be an anti-consumption practice where “dumpster divers /.../ reclaim ‘trash’ from the process of dispossession” (ibid, p. 1681). Cherrier (2009, p. 181) concludes that previous research has defined anti-consumption as a “resistance that is both an activity and an attitude”, and that resistance is one way in which you can view the diverse field of anti-consumption. Additionally, Cherrier (2009) categorises consumer-resistant identities into hero identities and project identities. In this paper the hero resistant identity will be addressed. When a hero resistant identity is constructed it is with the aim to resist political aspects of consumption and to facilitate a change that affects other individuals as well. Although Cherrier (2009) originally applied the hero resistant identity to voluntary simplicity and culture jamming, the concept is indeed applicable to the dumpster diving culture as well. The creation of hero identities as a way to make sense of diving has been addressed by some scholars within the dumpster diving research, and will be discussed further in the next paragraph.

Dumpster diving

Only a limited amount of research has been conducted on dumpster diving. However, in recent years some excellent studies have been published that cover the phenomenon dumpster diving, but also freeganism and its relation to dumpster diving. There is some range in previous research’s empirical findings. While Eikenberry & Smith’s (2005) research uncovers a great food-insecurity among both homeless and not homeless dumpster diving Americans who dive only to alleviate hunger, more recent

research has focused on food secure individuals whose incentives for diving are not purely or primarily economic. Through netnography and non-participant observations Fernandez et al. (2011) examine the creation of community and identities whilst resisting the market, as well as the negotiation of consumer constructs. It is explained that the interrelated motivations for dumpster diving are economic, ideological, and psychological. Nevertheless, whilst acknowledging these three aspects, Fernandez et al. conclude that the greatest incentive for divers is the ideological aspect. In line with Fernandez et al.’s (2011) arguments, the most recent research on dumpster diving by Vinegar et al. (2016), demonstrates that the reasons for dumpster diving goes far beyond economic reasons and food insecurity. In addition, recent research highlights the creation of dumpster diving communities and their importance, the social stigma that comes with dumpster diving, as well as divers questioning the excessive food waste they regularly come across. Primarily, the existing literature focuses on reasons for dumpster diving. Except for Fernandez et al.’s study, the tensions that come with diving have only briefly been mentioned in previous dumpster diving literature. Fernandez et al. (2011) conclude that divers resolve the tensions by adopting a hero identity. The tensions, Fernandez et al. (2011) claim, derive from divers’ ideological conflicting ideas when having to consume food while simultaneously wanting to resist the market. The research that covers food secure individuals generalises dumpster diving and its practices to acts of anti-consumption or consumer resistance (e.g. Pentina & Amos, 2011; Fernandez et al., 2011). This generalisation will be challenged and partially contested in the analysis.

Looking forward, previous research has called for further research on dumpsters as a source for food and health effects (Eikenberry & Smith, 2005), divers’ motivations (e.g. Eikenberry & Smith, 2005; Vinegar et al., 2016), other unorthodox ways of obtaining food, the experiential aspects of diving, and how divers negotiate the relationship between their individual and communal identities and how these identities affect their resistance to the market and consumerism (Fernandez et al., 2011).

Experiential consumption

Fernandez et al. define the psychological aspects as having less of an importance than the ideological reasons, and in general, dumpster diving literature has primarily focused on the economic and ideological reasons. Therefore, to build on previous literature the theoretical focus lies on the experiential aspect. The dumpster diving phenomenon is not only limited to aspects of anti-consumption and consumer resistance. On the very contrary, dumpster diving can be just as much about hedonic aspects. Holbrook and Hirschmann (1982) highlighted the experiential aspects of consumption, claiming one must not view the consumer as a rational individual and its consumer behaviours as logical, but take consumers' fantasies, feelings and fun into consideration. Although being published several decades ago, this 1982 article by Holbrook and Hirschmann has been highly influential within the experiential field of research and has been a starting point for a different way of thinking about consumption. Since my study addresses the neglected experiential aspects of dumpster diving and anti-consumption, in the same way in which academia challenged the entire field of consumption 35 years ago, it is of relevance to take Holbrook and Hirschmann's research into account.

In more recent years Gabriel and Lang (2006) and Cova and Cova (2012) have examined the different "faces" of the contemporary consumer, one of which is the hedonic consumer. Contemporary consumer behaviour is to some extent built on hedonism and consumers' strive to engage in experiences and to seek pleasure in them (ibid). The desire to engage in experiences, and at the same time have fun, is not only applicable to the consumption patterns of compliant consumers, but also to those consumers who do not adhere with societal norms. The importance of fun has been addressed by Brosius et al. (2013), by linking hedonic aspects to inorganic curbside waste collection in New Zealand. They found that their informants did not primarily collect inorganic items for sustainability reasons, but to have fun and because it felt like a treasure hunt. However, it was also shown that these urban scavengers developed a concern for wasteful practices and engaged in other activities to limit and reduce their consumption, such as dumpster diving for food.

Although the phenomenon to dive for food has mainly been approached with other theories relating to economic and ideological motivations, hedonic aspects have also been mentioned briefly and been compared with going to the mall (Fernandez et al., 2011) and described as "a picnic you don't have to pack" (Carolsfeld & Erikson, 2013, p. 262). Nevertheless, much of the existing dumpster diving research has either failed to view the phenomenon from an experiential and pleasure-seeking point of view altogether (Eikenberry & Smith, 2005), or considered economic or ideological motivations as paramount (e.g. Fernandez et al., 2011; Vinegar et al., 2016). As will be shown, the informants in this study spoke of both feelings of arousal and also of diving as an experience. Additionally, in the above-mentioned literature the concepts hedonic consumption and experiential consumption have been used almost interchangeably (Holbrook & Hirschmann, 1982; Boedeker, 1997), which will also be the case in this study.

In the analysis the above-mentioned theories will be used to analyse divers' motivations for diving, the ways in which motivations are interrelated, and the various tensions that divers need to negotiate.

Methodology

A qualitative approach was used for this study. From a hermeneutic interpretative framework, the goal was to, through interviews, observations and netnography, gain an understanding of the informants' view on dumpster diving. The methodology is based on an abductive reasoning, allowing the researcher to alternate between the empirical data and theories. A small study on dumpster diving was conducted by my fellow students and I (Källman, Larsson, Dahlberg, Andersson & Björkqvist, 2015) a few years prior. After getting consent from these fellow students, I was allowed to use the material from this 2015 study for this paper. In one interview I acted as the co-interviewer and in the interview with Ethan (Table 1) I was the main interviewer. The interview with Ethan generated a lot of useful material and quotes, which is why he is also featured as one of the informants in the table.

Sample

Seven in-depth interviews were conducted and three dives were carried out (Table 1). Using

Type of interview	Pseudonym	Age	Gender identity	Occupation	Years of experience	Diving frequency
In-depth	Johanna	26	Female	Works part-time	5	Weekly
Dive	Johanna (and friend)	(no info)	(Female)	(no info)	(several)	(no info)
In-depth	Kim	27	Non-binary male	Works	6	On and off
In-depth	Ebba	23	Female	Graduate student	3	Sporadic
In-depth	Zoe	28	Female	On sick leave	5	Weekly
In-depth	Sam	24	Non-binary	On sick leave	4	Weekly
Dive	Zoe and Sam					
In-depth	Linda	33	Female	Temporarily on sick leave	3	Weekly
Dive	Linda (and friend)	(Mid 30s)	(Female)	(no info)	(no info)	(no info)
In-depth	Kent	44	Male	Works	17	Weekly to daily
In-depth	Ethan	Late 30s	Male	Works	5+	On and off

Table 1 The study's informants.

purposive sampling all informants were found through the Facebook group Dumpstring Göteborg ["Dumpster diving Gothenburg"], except for Kim who was recruited, by chance, at a café after another interview. The informants were between the ages of 23 and 44, and they were either working or on sick leave, except for Ebba who was a full-time student. Pseudonyms are used since some of the informants expressed that being granted anonymity was a pre-requisite for them to participate in the study. The divers' diving experiences ranged from 3 to 17 years. Information about this study and its purpose was posted in the Facebook group, and the informants initiated the contact with me and volunteered to participate in an interview for the study. Some of the interviewees identified as non-binary, which is why I will use the gender-neutral pronoun ze when I refer to them.

In-depth interviews

The semi-structured in-depth interviews, with a majority of open-ended questions, were held at cafés and lasted between one hour and fifteen minutes and almost two and a half hours. On average, the interviews lasted an hour and a half. An interview guide was used, but the informants were told that the interview would be more like a conversation and they were encouraged to speak freely (Burgess, 1984). The topics covered in the interviews were the informant's background, interests, environmental aspects, views on shopping in general, opinions on supermarkets, and

experiences, practices and thoughts related to dumpster diving. The interviews were audio taped after getting consent from the informants, and were subsequently transcribed (some fully and some partially), and coded. The transcriptions were sent to the informants who were encouraged to read and comment on any inaccuracies in the text. Feedback on minor inaccuracies in the text was received and taken into account. The interviews were held in Swedish and the quotes were translated into English. The only exception was the interview with Ethan, which was held in English. Some informants are quoted more frequently than others because they were better at expressing themselves, or did so more clearly. The quotes contain some swearwords, but in order to present a fair and accurate picture of the dumpster diving culture it was decided not to censor the way in which the interviewees expressed themselves. After transcribing, coding and analysing all interviews, as well as the dives and netnography, two central themes emerged: diver's motivations and tensions. The motivations for diving: economic, ideological and hedonic aspects, as well as the tensions are presented in the analysis.

Dives: ethnographic participant observations

In order to get a deeper understanding of the divers' motivations and practices, ethnographic material was gathered through participation in and observation of dives [emic term]. Three dives were carried out and each dive was together with two divers. During two of the

dives other divers were also encountered. Many of the informants were very inclusive and invited me to come along on dives. However, the divers also made clear that they would not take me to their “gold mine” (their favourite diving spot), and those who did take me to their gold mine said that it was on the condition that I would not spread the word about the location of the supermarket. In the interviews some of the informants also were reluctant to disclose the names of supermarkets and locations of their gold mine diving spot, which is why no names or locations are disclosed. In addition, I had to ensure the informants that no photos would be taken of anyone or at the locations. It was important to ensure the informants’ anonymity, especially since some of them experienced dumpster diving to be either a legal “grey area” or illegal.

The divers and dives allowed me to get an insider perspective and to see the world through the eyes of the participants (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989). Before the dives I met with my informants and we walked, or took the bus, to the location where the dive would take place. All three dives took place at nighttime at supermarkets shortly after the supermarkets had closed. During the dive I participated and observed the others’ behaviour. It was not suitable to write fieldnotes during the dives, since it was dark and quite inconvenient to start writing whilst diving in a container. Since I not only observed, but also took part in the dives, it felt more natural to write the fieldnotes after the dive. The fieldnotes were written as soon after the dive as possible, to ensure that nothing would be forgotten. The fieldnotes consisted of the diver’s interaction with their friend, other divers and the public, the discussions between the divers, finds, items that were used, practices and my own reflections. All dives took place at locations where the containers or bins were neither locked, nor in a fenced area, but easily accessible right outside the supermarket.

Arnould and Wallendorf (1994) claim that cultural research calls for multiple data sources, and that merely interviews or observations often are not sufficient when conducting detailed research. To ensure that this study would be as comprehensive as possible netnography was also conducted in addition to the in-depth interviews and ethnographic dives.

Netnography

Netnography refers to ethnography conducted in an online setting. Similar to ethnography, netnography is a method that allows the researcher to uncover cultural aspects and social interaction. Despite netnography being a comparatively new research method it is of great relevance to research online environments since online and offline worlds are constantly overlapping (Kozinets, Dolbec, & Earley, 2014) in our postmodern society. Yet, similar to offline communities there is often also a barrier into online communities that the researcher must overcome, in order to be let into and accepted in the community. Some of the main differences to ethnography are the lack of possibilities to analyse face-to-face interaction, and interpret body language in a netnographic environment. Instead, one must analyse the written language such as exclamation points, capital letters, and a more modern phenomenon; emoticons and smileys (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006). Nevertheless, netnography provides the researcher with the opportunity to easily gather large amounts of data (Kozinets et al., 2014) and to analyse the whole community at once. Kozinets (2002b) also argues that the advantage of netnography is that it is less time consuming and intrusive than ethnography. In addition, online communities offer a large quantity of member-to-member interaction: data, which would be more difficult and time-consuming to gather ethnographically.

Although the interviews and dives were limited to Gothenburg, the netnographic approach was somewhat wider in order to facilitate the gathering of data of dumpster diving in general and of the online communities. The netnography was conducted in two closed (not public) Facebook groups; Dumpstring Göteborg [“Dumpster diving Gothenburg”] and Dumpstra med oss [“Dive with us”]. Dumpstring Göteborg has 4,500 members and the group is for “People who are interested in recycling, the environment, consumption, or simply cheap food etc”. The purpose of the group is for members to share good diving locations and general tips (Dumpstring Göteborg, 2017). Dumpstra med oss, on the other hand, is with its 12,000 members a nation-wide diving community. The administrators describe the group as “Diving at its best. Together.” (Dumpstra med oss, 2017).

These Facebook groups are forums where members can post pictures of their finds,

post messages or questions for everyone in the community to see, and share news articles or blog posts relating to dumpster diving. The netnography was conducted by scrolling through and reading the posts in the groups. As recommended by Kozinets et al. (2014) screenshots of interesting and relevant posts with text or photos were gathered, and saved for the analysis. These dumpster diving communities can be defined as communities of interest, meaning that the glue that holds the community together is the participants' shared interest in dumpster diving and similar topics, as well as the possibility to find like-minded people (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006).

Since these groups are closed I had to gain access by sending a request to join the groups. As mentioned, informants who wanted to volunteer for an interview and dive were recruited from Dumpstring Göteborg, after gaining access to the group. Throughout the gathering of the data, the netnography was conducted simultaneously with the interviews and the dives. When conducting the netnography I searched for cultural cues, shared practices, discussions regarding dumpster diving and related topics, and other interaction among the group members. While I did participate in the dives, the netnography was of a non-participant fashion; an approach, which Kozinets et al. (2014) refer to as "lurking". It was decided not to engage in any interaction; instead, discussions were initiated in the interviews and during the dives.

The ethical aspects of netnography, sometimes termed "netiquette" (Bryman & Bell, 2011), refer to research etiquette in an online environment (Kozinets et al., 2014). When taking quotes from the Facebook groups the members were not asked for consent. Therefore, all identities are being protected by the use of pseudonyms, as recommended by Kozinets (2002b). To ensure that I approached the two Facebook groups in an ethical manner when joining the groups I posted a message about me conducting research on dumpster diving and that I was looking for people to interview. The post also stated that the administrators were allowed to delete the post if that kind of inquiry was not allowed. The posts received several "likes", which indicated that the divers accepted my presence as a researcher in the online communities.

Analytical approach to the empirical data

As mentioned, the study's empirical data consisted of audio recordings and transcriptions from the interviews, fieldnotes from the dives and screenshots from the two diving communities on Facebook. Additionally, the previously mentioned 2015 dumpster diving study acted as a pre-study, and especially the interview with the diver Ethan was used to complement this study's empirical material. Findings and quotes from the pre-study interviews acted as a loose theoretical and analytical underpinning for this study.

In order to become familiar with the data I listened to the recorded interviews and read the transcriptions several times. The themes that emerged from the data were categorised and colour coded into common themes, patterns, dumpster diving norms, characteristics that set the divers apart, paradoxical aspects, and keywords. The divers were both analysed individually as a case, and together as a community. In the same fashion the ethnographic and netnographic material was analysed. The data was not only analysed with a focus on dumpster diving, but also on the informants' work and leisure life, as well as the way in which they talked about themselves in relation to society. Since I was already familiar with dumpster diving, I tried to take on a de-familiarisation approach, as recommended by Moisander & Valtonen (2006), by imagining now knowing anything about dumpster diving. While it is also beneficial for a researcher to be familiar with the researched topic, a de-familiarisation approach enables the researcher to distance oneself from the topic and view the culture in a new light (ibid). The analysis of the data was on-going throughout the writing process. The transcriptions and screenshot allowed me to easily go back and forth between writing and reviewing the empirical data. In an abductive fashion, the applied theories emerged simultaneously as the analysis of the empirical data was conducted.

Evaluation of the criteria for a good cultural analysis

The study is evaluated based on Moisander and Valtonen's (2006) five criteria for a good cultural analysis: insightfulness and relevance, methodological coherence and transparency, sensitivity to the phenomenon, sensitivity to the ethics and politics of interpretation, and communication and credibility.

This study creates an *insight* into the dumpster diving culture in Sweden, since, to the best of my knowledge, no previous research covering this topic has been conducted. The quantity of research on dumpster diving in affluent societies, especially in Europe, is scarce, which is another reason as to why this study creates insights into this culture. This study also presents insights by challenging both society's view on normative behaviours of acquiring food, and by questioning the existing literature on dumpster diving and anti-consumption. This study has theoretical *relevance* since it builds on the research that has been conducted on dumpster diving in the past few years, and acts as a stepping stone for further research within this field.

The comprehensive descriptions of the processes of how the empirical material was gathered and analysed are important for the study's *transparency*. It was especially important to document the methodology due to the scarcity of previous research. Naturally, the analyses of the empirical material must *cohere* with the study's methodology. By observing and participating in the dives I am acknowledging that I act as a co-creator of the diving culture, and that divers' social constructions are not independent from my role as a researcher. Partaking in such practices do however contribute to a richer cultural analysis.

Moisander and Valtonen (2006) argue that the *sensitivity of the phenomenon* involves the author being respectful of the researched topic. It also concerns ensuring that the suitable methods have been used and that the author chooses the methods in innovative ways that captures the studied culture. This was done by gathering data from the dives and from the dumpster diving communities on Facebook.

The *ethical* dimension was considered by ensuring the informants' that they would be anonymous in this study and that no names of supermarkets or "gold mines" would be disclosed. As encouraged by Schwandt (2003) I considered the way in which my *interpretations* of the dumpster diving culture might affect and be interpreted by both divers and society.

By being transparent when explaining how the theoretical framework and triangulation with several research methods are used to generate and analyse the empirical material the *credibility* of the study is ensured. In addition, the credibility was also ensured by letting the informants read the transcripts, and

by providing thick descriptions and descriptive quotes (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006).

Analysis of empirical findings

In the introduction dumpster diving was referred to as the practice of gathering food or other items from containers. However, the study's empirical findings show that dumpster diving goes far beyond being merely about the practice of gathering food from containers. It was found that the reasons for diving were economic, ideological and experiential, and none of the informants were incentivised by just one aspect. On the contrary, all informants were incentivised by at least two aspects. The majority talked about a combination of experiential and strong ideological aspects, while some mentioned the fact that diving allowed them to save money (economic) whilst also being "good fun" and "a good night out" (experiential). In addition, no matter what the divers' reasons for diving were, they all considered dumpster diving to be a lifestyle. Furthermore, the empirical results revealed several situations where the divers were faced with internal negotiations. These negotiations arose when conflicting belief systems had to be negotiated and solved. The conflicting elements of diving will be referred to as tensions in the analysis. The four tensions emerged when ideological and hedonic aspects overlapped, when wanting to resist the market but having to be quiet about it, when altruistic and egoistic ideas overlapped, and when vegan divers were confronted with non-vegan food.

In contrast to what society might think, this study has found that the diving community is far from being a homogenous group. Firstly, narratives of two very different divers, Ebba and Kent, will be presented to illustrate the heterogeneity of the dumpster diving community and the range of divers' motivation, personalities and backgrounds. Ebba is a master's student that dives sporadically. Kent, on the other hand, dives several times a week and thinks of diving as an adventure even though he started to dive for financial reasons. Secondly, the three motivations for dumpster diving (economic, ideological and experiential) will be analysed. Lastly, the paradoxical aspects and the way in which divers negotiated and solved tensions regarding dumpster diving will be discussed and analysed.

Ebba: the highly educated student diver

Ebba, who is 23 years old, is studying towards her master's degree at the University of Gothenburg. She has lived abroad for many years and speaks several languages fluently. Ebba describes herself as an active vegan, and as an analytical and critical, yet calm, person who often reflects on the negative aspects of society and the ways in which they could be improved. She laughs a lot when I interview her, but also expresses feelings of hopelessness towards today's water-, food- and migration crises. She also admits to sometimes thinking that it would have been easier not to be so aware of the negative aspects of society, because those negative thoughts make her "not that happy". As a teenager she loved shopping for clothes, but as she got older she grew sick and tired of the constant pressure to consume. She also became critical of the way in which the clothing industry makes people feel that they are not good enough, the idea that fashion supposedly buys you happiness, and that the fashion industry tells you to construct your identity through your consumption. Ebba's boyfriend introduced her to dumpster diving a few years ago when cooking her dinner with dumpster diving food. She became curious and this made her want to try diving. After a while she also realised that she could save money and thought that it was useful to become aware of the amount of perfectly good food that is being wasted. Laughingly she also adds that "Then there's the treasure hunting aspects to it as well. It can be pretty fun sometimes too. It can really be a fun experience". Many of her friends are also likeminded divers and she describes them as a bit alternative. Nowadays Ebba does not dive as often as she used to, but sometimes dives spontaneously if she happens to walk past a bin where she can take half a bag of food.

Kent: the adventurous, but dependent diver

Kent is 44 years old and he describes himself as "just a regular guy". He is an artist and runs his own company. His job allows him to travel all over Sweden for gigs, which he does with the motor home he also lives in. However, Kent also admits that it is an unsteady job and that it is difficult to know when his next paycheck will arrive. Kent is one of the pioneers within dumpster diving in Sweden, according to himself. The trigger for his dumpster diving had been hunger due to facing personal bankruptcy 17 years ago. At that time he befriended some

homeless people who taught him how to dive for food in supermarket bins. He admitted to thinking that diving was associated with sicknesses and bacteria, but was instantly "converted" when he realised how much good food there was to be scavenged. "It was just a coincidence that I ended up in this lifestyle, but I liked doing it. It was for me. I felt 'Wow, this works for me' ". Since he has been diving for so long he knows all the ins and outs of diving and seems to take pride in knowing supermarkets' opening hours, when the containers will be emptied and which locations to go to for particular food. Kent almost exclusively relies on diving for food and dives several times a week. Contrary to Ebba, Kent has not told his friends that he dives, claiming that even though he is not ashamed of it, it is none of their concern. Apart from the money saving aspect, Kent mentions several times that diving is a lot of fun too. Kent has been struggling financially since his bankruptcy, but says that soon his debts will be paid off. However, he says that he will continue diving because he likes going to his "gold mines" (favourite diving spot) and enjoys the adrenaline rush he gets from diving. When Kent speaks about his many other interests it is easy to understand why dumpster diving appeals to him. In addition to diving, Kent also enjoys outdoor climbing and urban exploring in abandoned buildings. My interview with Kent was by far the longest and it is apparent that diving is something he enjoys speaking about. "It is fun that someone wants to hear *my* story about why I do it. Because there can be prejudice that you're weird or odd or really poor, or something like that".

Economic motivations

In contrast to Eikenberry and Smith's (2005) study on food insecure "dwellers", all of the informants in this study were food secure. The only exception was Kent, who was forced to dive for financial reasons and who said that he perceived himself to be somewhat of a drifter. In the study by Fernandez et al. (2011) it is explained that the divers who had an initial economic motivation to dive developed additional incentives over time. This was found to be the case also in this study. Although Kent's only initial incentive to dive was economic later on he had developed experiential reasons, which will be further discussed in the section about experiential

motivations. Some of the informants were diving partially to save money and acknowledged that other divers also dived for this reason. Therefore they often shared finds (which sometimes emically was referred to as “harvest”) with others, either with random divers at the location, or with friends and family. However, to Sam it was unacceptable to dive only out of cheapness, and admitted to being angry with Ze’s uncle for doing so. Ze said that it was wrong to dive for that reason and argued that the uncle was taking food from those who do not have the same possibilities to buy good food, such as students, the unemployed, or people on sick leave.

“Solidarity” was a frequently used word among the informants and in the Facebook communities. Food-saving incentives, such as Solidariskt kylskåp [“The solidarity fridge”] and other organisations that are trying to create an infrastructure for saving supermarkets’ discarded food, were both celebrated and encouraged, especially in the Facebook groups. The economic aspect of diving, for the other economically incentivised divers, was not hunger alleviation, but rather to save money and to be able to spend more money on other activities, or to be able to buy more high-quality food in the grocery stores.

All informants mentioned that they had friends or co-workers that were keen to learn more about diving, that understood it because they might dive themselves, or that had similar anti-capitalistic or environmental beliefs. Nevertheless, they agreed that, generally, dumpster diving and divers are viewed in a negative light by society. It was pointed out that there is little awareness about dumpster diving in society and that the prejudice is uncalled for, because it is based on a notion of being a dirty practice. The divers said that in society there is a lack of understanding of the ideological and experiential aspects of diving, but also a misconception that divers collect useless garbage rather than completely edible food. It was also explained that prejudice towards diving was based on the perception that diving is associated with struggling economically or sometimes even being a beggar or homeless. Yet, the divers also admitted to having had some negative prejudice before trying it for the first time. The prejudice disappeared over time when the divers got braver, learning when and where to dive, and when realising the possibilities to scavenge loads of good food.

The fact that dumpster diving is highly stigmatised has also been proven to be true by previous literature (e.g. Nguyen et al., 2014; Vinegar et al., 2016). Nevertheless, previous literature might also contribute to the stigma surrounding dumpster diving. In the studies done by Eikenberry and Smith (2005) and Vinegar et al. (2016) it was revealed that the majority of divers had fallen ill after eating food from a dumpster. The interviewees in this study, as well as the two Facebook communities, demonstrate completely different diving experiences. None of the interviewees had become sick from eating dumpster diving food. Instead, they complained that it was unjustified that outsiders thought that you would get sick from eating dumpster food, and that people in today’s society are too strict and follow the best by dates to a slave-like extent. Instead, they questioned why people do not use common sense, arguing that back in the day, when no best by dates existed, people were forced to rely on common sense. The divers suggested that food that was about to reach its best by date could be distributed to soup kitchens so it would benefit those who are economically challenged, or sold to a discounted price before it expires. Adding to the stigma is also Edwards & Mercer’s (2007) categorisation of the “gleaning culture versus the mainstream capitalist culture” (p. 289). In their categorisation dumpster diving, or “gleaning”, is characterised as “dirty”, [c]haos/anarchy” and involves eating “‘raw’ or ‘rotten’ foods”, whilst the mainstream capitalist culture represents “‘hygienically clean’ ” and eating “‘cooked’ foods” (ibid). While Edward and Mercer studied people living a freegan lifestyle, the main focus lies on the food aspect of freeganism. As mentioned, the informants in this study described this image as being highly inaccurate.

Although the informants described some minor trade-offs: smelly fingers, or encounters with ignorant security guards or policemen, the cons of diving were always overridden by the positive ideological and experiential aspects that they got out of dumpster diving. When being asked if they would ever consider quitting dumpster diving many concluded that even if they would win a lot of money they would most likely still continue to dive, either for themselves or to help others. They explained that it was the ethical thing to do, or that they would continue simply because it was fun.

They seemed to take pride in being dumpster divers, although this might not have been the case had they dumpster dived purely for economic reasons. As a consequence, the fun part and the ideological beliefs were more significant, and in the following paragraphs this will be elaborated on.

Ideological motivations

In comparison to their economic motivations, the informants expressed even stronger ideological beliefs. The ideological aspect is much broader than the other two aspects and goes far beyond dumpster diving. The divers' ideological thoughts included matters such as animal rights, environmental degradation, food laws, extreme pressures to consume, criticism towards linear consumption patterns, veganism and the oversupply of food. In addition to being unhappy with the food industry critique was directed towards the capitalist system, politicians and society at large. "Sick", "fucked up" and "absurd" were some of the words used to express their opinions on commercial food waste. They expressed great hopelessness, saying that their one-man resistance and actions would not contribute to any changes for the better, referring to supermarkets' wasteful practices. However, the ideological elements did not function as a motivation for all divers. Nevertheless, all divers had reflected on and were critical towards the food industry and the amount and quality of food that supermarkets waste. Although, generally, the divers seemed to think that the diving community as a whole did contribute to saving much food and doing good, they also felt that their actions had little implications for the vast quantities of food that supermarkets waste, or for the food industry as a whole. On the contrary, the divers felt that supermarkets invest more time and effort into discouraging and keeping divers away, than enabling divers to save food. This finding is in contrast to Fernandez et al.'s (2011) informants who believed that they not only could change themselves by diving, they also believed that their own actions could change their community and the world.

Johanna said that she had a lot of anti-capitalistic beliefs, was critical of today's pressure to consume, did not believe in commercials and was a strong supporter of a circular economy and an environmentally sustainable society. When asked if the things she found ever surprised her, Johanna

answered: "Yeah. I still get completely *fucked*... It's just that it's so much good food that is being thrown away. Like, I never get used to it." Just like Johanna some of the other interviewees were critical of the capitalist system and described dumpster diving as a lifestyle. Nevertheless, none of them were critical enough to embrace a freegan lifestyle, which would imply not only expressing their resistance through food, but also resisting capitalism in several other aspects of life (Pentina & Amos, 2011).

In line with what was uncovered by Fernandez et al.'s (2011) netnography, many of the arguments in the Facebook groups were of an ideological nature, such as expressing anger towards supermarkets' wasteful practices. Karin, a member of Dumpstra med oss, used the Facebook group to express her feelings: "Very inspiring group! But WHAT is wrong with the world???? Hooow the *** can these things be thrown away? The wheel of capitalism is so incredibly sick." (Dumpstra med oss, 2017). Divers often seem to dive in smaller groups, or even alone, and might not meet in other contexts. Nevertheless, Dumpstring Göteborg has allowed the divers to come together into a community. In the same way, Dumpstra med oss allows divers from all of Sweden to come together and creates a sense of belongingness for the divers. Even if the Facebook groups allowed the divers to share values and exchange experiences, the groups were also used as outlets for anger. Online environments, such as Facebook, allows for arguments and discussions that might not take place in an offline setting since the possibility to hide behind the screen allows users to give way to emotions and opinions that otherwise might not be expressed (Peebles, 2014). Dumpstring Göteborg and Dumpstra med oss turned out to be textbook examples of this phenomenon. Alice, who preferred not to get into conflicts with supermarkets, used the online community to express her frustration instead:

Haven't many of you in this group, at one point or another, been face to face with the dark hole of capitalism? So have I. I just found a container filled with 2017 calendars. Oh, they used to look so nice. Kids and family calendars that would have given so much joy to, for instance, Kvinnojouren or to others in need. Cute calendars, animal motives...

ALL OF THEM had been cut right though them, even the cute wrapping papers for kids had been cut. /.../ I am very afraid of conflicts and not really the person who would speak to the store in question. ☹ They don't like divers there and sometimes they have poured detergents over the stuff in the containers.

I just wanted to complain a bit here. I know that it doesn't make the world a better place by complaining, but I do it anyways. It's so sad to see things that have been destroyed on purpose. Have a nice diving weekend everyone and I hope you save something that can be useful for another family. Saved a little roll of gift wrapping paper that had been cut. Can use it for scrapbooking or something like that. (Alice, Dumpstra med oss, 2017)

Even if many divers expressed anger and contested the system, others also engaged in the conversations explaining that rather than having feelings of hatred towards people it was more productive to distance yourself from the phenomena that you do not agree with.

Generally, the Facebook communities are the divers' hubs for meeting likeminded people, and they said that if and when they met other divers while diving they did not have as intense conversations offline as they did online. Nevertheless, it was mentioned that they all felt that they had an implicit mutual understanding of why they were there diving. Ethan, who was diving for ideological and experiential reasons, explained that he had never gotten along with his family members and felt that his wife's family did not like him either. However, through the dumpster diving community he could feel a sense of belonging and acceptance:

For a long time I felt like an outcaster and that's the good thing in being in dumpster diving and if you go dumpster diving and meet other people dumpster diving you are connected. Even though you've never met this person, you don't know their name before, and in some way or shape or form it's like 'ah, I'm your friend'. And there's a very inclusive thing, and then you get what you want and then you leave. And then you go to the next place and meet the next people and you get the same sort of inclusive feeling there. So that's another thing why it's good fun to go dumpster diving. (Ethan, late 30s)

Another aspect of the ideological ideas is the adoption of a hero identity, which previously has been acknowledged in dumpster diving literature (Fernandez et al., 2011; Nguyen et al., 2014; Vinegar et al., 2016). By negotiating a hero identity that is based on the consumer's rejection and resistance of the market (Cherrier, 2009) divers create a positive meaning according to Fernandez et al. (2011). Cherrier's (2009) hero identity revolves around anti-consumption and ideological beliefs being the primary catalysts for creating such an identity. This study and the study by Källman et al. (2015) show that the positive hero identity is not only built on the negative notion of *rejection* or *market resistance* ("diving is good because I am rejecting choice/resisting the market"), but can also be the positive concept of altruistic *saving* or *reclaiming* ("diving is good because I am saving/reclaiming food for others in need"). In the cases where divers were motivated by anti-capitalistic or other ideological beliefs a hero identity could be adopted. Ethan often dived for food and gave it to fellow church members because he believed it was the ethical thing to do. Ethan argued that had other people known that he was diving to reclaim food for less fortunate people they would have praised him (Källman et al., 2015). He told a story of an encounter with a policeman who, after telling Ethan not to come back to the supermarket and trespass again, let him keep 86 packets of barbecued ribs:

But I was thinking, this policeman he was actually... He had two roles there. He was being a policeman, but he's also being human. And I believe if he was there, the same man, without his badge and his gun he would have clapped us, applauding what we were doing. 'Cause we told him, this food is going to people who are starving or who don't have money to be able to buy food. And to him, he was going 'Yeah, that's a good idea.' But because he's a policeman he has to give us the police spill. And he did. He gave us both. (Ethan, late 30s)

As the quote illustrates, Ethan thought of himself as a hero for saving food and helping others in need. As mentioned, divers felt that society often do not understand dumpster diving. Ethan said that on this occasion the policeman did understand, and these feelings of mutual understanding allowed Ethan to view himself as a hero. He also argued that even if it

is illegal for divers to trespass it was important to look at the bigger picture and the ethical aspects, claiming that the biggest crime was that the supermarkets threw the food away in the first place, calling it immoral and blamed capitalism. As this example illustrates, a hero identity could be built partially based on a rejection and questioning of wasteful practices, but also on altruistic actions. Fernandez et al. (2011) found that a hero identity was adopted to solve the tensions that arise when divers have to consume food, whilst also wanting to resist the market. That was however not the case in this study.

Even if not all informants expressed having ideological reasons for diving, the amount of good food, which systematically is being wasted, was briefly, but strongly, expressed. This implies that even if they were motivated by economical and hedonic reasons they still had contemplated on the ideological aspects of diving. “Can you really characterise it as ‘stealing’ when it comes to trash?” and “Incredible amounts of food are just going to waste” the interviewees said about supermarkets wasting food.

Experiential motivations

Just like the ideological factor created meaning and reasons for diving, so did the experiential aspects. According to Holbrook & Hirschmann (1982), when taking consumers’ fantasies, feelings and fun in to account, consumption can be viewed as hedonic or experiential. In the same way as consumption can be experiential, so can anti-consumption. Although the supply of food in supermarket’s containers was referred to as “sick”, “fucked up” and “absurd”, diving was at the same time described in positive terms: “it is like a treasure hunt”, “like Christmas eve”, a fun, social and exciting activity, and that “you get a buzz out of it”. No matter if a diver had economic and/or ideological reasons for diving, all informants dived because it was fun too. Although Johanna had strong ideological beliefs what initially got her interested in dumpster diving was because it sounded fun. She explained how her punk rocker friends introduced her to dumpster diving and that they had told her that they enjoyed diving while being drunk. This got her exciting about diving: “So I thought to myself ‘shit, I wanna do this’. And then I really enjoyed doing it, you get an adrenalin rush. It feels like Christmas [laughs] when you find god

stuff.” In a very similar fashion Zoe said that diving was like Christmas and explained that, to her, dumpster diving was also a fun and social activity:

But yeah, as I mentioned, it’s really fun. It’s feels a bit like Christmas, especially when you find stuff that you normally wouldn’t buy yourself. ‘Oh, how nice! I’d like this! I’m gonna eat this!’ or ‘This is something I’ll use for cooking!’ So that’s kind of it; economic and fun and social. The thing itself, to go out diving with your friends, is in some way a social activity, that’s kind of nice and you hang out and do something together. (Zoe, 28)

In the above quote Zoe talks about diving as consisting of two aspects of fun: the activity and the finds. Zoe and Sam frequently dived together, and Sam had the same outlook on diving, arguing that there was no point in diving alone. When being asked if ze ever dived alone ze replied “Not really... It has happened, but I don’t know, it’s boring and it’s silent.” Sam, who just like Johanna held strong anti-capitalistic beliefs, continued explaining that the shared experience was important because it made it much more fun:

On the one hand we’re great friends and yap about and that kind of stuff, you know. On the other hand it’s fun to be able to share the euphoria you get when you find something amazing, you know. And you’ve got company, and it’s... Yeah but, it’s difficult to explain, but there’s some sort of dumpster diving connection that’s pretty funny [laughs]. I don’t know how else to describe it. Nah, but to go out alone is... If it isn’t absolutely necessary I’d rather not do it. (Sam, 24)

Even though many of the divers had ideological beliefs, which one can argue that in itself it ought to be enough to incentivise them to dive alone, many of the divers said that they did not want to dive alone. The reasons were either because they felt unsafe to do so, or simply because they did not think it was fun to dive alone and that they wanted to share the experience with someone. The desire to share the experience could also be seen in the online communities: almost daily do people post in the Facebook groups asking for diving partners. Kim, on the other hand, enjoyed diving alone saying that “I like going there by myself and

listen to music [laughs]. And then bike home. I think that's pretty nice, you know." As mentioned, Kent explained that dumpster diving not only allowed him to save money, but that it was exciting too. Kent sometimes went diving alone and described that, to him, dumpster diving was like a challenge and that he was competing with himself. On the one hand, he always strived for not being seen so that the supermarket would not put locks on the containers, but on the other hand he also competed with himself thinking "okay, so today no one is going to catch me".

It was also mentioned that in the same way people get excited about planning a vacation, divers could get excited about planning their dive. Due to the quality and quantity of the finds divers could become too excited and experience "dumpster diving drunkenness". Sometimes that was negotiated on the spot. Then, the divers tried to bear in mind that the food should be shared and that it was important to leave food for others. If the divers could not resist the dumpster diving drunkenness they often distributed the food to others. If the food was not distributed and got old the divers argued that at least it was better that the food ended up in their compost than in the supermarket's container. The experiential and ideological aspects of dumpster diving drunkenness will be discussed further in the section Tension 3.

Similar to the informants in this study Fernandez et al. (2011) explain that divers enjoy sharing the diving experience with friends and the element of surprise. These aspects are categorised as psychological motivations, which are inferior to the ideological aspects (ibid). However, this study shows that hedonic motivations are not necessarily inferior to the ideological ones. On the contrary, not only can hedonic motives be superior, but they can also be a substitute for economic or ideological motivations. This means that divers need not to be motivated by ideological reasons, but instead can dive to save money and to have fun, which was the case for both Kent and Zoe.

The study by Fernandez et al. (2011) focuses on divers having fun while the practice of diving occurs. However, this study shows that the fun in diving also went beyond actively diving for food by transgressing onto online contexts and social media, in particular Facebook and Instagram. In addition to taking

part in the discussions in the Facebook communities, some divers also liked posting pictures of their finds in the Facebook groups or on Instagram accounts. A common phenomenon on social media is to upload photos of one's dinner or of the "outfit of the day". In a very similar fashion the divers also found pleasure in regularly uploading photos of their finds, and seemingly the divers wanted to seek attention and recognition among their peers. It is not uncommon that the food is displayed in a staged way, similar to how non-dumpster diving food or a photo of an outfit of the day can be staged. The uncooked fruits and vegetables could, for instance, be organised by their different colours and referred to as "dumpster diving art" by the diver. The food that had been cooked was staged in the exact same way as non-diving food: the photo of the food, which was neatly presented on a plate, was often taken from a bird's eye view. Linda had even created a new Instagram account that was designated to her finds. In her interview she proudly showed me her Instagram pictures of the food and flowers she had found. The best part of an evening of diving, she said, was when she had put all the food "on display" on the kitchen table, taken a picture of it and uploaded it on Instagram, "and then you sit there with a glass of wine and wait for the comments" Linda concluded. She also explained that because she had children she did not have much time to herself, but that she liked to dive in her spare time when the kids were asleep. Linda was far from being the only one who liked the attention she got on social media. In the Facebook groups photos of harvests are uploaded almost daily. By the way in which some divers upload photos on a regular basis, express themselves and encourage others to write comments it is apparent that they seek attention from their peers and find pleasure in the attention they do get.

In the existing literature dumpster diving has been classified as acts of anti-consumption or resistance. However, this study shows that that is not necessarily the case for all divers. The fact that not all divers practice dumpster diving because they are economically challenged or resist the market, but instead for the fun of it, challenges previous definitions of the phenomenon that is dumpster diving. This finding is supported by Chatzidakis and Lee (2012), who found that what might be classified as anti-consumption *practices* do not

necessarily need to be driven by *motivations* of anti-consumption. As a result, anti-consumption practices such as dumpster diving can be motivated by both anti-consumption beliefs and consumption motivations that are not connected to anti-consumption.

As discussed, dumpster divers are motivated by economical, ideological and experiential aspects. These three aspects also contributed to the tensions that arose when an individual's conflicting beliefs created an internal struggle, which needed to be solved. The tensions will be discussed in the remainder of the analysis.

Tensions

The empirical data offered a great deal of paradoxical practices and thinking regarding dumpster diving. Four main tensions were found, where the divers balanced between two strongly conflicting elements of dumpster diving: 1) when the ideological beliefs are in contrast to simultaneously wanting to have fun, 2) when wanting to resist the market yet having to be silent about it, 3) when altruism and sharing practices collide with the desire to keeping "gold mines" a secret, and 4) when vegan divers are confronted with non-vegan food. As mentioned by Moisander and Valtonen (2006), culture is not static, but involves situations and conflicting elements, which are constantly being created and re-negotiated. The results of how the divers negotiated, re-negotiated and solved the tensions are discussed below.

Tension 1: Criticising society and having fun at the same time

The best aspect of dumpster diving, as described by many of the informants, was also the main reason for resisting the marketplace in the first place: large quantities of edible food are being wasted. Although the informants described the amounts of wasted food in negative terms, such as "absurd" and "disgusting", at the same time they also described an inherent joy of coming across large amounts of food and getting a good harvest. The informants' ideological views overlapped and clashed with the aspects of fun and excitement. The negotiation between having fun and being upset for ideological reasons were also expressed and discussed in the online communities:

Back from Asia! And what did I do on my first night in Sweden? Dumpster dived, of course! The goal is to eat 100% dumpster food (ate approx. 90% before). Am a vegan/fruitarian, which means that I have to refill my fridge pretty often. In one week I've been to my beloved [supermarket] 4 times haha. I love dumpster diving, but hate it at the same time. You know the thrill of finding a container full of wonderful stuff, but at the same time the anger that it goes to waste. But happy to be able to decrease the food waste and get delicious free food. Happy days. (Gabrielle, Dumpstra med oss, 2017)

The above quote illustrates the overlapping elements of ideology and hedonism, and the negotiation of positive and negative feelings. Had diving not been connected to exciting experiences and positive feelings the divers would not have been able to continue their protesting actions and dive for years. The reason why it would not have been possible was because the ideological beliefs were so strongly connected to negative feelings. In the previous section about ideological motivations, Alice from the Dumpstra med oss Facebook group was quoted. She was upset that calendars and gift-wrapping paper had been destroyed and thrown away, but saved some wrapping paper for scrapbooking. Just like Gabrielle, Alice was balancing between the anger towards the supermarket and the joy that the gift-wrapping paper brought her. In the end, Alice chose to focus on the fact that the gift-wrapping paper would be a nice addition to her scrapbooking hobby. Some of the informants, such as Johanna and Sam, had strong ideological and experiential motivations for diving. Prior to a dive they decided that had they no one to dive and share the experience with it was not worthwhile to dive. In this study it was found that, generally, the ideological-experiential tensions took place before or after a dive, but never during a dive.

From an ideological and altruistic standpoint, the divers said that they would be pleased if the community grew and if more food could be saved. However, it was also mentioned that it would be bittersweet and disappointing if the regular diving location or gold mine would be depleted, because if there was no food in the container it would not be fun to dive. Some of the informants said that they welcomed new divers into the community and that they would happily teach them about

diving, but by protecting their gold mines the conflicting aspect was negotiated. Under Tension 3 the altruistic negotiations will be discussed further.

Theoretically it could be paradoxical to explain that consumers consume in both a rational manner (which in this case would be the diver's ideological beliefs) and in an experiential and pleasure-seeking manner. However, Boedeker (1997) claims that rational and experiential consumption ought to act as supplements to each other. Only when taking both the rational and experiential aspects into account can one gain a better understanding of consumer behaviour (ibid). As this study shows, one must not only take the ideological motivations into account or view the ideological aspects as paramount, but it is also important to analyse the experiential aspects to be able to get an in-depth understanding of the dumpster diving culture. Previous cultural studies have also shown that consumer resistance and ideological beliefs are interconnected to having fun and sharing experiences with others. This has shown to be the case at the Burning Man festival (Kozinets, 2002a) and in the hipster community (Cronin et al., 2014).

Tension 2: A silent counter movement - the only way to protest

For many of the informants, dumpster diving is an action taken against the contemporary consumer society and its wasteful practices. However, when diving in a supermarket's container it is very important for the divers not to be seen by supermarket employees, the police, security guards, neighbours or anyone else from the public. It was mentioned that a couple of years ago there had been "almost like a witch hunt" in Gothenburg to stop divers from diving, but that it was no longer the case. Kent mentioned that much had changed since he started diving 17 years ago, saying that in the beginning of his diving career it had been easier to access supermarkets' containers to gather food. However, he said, in recent years many supermarkets had become aware of divers and put locks on their containers, locked the containers in or put up fences to prevent divers from entering the area. This was also confirmed by Ebba, who said that today Gothenburg is not the dumpster diving paradise it once used to be. All divers felt that generally supermarkets had little understanding for dumpster diving and did

much to prevent them from saving food. In the Facebook communities it is often being discussed how the situation should be handled when being confronted by the police, security guards and supermarket employees. Many divers argue that the best approach is to be polite, apologise, walk away from the situation and come back another time, in order to prevent the supermarkets from putting up fences.

Anti-consumption implies "challenging the ideological primacy of consumption" (Kozinets et al., 2010, p. 228) and to the ideological divers dumpster diving can be defined as a form of anti-consumption. The ideological divers wanted to protest against supermarkets, but if their protesting actions (i.e. diving) are noticed, the repercussions are that bins and containers might be locked in, and the possibility to protest disappears. Thus, the practice of diving must be kept so silent and go unnoticed, making ideological diving highly paradoxical. Though what is challenging for dumpster divers is that they cannot detach themselves from the very market they resist. One must acquire food somehow, and especially when living in a large city, such as Gothenburg, it is nearly impossible to be self-sustaining and grow your own food. Thus, their resistance practices are dependent on the very supermarkets they resist in the first place. This argument is in line with Kozinets's (2002a) study on the Burning Man festival; consumers cannot fully escape the market despite resisting it. However, many of the informants felt that diving was their *only* possibility to protest against supermarkets' excessive waste and detach themselves from the capitalistic market. It was not only the practice of diving that the divers felt had to go unnoticed. They also claimed that the communities on Facebook must be closed groups so they can be a safe haven for discussions.

Tension 3: Sharing with others while keeping gold mines a secret

Although the informants thought that solidarity was an important aspect of diving they also described the fine line between sharing the food and keeping their "gold mines" (best diving spots) a secret to themselves, no matter what their motivations for diving were. The divers described a spirit of solidarity when meeting other divers in a container and said that the food was shared with these strangers. Even if they did not always encounter other divers, they still

were considerate of others and often left food in the containers. It was important to keep others' needs in mind, since other divers might dive in the same container later in the evening. In addition, the food was also shared with their friends and family at home. The divers did not talk about a "finders keepers" mentality, but rather a situation where the divers came to a mutual agreement on which person could take which food.

Even though the sharing actions were said to be important, the divers were not always this altruistic. Some of the informants did not want to share their gold mines, neither with me nor with the fellow divers in the online community Dumpstring Göteborg, and claimed that these places were their secrets. The ones that did reveal their gold mine clearly underlined that I was not allowed to take photos of them or their favourite spots, or share the names of the favourite spots, out of fear that these places would be exposed and shut down. One informant even said that he regularly posted pictures of the food in the Facebook group, but chose not to write where the food was found to "annoy others". This mentality is similar to mushroom pickers' practices and the way in which they can be hesitant about sharing their favourite chanterelle spots with strangers, or even with friends or acquaintances.

In addition to not wanting to share the locations of gold mines, many of the divers also admitted to having experienced "dumpster diving drunkenness", something which can be compared with excessive shopping behaviour and buying things you do not actually need, but nonetheless you do it because it's cheap. Kent explained:

I call it dumpster diving drunkenness. You go 'Oh, I *have to have* this'. And then you end up bringing 35 loaves of bread with you. It's very easy to end up doing that when you see that there's a lot of good stuff just lying there and there's nothing wrong with it. But I take what I need. Because there are other divers that will come and who would like to have some too, you know. Once, there were 35 nets of oranges. So I called my mum and asked 'do you need oranges?' So you're not egotistic, you know, and think 'I should have it all'. I don't wipe the place clean, because there should be enough for others too. (Kent, 44)

Kent tried not to give in to the dumpster diving drunkenness since he felt that it was more

important to consider other divers' financial situations and need to dive for food. The divers dealt with dumpster diving drunkenness by either negotiating with themselves at the location how much they "actually need", or by giving food away to others after coming home with food that they did not want to eat, or were not capable of eating due to the vast quantities.

In the diving community it is not only food that is being shared. In the Facebook groups tips and photos of food are shared as well. Johanna explained how she is sharing her finds by posting updates in the Facebook group when coming home after a dive:

And then I take a picture of it, of my finds. Then I maybe post it in the group [Dumpstring Göteborg]. So that people should be able to see that there's food there, you know. Because you give tips to other people too; 'tonight it was great here'. Because then, in one way, you also make sure that more food is being saved. And you help others. Cause sometimes you get to a place and there's nothing there. (Johanna, 26)

The location that Johanna usually went to was described as one of the well-known diving locations in Gothenburg. Had her regular diving spot been considered a gold mine to her had she perhaps not shared this information on Facebook. Another example of tips sharing is a member of the Dumpstra med oss (2017) who posted a photo of 20 lemons she had saved diving. This member got several comments with tips and recipes with what she could do with the lemons. Many of the recipe comments also contained heart emoticons, which seemed to act as an encouragement for all the possibilities of what could be cooked with the lemons, and an indication that the lemons were considered to be a good harvest.

Not only were the divers often considerate of others by often leaving food in the containers, but they also gave food to those who are less well off. Many divers mentioned the possibility to leave food at Solidariskt kylskåp ["The Solidarity fridge"], which provides fridges at four different locations in Gothenburg where one can leave and take food for free (Solidariskt kylskåp, 2017). The Facebook groups were not only used to discuss diving, but also used to distribute and share saved food. To Linda the large amounts of food she found diving was overwhelming. At one point, she said, she bought an additional freezer

to be able to cope with the amounts of food she saved. Even if Linda did not dive for ideological reasons, but to have fun and save money, she was considerate of people who are struggling economically, and said that she and her family could not possibly eat all the food she had dumpster dived:

Yeah, I've given away bags full of food. [To] friends who aren't that well off. Neighbours. If you have loads of stuff you either write a post about it in the group [Dumpstring Göteborg] that you have plenty of food, so people can come and pick it up. So I've done that a couple of times. Like, grilled chickens and cream. *What the hell* do I need 20 grilled chicken for? [Laughs]. Or, there's a group called Dumpstrande änglar ["Dumpster diving angels"] and there people give away food. So I've given food away there too. (Linda, 33)

Despite divers being secretive about their gold mines, there was always a strong sense of solidarity, and sharing and caring when meeting fellow divers in a dumpster. Ethan (Källman et al., 2015) explained:

I think people who have an ethical belief in dumpster diving of course they're gonna care. Cause they have the same philosophy in life and the same sort of, they don't tend to be egotistical. They tend to be like, eh, they're not caught up in celebrity shit and stuff like that, you know. They actually read books that are gonna increase their awareness you know, and understanding of how things really are. That's my interpretation of people you meet dumpster diving. You know, they're sort of fringe people. I wouldn't call them mainstream. Last time we went we were at, or I don't know last time, but a time that we went, we were at [supermarket] and out came the lesbian dumpster diving gang [smiling]. They had shaved head and they had dreadlocks and they had the, you know, Indian hippie pants and stuffs like that and we had a great time digging in the dumpster. And that's what they called themselves: the lesbian dumpster diving gang. And they were *hilarious*, they were hilarious. All they did when we were there, we were there 20 minutes with them, helping out with them, and all they did was laugh and hang shit on each other. And who wouldn't wanna be a part of a community that's like that? (Ethan, late 30s)

Tension 4: Dumpster diving makes divers overlook their vegan ideologies

One of the informants, Kim, was a vegan due to ideological and environmental reasons, and wanted to push for a transition into a vegan society. However, at the same time ze confessed to being more flexible when dumpster diving, and could dive for food containing non-vegan ingredients. Kim said that ze usually drew the line at milk powder, but also confessed to having "fluent" boundaries from one day to another for which food ze would eat. The fluent boundaries imply an ongoing negotiation and re-negotiation of Kim's veganism, which took place during the dive. In addition, not only did Kim choose to take non-vegan food, but ze was also genuinely excited to find it:

I, who basically only consume vegan get, eh, often very happy when I find chocolate and things like that. And loads of candy. It's funny that that's the best [laughs], but those kinds of things are so nice. 'Cause it's... It's something that doesn't expire, and doesn't get off. Eh, and that it's some sort of consumption that's for free. And stuff that I would never choose to consumer otherwise from a store. (Kim, 27)

Johanna was a vegan for the same reasons as Kim. She had also experienced these inner conflicts, saying that this was a common thing among vegan divers. Johanna said that she was "not a hard-core vegan" and also admitted to cheating one in a while. However, in comparison to Kim Johanna always stuck to her beliefs and never re-negotiated them when diving:

I know that there are people that... That compromise with this... That they eat vegan, usually. But that they take for instance dairy products when they dive because they think it's an okay thing to do because it's for free. 'I didn't pay for it and contribute to the industry', you know. And I... I used to think like that before, I was a bit torn. 'Cause now there's a lot of cheese or yoghurt here and I'm not taking it...' To me that felt odd. But now I have a different opinion, from a health perspective. I don't want to eat that kind of food. (Johanna, 26)

According to Cherrier (2009), anti-consumption is an attitude as much as it is an activity, which can explain why this situation creates inner

conflicts for these vegan divers. Even if dumpster diving involves consuming the reclaimed food, it was often mentioned that eating dumpster diving food “does not count” as consumption, and therefore the desire to resist and reject could be overlooked. To reduce ze’s cognitive dissonance Kim argued that it was worse to buy ethically produced vegan chocolate from an ethical grocery store than eating the regular chocolate ze found when dumpster diving, because purchasing it would contribute to capitalism. Kim also argued that dumpster diving does not contribute to any increase in demand and therefore it could be considered a consumption which in a way was “non-existent”. However, when sharing food the vegan divers never compromised with their beliefs. Even if some divers admitted to cheating on their veganism they never actively dived for meat or dairy products for other non-vegans to eat.

In this analysis the economic, ideological and experiential aspects of diving have been discussed. These three motivations for diving are interrelated and create situations in which tensions arise. The study’s findings are summarised in the next section where the study’s contributions are also being presented.

Conclusion

This paper presents an in-depth analysis of the dumpster diving culture in Gothenburg, Sweden, and aims to answer two research questions. The first research question was aimed at understanding the ways in which divers make sense of dumpster diving and its related practices. The Gothenburg diving community is a heterogeneous group and it was shown that divers make sense of diving in ways that are economic (saving money), ideological (expressing e.g. a strong dislike for capitalism and wasteful practices), and experiential (having fun). A combination of at least two aspects motivates individuals to dive, although all informants had adopted an experiential motivation for diving. For food secure individuals the economic aspect is not the primary incentive for diving, but act as a complement to ideological or experiential reasons. The social stigma that surrounds dumpster diving is mostly connected to the prejudice that divers are economically challenged or even homeless. That was not found to be the case among the informants. Not

all divers adopt ideological reasons for diving, but the ones that do call into question matters of market resistance, linear consumption patterns, supermarkets’ oversupply of food, environmental degradation, wasteful practises, and animal rights. It was found that ideological divers could adopt a hero resistant identity, which allowed the divers to view their market resistance and food saving practices in a positive light. For food secure divers the ideological and experiential factors are superior to the economic aspects. Furthermore, the experiential factor was found to be paramount to the economic and ideological aspects. The divers had either been incentivised to dive for fun from the very beginning, or had acquired the motivation to dive for experiential reasons over time. The reason why the experiential factor must be considered paramount is because it was shown that the divers do not engage in diving unless they either had someone to share the experience with, or had fun diving. This was found to be the case despite the fact that some divers held strong ideological beliefs. However, no matter what incentivised the informants to dive or which diving frequency they had, dumpster diving was considered to be a lifestyle.

The dumpster diving phenomenon is not only limited to the practice of diving, but takes place in online settings as well. Particularly ideological and experiential divers engaged in diving related online practices. The ideological divers often engaged in discussions in the Facebook communities by discussing food saving actions, or by criticising the capitalistic system and supermarkets’ systematic food wasting practices. Pleasure-seeking divers posted pictures on Facebook or Instagram for attention seeking purposes.

The second research question was aimed at understanding the ways in which divers handle the conflicting meanings of dumpster diving. It was found that the tensions, which are based on the three motivations for diving, arise in four different contexts. The first tension that arose can be considered as the most profound tension that the divers experienced. One of the main reasons that incentivised them to dive for ideological reasons, motivated them to dive for experiential reasons as well: large quantities of food are being wasted and can consequently be scavenged. This situation made divers conflicted between feelings of anger towards supermarkets and the capitalistic society, and

the positive feelings of excitement that came with a good “harvest”. The tension was solved by focusing on the positive experiential aspects of diving, by being excited about unexpected finds, and by sharing the experience and excitement with friends. The second tension arose when ideological divers wanted to resist the capitalistic market, question supermarkets’ wasteful practices, and challenge consumerism - yet felt the need to be silent about diving. As the existing anti-consumption literature has proven, consumers cannot detach themselves from the very market they resist, especially not when it comes to food. Therefore, it was argued that diving was their only possibility to practice resistance. The tension was solved by letting the divers go unnoticed because the containers were locked in or fences had been put up, the possibility to protest would disappear. The third tension arose when the divers on the one hand wanted to protect their “gold mines” (best diving spot), but on the other hand wanted to be altruistic and share food and tips with others. The locations of the gold mines were often not disclosed, but the divers compensated by sharing food with friends and family, and by posting tips and photos of other good locations to the fellow divers in the Facebook communities. Another act of solidarity was to leave food in the gold mine containers for other divers that might come later in the evening. Occasionally the divers could get dumpster diving drunkenness when being confronted with more food than they could eat. This was either solved during the dive by having an internal negotiating about how much food one could actually eat, or if the diver could not resist the dumpster diving drunkenness the food was shared with friends and family after the dive. The fourth tension arose in situations when vegan divers were confronted with non-vegan food. The fact that anti-consumption is a practice as much as it is an ideological attitude explains why the vegan divers felt conflicted when being confronted with non-vegan food. Some vegans solved the tension prior to a dive by deciding not to dive for non-vegan food. Others had on-going negotiations during the dive and solved the conflict by viewing dumpster diving food as a non-existent consumption, or by having fluent boundaries from one dive to another. Depending on the context, the tensions were negotiated and solved prior to, during, or after a dive.

Although the divers were modest when describing their own contributions to societal change and felt limited by society’s rules and norms, this study’s findings show that it must be acknowledged that the dumpster diving culture does challenge traditional food norms and practices. Accordingly, one must view the dumpster diving culture as a creator of and contributor to societal change. Additionally, this study’s findings has implications for the dumpster diving and consumer resistance research. Contrary to what previous research claims, dumpster diving is not necessarily a practice of market resistance since not all divers dive for ideological reasons. The phenomenon dumpster diving must instead be viewed as a multifaceted field, and the way in which the divers create meaning from dumpster diving as comprehensive.

Suggestions for actions to be taken by supermarkets

In order to reduce the quantities of food waste, supermarkets must break the traditional linear view on food consumption and instead engage in new practices. As a suggestion, two measures can be taken by supermarkets. Firstly, rather than preventing the practice of dumpster diving, supermarkets should get involved in incentives that enable food-saving actions. Therefore, supermarkets ought to initiate collaborations with the already existing organisations, which incentivise and facilitate food saving actions, such as Solidariskt kylskåp. Secondly, “best by” does not equal “use by”. According to Swedish legal regulations food may still be sold past its best-by date. Therefore, supermarkets ought to create greater incentives for consumers to buy food that is either close to its best by date, or that has expired but is still edible. One solution is to allow the consumers to buy that food to a starkly reduced price. Actions such as these will not only improve the waste management short-term, but will also contribute to long-term positive environmental effects.

Limitations

Despite its contributions, the study is also limited in its scope. Except for some data from the nation-wide Facebook community Dumpstra med oss [“Dive with us”], the study focuses on food secure individuals who dive in supermarkets’ containers in and around Gothenburg, Sweden.

Suggestions for further research

Although the study is limited to Gothenburg and Sweden, Sweden as a case presents a useful starting point for further research on dumpster diving activities in Sweden as well as in other affluent societies. Furthermore, the tensions found in this study provide a fruitful avenue for further research on the way in which conflicting situations are being negotiated. As this study has shown, dumpster diving must not be limited to an act of consumer resistance, which is why the experiential aspects of dumpster diving also must be researched further. Additionally, dumpster diving is not limited to the practice of diving. Therefore, this paper calls for further research on the way in which divers make sense of dumpster diving in online settings, such as on social media and in other online forums. Furthermore, due to the study's limitation to Gothenburg, it is of relevance to study also smaller communities in Sweden. Such research will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the Swedish dumpster diving culture as a whole.

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