How do Millennial Consumers Relate to Meanings of Sustainability in the Consumption Practice of High Involvement Products?

A Consumer Study of Sustainability's Role in the Product of Craft Beer

By

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May 2019

Master's Programme in International Marketing & Brand Management

Acknowledgements

To start off, we would like to give a heartfelt thank you to our supervisor and guidance through the work of this thesis, Ulf Elg. Thank you, Ulf, for your great knowledge and wisdom that you have provided us throughout this process!

Moreover, we would like to thank Sofia Ulver for her supporting guidance and inspiration throughout this thesis. Of course, this study would not have been possible to make without the participating respondents either. Not only did they give us their time, but also did they help us conduct great and interesting material, that truly has been a pleasure for us to take part of. Thus, a big thank you to our engaging respondents.

Last though definitely not least, we want to give each other a big thank you for the great teamwork and fighting spirit throughout this thesis! We made it.

Cheers!

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Abstract

Title: How do Millennial Consumers Relate to Meanings of Sustainability in the Consumption Practice of High Involvement Products?

Date of the Seminar: June 5th, 2019

Course: BUSN39. Degree project in global marketing

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Keywords: Consumer behavior, high involvement, sustainability, consumer culture, Millennials.

Thesis purpose: The purpose of this study is to understand what motivates sustainable consumption, and how high involvement products are connected to these sustainable consumption practices, which ultimately contributes with the Millennial consumers' meanings of sustainability in high involvement consumption.

Methodology: The research of this study has a view of social constructionism with a relativist stance, since the study aims to investigate meanings. Subsequently, is a qualitative research method used with an abductive approach to reach the purpose of the study.

Theoretical perspective: This study's main constituents are theories regarding consumer behavior within the fields of high involvement, sustainability and consumer culture theory. Thereby do these compose the base of the theoretical approach used to confront the aim of this study.

Empirical data: The empirical data was gathered through ten in-depth interviews with respondents within the consumer group of Millennials. The interviews were conducted with a semi-structured interview guide that mainly was established with an inductive approach, in order to not influence the consumers with already pre-assumed theories connected to the study.

Conclusion: The study reveals that the meanings of sustainability that exists within high involvement consumption practices mainly touches upon the social and economic aspects of sustainability - though not the environmental one, which motivates the Millennial consumers the most. However, what is predominantly seen in the findings, is that these consumers create meanings in their high involvement consumption through the consumer cultural theories of hedonism and conspicuous consumption, where no aspects and meanings of sustainability exist. Thereby, does the emotional consumption acts of high involvement suppress the pragmatism and rationality of sustainability, even though sustainability is cared for greatly by these consumers.

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1. Introduction

In this chapter of introduction, a shorter presentation of the study objects will be given. After a brief of the subject in question, a problematization regarding the appeared gap that this study aims to investigate is reviewed. Following, a description will be made of how the product of craft beer will represent the study object in this study, before the purpose and research question is specified. The chapter ends with a thesis outline, to easy the reading and make the reader aware of what will be covered in this study.

1.1 Sustainability and Consumer Behavior

The ethical and sustainable consumption is growing (Berry & McEachern, 2005; Davis, 2006, cited in Bray, Johns & Kilburn, 2010), and in 2010 Devinney, Auger and Eckhardt claimed that this had been the case for the last 35 years. Simultaneously as this consumption practice have been expanding, the global turmoil of what our planet is subjected to because of climate change has developed extensively (Castaneda, Martinez, Marte & Roxas, 2015), which has caused sustainability to now be termed as an outbreaking mega-trend (Lubin & Esty, 2010). An increased awareness of and concern for the global climate change, have turned focus towards consumer behavior and whether different types of behavior are ethical or not when considering different consumption practices (Devinney et al., 2010). The number of consumers stating that they consider sustainable and ethical aspects in their consumption is increasing (Cowe & Williams, 2000), all while the classic cause to consume services and goods in order to seek status, seems to be broadened to now include consumption of goods that are of high quality and are good for the health as well as the environment (Griskevicius, Tybur & Van den Bergh, 2010; Ottman, 2011).

However, there are several separate opinions of what drives the ethical and sustainable consumer behavior. For example, in the 1980's, Fishbein and Ajzen (1980) stated that ethical consumption had two precedents: social norms and individual attitudes. Later on, Ajzen (1988) expressed that the individual behavior is depending on one's own attitude, the perception of societal pressure, and the feeling of control over the action of purchase. More recent studies have also questioned the impact that ethics have on consumer behavior, which instead imply that factors such as color, style and price are playing a more important role in the decision (Bray et al., 2010). Additionally, another important factor that influence the consumer's choice is the level of effort (Carring & Attalla, 2001). Carring and Attalla (2001)

mean that price, time, comfort and quality of the ethical choice needs to be "manageable" and in line with the more unethical alternative, otherwise the consumers tend to go with the more convenient choice.

Similar to how Carring and Attalla (2001) talk about a connection between the consumer's level of effort in relation to the consumption behavior, is the level of involvement that the consumer devotes to a product. The topic of high involvement products, or simply the topic of involvement within products, became popular in the literature of consumer research about the same time as the ethical and sustainable consumption started to grow (Devinney et al., 2010; Lesschaeve & Bruwer, 2010). Meaning of involvement in relation to consumption refers to when a person's individual needs, interests and values sets the tone of an object's relevance (Zaichkowsky, 1985), and when it comes to high involvement products, there are meanings behind every purchase that is made, such as social rules and expectations from the community in question (Zheng, 2008).

When purchases before were seen to be grounded in aspects of functionality or utility, one of the main key features with commodities in today's society, is rather the meaning behind the consumption practice (Laaksonen, 2010). For example, the cellphone has become more of an expressive product today, filled with personal and social meanings beyond the practical meaning of using the phone to make calls and send texts (Laaksonen, 2010). Thus, the usages of commodities seem to have gone beyond the simple feature to work as a practical quantity, and to have become something of a meaning, an involvement and a way to express deeper emotions that are social and personal. For example, this can be stressed by that brands appear to get close attention from consumers in today's society, due to the powerful, symbolic meaning that is behind a commodity and consumption behavior (Zheng, 2008).

As the meanings and value creation that is behind the high involvement purchases is influenced by the values, needs and interest of the consumer, this practice of consumption can be seen to be influenced by consumer culture. According to Steenkamp (2019), consumer culture theory entails that the core identity of people is interpreted and conformed with reference to consumption in our modern society. Thus, culture, personality and social life is composed through the acquiring and obtaining of commodities, which ultimately also affect the behavior of consumers by different means (Hämäläinen and Moisander, 2007; Slater,

1997). Thereby are both consumer culture theory and sustainability something affecting individuals in today's consumption society - but the question is to what extent?

1.2 The Consumer Group of Millennials

A generation of consumers that, more often in comparison to other generations, seems to seek the opportunity to make an environmental and social impact with their consumption practices, is the generation of Millennials (Lerro, Raimondo, Stanco, Nazzaro & Marotta, 2019). Millennials are the generation of people that are born between the years of 1977 – 1999 (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002), and appears to show more civic awareness and take a larger social responsibility, compared to the target groups of Generation X and the Baby Boomers (Phillips, 2007; Cui, Trent, Sullivan & Matiru, 2003; Vargas, 2001). Millennials are seen to be less loyal towards brands in comparison to the Baby Boomers (Phillips, 2007) as well as the Generation X (Kell, 2018), and the reason for this is discussed to be due to that they are the "children of Internet who are always willing to be informed about news and new developments" (Glass, 2007 in Lerro et al., 2019, p. 4). Thus, making an informed and responsible decision of consumption can be seen as more valued among the Millennials, rather than supporting and becoming loyal towards a specific brand. That could further be strengthened by what Hanson-Rasmussen and Lauver (2018) imply regarding that the Millennials are a target group with a lot of engagement, optimism and willingness to take action. As this is the case, this might limit the risk for there being any underlying causes that restricts them to consume in line with their deeper preferences and values related to environmental practices, which further might implicate that these consumers' sustainable consumption practices are not affected by factors such as brand loyalty.

1.3 Problematization

Much of the difficulty in understanding the complexity of ethical consumerism resides in the failure to grasp more clearly and consistently what it is that motivates individuals socio-politically and how it is that the purchasing context operates to reveal or not reveal the wants, desires, values, constraints, beliefs, and mindset of the individual doing the purchasing.
– Devinney, Auger & Eckhardt (2010, p. 2)

One cannot deny the fact that the trend of sustainability is growing bigger and bigger in today's society (Lubin & Esty, 2010), which thereby is affecting the ethical and sustainable consumption to grow extensively (Berry & McEachern, 2005; Davis, 2006, cited in Bray et al., 2010). Though, something that is not as clear as the growing trend of sustainability and the sustainable consumption behavior, are meanings behind making these environmental and ethical choices, since the literature points towards several different aspects (Devinney et al., 2010; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980; Ajzen, 1988; Bray et al., 2010; Carring & Attalla, 2001; Rahman, 2018). Further, it is unclear whether how meanings behind consumption practices of consumer culture theory correspond and intertwine with the sustainable practices. For example, some researchers mean that consumption has an underlying cause in people seeking status, a position in the society, and that this is a way of expressing identity (Griskevicius et al., 2010; Ottman, 2011). Others refer to that the choices behind consumption practices rather have to do with the effort the customer needs to sacrifice in relation to its needs and values (Coşkun, Vocino & Polonsky, 2017), meanwhile some highlights that it simply has to do with the amount of resources such as time, money and knowledge (Carring & Attalla, 2001).

An example of a consumer that has a big enthusiasm and is seen to spend a lot of time, money and knowledge on different consumption practices, is a consumer called *aficionado* (Latour & Latour, 2010). Even though this consumer not necessarily has a deeper knowledge or expertise of the product consumed, he/she is often seen to have an emotional affection for products of which they engage and involve highly in on a regular basis (Latour & Latour, 2010). Furthermore, these products of high involvement can often be considered more likely to favor a sustainable consumption in comparison to products of low involvement (Coşkun et al., 2017). This because the aspect of involvement refers to the amount of needs, interest and values connected to the practice (Zaichkowsky, 1985), and conscious choices such as ethical and environmentally friendly ones often implies either an interest, need or value to consume in this way.

Though, what one consumer sees as an object of high relevance, might not be the same for another consumer (Laaksonen, 2010). In contrast to products of high involvement which consumers put a lot of resources into (Zaichkowsky, 1985), there are products with a lower consumer involvement. Products with a lower consumer involvement often implies that consumers are more willing to change their behavior, due to that the behavioral barriers are

lower, since it does not require much from the consumers to change a behavior that they do not put a lot of effort into (Coşkun et al., 2017).

What this might implicate is that a low involvement product could be something of which a consumer more easily might change its behavior for, to favor the environment. As a consequence, this could mean that sustainability therefore could be less cared for in a product of high involvement. But as accounted for previously, high involvement products are something that reflect consumers' values, needs and interests - Would not consumers that care for sustainability then reflect more upon this behavior in their consumption of high involvement products? As this question cannot be answered with existing research, there is a stringency in the literature that examines the relation of high involvement practices of products that have sustainable meanings (Jansson, Marell & Nordlund, 2010) - which further points towards a gap.

In this gap, the consumer group of Millennials can provide an interesting context as they generally are seen as both consumers with an interest in sustainability (Lerro et al., 2019), as well as less loyal consumers towards brands in comparison to other generations (Phillips, 2007; Kell, 2018). Thereby, these can enable us to investigate the complexity of what is stated above and see what happens to their care for and meanings of sustainability when consuming products of high involvement, while not being affected by brand loyalty.

1.3.1 The High Involvement Product of Craft Beer

A product that seems to have been given a lot of its popularity and growing demand from the consumer group of Millennials, is the product of craft beer (Fromm, 2014; Granese, 2012). Craft beer is a product associated with a lot of knowledge and taste (Henningsson, 2016), as well as it is seen as a premium, more sophisticated product that people are willing to pay more than usual for (Archer, n.d.). Studies have also shown that the aspects of craft have links to a sustainable and ethical consumption (Hughes, 2011; Ulver, 2019). Furthermore, Sprengeler (2016) and McWilliams (2014) argue that craft breweries that are of small-scale and independently owned, also seem to resonate with the values of Millennial consumers, as they display environmental sustainability and responsibility in social causes. Hence, it seems to be a product of high involvement for the Millennial consumers.

Crafted goods in general are characterized with a historical or an ethnic trace, such as being produced in a classic, handmade way (Archer, n.d.). Basically, crafted products are also seen as the opposite to mass production and are instead valued by consumers through the uniqueness and handmade touch (Archer, n.d.). Consumers seem to value goods of local produce and higher quality, which is typical attributes for premium products, at the same time as they have a greater intent to pay a higher price for these types of products (Säfström, 2017), which further strengthens the speculations of craft beer being seen as a product of high involvement. Thereby, will the product of craft beer in this research symbolize the product of high involvement, that is used to fill the above-mentioned gap in the existing literature.

1.4 Purpose and Research Question

Having found some interesting and, seemingly, rather unexplored aspects of high involvement, these will represent the gap of which this study aims to investigate. This gap deals with the consumers' alleged meanings of consuming sustainably in their practice of high involvement. Hence, the intended contribution with this study is to fill this gap by bringing valuable consumers insights regarding meanings of sustainability from the consumer group of Millennials. These insights could be of value for actors within any consumer business since the sustainable and ethical consumption increases in today's society and are important aspects within both departments of marketing and sales. Moreover, as consumers now are finding deeper purposes in their consumption practices through high involvement, these findings may be of extra importance within businesses that provide products of this higher caliber. Lastly, the findings may be found valuable for future research and literature within the field of high involvement.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to understand what motivates sustainable consumption, and how high involvement products are connected to these sustainable consumption practices, which ultimately contributes with the Millennial consumers' meanings of sustainability in high involvement consumption.

In accordance to the initiating deliberation of this study's chosen topic, the given research question that will provide an answer to the dilemma of the study is:

How do Millennial Consumers Relate to Meanings of Sustainability in the Consumption Practice of High Involvement Products?

In order to answer the research question at hand, a few subquestion were developed in order to guide and help the researchers through the process of gradually reaching a solution to the given problem:

1. How is sustainability understood, expressed and emphasized by the Millennial craft beer aficionados?
2. What meanings do Millennial craft beer aficionados see in their consumption of the high involvement product craft beer?
3. How do the Millennial craft beer aficionados' meanings of craft beer consumption correspond with their expressed perception of sustainability?
4. What role does the corresponding sustainability aspects have in the high involvement product of craft beer, when looking at the Millennial craft beer aficionados?

1.5 Thesis Outline

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Each chapter aims to contribute the study with different types of components, all needed to answer this study's research question and to complete the aim of it. More detailed, the chapters cover the following aspects:

The first chapter provides an introduction with background, problematization, purpose and research question. The second chapter consists of the study's literature review, and provides a comprehensive overview in theories of sustainability, consumer culture theory as well as involvement, which in different ways are used throughout the whole study. The third chapter covers the methodological approach that has been adopted in order to conduct and finalize this study with the highest quality possible throughout the whole process.

Further, the fourth chapter contributes with an overall review of the craft beer product in order to provide an understanding for the context of which this study is held and a thorough

introduction to the product if this is unknown to the reader. The fifth chapter gives account for the empirical material that has been generated from the conducted interviews of this research study. This material is also thematized into the most important topics that were discovered and of relevance for answering the aimed purpose of the study. Analysis and discussion are in the sixth chapter, which investigates and reflects upon the correlations, deviations and new findings between the theoretical approach and the empirical material, in order to answer the given research question. The seventh and final chapter is the conclusion, which reveals the main outtakes from the conducted study and what this means in terms of theoretical implications. Additionally, it also covers what these findings might implicate for practitioners as well as gives suggestions of how this research topic can be approached in future studies.

2. Literature Review

In this second chapter, the literature review of the study will be presented. Briefly, the chapter is divided into the three main topics that the literature review is built upon; theory about sustainability in relation to consumption, consumer culture theory and consumers' product involvement.

It starts off with an introduction about the historical uprise of sustainability, which continues into a presentation of the different definitions of sustainability, and further on what theoretical viewpoints there are of sustainable consumption. Moreover, the literature review goes into the spectrum of what earlier literature says about being a sustainable consumer, for example through how motivation, ability and opportunity as well as values affect consumers' sustainable actions, both on individual and multiple levels. Further on, theory about the attitude-behavior gap is introduced, before moving on into literature about consumer culture theory. During this part of the chapter, theory about consumers' meanings of consumption and political resistance is lifted. In the end, theory on consumers' involvement in relation to different types of products is presented, before ending the chapter with giving the researchers' theoretical viewpoint of this study.

2.1 The Historical Uprise of the Sustainability Discussion

During the 1970's, the first use of the word sustainability was made in the English language and at this time the main use of the word was when referring to policy making (Ontong & Le Grange, 2018). Ontong and Le Grange (2018) state that sustainability as a policy, both then as well as now, conveys to the request of sustainable developments made by governments, businesses as well as worldwide organizations. Even though the word sustainability was introduced already in the 1970's, the breaking point of the sustainability discussion did not come until the publication of the rapport *Our common future* in 1987 (Sneddon, Howarth & Norgaard, 2006), which created a critical role for the notion of sustainable development in future policy making (Chang, Zuo, Zhao, Zillante, Gan & Soebarto, 2017).

Our common future was a rapport managed by Gro Harlem Brundtland through the UN-subsidised World Commision on Environment and Development, and he made the choice to amend the institutional systems on global, national and local levels in order to endorse and

improve an economic development that would keep the planet out of harm's way, as well as for it to be secure and well (Sneddon et al., 2006). As efficient and practical responses had to be made to the sustainable problems that had started to occur, the sustainable development initiative was thought of as project of enlightenment (Sneddon et al., 2006), and as years went by and the sustainability issue became more urgent, the knowledge and insights on the issue grew vastly.

In addition to these previous events, an awareness campaign that arose the issue of sustainability further, was one lead by the former U.S. Vice President Al Gore, which demonstrated the extensive concern of global climate change (Jacobsen, 2011). Apart from offering presentations and lectures on the threat of global warming, Al Gore also participated in a documentary released in 2006, called *An Inconvenient Truth*. The main purpose of this documentary lied in increasing the awareness of the problem as well as urging people to commit to the important need of reducing climate change (Jacobsen, 2011). Hence, in 2007 the former U.S. Vice President, together with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change received the Nobel Peace Prize for being the one that had been doing the uttermost in order to establish a greater comprehensive understanding in the world, for what proceedings that needs to be embraced in order to prevent further climate change (Jacobsen, 2011).

Although numerous of awareness campaigns like this one with Al Gore have been done, Jacobsen (2011) means that there is an uncertainty in how much these efforts actually contribute to a change in consumer behavior. However, in 2015, Castaneda, Martinez, Marte and Roxas poses that the world wide tumult and uproar of what climate change is doing to our planet has become substantially increased over the past 40 years, which thereby has caused sustainability to be described as an uprising mega-trend (Lubin & Esty, 2010). As a result of this, consumers have today a continually growing amount of sustainable products and produce to choose from when making consumption decisions in their everyday life (Abdulrazak & Quoquab, 2018).

2.2 Definitions of Sustainability

The concept of sustainability is very broad as it covers different aspects, which might be one cause for why there seems to be different kinds of meanings regarding what sustainability

signifies (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO], n.d.; Moore, Mascarenhas, Bain & Straus, 2017), but very often it is focused around the environmental matters (Sheth, Sethia & Srinivas, 2011). A study made by Moore et al. (2017) had the aim to develop a comprehensive definition of sustainability. What the study came to identify were 24 different definitions. Though in general, it is said that there exist three different aspects of sustainability (Te Kete Ipurangi [TKI], 2015; FAO, n.d.). Besides the environmental aspect, which is the most common element people associate sustainability with, there are aspects of social and economic sustainability.

The environmental aspect of sustainability simply refers to the natural ecosystem on earth, and how the reproduction shall ensure a perseveration, or even an improvement, of the natural resources (FAO, n.d.). The economic aspect considers creative and innovative improvements, such as services, that adds value to life and encourage a more fair and sustainable future (TKI, 2015). The social aspect implies the physical and mental well-being of people, equity among generations, as well as between social and ethical groups, and also has a cultural element which acknowledges diverse worldviews, the sharing and nourishing of freely expressed attitudes and values (TKI, 2015).

2.3 Sustainable Consumption

Altering the view of our consumption society and constructing new patterns of consumption has become a great concern since the late 1990's, amongst consumer citizens that demonstrate both environmentally friendly as well as unsustainable behaviors (Liu, Qu, Lei & Jia, 2017). Liu et al. (2017) state that rapports and research of sustainability have been increasing rapidly during the past years, resulting in more insights and policies around the matter of sustainability in our society. As consumers have become more enlightened of what their consumption behaviors and habits are doing to the planet, new definitions such as sustainable consumption have been coined. The first definition of sustainable consumption was made in 1994 by the United National Environment Programme and they explained it like consumers use of products and services that respond to their basic needs, bring them a better quality of life, at the same time as it minimizes the usage of the natural resources and materials that are toxic (Liu et al., 2017). In addition to this, the sustainable consumption of different products and services should also discharge as little emissions and pollutants as

possible, in order to not threaten the life standard or supplies, that should meet the needs of future generations (Liu et al., 2017). Furthermore, extensive research on the subject of sustainable consumption have today been done and there are countless definitions of what sustainable consumption really is (Shao, Taisch & Mier, 2017). Although, whether consumers choices and actions have an effect on the environment or not have become a non-arguable question (Thøgersen, 2010). Consumers way of living and their everyday consumption decisions can therefore either obstruct or be of help to achieve the societal goals of a more sustainable future (Hostaa & Žabkar, 2016), and as the power lies with the consumers as sovereigns of the market, they have the power to get what they want from producers and rule the market (Sassatelli, 2015).

2.4 The Sustainable Consumer

The consumers are aware about that their power in the market ultimately affects the climate, thereby this affects their decision making in consumption practices (Thøgersen, 2010). In various opinion polls and market research, consumers often express concern about the environment (Abdulrazak & Quoquab, 2018) which is proven by the steady uprising demand of eco-labelled products as well as with the comprehensive recycling that is being performed with consumer good rest products (Thøgersen, 2010). Just like when defining sustainability, there are many different explanations to what a sustainable consumer would be. Definitions such as sustainable, ethical, responsible, environmentally friendly and socially friendly, are commonly used words to describe consumer behavior and consumption that aims to lead to a better, viable, world outlook (Belz & Peattie, 2012; Harrison, Newholm & Shaw, 2005; Webb, Mohr & Harris, 2008). A study conducted by Banbury, Stinerock, and Subrahmanyan (2012) showcased through subjective personal reflections, that consumers described sustainable consumption as; decreasing their overall consumption and purchases, using more sustainable means of transportation - such as public transportation, living as small as possible, reducing their use of single use products, purchase organic produce, use energy-efficient products and using less water with for example, low-flow shower heads.

The current literature on the subject shows that there is an accustomed awareness of the different levels or dimensions of sustainability and sustainable consumer behavior, such as environmental, economic and social issues, which proves that consumers put different significance and priority to these different concerns when consuming (Belz & Peattie, 2012;

Phipps, Ozanne, Luchs, Subrahmanyan, Kapitan, Catlin, Gau, Naylor, Rose, Simpson & Weaver, 2013). While the environmental impact of consumption goes under the definition of green consumerism, the socially sustainable consumption is often referred to as ethical or pro-social consumption (Black & Cherrier, 2010; Jackson, 2005).

2.4.1 Motivation, Ability and Opportunity

Among marketers, non-governmental organizations and government departments, it is evident that the expressed environmental concern among consumers does not reflect their pro-environmental behaviors and actions, which causes frustration among the stakeholders (Thøgersen, 2010). In early research of the subject, Fishbein and Ajzen (1980) argued that social norms as well as attitude of the individual were the two determining factors affecting the consumer to perform sustainable actions. Further, Ajzen (1988) introduced that the individual behavior of consumers is dependant on three different components - the individual attitude of the consumer, the societal strain and sense of authority over the purchase decision. Similarly, but not althougheter in line with previous authors, current research consistently shows that sustainable consumer behavior is dependant on the context (Deci & Ryan, 2008) as well as the individual (Thøgersen, 2010).

Thøgersen (2010) implies that the pro-environmental motivation strength among consumers is various and what motivates them to support, or not to support, sustainable behavior is different depending on the individual and that motivation is essential for sustainable behavior to be acted upon. Although, researchers argue that motivation alone is not satisfactory for a pro-environmental behavior (Guagnano, Stern & Dietz, 1995; Ölander & Thøgersen, 1995). According to Thøgersen (2010), consumers motivation to embrace and maintain sustainable consumption patterns may be obstructed by strong routines and habits of the consumer, as well as absence of different resources such as time, capital or expertise. These are defined as personal characteristics which conclude the ability of the consumer to perform sustainable behavioral actions (Thøgersen, 2010). Further, there are other factors and aspects in bigger contexts that may affect the behavior of a consumer, resulting in either an interference or a promotion of a pro-environmental action (Thøgersen, 2010). Key characteristics may, in certain situations, for instance be price, as well as availability, that ultimately affect the final sustainable behavior of the consumer (Thøgersen, 2010). These factors, among many possible others, are what in different contexts affect the consumer's opportunity to perform a pro-

sustainable action (Thøgersen, 2010). These ability factors are also strengthened by Bray et al. (2010) that agree with price playing a important role in consumer behavior, but they also imply that elements such as style and color can affect consumers ultimate purchase decision. Further, they question how much the consumer's attitudes and values towards ethics and sustainability actually affect their final consumption decision and argue that the price, style and color factors play a more significant role (Bray et al., 2010).

Although all authors mentioned above do not agree in the reasoning of the importance in the different factors affecting consumer behavior, all of their views are somewhat included in the MAO-framework below (Figure 1) that is developed by Thøgersen (2010). The framework demonstrates the authors take on the interaction and synergy between the three components motivation, ability and opportunity, which has been discussed above. The framework gives a good and thorough overview over the different elements affecting consumer behavior, which plays an important role for understanding the consumer in this thesis.
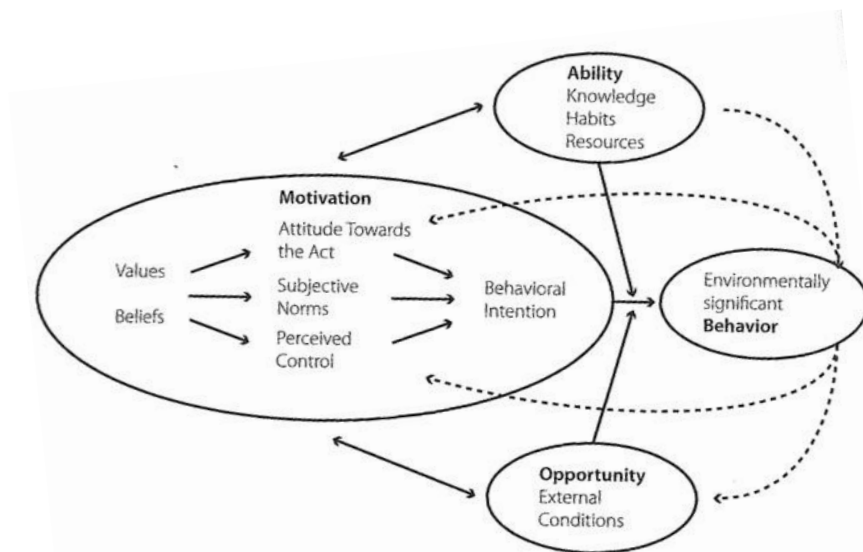
Figure 1: The MAO-model (Thøgersen, 2010).

However, another decisive factor in consumers having an environmentally compelling behavior, which is not current in the MAO-model, is according to Carrigan and Attalla (2001) the level of effort. The level of effort presumes that the ethical choice the consumer is able to do, requires a price, comfort, quality and time that is as feasible for the consumer as any other choice that would be more unethical or unsustainable (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). If the sustainable option is not as manageable as others, the consumer will most likely turn to the

choice which is more convenient and thereby also less good for the environment (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). Even though the level of effort theory does not have a clear position in the MAO-framework, it is still somewhat included. One could say that the level of effort is a combination of both the opportunity and ability element which ultimately is affecting the motivation of the consumer. Although they from this point of view are similar, the level of effort is an important theory to both mention and consider when evaluation the sustainable behavior of consumers.

Furthermore, in connection to the motivation of the consumer, Bagozzi and Dholakia (1999) claim that the pro-environmental goals of a consumer have different levels of abstraction, which form a complementary hierarchy of goals. Thereby, the goal of preserving and supporting the environment, can be a central goal for some people, which results in it existing at a middle level of abstraction and by that it is hierarchically related to both superordinate and subordinate goals (Thøgersen, 2010). People's value priorities mirror their superordinate goals and conclude why being protective of the environment is important to them, while the subordinate goals is associated with the actions that consumers perform since they believe that this is what is necessary to reach a safe and secured environment (Thøgersen, 2010).

2.4.2 Prioritizing Values on Individual and Multiple Levels

Consumer behavior that is pro-sustainable has persistently been linked to the value preferences of individuals (Schultz, Nolan, Cialdini, Goldstein & Griskevicius, 2007; Thøgersen & Ölander, 2002). According to Schwartz and Sagiv (1995, p. 93), human values are "desirable goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in people's lives." There is a moderately narrow number of basic human values existing and these are, to a great extent, mutual across many different cultures world-wide (Schwartz, 1994). Thøgersen (2010) therefore argues that what ultimately differentiate us humans and our cultures apart, is rarely the values that we carry but instead how we chose to prioritize our own values in relation to other values. According to Thøgersen and Ölander (2002), how we chose to prioritize our values are a significant determinant of our individual behavior and therefore also our pro-sustainable behaviors.

Although consumption activities often are seen as something that is conducted on an individual level, it is also a process that appears in a bigger scheme of investments,

manufacture and commerce that involve around forces of culture, institutions, power, economy and infrastructure (Milfont & Markowitz, 2016). Subsequently, the behaviors of consumers can and should be assumed in a perspective of multiple levels since all distinct behaviors are embedded in, and persistent by, circumstances running at multiple levels such as individual, household, community and nation level (Milfont & Markowitz, 2016). Further, Jägel, Keeling, Reppel and Gruber (2012) state that consumers frequently have to adjust and determine whether they should consider the needs of the family, society or nature when making different consumption decisions. Thus, consumers might sometimes be faced with different ambiguities when making choices regarding their consumption since all needs of every stakeholder cannot always be met, even if they are cared for by the consumer.

2.4.3 Attitude-Behavior Gap

The attitude-behavior gap, or what Nicholls and Lee (2006) calls the ethical purchasing gap, is what authors refer to when explaining consumers frequent inconsistency in their pro-sustainable behavior, in comparison to their indicated concern and awareness for sustainable consumption actions (Boulstridge & Carrigan, 2000). According to Carrington, Neville and Withell (2010), the attitude-behavior gap is an extensively discussed and researched topic within both social psychology as well as in ethical consumption, which proves its relevance for this thesis. According to Davies, Lee and Ahonkhai (2012) researchers have tried to find explanations to the fact that 30% of consumers describe themselves as ethically or sustainably aligned but unsuccessfully manage to convert this into their actual consumption behavior. The literature display two vast sides when identifying interpretations for this gap; there are those who believe that the gap can be explained and associated with various research faults, while others argue that it is affected by some type of cognitive cause (Davies et al., 2012). This research will not go further into the explanation of research errors since the authors of this study are convinced, by previous research, that this gap in fact exists and therefore want to go deeper into and contribute to the cognitive factors of this phenomena while considering the product of craft beer and the consumer group of Millennials.

Thøgersen (2010) states that this gap can be explained with the MAO-model, as well as with the studies stating that pro-sustainable behavior is affected by both consumers ability and opportunity to perform the action. Thereby, any particular behavior that is displayed by a consumer is a result of several different aspects, just alike those explained above, where

consumer attitude is one example of an element. Among the cognitive explanations, of which Thøgersen (2010) also belongs, there are several more. For example, Papaoikonomou, Ryan and Ginieis (2011) mean that the gap is related to the rational choice reasons such as willingness to pay. This is strengthened by Bray et al. (2010) who in their eight different themes of what affects ethical consumption, are including price sensitivity as well as personal experience. According to Bray et al. (2010) consumers put a higher value to their finances than their ethical values, thereby they need a negative experience, such as a rapport or broadcast, stating the urgency and importance of consuming more sustainable and ethical, in order for them to actually consume accordingly. Further, there are also barriers for executing what the intentions indicate because of insufficiency in information or knowledge for the consumer, as well as disorientation and concern about the purchase (Shaw & Clarke, 1999; Shiu, Walsh, Hassan & Shaw, 2011; Bray et al, 2010). The last factors affecting the ethical consumption as put by Bray et al. (2010), is guilt, perception of quality, apathy in the purchase decision and finally ethical commitment. These are reasons all of which, in one way or another is and can be included in the MAO-model in the work by Thøgersen (2010), which therefore proves its relevance and accuracy.

Shaw, McMaster and Newholm (2016) state in their article that more consideration should be given to people's way of expressing care in relation to consumption. They propose that consumers "caring about" something, not necessarily must mean or point to that the consumer is "care-giving" in this matter, while the attitude-behavior gap might entail that consumers do so (Shaw et al., 2016). Having a stronger focus on how consumers choose to articulate their principles of care about something, in this context about different sustainable practices, might result in a greater understanding for the consumer behavior in these types of conditions (Shaw et al., 2016). The authors state the necessity of this addition to the literature as complement to understand both the attitude-behavior discussion, as well as the discourse around ethical consumption. Therefore, the aspect of care will be taking into great consideration when trying to untangle the ambiguity of the attitude-behavior gap and its relation to sustainable products.

2.5 Consumer Culture Theory

Theories of consumer culture broadly refers to a society where creation of culture, character and social behavior carries an essential role in how consumer goods are acquired

(Hämäläinen and Moisander, 2007; Slater, 1997). Moisander, Rokka and Valtonen (2010) explains that not only does consumer culture, consumption and marketplace endeavours serve a dominant role when seeking individual fulfillment and prosperity, but it is also of big importance for political attendance as well as participation in society. As this way of viewing consumption early was realized as an important perspective laying ground for the topic of this study, related to consumer meanings, believes by many authors within this field of research is presented down below.

2.5.1 Meanings of Consumption

An essential way of how consumer culture theory can be viewed, is the theories made by Campbell, who poses that the modern era, modernity, is signified by the pursuit of novelty in combination with a special type of hedonism where objects are experienced through the creative fantasies of individuals (Sassatelli, 2007). Campbell (1987) poses that a hedonist is a modern consumer who attach dreams to desirable objects, which are later let go of when they have been obtained. This hedonism practice and modern way of consuming is recognized as private proceeding, where you use the mind instead of the body (Sassatelli, 2007). In this way the potential of consumption becomes infinite since it is only the imagination that sets limits for what experiences and meanings an object can bring (Sassatelli, 2007). According to Campbell (1987) this modern hedonist practice, which is so dependent upon the individual and the artistry of oneself, turns consumption into something else than the use of products and finding the right product for the right price. Instead it is all about what the image of the commodity can bring to the pleasures within the imagination of the consumer, where the "real" consumption practices is only a result of what proceeds mentally within the mind of the consumer (Campbell, 1987). As understood by the theories of Campbell, the focus in the consumption of modernity does not become the product that is consumed, but instead what images and fantasies the product can bring the consumer. All of which is enjoyed by the consumers themselves and not for purpose of anything else. An author with a different point of view, that sees consumption beyond the "imaginary" and "fantasi-like" hedonism, but also see consumption as something beyond the utility of the product - just like Campbell, is Veblen.

Veblen was the one who established the concept of conspicuous consumption in order to illustrate and specify the phenomena of when consumers does not follow the rationale of that

commodities purchased should give maximum utility to a cost that is minimal (Sassatelli, 2007). According to Veblen (1994, orig. 1899) there are, parallel to the fundamental value of the sole use of a commodity, also ritual forms of consumption that are connected and associated to prestige and recognition. He poses that not even the poorest of our society can escape the practice of conspicuous consumption, it is something existing across all of our social classes (Veblen, 1994, orig. 1899). Veblen (1994, orig. 1899) argues that some consumers are exclusively valuing some goods for their ability to make an apparent social position in society. Thereby both waste and conspicuous consumption provide consumers a possibility to seemingly manifest a heightened social stand, which was supported on the assumption that power and wealth must be visible since revere can only be accomplished with proof (Veblen, 1994, orig. 1899). This is supported by Sassatelli (2007) as she agrees that this is a phenomena often visible among consumers that seek to find a product simply because its high cost, which thereby can demonstrate a monetary strength for the surrounding social actors, that helps them support their reputation and future social stand. According to Sassatelli (2007), identity creation and social differentiation is achieved by modern individualists through techniques such as conspicuous consumption, fashion and style. In comparison to Campbell, the theories of Veblen lay the purpose of consuming for others to see, while Campbell see this as a strictly private proceeding. An author that see consumption as somewhat a combination of the two earlier mentioned authors, is Goffman.

Goffman still talks about consumption in a very spiritual and abstract sense, just like Campbell, where commodities have a bigger and deeper meaning than the sole purpose of the commodity. But there is also a resistance against the standardization of commodities in the market that is meant to affect the consumer's surroundings, so with some means it has a purpose of demonstration, just like the theories of Veblen. Goffman (1974) refers to consumption with the term of "reframing" through which commodities are "keyed" as something else. Through procedures of de-commoditization social actors start discussions or even conflicts with the market in order to adequate standardized goods and convert these into commodities with a deeper personal meaning (Sassatelli, 2007). According to Sassatelli (2007) it is through this only way that consumers do not become commodities themselves while consuming, but instead they use the commodity to strengthen and establish their own identity. Sassatelli (2007) suggests that the overpowering appeal to connoisseurship may have something to do with this phenomenon. That when having a deep understanding of an object and demonstrating an artistically pleasing abstraction from this, the profound knowledge that

the connoisseur has about the commodity ends up being a source of protection from the captivity of the object (Sassatelli, 2007).

This ambiguity of consuming in order to show resistance to our consumption society and the standardization of products, is something that also has been translated into a bigger consumer culture context, where globalization of big corporations' commodities, has given development to the contradicting movement of localization (Sassatelli, 2007). Instead of having one global and standardized product, big corporations are having their commodities adapted for the different sales conditions that are current in the country of which they operate (Sassatelli, 2007). This localist resistance then leave the world unchanged as adaptation of products such as McDonald's hamburgers or the beverages of Coca-Cola keep the flows of global commodities going (Sassatelli, 2007). As there are many different views and parts of the political consumer resistance phenomena of localization and since this have less focus on consumption and more on resistance, this will be further investigated in the following chapter. Still there was a need of stating its relevance to the consumption thoughts of Goffman since these phenomena have a strong connection and relate to each other a lot.

Understanding the thoughts of the authors mentioned above is of high relevance to this study since these can enable one to understand the meaning of why a certain product is consumed. All have different standpoints and theories relevant to understand different consumption practices all of which can be relevant in this case. Whether all or some of them are current when it comes to what is studied in this situation, as well as if only some of them can be found will become apparent further in this study.

2.5.2 The Political Consumer Resistance

In 1993, George Ritzer conducted a very critical writing in his book about the term McDonaldization, where he shared his thoughts about the world's consumption and globalization, which he used the term de-humanized, among many others, to describe. According to Ritzer (1993), the McDonalized production was characterized by the principle's efficiency, predictability, calculability and control where the labor of people was replaced by machines. He claimed that these attributes spread way beyond companies such as McDonald's and meant that all contemporary ways of consuming involved these rationalized ways of production. Sassatelli (2007) means that the very critical views of the

McDonaldization-followers have had its moment of popularity, but may well also continue. What is beyond no doubt however is that the theories of McDonaldization, that was established by Ritzer (1993), has created many different provoking forms of resistance (Sassatelli, 2007). As an answer to McDonaldization, and all of what this means, new alternative ways of consumption and social movements have been introduced to the market (Sassatelli, 2007).

When looking at the food industry and the dispersion of the low-cost fast-food, which is mainly based on the source of minced meat, there has been a response from consumers where health, authenticity and taste have been given an encouraged demand (Sassatelli, 2007). According to Tester (1999) there can occur different kinds resistance and as an opposition against the spread of McDonald's, the emphasis on vegetarianism became stronger, which in particular was signified by the ethics of respecting animals. Another type of resistance showcased is one discussed by Sassatelli and Scott (2001), where European consumers reacted in terms of protecting their culinary traditions against the excessive industrialized farming that came with the McDonaldization. They argue that the Europeans instead turned their recognition to sources which could guarantee agricultural processes that was sustainably complied and to products signified as natural, local and traditional (Sassatelli & Scott, 2001). Sassatelli (2004) thereby implies that these philosophies are supported by some customers, producers and intermediaries that are joined and unified in opposition to the globalization and standardization of our commodities, thus practicing in alternative ways of consumption which are characterized by sustainable, local and traditional goods.

Sassatelli (2007) further explains that this movement has affected many different areas of products, where one especially becomes of special interest for this study - the one of beer. This opposition has for example established something called the Real Ale Campaign in England, which aim was for pubs to brew their own traditional beer, which also drove local brewing to a revitalization (Sassatelli, 2007).

This resistance has developed many new concepts in the market. According to Sassatelli (2007) the spreading of alternative and ethical, as well as critical and political consumer standpoints, are not only something that have brought on boycotts of multinational brands and standardization opposition, but in terms of ethical business, it has also advanced a bigger interest for local and organic produce, where Fair Trade actions have grown along. This is a

phenomenon often called bottom-up cultural revolution, where a variety of political participation acts are combined with the everyday life of consumers (Sassatelli, 2007). This is now something practiced by wide parts of the consuming populations in the developed countries and has by Micheletti (2003) been labeled as negative and positive forms of political consumerism.

In conclusion, Sassatelli (2007) suggest that we still may be a long way from knowing whether or not the political values of consumers have measurable effects on their consumption habits and if the choices of consumers are run through these values. Although she argues that the current picture that we have of today's consumers as political players indicate that they now, maybe more than ever, are increasingly becoming social actors through their symbolic actions that go through some of society's most solid cultural lines, which ultimately makes consumption a significant and disputed field for social change (Sassatelli, 2007). Since the product of craft beer maintain many of the above-mentioned characteristics of resistance, it is of high relevance to determine if this is something consumers consider and find meaning in, while choosing to consume this product.

2.6 Consumer Involvement

According to Laaksonen (2010) products are not alone something we need, but also something we desire - a key feature in the postmodern society of today is that the commodities that consumers are buying now hold deeper meanings and are going away from the sole purpose of being bought just for its functionality or utility. Lesschaeve and Bruwer (2010) argue that there has been an increasing interest for the topic of involvement during the past three decades.

Clothing, cars and cellphones are examples of expressive products that can be filled with both practical as well as personal and social meanings (Laaksonen, 2010). Additionally, there are also experimental products, which include cultural devices or leisure and amusement services, where meanings of delight, indulgence, dreams and creative importance can be one of the fundamental reasons for purchasing and using the commodity or service (Laaksonen, 2010). In accordance to this, Belk, Ger and Askegaard (2003) point out that commodities

even can turn out to be items of passionate devotion, when containing these symbolic meanings and hedonistic enjoyments.

2.6.1 High versus Low Involvement

It was during the end of the 1970's that consumers were started to be questioned as thorough problem solvers with focus on effective information gathering when purchasing products (Laaksonen, 2010). The argument against this rational information processing was that many of the situations where consumers were making a choice, was defined by narrow information processing, low assessment times and small physical efforts (Laaksonen, 2010). This type of behavioural cognitive information processing came to be termed "low involvement behavior" while the opposite was called "high involvement behavior" and this is thereby why involvement has become a significant part when talking about differences in consumption behavior (Laaksonen, 2010).

According to Laaksonen (2010) there have been differences among researchers about what the concept of involvement really means, if there were certain products labelled low involvement and some labelled with high involvement. What today has been agreed upon is that involvement is determined by the consumers perception of the product and how much relevance it has for the consumer - the degree of involvement therefore rely upon both the needs, values and interests of the consumer, as well as the attributes of the object (Laaksonen, 2010; Zaichkowsky, 1985; Wulf, Odekerken-Schröder & Iacobucci, 2001; Mittal, 1995; Kong & Zhang, 2013).

The FCB-grid that is displayed down below (Figure 2) supplies a categorization of consumers purchase decisions in two main dimensions, which are high or low intensity in involvement and think or feel type of involvement. This FCB-grid has further been developed by Ratchford (1987) by using a development of measurement scales to deliberate involvement in different products, which are displayed as examples in the figure below. As earlier implied, it is still important to stress that the degree to which a product is defined as something of emotional or rational involvement, can vary between different consumers (Laaksonen, 2010). For example, could some consumers regard detergent as something of high relevance and involvement because of environmental concerns or health issues, while others would not.

28
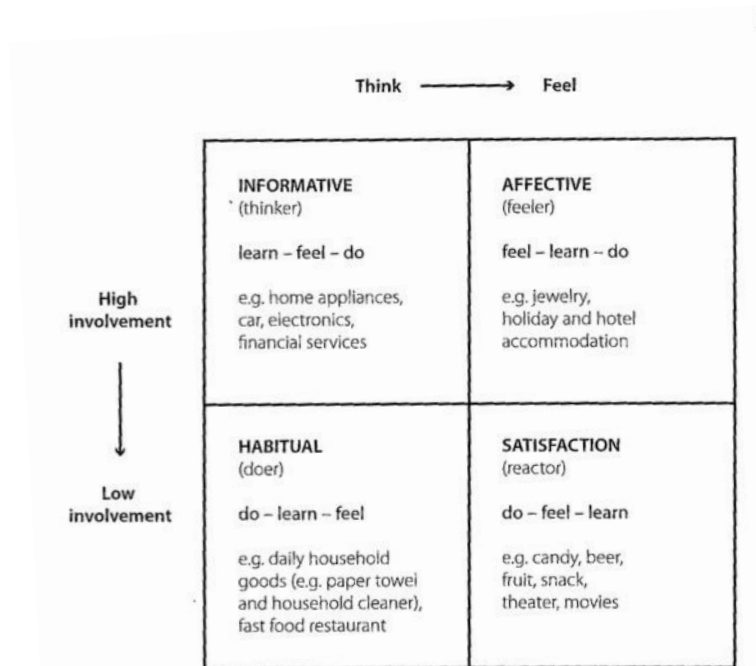
Figure 2: The FCB-Grid (Laaksonen, 2010).

In conclusion, high involvement products are something of high relevance for consumers and when they are buying these kinds of products, they are driven to dedicate much of both their physical as well as mental energy into the object that is purchased and consumed (Laaksonen, 2010). These type of products as well as consumers are thereby highly relevant to investigate in this study.

2.6.2 Involvement in a Sustainability Context

Another thing that becomes vastly important to look at in this review, is what existing research say about what effect or relevance that sustainability have for consumers when consuming high involvement products. According to his study, Rahman (2018) found that the behavioral intentions of consumers are very dependant on what type of environmental product that is treated as well as to what extent and what type of involvement the consumer have for the product at hand. Further Coşkun, Vocino and Polonsky (2017) argue that low involvement products are something that consumers by nature do not put a lot of information processing and evaluation into. Thereby, trying to make them consider green consumption and make conscious decisions while purchasing these products can be troublesome since it already is something they are not spending a lot of time doing (Coşkun et al., 2017). While this is an accurate conclusion from their study, their result may as well suggest that

consumers can be more willing to change, or more easily can change their behavior for when consuming low involvement products. If consumers effortlessly can tell that a low involvement product is better for the environment, these changes are smoother because of the inexpensiveness and easiness to these products (Coşkun et al., 2017). What this may implicate, in regards to high involvement products, is that sustainability is more accessible to consider in a product of which you already put a lot of thought and consideration into, while it on another hand might mean that you would not like to compromise on other factors in a product of which you care so much, in order to get in more sustainable. In conclusion, the theories of the authors are supportive of each other and weather or not they will fit to the high involvement product of craft beer will later be disclosed in this study.

2.7 Theoretical Approach

The literature review presented above has worked as a foundation when developing and finding the theoretical approach that will serve as a guidance, in order to answer the given research question of this study. After getting to know this area of research, it is believed that both theories of sustainability as well as consumer culture have a substantial effect and are needed in order to find consumers meanings of sustainability in high involvement consumption. Thereby, these will serve as the main constituents of this study's theoretical approach, where the theories of high involvement consumption are the base, while the relationship between this, sustainability and consumer culture theory will be explored. What is most relevant from these theories is how sustainability and consumer culture affect individual's consumption behavior and what consequences this ultimately has on high involvement consumption. Therefore, have the theories affecting consumer behavior been taken out and focused on in the theoretical approach. The alleged relationship these theories have, which will be explored in this study, can be seen in the illustrated figure below.

Figure 3: Theoretical approach overview.

First and foremost, within the theories of sustainability are the different aspects of environmental, social and economic sustainability (Belz & Peattie, 2012; Phipps et al., 2013), serving as a foundation. The reason for why all of these aspects are considered separately, but still as a base, are since they have different significations and thereby might mean different things from a consumer behavioral perspective, while they all at the same time are included under the concept of sustainability. As all these aspects thereby may have different outcomes on the study, they are important to take into consideration and treat in this manner.

Going deeper into the subject of sustainability, will the consumer behavior-oriented theories that can explain consumers reasoning in sustainable consumption practices have a further

focus. This implicates that the MAO-model (Thøgersen, 2010), is included as it covers many of the essential aspects of consumer behavior in sustainable consumption, as well as the attitude-behavior gap (Nicholls & Lee, 2006), which can tell us when the sustainable consumption behavior might default. These theories are important to include in order to understand the essential reasoning behind consumers rational thinking in ethical and pro-sustainable behaviors, which can enable their role in the creation of meaning in high involvement consumption.

Furthermore, is consumer culture theory an essential constituent in the theoretical approach as this exemplifies how consumers on a more emotional level create different meanings in their consumption practices. Thereby will hedonism (Campbell, 1987), conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 1994, orig. 1899), de-commoditization (Goffman, 1974), connoisseurship (Sassatelli, 2007) and political consumer resistance in the form of alternative consumption practices (Sassatelli, 2004), also be considered when looking at how consumers create meanings of sustainability in high involvement consumption. These theories are important to include in the theoretical approach as well, as these can give account for the reasons behind consumption in the first place, at the same time as they also can make us understand why everyone is not consuming in a pro-sustainable way all while we know that it is essential to save our planet.

The theory of involvement is only general and there to provide a solid foundation and understanding for how consumers consider both high and low involvement products and what effects this has on consumer behavior, as we know of it today. Through this theory, the relationship between these three constituents will further be developed to provide an understanding for what meanings of sustainability that the Millennial consumers see in high involvement products.

3. Method

In this chapter the study's methodological choices will be presented and motivated. To begin with, the chapter introduce the research's philosophical standpoint, both from an ontological and epistemological view. Furthermore, a presentation of an earlier pilot study is given, where findings that are seen as valuable insights for this study are gone through. Thereafter, the chapter processes the study's research design, where it starts out with describing the motivation behind making a qualitative study and how the study is of an abductive approach, before entering the discussion about selection of respondents. Delimitations of the study's respondents are given, followed by an argumentation of the choice of sampling method. Continuing, a presentation of the collected data and the interview guide is specified, and further on, how the material came to be analyzed. Lastly, the quality of research and how this study considers ethical rights are both discussed before ending the chapter with reflecting upon the methodological limitations of the conducted research.

3.1 Philosophical Background

According to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, Jackson and Jaspersen (2018) the philosophical assumptions that researchers have are something that has a substantial effect on the outcome of the conducted study and the quality of this. As research philosophies are of such big importance, they are essential to acknowledge in both the design as well as in the assessment of the study (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). Thereby will the philosophical background of this study be explained and accounted for below.

3.1.1 Ontological Stance

The ontological standpoint of this study is generally that of relativism. The ontological view justifies what fundamental belief the research has about the way of reality (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). The philosophical standpoint of relativism presume that all developed facts is reliant upon the observer (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). This was an essential part of this study as it had the aim of finding individual consumers' meanings - as in beliefs, values, thoughts and perceptions of sustainability, in the special high involvement product of craft beer. Thus, meanings are assumed and expressed differently depending on the beholder which was embraced and of importance to achieve the most out of this study.

3.1.2 Epistemological View

Easterby-Smith et al. (2018) state that the epistemological view of a research reveals which is the most applicable way of probing into the nature of the world. The alleged epistemological standpoint that has been assumed in this study mainly lies within social constructionism where it stretches amidst constructionism and strong constructionism. Easterby-Smith et al. (2018) mean that social constructionism indicate that the facets of reality is determined by individuals, that reality is not something that is objective. Instead they mean that reality is a social construction which is elucidated by how people interact among one another (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). What determines this view is that the objective of the study do not see the world as finding one independent truth through measures with numbers and theories, but rather that the truth is something that can be interpreted from the varied deep meanings and values of consumers.

3.2 Findings from Pilot Study

Just a few months before this study was made, the researchers made a pilot study with a closely connected aim to the one of this study. The purpose of doing a pilot study was to investigate whether this was a subject that was of interest to investigate, and if the intended methods of use were appropriate for the study or not.

The pilot study faced some problems which were taken into consideration further on in the conduction of this study, and which have worked as valuable guidelines. First of all, the authors saw that there were some confusion and difficulty with the term of craft beer, as this is not a conventional term that are commonly used in Sweden - either at Systembolaget or among the consumers. As the concept of craft beer originates from the US (Henningsson, 2016), the criteria that comes within are quite difficult to "translate" into Swedish measurements. For example, one criterion that needs to be fulfilled to be able to call beer for craft beer is that it needs to be small-scaled produced, where small-scaled produced refers to a maximum of 700 million liters per year (Henningsson, 2016). Spendrups, which is one of the largest breweries in Sweden, produced 185 million liters beer during 2017 (Spendrups, n.d.). With those standards and measurements that originates from the US, one of the largest breweries in Sweden could thereby be argued to be a craft brewery, which might not be the obvious perception that Swedish craft beer consumers have of the product. Thus, with the wisdom from conducting the pilot study, the researchers chose to "step outside" the criteria of

the term established in US for what craft beer is, and instead have a more open approach towards the term and let the interviewees set the tone for what the term of craft beer implies from their point of view. Though, when asking the respondents whether they consumed this type of product to determine if they were proper candidates or not, the terms craft beer and microbrewed were used.

The reason for using the term microbrewed beer when reaching out to potential respondents, was because it was one of the used words by the respondents in the pilot study, when they talked about and described the concept of craft beer. Likewise, words such as small-scaled, local and flavorsome were used. Additionally, these terms were further taken into account when deciding what beer types that should be used in the part of the interview guide where the respondents were to describe different types of beer. (More about that part of the interview is to be read further down in *Empirical Collection and Interview Guide).*

Another insight from the pilot study that was taken into consideration when conducting this study, was the method of sampling. In the pilot study, the method of snowball sampling was used, though this choice of method was criticized both by readers and eventually the researchers as well, since this method did not capture sufficiently suitable candidates. Also, the choice of snowball sampling was criticized for the risk of getting a selection where the respondents belong to the same network, group or community, which might impact the variety of the respondent's statements. Therefore, the method of snowball sampling was exchanged before this study was conducted, to a sampling of purposive style. (Read more about the method of sampling further down in the chapter of *Selection of Respondents*).

Further, the choice of having in-depth interviews was argued to be a success in the pilot study and therefore this method was kept in this study as well. The reason why doing this instead of conducting a focus group for example, was that the goal was to find as many of the consumers individual meanings of sustainability in craft beer, without the effect of a unanimous group. As Bryman (2016) says, there is a risk for the respondents to give answers that are expected, and not what they actually think, as well as that the consumers do not think critically, when participating in focus groups. As the aim was not to find a collectively constructed meaning, but rather the different existing meanings in the craft beer product among millenials, in-depth interviews were thereby continued to be argued as the best alternative.

3.3 Research Design

This chapter explains the choice of qualitative method, followed by a description of the abductive approach in this study, before moving forward to explain what delimitations there were in relation to the sample respondents, as well as how the selection of respondents was made. Finally, descriptions of how the study's research design of data collection and how the interview guide was built, is given.

3.3.1 Qualitative Research

A distinctive differentiation between qualitative and quantitative methods is that the qualitative method gathers material in a non-numerical form (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018) and has more focus on underlying meanings and understandings, in comparison to quantitative research design that instead has a focus on statistics (Alvehus, 2013). Also, a qualitative method has more of an explorative delivery of material, in comparison to quantitative data (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). For example, when investigating consumers' values and behaviors, detailed explanations are essential in order to expose meanings and motivations behind values and behaviors, and the perspective of getting a deeper insight of the studied question is what qualitative research emphasizes (Bryman, 2016). As this is the case in this study, the relevance of using the qualitative research method was determined.

There are different ways to gather empirical material through a qualitative method, where one commonly used method is the qualitative interviews (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). A qualitative interview is based on direct conversation about the topic in question, and where the interviewer makes room for the interviewee to speak freely about its own views and thoughts, preferably with a descent surrounding in order to avoid affecting the interviewed persons' thoughts (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). The method of qualitative interviews is to prefer when the researcher aims to access information and gain knowledge that might be on such an underlying level, that it becomes difficult to understand the phenomena just by observing (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018), which is the case in this study. Moreover, there are several different ways to conduct a qualitative interview (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018), and the chosen way to conduct the interviews of this study was by having face-to-face interviews with a semi-structured interview design.

3.3.2 Abductive Research

The abductive research approach is a beneficial way to embark a study as it aids an objective of disclosing new conditions, thus it is used for developing and discovering new theories and concepts rather than validating already existing theory (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). According to Dubois and Gadde (2002) is the abductive way of writing, a middle way of an inductive and deductive method, where the latter two are combined. This is an intermediate stance where there is an interactive exchange process between the data and the theory collected for the study (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). For this study there was a theoretical groundwork made before the conduction of the study, enabling an optimized interview guide for the interviews. However, as the empirical material was compiled and new discoveries were made the literature review and theoretical approach, was examined and updated to find as many relevant and compatible consumer insights as possible which thereby enabled development of theory through an abductive research approach.

3.3.3 Delimitations of Respondents

The aim with this study is to understand Millennials' meanings of a sustainable consumption in relation to high involvement products, and since the product of craft beer is used in order to untangle these underlying meanings, it was of value to get in touch with people who not just consumed craft beer, but also were devotees in the area and had some knowledge about it. This because the respondents needed to be able to express thoughts and reflections about the subject. Therefore, the target group of beer aficionados was chosen. A beer aficionado is a type of consumer that are somewhere in between the causal beer drinker and a beer connoisseur (Maciel & Wallendorf, 2017). They seek to develop a cultural competence in craft beer as they might be attending different lectures and courses about the topic, interacting within the beer community, and maybe even gives home brewery a try - though they do not possess such a great competence as the connoisseurs (Maciel & Wallendorf, 2017).

Furthermore, the study's respondents were delimited to Millennials. The main reasons for choosing the Millennial consumer group is argued for in the introduction. Since the study aims to investigate meanings of sustainability, it is of value to investigate the phenomena with people that value sustainability. As the Millennials are seen as a target group with engagement, optimism and willingness to take actions, in combination with having the potential to make an environmental impact (Hanson-Rasmussen & Lauver, 2018) this argues

for that the Millenials is an appropriate target group, as they probably have been more influenced by the sustainable mindset of their time. As craft beer is a product with associations to sustainability (Hughes, 2011; Ulver, 2019), but also is a product of great interest among the Millennials (Fromm, 2014; Granese, 2012), it was thereby also determined to be the most optimal high involvement product for this study.

Moreover, this study is conducted in Sweden that is seen as one of the leading countries when it comes to sustainability (Phillis, Grigoroudis & Kouikoglou, 2011), which might have a significant impact on the Swedish consumers' values and perceptions of sustainability. Additionally, the increase of craft beer has been tangible during the last couple of years. Today, the microbrew industry is the fastest growing industry in Sweden when looking at a percentile change in number of companies (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2018), which makes it especially interesting to investigate how Swedish beer aficionados relate to meanings of sustainability connected to craft beer. Furthermore, since the authors are studying at Lund's University in Sweden, a target group of Swedes became the most appropriate one. Not only because of the distance, but also because there could be an underlying understanding of the culture and state of mind between the interviewers and interviewees, which thereby could make it easier to understand the respondents' associations and expressions (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018).

3.3.3.1 Selection of Respondents

The sampling design of this study is of non-probability, which implicate that the possibility of all individuals of the population being represented in this study, is basically non-existing (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). Although, it is a valuable method to use when trying to find and understand if a special trait exists in the selected target group (Bryman, 2016), which strengthens the use of this method when searching for meanings of sustainability in high involvement consumption among Millennial craft beer aficionados. Furthermore, a non-probability sampling design is also beneficial to use because of the precision that the method brings (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018).

Because of the criteria that the respondents needed to fulfill in order to be seen as valid for this study, the method of purposive sampling was chosen. Purposive sampling is of a non-probability sampling design, which is commonly used when when the respondents of a study

need to meet different criteria in order to be seen as proper candidates for a study (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). As mentioned in the chapter above, the criterion that needed to be fulfilled for this study, were that the respondents were beer aficionados, since the product of craft beer was used as the object to examine consumers' meanings of sustainability in their high involvement consumption. Further, they needed to belong to the age group of Millennials, thus earlier studies have shown that this generation is a main target group that drives the demand of craft beer (Fromm, 2014; Granese, 2012), as well as they have grown up in an area where sustainability and ethics have been greatly discussed. Finally, they were delimited to Swedes due to a convenience and underlying understanding in relation to the researchers, but also because Sweden is seen as a country with a leading sustainability thinking (Phillis et al., 2011).

To come in contact with Swedish Millennials that were craft beer aficionados, posts were written on local craft beer conventions and in craft beer groups on Facebook, as well as a note was written and left at the local craft beer shop in Lund, where the study was made. Though, as this gave a bad outcome, the researchers needed to approach the target group in another way. Therefore, they reached out to people in their network that they knew consumed craft beer or were likely to know someone else that consumed craft beer, which resulted in several interviews.

The number of interviews were not set from the start, but around the eighth interview patterns were repeated, which after ten interviews led the researchers to believe that full saturation was reached. Thereby, the interviews stopped after that ten were conducted. In more detail, the selection of respondents was represented of eight men and two women. Since they belonged to the generation of Millennials, they were within the age range of 20 to 42 years old. Furthermore, a majority of them had a university degree, and some were still studying at the university meanwhile others had started to work. (See Appendix 3 - *List of Respondents,* for more details about the interviewees and the length of each interview).

3.3.4 Conduction of Interviews and Interview Guide

According to Easterby-Smith et al. (2018), one of the first things to consider regarding the interview guide is how structured it should be. There are different levels of structure, however, a semi-structured interview guide was argued to be the most suitable one for this

study (Appendix 1). The arguments behind this choice are that there were specific themes that needed to be discussed, although, an open dialogue and an opportunity for the respondents to more briefly talk about and express their thoughts and views was desired (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). Thereby, semi-structured interviews became the obvious choice for this study. It was also taken into consideration that questions could come to be discussed in a different order from what was indented, which Easterby-Smith et al. (2018) mean is quite common. Therefore, the interview guide of a semi-structured sort was created by relevant themes, which Bryman (2016) means is rather usual. The themes of this study's interview guide were 1. *Information about the Interviewee, 2. Consumption of Beer, and 3. Sustainability and Consumption Habits* (See Appendix 1).

These themes were derived from theoretical implications, however, theory was not explicitly connected to the questions. Rather, the interview guide was mainly of an inductive character with a conscious choice of grounding themes connected to relevant theory, though, without explicitly mentioning theoretical terms. This decision was grounded in the strive to avoid steering and influence the respondents into specific paths, as it was seen more valuable to ask more open question and take part of how they experience the topic, rather than get too steered answers.

Both of the two researchers attended the interviews, where one sort of had the role of interviewer, meanwhile the other one kept track on that the areas that needed to be touched upon was discussed and came with complementary questions and comments when needed. The interviews were held in separate group rooms booked at Lund University School of Economics and Management, as well as some interviews were held in the interviewees' homes. The reason behind these choices of location was to ensure a calm and safe environment, where the respondents felt that there was nobody else listening to them, in order to make them as comfortable as possible (Bryman, 2016).

Before each interview started, the respondents were informed about the aim with the study and the interview, though the part of how sustainability affects their consumption was left out with the purpose of avoiding directing the respondents into the area of sustainability too early. The respondents were also informed about their ethical rights of their participations in the interviews, as for example that they did not need to answer any questions they were not comfortable with, that they were going to be anonymous and that they had the right to leave

the interview whenever they wanted (Bryman, 2016). Of course, all respondents were also asked if it was okay that the interview was recorded in order to facilitate the transcription.

The first part of the interview guide, *Information about the interviewee,* aimed to get some knowledge about the respondents in terms of age, educational background, civil state, current occupation, about what kind of hobbies they had and what they liked to do during their spare time. This theme was grounded upon theory of where Bryman (2016) implies that it is valuable to get a picture of who the respondents are, for later on when contextualizing and analyzing the respondents' answers. Moreover, the researchers also saw this part as a way to "ease up" the interview and make the interviewees comfortable.

The second part of the interview guide went under the theme *Consumption of Beer*. This theme aimed to investigate the respondents' interest, knowledge, associations and thoughts about beer, and more specifically craft beer. The theme was mainly built upon questions that were related to answering the different aspects of meanings behind consuming craft beer, such as to see if it was motivated with a sustainable consumption. Furthermore, the theme aimed to investigate if there was a connection between how they expressed their consumption of craft beer, in relation to the consumption theories that exists within consumer culture.

The questions that were asked were of both laddering up and laddering down character. The technique of laddering up implies that questions are asked with the purpose of understanding and reveal respondents' value base (Wansink, 2003; Bourne and Jenkins, 2005), for example by asking questions of "Why?" (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). For instance, the respondents were asked why they buy craft, and sometimes why they bought that specific craft beer that they mentioned. Although, Easterby-Smith et al. (2018) points out that the researcher needs to be sensitive and determine carefully when a question of "Why?" can be asked, as too many questions of this character might end up in the respondent feeling empty of things to say. The technique of laddering down is somewhat of an opposite to laddering up - meanwhile laddering up lies on the perception of understanding underlying values, laddering down is instead a way of conducting specific examples, statements and views in relation to the certain topic (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). Questions that were of a laddering down character during this second part of the interview were "What is craft beer for you? How do you define it?", "What factors in beer are important to you?", as well as "Which values affect you when it comes to your consumption of craft beer and why?"

Further into the second part of the interviews, the respondents were asked to describe what their latest purchase at Systembolaget looked like, and what they were thinking when making their choices. The intention with this question was to understand what their consumption actually looks like, and not just how they talk about it. In the beginning of the study, when discussing what type of method that should be used to collect the empirical material, it was up for discussion whether an ethnographic observation would be proper to use or not. The thought then was to follow the respondents during a browsing and purchasing session at Systembolaget. However, the discussion ended in that these observations would probably be too biased, as the respondents would be well aware of that they were being studied and thereby consume in an "unnatural" way.

Moreover, in the end of the second part of the interview guide, a prompting technique was used with the purpose to provoke creative associations and descriptions by means of showing and discussing representative symbols (McCracken, 1988), in this case within the category of craft beer. This was done by the interviewers showing the respondents six different types of beer bottles. The choice of showing the bottles after asking them questions about beer was with the intention to not affect their own associations and thoughts of craft beer (Bryman, 2016).

The six beers that were chosen for this study, were based on what had come up earlier in the pilot study regarding definitions of craft beer: local, small-scale, experimental, and heritage/tradition. Two of the beers were of a local type and small-scaled (Råå and Lundabryggeriet), one from a large brewer in the US, which once started of small-scaled (Brooklyn Brewery), as well as one from a more experimental brewery in Sweden (Omnipollo). Furthermore, a traditional Weissbier (Franziskaner Weissbier) and a beer from one of the most famous Swedish beer brands (Norrlands Ljus, Organic) were used (See pictures in Appendix 2). The choice of bringing a beer from one of the most famous beer brands in Sweden, the Norrlands Ljus Organic, was to see if the respondents made any distinction between this type of beer and the others, and if so – how this distinction looked like. Also, this beer from a famous Swedish brand was organic, and the bottle was not of the classic look. Both these factors were chosen with the intention to investigate if the respondents defined and valued this type of beer different because of these two factors, as

organic and "fun bottle" also were mentioned as two typical traits for craft beer in the pilot study.

The third theme was about *Sustainability and Consumption Habits.* In this part of the interview, the respondents were asked what they thought of and how they would define the term sustainability – both in general but also more specific in a context of craft beer consumption. This was of value to understand since the concept of sustainability is very broad (FAO, n.d.; Moore et al., 2017), and therefore these kinds of questions helped the researchers to understand how the respondents defined and associated their meanings to the term sustainability. Thus, this third theme was basically connected to earlier theories about sustainability and sustainable consumption, such as the attitude-behavior gap, Though, since the guide was generally of an inductive approach – theories were not explicitly linked to the questions, only ideas from the different models were taken out and used as inspiration in the questions asked.

Moreover, during the first interviews there were two questions that came up to topic both times, and thereby got developed to be questions in the interview guide. These questions were "Do you think that you have the ability in terms of knowledge, habits and resources to make sustainable choices when buying craft beer?", and "Do you think you have the opportunity in terms of availability and supply to make sustainable choices when buying craft beer?". The questions were inspired by the MAO-model, and got developed from discussions about if the respondents saw themselves having enough knowledge about the topic of sustainability in relation to craft beer in order to make sustainable choices, and further if they thought that the stores offer sustainable choices of beer. Just like it is common that questions change order during interviews, it is also common that new, relevant questions appear and develops over time (Bryman, 2016).

The interview ended with a question where five different words were mentioned, where the respondents were asked to express what these words implied to them, and furthermore how they valued them. Moreover, they were to determine which one of these five expression they associated to sustainability the most and give a motivation for why this was the case. The words that the respondents would relate to in the question were local, small-scale, heritage/tradition, as well as ethical consumption and craft. The choice behind these words

lied in findings from the pilot study, where these words were used when the respondents were to describe craft beer.

The choice of listing the theme of *Consumption of Beer* before *Sustainability and Consumption Habits* was with the intention to avoid planting any thoughts of sustainability and a sustainable consumption when talking more specific about craft beer consumption. Though, some respondents in this study came to mention the sustainable aspect of craft beer already in the part of *Beer Consumption,* thereby this was not thoughts planted by the authors since they avoided to tell the full purpose of the study until later on in the interview.

3.4 Analyze of Conducted Empirical Material

With the permission of the interviewees, all interviews were recorded and thereafter the researchers transcribed five interviews each. The reason to record the interviews was to be able to give full focus towards the interviewee and what he/she said, rather than focusing on taking notes while interviewing (Bryman, 2016). Of course, there was also some risk with recording interviews, for example such as the interviewees becoming uncomfortable, or that technical problems could be encountered (Bryman, 2016). However, when evaluating the alternatives against each other, whether to record or not, the benefits of or recording the interviews were valued higher.

The interviews were transcribed word by word, since it is possible to miss out on valuable facts by writing down only certain quotes or themes (Bryman, 2016). When the work of transcribing all the interviews were made, the researchers made a first thematization on their own. By reading through all interviews, highlighting and making notes while reading, both researchers sorted the material and found different themes. This work of the analyzing process can be compared to what Rennstam and Wästerfors (2018) mention as sorting; the material was sorted into different themes, which further on became material that was discussed between the researchers. The reason for why the researchers chose to make a first thematization separated, was with the aim of avoiding to affecting each other's thoughts and ideas too much, and thereby they also avoided missing out on different themes and angles that maybe would not be found otherwise. Though, after a first thematization on their own, it quickly became clear that the researchers had understood and thematized the interviews quite

similar to each other. A final thematization of the conducted material were set after a deep discussion were both authors analyzed the findings and their own themes profoundly. This part of the analyzing process can be likened with what Rennstam and Wästerfors (2018) call reducing, which implies to the process when the material is reduced in order to become a usable amount of empirical material to further analyze. The process of sorting and reducing material resulted first and foremost in the two different themes: *Meanings of Sustainability* and *Meanings of Engagement and Identity,* which got further developed into different subtopics.

The last step in process – arguing for the conducted material (Rennstam and Wästerfors, 2018), was done throughout this whole study. Rennstam and Wästerfors (2018) talk about facing the problem of authority, such as the researchers underestimating and reducing themselves and their findings, which is solved by arguing for the conducted material. By arguing for the empirical findings throughout the chapters of Empirical Material, Analysis and Discussion, as well as throughout the chapter of Conclusion, the authors are facing the problem of authority.

3.5 Quality of Research

Easterby-Smith et al. (2018) presents eight different criterias which can be used for evaluating the quality of the work in a qualitative study, since this is so contrasting from the work made in a quantitative. The criterion of which Easterby-Smith et al. (2018) argues that you should consider determining the quality is worthy topic, rigor, sincerity, credibility, resonance, contribution, ethics and meaningful coherence.

The criteria of worthy topic refer to whether or not the field of study is satisfactory and fulfilling enough (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). This is argued to be the case in this study since it touches upon the topic of sustainability which is very relevant at this point of time and can give considerable insight for the players of the alcoholic beverage industry and the craft beer industry in particular. The rigor criteria acknowledge how suitable the chosen methods, theories and collected data fits the aim of the study at hand (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). As both the method and theoretical view have been meticulously developed and chosen to fit the intention of this study, which thereafter has been the foundation for the gathered data, the criteria of rigor also is claimed to be met.

Moreover, when explaining and specifying the completion of this study, both the criteria of sincerity as well as credibility has been taken well into account, making the research as comprehensive and transparent as possible for the reader, which thereby makes these criterias fulfilled. The quality criteria of resonance is met through making relevant depictions from the empirical material gathered, where concluding expressions is carefully discussed, while still enabling the discoveries to be transferable to somewhat similar situations, tentatively on other products in the industry of alcoholic beverages, which also is of high involvement.

The contribution from this study has an interesting theoretical input as it further deepens the understanding of sustainability's role in specific high involvement product categories. Further, it also provides practical impact in the question of how breweries today should engage in and employ sustainability in production, as well as in marketing activities. Furthermore, ethics is an issue that also was carefully considered before and during the execution of this study in order to achieve high quality, which is further explained and accounted for in the chapter on ethics. Since the study continuously was gone through, adapted and modified as the research process went on and as everything was evaluated carefully before the execution or writing of anything the study was able to fulfil its aim and answer the research question. The research thereby attained a meaningful coherence which contributed to a high quality throughout the whole paper.

Moreover, it can be discussed how representative the selection of respondents is, as an outcome of there being eight men and only two women in the study, and that they all have studied at the University. Nevertheless, this selection of respondents seems to reflect the typical craft beer consumer since "... craft beer has attracted a substantial following among predominantly male, white, well-educated, urban and suburban consumers" (Carroll & Swaminathan, 2000; Holt & Cameron, 2010 in Maciel & Wallendorf 2017, p. 729).

3.6 Ethics
As this study had a focus on consumer thoughts and meanings about an alcoholic beverage, it was important to think about the ethical implications of this throughout the study, in order to not make the respondents uneasy and uncomfortable at any time. As consumers' attitudes

about alcohol can be very sensitive information to share in different contexts the ethical considerations were therefore handled with extra care to avoid any mishaps.

Bryman and Bell (2007) have developed ten key principles to consider in regard to the ethics of research studies. These for instance cover that one should ensure that participators of the study have given an informed consent, as well as that they have been ensured that no harm will come to them through the participation of the study (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The respondent's dignity and privacy should be secured while they also are assured anonymity and that the research data stays confidential (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Moreover, Bryman & Bell (2007) present that the last four principles covers ethics in regard to the conservation of integrity in the research community, where one should keep full transparency of the study and not be misleading in the reported findings. This while as well preventing deception in the research aim and declaring any co-operations that may affect the study in some way (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

To make sure that misunderstandings was avoided and to assure that the ethical matters were kept professional and of high quality, every interview was initiated with a conversation that touched upon these important ethical concerns. The respondent was there informed about the what the purpose of the interview was. That one's anonymity was going to be kept safe and that the data would be kept away from public eyes, to ensure that one would not be harmed by this interview in any way. Thereafter the respondents were asked if the interviews could be recorded for the transcription as well as for the analysis of the gathered empirical material. Finally, before starting the interview, the respondents were also informed that they did not need to answer any questions if they were uncomfortable with any of them, as well as that they had the right to leave the interview at any needed time if necessary. They were furthermore informed that the purpose of the interviews was to take part of and understand their thoughts, point of views and associations in relation to the subject, and that there was not any "right or wrong" answers that were expected from them.

By sticking to the ethical principles that was set from start, all material was kept truthful and sincere throughout this conducted study, which ultimately leaved the thesis in full transparency with no distortion of any collected material.

3.7 Methodological Limitations

Even though the methods of this study have been carefully selected, this study still has some limitations. Therefore, this chapter will bring forward and discuss these limitations and what these imply for the study.

First and foremost, the method of qualitative research is commonly criticized for being too subjective (Bryman, 2016). As qualitative studies are of social constructionism, they more or less get a subjective angle, no matter how much the researcher carefully tries to be as objective as possible. Thus, in the case of this study, the researches have been well aware of the value to be as objective as possible, nevertheless, it cannot become purely objective. Also, in line with that qualitative studies often are criticized for being too subjective, it is also criticized for being difficult to replicate (Bryman, 2016). The arguments behind this are that these types of studies are often unstructured and totally reliant upon the researcher, which makes it impossible to make a replication, since the product is an outcome of the researcher's preferences (Bryman, 2016). The researchers of this study have therefore tried, in order to minimize this limitation, to give detailed explanations while being as reflexive as possible in the chapter of method. However, the fact that the study is difficult to replicate is not possible to totally get away from, as it also is dependent on factors such as the responses from the participants as well as characteristics of the researchers and respondents, such as age, gender and personality (Bryman, 2016).

Another common critique regarding qualitative methods is the problem of generalization (Bryman, 2016). It is truthful that this study's findings cannot be generalized on an entire population – however, that is not the aim. It is rather as Bryman (2016, p. 399) puts it, "Instead, the findings of qualitative research are to generalize to theory rather than to populations. /…/ In other words, it is the quality of the theoretical inferences that are made out of qualitative data that is crucial to the assessment of generalization." Thereby, this is not seen as something limiting this study.

4. Empirical Context

In order to untangle and understand the complexity of what this study aims to investigate, the product of craft beer is used to symbolize a product of high involvement. Therefore, the following text will give a short background and information about the product of craft beer.

4.1 The Craft Beer Product

Since the time of World War II, the beer industry has mostly been ruled by large companies (Burns & Novick, 2011; Knoedelseder, 2012). It was not until 1978 that craft beer first gained its proper grounding, when home brewing of beer became re-legalized by President Carter (Maciel & Wallendorf, 2017). From then on, what for some Americans started out as an experimental hobby with different beer styles, later transformed into a profession (Maciel & Wallendorf, 2017). During this time, the American market of craft beer actors exploded from being fewer than 100 in the 1980's, to become more than 4000 craft breweries today (Maciel & Wallendorf, 2017).

Years forward, the craft beer eventually entered the Swedish market. Although, there have been debates whether the term craft beer is proper to use or not, especially in relation to the Swedish market (Henningsson, 2016). Due to that the term was established in the US, the criteria that were set for what breweries need to fulfil in order to call themselves craft breweries, are adjusted for the American market, which more than often becomes misleading when using the same conditions for the Swedish market (Henningsson, 2016). The three criterion that were set do determine if a brewery is allowed to be called a craft brewery or not, are the questions of scale, dependency and tradition (Henningsson, 2016).

First and foremost, the question of scale refers to that a brewery needs to be small-scaled in order to be accepted as a craft brewery, where small-scaled implies a maximum production of about 117 liters beer per year (Henningsson, 2016). Further, the brewery needs to be independent, which means that the brewery cannot be owned by more than maximum 25% of an alcoholic company that is not a craft brewery (Henningsson, 2016). Lastly, when talking about tradition in relation to craft breweries, this refers to the process of production. Earlier it was a must that the beer consisted of mostly malt, however this changed in 2015, and

nowadays a brewery can be seen as traditional even if they use mostly corn, rice or syrup in the production (Henningsson, 2016).

Nevertheless, as mentioned in the chapter above of findings from the earlier conducted pilot study, these three criteria are difficult to translate into the Swedish market, as this for example would give one of the largest breweries in Sweden acceptance to be called a craft brewery. Due to this problematization, the term craft beer is not that common to use in Sweden since it is not clear what it refers to (Henningsson, 2016). This was also confirmed when the authors went to Systembolaget and talked with the trained staff, that Systembolaget does not sell, label or talk about beer in terms of craft beer. Rather, it is a question of small-scaled, locally brewed, microbrewed, or different styles such as IPA, APA and Sour Beer (Henningsson, 2016). Furthermore, the craft beer industry has been presented as something that has different understandings and interpretations of sustainability. According to Gatrell, Reid and Steiger (2018) these sustainability connections have a main focus on environmentally sustainable practices as well as place-based descriptions, which one can connect to the characteristics of where the beer is described as small-scaled, local and microbrewed.

5. Consumer's Perception of Sustainability and Craft Beer

In the following chapter, the conducted empirical material will be described. As the aim with this study is to understand how consumers relate to meanings of sustainability in their practice of high involvement products, the respondents of this study were asked questions about their beer, and more specific craft beer consumption, as craft beer constitutes the high involvement product in this study. Furthermore, as the purpose is to understand how consumer meanings of sustainability relates to practices of this type of product, the respondents were asked questions both in general about sustainability, as well as in relation to craft beer. Thereby, the first thing that this chapter highlights is their consumption in relation to sustainability, since this is the main focus. However, as there also turned out to be other aspects that were of great value and cause behind their consumption behavior, these have also been chosen to be highlighted in this chapter.

5.1 Meanings of Sustainability

What could be seen in the material conducted from the interviews, are that many of the respondents highly value sustainability and tries to make sustainable choices over a broad spectrum of activities. Furthermore, there is a distinction between how the respondents relate to meanings of sustainability in their consumption of groceries such as meat, in contrast to how they relate to meanings of sustainability in relation to craft beer. Moreover, what also was touched upon was the complexity of being a sustainable consumer, for instance due to the ambiguity in the concept of sustainability itself, as well as that the consumers' attitude towards possibilities and abilities to make sustainable choices, are closely linked to an experienced level of information. Finally, it was possible to see that the environmental aspect of sustainability does not constitute such a large part of the consumption as one might think - instead the social and economical aspect of sustainability seems to have a bigger impact on consumers when it comes to the product of craft beer.

5.1.1 The Value of Being a Sustainable Consumer

Being a consumer with a sustainable mindset is something that this study's respondents clearly value. Some meant that they had more or less strict rules for how their consumption should be, while others just expressed a general mindset of making sustainable choices in

their everyday lives. Examples of how they make their choices more sustainable were given, as well as some also came to clarify a difference between how their mindset is when consuming grocery products in comparison to beer.

5.1.1.1 Taking Responsibility Through Sustainable Consumption

When the respondents were asked to define the concept of sustainability, as well as to express how they value sustainability in their everyday life, many of them mentioned that they care a lot about the environment. Some expressed that they actively think of consuming in a sustainable way, or at least that they try to consume sustainably. Ella was one of the respondents that emphasized the importance of a sustainable way of living:

I guess that the definition of sustainability is that you use energy and raw material on such a level that future generations will not be suffering. And I find that really important; it's a big part of my lifestyle if you could say so.

– Ella, 25

Things that frequently came up during these interviews were that the respondents are flying less than before, that they often use other transportation methods than driving the car if possible, and that they think about the manufacturing behind the groceries they buy, for example if the vegetables have been locally produced, if the coffee is Fairtrade marked, etcetera. For instance, Ella further stressed that she takes sustainable aspects into consideration when lowering her green gas emissions through means of transportation, as well as making more conscious choices in the grocery store:

And yes, I try to take the bus to school and to bike. And we have also, in recent years, tried to minimize out flying trips since you're starting to panic over that a bit. And we also try to make sustainable choices when buying groceries.

– Ella, 25

Similar to Ella, both Carl and Oliver also had similar arguments when discussing sustainability and how they value sustainability in their life. Carl also highlighted, like Ella, how he tries to decrease his green gas emissions and make more conscious choices in the grocery store, for example through buying locally produced food when possible. Oliver

mentioned how he takes the train more often instead of driving the car, that he basically has become a vegetarian, and that he works at a company that also pursue a lot with sustainable actions itself, all of which was not common habits for him before.

What was possible to see after conducting the interviews, was that a majority of the respondents seemed to value sustainability and sustainable actions highly in their everyday life. For some of the respondents, their sustainable actions seemed to be something that permeated all their choices and behaviors. This way of consuming things could be seen as a part of creating meaning for them, to have a meaningful way of consuming and taking responsibility for the planet. In the areas of their lives of which they know how to be sustainable, they seem to be highly involved and put a lot of time and energy, in order to do the right thing. Although, what is interesting to reflect upon is that the type of sustainability that all respondents immediately came to talk about when asked about it was the one from an environmental perspective, even though none of the interviewers specified what kind sustainability they meant.

5.1.1.2 Sustainability in Food versus Beer Consumption

A quite distinct aspect that was discovered during all interviews when discussing sustainability, was that the respondents often mentioned that they considered sustainability more in different ways when talking about sustainable choices of groceries in comparison to beer. This is exemplified in this quote made by Adam where he also justified his reason for why that is so:

Yes, I care more when I buy groceries than when I buy beer. Eh… more since I buy groceries more often than I buy beer. So, of course that has a bigger effect on the planet than my consumption of beer.

– Adam, 25

Henry claimed a very similar approach and way of thinking as Adam, regarding that he has a more sustainable way of choosing in the grocery store, due to that he consumes food but not beer everyday, and thereby his way of consuming groceries becomes more important:

More in a grocery store, because I eat every day, and I don't drink beer every day. So, I believe the choices are more important in that area, because it makes a bigger difference. There, I'm more careful, or… I do that too, but I would say that I'm more careful with making sustainable choices in a grocery store than when I choose beer.

– Henry, 31

This way of arguing about sustainable choices when consuming beer versus consuming food, was practically mentioned by all respondents. Overall, it was considered to be more important to consume food more sustainable in comparison to beer, since food is consumed to a much greater extent, and thereby it is seen to have a larger impact on the environment. Although an interesting element of this is that sustainability is given more time and thought in a product of which they do not care or engage particularly much in otherwise, as it seemed to be something of low involvement.

Another interesting aspect that came up during the comparison of the differences in these two consumption practices, was the meat industry. Within this, the aspect of sustainability seems to have a big influence on many of the study's respondents. The respondents appeared to have a lot of knowledge and insights in this industry and stated that they are making active choices when it comes to their consumption of meat. There also seemed to be some general "right and wrong" ways to consume within this product group, and overall the study's respondents talked negatively about the meat industry from an environmental perspective. For example, it was pointed out that the meat industry was something negative in an aspect of ethics. George explained that he strictly consumes meat that is from Sweden due to ethical concerns:

When I buy other groceries, I exclusively buy meat that's from Sweden for example. But I guess that's more… on an ethical level. If you buy it in Sweden, or particularly with meat, that's where I am the pickiest since I have certain ways of… I mean you cannot breed them any way you want to. I know that you don't have free access to how much antibiotics you can put into them, etcetera. So, when it comes to that… or there I feel relatively informed when it comes to groceries.

– George, 28

Besides the factors of ethics, the discussions around meat mostly involved the industry's negative impact on the environment. When this came to topic, it became clear that the respondents considered locally produced meat and other produce more sustainable, and that they quite strictly stick to locally produced commodities just because of this. Carl was one of those who explicitly said that he, basically, only consumes meat produced in Sweden:

Yes, but I reward locally produced when it comes to vegetables and that stuff as well as Swedish if it exi… I mean when there is Swedish vegetables, I buy those. I think that we… that I can almost say to 100% that we eat Swedish meat, or at least 99,99%, you never know what your sausage contains. But I mean… when we actively choose, we keep it Swedish and we try to reduce the amounts of meat and try to keep… to eat more vegetarian, to eat that a few days in a week. To draw our straw to the stack as well.

– Carl, 28

Lisa also expressed that she highly values that the meat she buys always is from Sweden. She gave an example on how she never would buy chicken from Denmark, and that this is almost engraved in her way of consuming. Though, when it comes to her consumption of beer, she does not have this mindset and she has no problem at all with buying foreign produced beer, such as beer from Denmark. Tom highlighted the same thing in his interview, where he pointed out that he would never buy foreign produced meat, though continuing to put his consumption behavior in contrast to when buying beer, he said that he does not have any problems with buying beer that has been produced in a foreign country.

Nevertheless, what both Carl, Lisa and Tom pointed out was what many of the respondents expressed during their interviews; that they have rather distinct restrictions and seem to be relatively well informed when it comes to the grocery industry's, and more specific the meat industry's, impact on the environment when considering sustainability. Additionally, what can be seen in what both Lisa and Tom expressed, is that when this is being compared to the beer industry in general, they acknowledge quite a significant difference between these two product categories.

Furthermore, there was almost a feeling of that the respondents thought they needed to excuse and explain their consumption behavior of meat. For example, when Adam came to talk about his meat consumption, he stated that he and his girlfriend only consume meat when

they are away on a dinner party, when they are at a restaurant or when they aim to celebrate and enjoy something special. Thus, the meat consumption can be seen as a way of treating yourself, at the same time as Adam seemed to feel that he needed to justify this type of consumption behavior, as he knew that this type of consumption was environmentally bad:

We only eat meat when we are on a dinner party or away at a restaurant and want to enjoy ourselves a bit extra. So, I guess that's where I think it has more of an impact on the environment, on the sustainability.
– Adam, 25

As a conclusion of this, the respondents of this study all value and have pretty restrictive ways of consuming groceries in the context of sustainability, though when reflecting whether this type of behavior is present in relation to craft beer, this did not seem to be the case. Some highlighted the fact that the difference between how they look at beer versus groceries lies in their frequency of use: the more often they consume this, the more they take the aspect of sustainability into consideration. They also seemed much more informed within the area of food, and as beer was not said to be a commodity that these respondents consume on an everyday basis, the sustainability aspect of it often becomes under prioritized. Although one might question the logic behind a reasoning behind something like that. How come, if sustainability is so important for these consumers, that it is not considered in a product like craft beer where a lot of time and engagement is already put? Do they really care that much about sustainability as they say they do when they reason in this way? In the chapter below another justification for why sustainability cannot be considered as much in the craft beer product, was brought to the researchers' attention by the responding consumers.

5.1.2 The Complexity of Being a Caring Consumer

The respondents also showed some glimpses of the complexity in being caring and sustainable consumers, as the concept of sustainability itself is very broad and fairly vague. When the respondents were asked to define the concept of sustainability, the same reaction was shown almost every time – a face of confusion and insecurity. In fact, many of the study's respondents had a hard time to express how they even define sustainability, and especially when this was asked in relation to the beer industry. Some respondents came to wonder if this even is a problem within the beer industry? Many did raise the fact that there is

a relatively small focus on sustainability when it comes to beverages, and more specifically beer. For example, Lisa said that she thinks the concept of sustainability itself is very wide, that so much can be included in the concept of it, thus it becomes complicated to relate to, especially in a context of beverages such as beer. In similarity to Lisa, George expressed that he had not been thinking about sustainability in relation to craft beer before:

Sustainability… That's a very difficult term. Or I don't know, I feel a bit out of my comfort zone. Sustainability is very broadly used expression really. /.../ Or I mean, I think that I went into it with the picture of that what they are doing is okay. But I think that's more… or I haven't really done any investigation myself really, I haven't sought for if there's a problem or not.

– George, 28

Furthermore, both Oliver and Henry said that sustainability is a "big issue today", and that the question of sustainability is a very broad and "heavy", which also William agreed upon by claiming that it is a difficult issue due to the many factors that matters and impact it.

The vague and very broad concept of sustainability seemed to be a part of the confusion and the caution some of the respondents showed when they were asked to define and talk about sustainability, both in general but also in relation to craft beer. When the respondents did not have a clear way to relate to the concept itself, this seemed to create a lack of how they thought they should, and how they do, relate to a sustainable way of consuming objects of so high involvement such as craft beer. Again one could question the respondents in this arguing as they later had said that they cared a lot about the environment and could define it then, but later when asked to put it in relation to craft beer this was very complex to do and the justification was that it had many different meanings. Even if it is hard because of the many meanings the word implies, one could think that it would be something to put time and energy into to understand, if one cares about both the product and about sustainability.

Furthermore, what often is seen as a sustainable choice or way of consuming, also started to be questioned as some of the respondents found their own thoughts and expressions rather paradoxical. Some even turned their viewpoints of the subject around. For example, when Tom came to the part of the interview where he had six different bottles of beer in front of him and then was asked which beer he considered to be a more sustainable choice, he

answered that he thought of the local ones to be more sustainable. Though, quickly after his statement he changed his mind and instead he started to reflect upon whether his thoughts were paradoxical:

Yes, the local. But that's also a bit of a paradox. At these large breweries, they maybe have economies of scale, and thereby they maybe have a whole other opportunity to have large productions and deliveries, so that their emissions per capita becomes smaller per bottle than this will. So, this local beer from Lund can be worse than this big Norrlands or Brooklyn-beer. But I think; small, okay... locally produced – then it's probably good. But I haven't done the research yet, so I don't know.

– Tom, 25

This viewpoint, that the larger breweries would be more sustainable because of their economies of scale, was also concluded by others. For instance, George did also point this out during his interview:

The more I think about this now it almost feels like it just as much could be the other way around. For example, I think that a big company that has money, they can basically decide that "shit the things we do in this way are being done the wrong way, they are bad for the environment", and if you have the money to change certain processes, you can change…so just because something is of a small-scale it doesn't have to mean that it's sustainable, now when you think about it further. Since the large companies that are well established have the possibility to niche themselves, while they financially have the tools to solve problems no one else can do in their production. So, the more I think about it, the more I feel trapped, haha.

– George, 28

Just like George and Tom, William had these thoughts about economies of scale and sustainability as well. He reflected upon the feeling of buying craft beer because it feels good, as in one doing a good choice by buying craft beer instead of "regular" beer, and thought that this feeling might actually be false. He stated that it is likely that it could be the other way around, that is to say, that it is easier to maintain a sustainable production when having the economies of scale.

As seen here, some of the respondents came to question their way of thinking regarding what would be a more sustainable choice and what would not. As the local aspect was mentioned as a sustainable choice of beer, either because of, or strictly due to a shorter transportation, Tom, George and William went further on to discuss that this could be paradoxical. They came to discuss how larger companies often have more possibilities in terms of resources and power to, for example, have a more sustainable production due to their economies of scale. Thus, the factor of being a small, local brewery or a medium sized one, became questioned for often being seen as more environmentally sustainable. This reasoning creates a real understanding for the complexity that the consumers are faced with when making craft beer choices. Despite this, it can be questioned how they can justify the difficulty of choosing their craft beer with these arguments, while it can be the exact same way when purchasing other commodities, which is not something brought up during their interviews.

5.1.3 The Result of Being an Under-Informed Consumer

The paradoxical views seem to, partly, be grounded on a lack of transparency within the industry, and just like many of the respondents pointed out, they are not really sure of what would be a sustainable choice of beer. Several of them also meant that there is not enough information about sustainability in the craft beer industry – or at least that this is communicated rather vaguely. Many of them also argued that it can be a marketing thing, basically that this topic has not reached the craft beer industry yet. In fact, many of the study's respondents stated that sustainability in relation to craft beer is not something they have reflected upon before, and that it was not until it got brought up during this study's interviews that many of them actually came to think about it, according to themselves. For example, Carl stated that he does not find there to be any official information about this topic, and because of this it is difficult to make informed choices:

No, I don't think so. Just because, like we talked about before, I don't think that the information really is there. Around craft beer in particular… they don't display it that much, and I haven't put myself that much into it, since I haven't gotten that far into it, and right know the interest only lays in the drinking. /…/ But since I don't consider that as generally known information… I wouldn't say that I have the knowledge to make informed choices when it comes to craft beer. Then it depends on if they write organic or ecological or whatever they choose to write on their bottle, that I can take a stand point regarding, which I

honestly don't do since it's only an advantage if the beer happens to be organic when I buy it, unfortunately.

<div align="center">

– Carl, 28

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Carl continued to reflect about this topic and said the following when asked if he thought he had the possibility to make sustainable choices when consuming craft beer:

I don't think there's enough information about it. And neither do I know if there are enough beer kinds that are. Ehm... as said before, I often buy from local breweries in Skåne, which you can see as relatively local on a large-scale level. But I don't know how they operate, I don't know from where they get their malt, their hop or their water. I actually don't know that, and that isn't something they swagger around with today either. But as I've said I think there will be a change the larger craft beer becomes, which will give you more insights and they will want to get an edge within their processes. But today that isn't needed, since the competition isn't there yet – I think. So, I actually think it's a marketing thing.

<div align="center">

– Carl, 28

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Daniel agreed upon the similar, that he has obscure knowledge about the subject and thereby do not know how to even make sustainable choices of beer because of that. Further, Lisa expressed that she has limited knowledge about how to make a sustainable choice of beer. Although, she believed that the supply and availability to make sustainable choices are there, just that she does not how to make use of the existing supply and availability because of her lack of knowledge.

Like Lisa, both George and William also seemed to think that they have the ability in terms of resources and supplies to make sustainable choices when it comes to consumption of craft beer. For example, George expressed himself having vague knowledge about sustainable choices when it comes to the product of craft beer. Though he believes that everybody has an opportunity and choice to make it, and moreover that the opportunity would increase if sustainable choices were labeled:

Yes, I think so absolutely. But on the other hand I don't know how many of them actually is, I mean if you should have some sort of seal of quality on it, thus what is KRAV-labeled and

what that means in terms of additional costs for all those breweries, or if it even is, or if it's

already relatively OK. But I absolutely think, that then everybody could have it, I guess.

– George, 28

Similar to George, William said in the interview that if he had read more about the subject of sustainable beer consumption, then it would not be a problem with doing sustainable choices, thus he believes that there are possibilities to learn more. However, he also pointed out that he is sceptic towards breweries and companies that tries to profile themselves as sustainable, as he means that everything is about how, for example, a study is conducted or what the company itself chose to highlight as sustainable. William means that everything in the end is about the industry's and company's interest, rather than a genuine interest in sustainability, and that it is easy to get affected as a consumer by what the companies are profiling themselves as. Nevertheless, he does not think that it affects him in the longer run, especially not when it comes to the product of craft beer.

Thus, there seems to be a lack of information and knowledge about sustainability in the craft beer industry of Sweden, which further seems to create confusion among some consumers regarding whether or not there even is any sustainable choices of beer to buy. Many of those who did express that they believe there are sustainable choices of beer to buy, expressed that they however are not really sure of how they should make their choice more sustainable, simply due to the lack of information and knowledge. Although, this was contested by Ella who claimed having both the knowledge and ability to make sustainable decisions of craft beer at all times. With this information at hand one can settle that the consumers have the ability to take sustainability into consideration, although they defend this through posing that the information is not easily attained, which does not seem to be the case for Ella. This excuse of availability takes us to the next chapter.

5.1.3.1 The Effect of Convenience and Comfort

As just described, a majority of the respondents think that there is a lack of information within the area of craft beer consumption. Furthermore, the lack of information in combination with convenience could be seen as a contributing factor to why the respondents have not been thinking about sustainability as an aspect when consuming beer earlier. For example, Tom implied that he has not been thinking about sustainability in relation to beer

before – partly since it is not something that has "approached him", but also since one sometimes do selective choices with what one aims and wants to care about. Tom meant that it can be tough to always think and do "right" for oneself, in all possible aspects:

I don't know, since I haven't been thinking about it before, I can only sit here and guess, so I don't know how valuable this will be for you, but I don't know if it maybe is about that I want to avoid making a choice – "okay, now I will only buy beer from the brewery of Lund, since that's the only one nearby". /…/ Instead it's more about that it should be relatively sustainable. And that's also very important to me, especially during these times. But – like everybody else, you are a bit of a hypocrite. You make it easy on yourself! You value it really high sometimes while you are totally forgiving with how you act and consume other times.

– Tom, 25

This seems to be alike the fact of which Oliver pointed out regarding him becoming a vegetarian; he did not think about the animals until after he became a vegetarian, in other words, he did not care about the animals to this wide extent, until he actively made the decision to care all the way through. Further, when Oliver got the question of how much he values sustainability, his answer was similar to what Tom emphasized, that even though he values sustainability and finds that important, he does not always live the way he learns:

Pretty high, I think. Even though I don't live as I learn or think that way. I do it to some extent or to a pretty large extent in comparison… depending on how you see it but… I value it quite a lot, I think.

– Oliver, 30

Summarized, the vague information and insights about the craft beer industry and how to make sustainable choices within this, in combination with how people often seek to behave in a convenient way, is seen to be a cause for why consumers do not very often actively take a sustainable stance with this type of product. As long as the respondents need to seek information themselves, and as these new ways of consuming might possibly be more demanding, the consumers seem to close their eyes for the problems, since this is a more comfortable alternative. This proves what has been questioned in most of the previous chapters, that there is explanations and excuses for why not all aspects of sustainability is thought about more, it seems to come down to the fact that the consumers are too comfortable

with what they know and do already. It seems like they do not want to reduce their craft beer possibilities for the sake of sustainability, which is questionable as they say that they care so much about this. They seem to become passive consumers of sustainability, in a product which otherwise involves them considerably.

5.1.4 The Importance of Being a Socially Responsible Consumer

According to the discussions of the respondents, the price of a craft beer is basically always higher than the price of a "regular" beer. Some respondents shared how they have spent a lot of money on this type of beverage, and as result of that, the respondents were asked to answer why they were willing to pay that amount of money on a beer. Interesting was that many of them came to mention the social and civil aspect of the product, as well as the production behind it, as a cause for why they are willing to spend that extra amount of money on craft beer. William was one of those who lifted this, and he argued that it is in fact the craftsmanship behind the product that makes him willing to pay more for a product like craft beer. He imagines how men and women pours the bottles manually, puts the cap on themselves and glue the labels on the bottles. For William, these feelings give him a sense of that the ones who are working with and producing this really cares about the product, and this he enjoys and is willing to support.

Adam also said that the first thing he thinks about when asked to define the concept of craft beer, is the matter of local production. He further developed this and pointed out that it can be about wanting to favor the local businesses:

I immediately think about maybe locally produced beer, think about Systembolaget where it's mostly showcased. For example, like the beer of Sibbarp, they are quite big in Malmö. And that I think, is a trend in itself, that you maybe would like to favor the locally producing businesses and the enterprises around you, so maybe you try to maintain some kind of rotating cycle. That you want to favor those who are close by. And that they do their own thing. /.../ Eh... if we should compare it with groceries generally I don't think I'd care particularly much if it was locally produced, but with beer maybe it... it feels a bit more fun if it's from Sibbarp since you... for example with the beer of Sibbarp, I somewhat know the owner, therefore I find it very nice for him and his wife when the business is doing well.

Likewise, Lisa mentioned the social aspect of sustainability, but in combination with an economic aspect, as a contributing factor for her choosing craft beer. She pointed out that when it comes to terms of consumption in relation to sustainability, she thinks of customer satisfaction and about having an understanding for the work that goes into that specific product. She thinks that it is crucial to support the smaller suppliers at the market in order to maintain a complement to the larger actors and to avoid giving the large actors monopoly. When Lisa then was asked the question whether she thinks that she has the ability to make sustainable choices when she buys craft beer or if there is something that obstructs her from doing this, it again was these aspects of sustainability that she referred to. She indicated that she has the possibility to make sustainable choices through supporting the small-scaled businesses that exist on the market:

If you go back to this with supplies, it's really Systembolaget that decide who is allowed to come in and who I'm really aloud to support. And what regulations that exists here in Sweden, since they aren't allowed to sell to me directly, or at least not as a private individual, then I need to go through Systembolaget. So actually, you can only support those that they provide there. If you look at supplies. And to really sustainably support the individual supplier would require me to buy from them. Because that is the only way I can imagine it, if I keep buying from those smaller suppliers. For it to be able to exist, for them to be able to remain.

– Lisa, 24

When Daniel was asked the question about how he defines craft beer and what that is for him, he as well said that it is about being able to see the process and people behind the product, how the brewer has been standing there and flavored the beer him or herself. He described this with there being a special "human hill farm factor" over this feeling where he imagined the process. Further into the interview, when Daniel was asked how he thinks about sustainability in a context of craft beer, he answered *"the ingredients and where they come from."* Though, at the same time he continued to say that it is not something he thinks about in particular when buying beer, and that he would not make any consciously sustainable choices when it comes to buying this product – which he thinks partly has to do with the fact that he does not have enough knowledge about it:

First and foremost, I think about the raw material. Where it comes from. And then of course what kind of process it has undergone, to make the beer a finished product. But I don't think about that particularly much when I buy beer to be honest. But I think that has to do with what I said before, that you don't know anything about it. But I think, if I would buy other groceries or fruit I would think about where it comes from. Then you think about it all the time. Eh, which you don't do here, which is interesting. /.../ Absolutely! But I wouldn't have done any environmental conscious choices, when it comes to buying beer today.

      – Daniel, 24

Also, Carl expressed some sort of social aspect of sustainability in regard to consuming craft beer. He pointed out that it is fun to buy locally produced beer and that Skåne has a lot of breweries, though he explicitly said that it is not the environment that motivates him to buy locally produced beer from Skåne, but that it is fun to reward the local actors.

Generally, it seems like sustainability from an environmental aspect does not have a rather crucial role among the interviewees in relation to craft beer. However, it is possible to see that some of the respondents value both the social and economic aspect of sustainability – they wanted to promote and support the smaller operators, the craftsmen behind the craft beer product. Although this was not clearly stated in a combination with the terms of social and economical sustainability by the consumers, rather it was something that could be conducted from the explanations of their values. They value how they can imagine and almost see how people have been working with this product, how they have created it and their choices of flavor. Some said to enjoy the thought of knowing that they actually can meet the persons behind the product, and that they like to cherish the smaller actors in the way of supporting the more local producers and the true craftsmen. The willingness to support the craftsmen and smaller breweries might lie in the feeling of something being handmade, that it maybe comes with a higher quality, and that it might be a way to show the surroundings how one takes responsibility for the local society. It is a way of getting involved with the product you buy, and thereby the social and economic aspect perhaps is easier at hand than the knowledge of making an environmentally sustainable choice, even if they are not always considered as conditions of sustainability.

5.2 Meanings of Engagement and Identity

When the interviews of this study were held, another point of view apart from the one of consumers meanings of sustainability, became profoundly evident. Even though the essential aim of this study was to find meanings of sustainability in high involvement products, other insights was found regarding the respondents behavioral reasoning, when consuming the craft beer product. As these insights seemed to have a fundamental impact on the consumers whole meaning of consuming this product, it could not be left out from the empirical findings of this study. This chapter thereby touch upon different meanings regarding the respondent's identity as well as engagement when consuming craft beer.

5.2.1 The Indisputable Reasons of Being a Craft Beer Consumer

When the consumers were asked to simply talk about their interest and enthusiasm towards the product of craft beer, there was three apparent themes that came up during these discussions, that was clearly established among the consumers. These themes are therefore introduced downbelow. What makes these themes so clearly settled, is the fact that they were not hard to extract from what the respondents said, these meanings of consumption were straightforward and without doubt of importance for them when consuming this type of beer.

5.2.1.1 Commitment to Find New Sensational Flavors

One very evident and distinct aspect of what young consumers see in the product of craft beer, is flavor and taste. The product category of beer is something that attract the respondents as it is a commodity that they on a general level would describe as good, refreshing, well-brewed and cheap, in comparison to other alcoholic beverages such as wine. That flavor and taste are the most popular characteristics may not be that surprising since it is the taste that makes people like something or not when it comes to food and beverages. But what is it then with the taste in particular that makes craft beer better than any other beer?

The participating consumers of this study argued that they often seek themselves to this type of beverage to explore new and exciting aromas as well as taking their beer drinking to new levels and make it something more tailored for them and their taste buds, than the brewed drink had been to them earlier. Accordingly, George expressed the start of his craft beer interest in the following way:

I think I never actually found Carlsberg and other beers like that as good beer, I still think… Or under certain, or the right circumstances I still find it very nice with a cold Carlsberg or Hof or whatever you have at the time. But if you… if you go further and let go of all the things you are used to have, you can find certain things that makes you go "shit, can it taste like this?!". It creates a "WOW" for you, I think it's that… or you try to find more and more of exactly what you want. I think that's what makes it fun…

– George, 28

In similarity to George, Carl expressed that craft beer was so exciting because of its complex and explorative flavors:

…But because of the taste for instance. I find them so much better and more complex in the taste than I find a standard beer. But I'm also not the one to reject a cold lager on a hot summer day, it's not that. But simply put there is so much to explore, and I find it fun to try new kinds and feel the different nuances in the different kinds of beer.

– Carl, 28

Thus, the respondents do not find a "normal" beer as something bad at all times, even though this does not give them the same experience that a craft beer would give them. The consumption of this kind of product seem to serve a bigger purpose and be of higher importance since it can provide a sensory encounter that is maybe more, or sometimes less, adapted to what they prefer in a beer, in comparison to what a standardized and mass-produced lager can provide. They therefore have a higher intent of buying craft beer in comparison to others. Further, in a discussion regarding what aspects are considered most important when consuming craft beer, Tom mentioned something that clearly reflects the exploring aspect of this interest among our respondents:

When I'm choosing a beer, I'm not looking for something that is safe, that I know I like, but instead I am eager to find something new, which can impress me. That makes it more fun to buy, something different.

– Tom, 25

This is also something that Carl reflected upon when talking about what it is that is appealing with craft beer:

Now we are back to the amplitude and innovation again. I enjoy testing very odd flavors, strange kinds of beer and that sort of thing. So, I guess it's… No, but that it's unique as well, I find it more fun when things are unique, when everybody haven't tried it or you know… Not exclusive, because it's not exclusive when everybody can buy it, but unique from the aspect that maybe everyone hasn't tasted it.

– Carl, 28

To widen the spectrum of flavors seems to be the fun and an appealing aspect of craft beer, to explore the unexplored and to find unexpected things, which makes it something out of the ordinary. The thrill and excitement of discovering something that everybody has not yet tried or that everybody does not yet know of, gives the product a silver lining that all products cannot give, and that is what makes it so special - a high involvement product. Associated with the argument around what is interesting and fun with the beverage there are also expressions about the rethinking of the beverage. By some respondents it was somewhat classified as an experiment. They described how craft breweries are more developing, tried more fun and exciting things that went beyond the boundaries of "normal" beer, both in collaboration with each other as well as on their own. This thereby made this a more alluring beverage to enjoy in combination with other flavors such as a nice dinner, but also in other settings.

Going further into the respondents encounters with craft beer, Daniel characterized it as something almost magical as he explained the sensation of drinking craft beer with visions of which the average beer drinker maybe would not illustrate:

Hmm, I think of like new cut grass in the beginning of the summer. I think of that and then I think a little bit about sunset as well. That I would like. Preferably before a concert - you know, that sort of feeling. You are quite untroubled and just… it's warm…

– Daniel, 24

These descriptive, creative and mindful metaphors implicate what the odd and advanced flavors of craft beer means in terms of experience for the consumers - a hedonistic act that

seems to take them somewhere else, somewhere better where they very much enjoy themselves. The pleasure of being so explorative with the senses and the aim of getting an adventurous flavor trip inside a beer bottle seemingly appear to be the respondents' main motives, as well as the most obvious reasons for their high involvement consumption of this product when asked. The rethinking and different approach to flavor that is defined by the respondents, is something that captures the consumers' attention and interest. This in combination with their colorful descriptions of what makes trying new things so fascinating, provide an understanding of what is fun and exciting for them about flavor in craft beer.

5.2.1.2 Uniqueness and Higher Quality Providing Greater Satisfaction

Apart from the definitions of flavor and taste as a purpose of drinking craft beer, some respondents also described that this kind of beer offers something that is more profound, which was evident already during their expressions of taste. This aspect was partly communicated by some of them when it came to the special care and thought that is behind the process of producing and developing this kind of peculiar tasting beer, which ended up making it even more unique and of higher quality for them:

I like the thought about that there's someone that has been putting that extra time and effort into getting a flavor that's more unique for that brewery or that brewer. He puts his time and soul into it to make it work.
– Daniel, 24

Carl also agreed with what Daniel said and put special emphasis on the fact that it does not matter under which circumstances this extra work and feeling is put into the craft beer, as long as the consumer can sense it:

Beer that is… that's made with extra consideration and care where you have been giving one extra thought about how it should taste. It should not taste at its best when it's -3 degrees Celsius, you should be able to drink it anytime and there should be a lot of taste, as well as it should have been done with extra care and feeling, that's craft beer for me. And if it's made by a person at home in a garage or if it's made in a factory with maybe 10 employees, doesn't matter, as long as it's of a smaller scale. I'd say that's craft beer for me.
– Carl, 28

By the product being something of high involvement for the producer it ultimately also makes it something of high involvement for the consumer. As the brewers are creating something with extra time and care, the craft beer product becomes more unique in comparison to what the rest of the market is offering, which sequentially makes the consumers more satisfied when it also holds a better taste. What further was evident in the comments made by Carl was that this special feeling and consideration that made the craft beer unique, often was generated by something that was of smaller scale. Even the design on this type of beer reflected something more authentic in comparison to other beers, according to Daniel:

... You know that someone has been giving that extra thought when they designed it. They have been thinking about you even though they don't know who you are, then it also becomes more valuable than if it's just a generic bottle.
– Daniel, 24

This statement concludes that design as well can provide a unique and satisfying feeling for the consumers, that everything is not always about the beverage and the taste, even if it is a very essential factor. Also, Carl reasoned around how craft beer's esthetics generated remembrance and that it was something where more time was put, in comparison to other beer types:

But a lot of craft beer have a very nice design. They try to distinguish themselves through a cool label or a differently shaped bottle or just by trying a different concept when it comes to that sort of thing, so that they're seen on the shelf. While the large-scale produced beers often has a standard bottle or can, where they haven't been putting much time or thought into design, instead it shall only be pushed out into the market, in large amounts and to a low price... I guess I find that the biggest difference, when they distinguish themselves and how they expose themselves.
– Carl, 28

These quotes then reached further and were developed into expressions of where the respondents kept talking about and relating to craft beer as "good-beer" or "fine-beer" in relation to what other categories offered, as they meant that this type of beer gave them that

"little extra" something. They appeared to very much like consuming this type of beer because of the exclusiveness it demonstrated in comparison to other beers. This also made this type of beer more worth and valuable to them, and putting that extra money, sometimes a lot of extra money, was not something unusual for them because of these factors. The desire to be able to get your hands on this unique beer stretched far for many of the respondents. From standing in line outside Systembolaget before opening to get a hold of the exclusively limited christmas beer "Lusse Lelle" with the taste of saffron or checking out the webpage of Systembolaget every day in order be aware of all new releases. The interest stretched as far as one of the respondents travelling to Belgium to experience a specially brewed beer:

... I'd never been to that brewery specifically. And they had a beer that only was released there, and it was very limited and exclusive. It was a beer that they had been brewing 10 years earlier and the resale value on that was about SEK 5000. And I'd also tried nearly everything from them, so then I thought I could fly down there with a friend and share the experience. As well as other things of course.

– Henry, 30

The uniqueness and exclusiveness of this high quality beer makes some of these respondents go to remarkable measures to not miss out on what is offered, and listening to the descriptions of what they see in the beer and what they would do to get that, the satisfaction of it becomes understandable. Although important to mention when talking about this aspect it that there was a difference in how some of the respondents behaved around this matter. All of them claimed the uniqueness and high quality in craft beer, however all of them did not buy craft beer exclusively because of its higher price, especially not the participating students. Some of them also added that the price in combination with the powerful flavor and taste of which craft beer often has, made them mix different beers in order to not get overwhelmed. So even though the exclusivity and uniqueness of the beer seemed to be of big importance for them, they were restricted in how this exclusive consumption could be outlived.

Interesting to reflect upon as well is the contradiction this creates with the earlier statements many of the respondents earlier had made, when they generally had been speaking about beer as something good because of its advantageous price in relation to other beverages such as wine. Although this statement of course was depending a lot on occupation and salary, it yet

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showed that a considerable amount of the participating consumers are willing to compromise on the price, as they know that they are getting something unique of higher quality in return, which serves a deeper purpose for them than an average beer would. There seemed to be a great desire for this uniqueness and exclusiveness as they knew that they were supporting something special, while they at the same time could display this rarity for others. Although they at times were mixing the craft beers with regular beers this did not seem to taint this otherwise very rare and exclusive consumption that was so proudly expressed. These expressions also prove that the consumers have both the time and energy to put into this product, which they also are doing, although it is seemingly not to discover what is sustainable or not.

5.2.1.3 Confronting the Major Players and Standardization

In contrast to the earlier expressions of fine-beer, good-beer and unique high-quality beer, the bigger beer producers were portrayed in a complete opposite way by the participating respondents. They were often described with less favorable words and often with almost degrading definitions when put in relation to craft beer:

… On the brewery of Gotland or the brewery of Visby, they have a picture of "raukar" to really push for that it's a local island and a beer that's produced in small-scale, it's not the McDonald's of beers.
− Tom, 25

In accordance to the reasoning of Tom where "standard" beer was referred to as the McDonald's of beers, Ella added another view of how this kind of beer is something of low engrossment, where you do not care particularly much, that it is a beer you choose without thinking:

… I think that it for us have become a "wear and tear" beer, you know the beer you just drink without reflecting, it should be green. It should be a Carlsberg or Tuborg, because it has always been that way at home with my family and with my partner's family.
− Ella, 25

Giant, mass producer, standard-beer and shelf-filling beer are other terms that many of the respondents often used to describe and refer to the other kinds of beer which they often meant was the opposite to craft beer. These were in strong contrasts to craft beer, which they often portrayed as something small-scaled and local, where the brewing process, as well as the used ingredients were described as more of the natural kind. The negative associations of which they used to describe the "average" beer generated a sense of resistance even if it was not directly expressed by all respondents. A resistance towards a commodity that was standardized, regular and always tasted the same, wherever and whenever it was consumed. What was it then that made a regular beer so much less worth and of so low significance in comparison to craft beer? It is partially explained with the sensory experience, uniqueness and high quality that the craft beer could give, which seemingly was not something present in regular beers. It was also something that became evident when some respondents compared the different types of beer. Although, when comparing, it was noticeable that the lines between them was blurry and really hard to define for many of the respondents. Even though it was tough, a few participators revealed some really interesting differences between the craft beer and the regular beer:

...the important thing is that it feels small, not that it actually is small. Like with the Omnipollo beer: it might as well be Sweden's most sold beer, yet I find it exciting since they have avoided to profile themselves as giants.
– Tom, 25

Just like Tom expressed there is something with the small-scale that creates associations with craftsmanship and craft beer. Many seemed to have opinions about that breweries cannot be to big and produce to large quantities in order to be called a craft beer brewery, since this implicates that the only purpose of producing is earning money. But as stated by some, there are producers at the border between the two, that profile themselves as smaller and unique, which creates a stronger feeling of craftsmanship, even though they are not particularly small, just like Tom mentioned. Also, William expressed similar thoughts:

But then there are people that are good at portraying themselves as much smaller than they actually are – like Mikkeller for example. If you look at their bottles you would think they're created by someone sitting in a basement, which is not the case.
– William, 31

Thereby, the difference between the breweries seems instead to be existing in the fact that they all the time keep trying to rethink what is offered in the beer, which continuously provides new sensations. That their primary purpose with the production does not lay in earning as much money as possible, but rather in using the best raw materials to create the best craft possible, is what appeals to the consumers and what they see in craft beer. During one of the interviews, one respondent argued about a brewery that seemed to be in-between craft beer and its opposite, in the following way:

I think it's because they also are developing, because they do new things all the time that are small-scale and that it's progressing. They haven't just made a good beer in a craft beer-format and then leaned back on that success and started mass-producing it and stopped being creative for example.
– Oliver, 30

In resemblance to what Oliver said, but with less focus on small-scale, Henry stated that craft beer seems to be more about taste and flavor rather than business and size:

I'd say that craft beer is... smaller scale, but not necessarily, but there you have more focus on the raw ingredients rather that the profit. Even though profit always is a factor, you wouldn't like to work for free. But it feels like… that generally, it's rather about taste than about business. That's how I would define it.
– Henry, 30

Being small and having a focus on experience rather than profit and business seems to be what creates meaning among the consumers, which makes them prefer to consume craft beer instead of another standardized type. Again, this shows how they do not like supporting something of big scale since it automatically creates a sense of standardization in both recipes and processes, a feeling of the producer only trying to earn as much money as possible.

Another interesting observation and insight that was noted during the interviews, which also is linked to this resistance against larger breweries, is how a more forgiving and forbearing attitude is expressed towards the small-scaled breweries. This became evident when a

respondent compared two different kinds of beer (The brewery of Lund and the Brooklyn Brewery):

I would value Lundabryggeriet higher, but I wouldn't expect as much from that since I know that it's from Lund, while I know that this is from Brooklyn. I don't know if it's because… a little bit of this… if the one from Lund only would have been a little bit worse than the one from Brooklyn, I would still value the one from Lund much more since it's from here. Subconsciously I guess, I don't know…

– Daniel, 24

When being bigger and standardized in the processes, more is expected from the brewery. The beer should taste the same as it always has, and since the brewery is of larger scale it should always be able to deliver a beer that is approved. If the brewery is smaller, the batches will differ, and different might not always mean better and superior, however that is fine because it is small. The respondents pay more regards and respect to the small-scaled breweries since they are the underdogs, but in one way that is also what makes them so unique and special, which thus can be the reason for this type of consumption being more meaningful and of higher involvement for them.

In conclusion, Tom ultimately expressed in words what this chapter is trying to give into account - how craft beer creates a resistance against what is big, standardized and consistent - when he is asked what feelings the consumption of craft beer generates:

It's still a bit punk. It's… I actually believe that this whole trend with pale ale, IPA, American styled and so on, they are a bit of a… Yes, but a "reaction" against the large brewing giants. It's also, what to say, we have a "do-it-yourself" culture that's growing bigger, that… or I don't know, haha, I don't know that much, but I believe that it's a little bit of ethics against consumption, it has become a "fashion-thing". It's quite easy to connect IPA to the hipster-trend somehow. And I guess that's a reaction against consumption, against mass production.

– Tom, 25

In addition to the resistance of what is standardized, the respondents also seem to follow the trend of caring more about ethics and authenticity in society, which has a lot of focus right now. Maybe it is the insistent do-it-yourself culture that makes them take more responsibility

to fit in, or it actually is the enlightenment from this trend that has made them care more by heart. Either way, the confrontation of the markets major players is something that clearly affects their consumption of this product where aspects of both social and economic sustainability seems to be included.

5.2.2 The Veiled Reasons of Being a Craft Beer Consumer

After going through all the material generated from the executed interviews it became evident that there were two types of consumers participating in this study: those who thought, but also expressed, themselves very rational when it came to their consumption, and those who more deeply expressed what it was that emotionally appealed to them with the phenomena of craft beer. It also became clear that many of them were surprised by the fact that they never before had reflected upon this deep interest that all of them shared. Thereby could their deeper meanings of consuming this product sometimes be very difficult to identify, but besides the above-mentioned, that was clearly expressed by themselves, there gradually was a theme of characterization entering the interviews regarding these products, although it was not explicitly expressed by the respondents.

5.2.2.1 Strengthening of Character by Having Superior Knowledge and Sophisticated Taste

One example of these concealed meanings of consuming craft beer was for instance that there seemed to be a strengthening of character regarding the knowledge that the respondents had about the craft beer product in comparison to others. Thus, this was something that many of the participating consumers expressed contentment around:

It's simply a "geekery" where you take a leap from those who have no clue about what they're consuming. You want to distance yourself, do basically the opposite from what they're doing, do something else, and almost declare them as idiots. Bottom line: they are doing it wrong, they don't know.
– Tom, 25

As craft beer devotees, they stand out as a group from everybody else consuming beer. They seem to think that they have a clearer character in comparison to everybody else consuming it and since there is a deeper meaning behind this kind of consumption, there is also a strong

content about knowing so much more than everybody else. That was something that Tom also was happy to openly declare:

If I'm out with my friend, there's this image of me knowing beer. And I'm happy to maintain this by choosing a more difficult beer.
– Tom, 25

As Tom seems to feel an increased strengthening in character by having this expert-knowledge in comparison to other people, it is also something he feels better about showing off to other people in his surroundings. He also explained how he enjoys competing with those sharing this superior knowledge:

... especially those who brew their own beer, like my brother who also started to brew his own beer. That's a bit of a competition of course. You want to outperform the others with the same competence!
– Tom, 25

By showing knowledge as well as competing with others about it, Tom is able to assert himself and feel better about what he knows and prove a deeper understanding for the beverage of beer. The possibility to become an expert in the area and to be enforced with special knowledge, which is not shared by everybody, becomes very desirable for the individuals interested in the beverage. Ella stated a more quiet and humble contentment around the fact that she knows more about beer than others in her surrounding, and pushed on the fact that the knowledge provides her more possibilities to herself enjoy and understand the flavors of what she is eating and drinking:

It's fun to understand flavors, and to understand the combination of flavors with food; I could never do that before. And I find it much more fun to do it with beer rather than wine, I cannot feel the nuances the same way with wine, which more people actually can.
– Ella, 25

Also, that Ella has a talent of feeling the different nuances in beer rather than wine gives her a talent that is not shared by as many people as there is with wine, which further strengthens her character of being special and unique.

Further, there seemed to be a perception of that the knowledge and interest that the respondents have for craft beer proves a more developed sense for beverages that runs deeper than when one starts to drink alcoholic beverages. The remaining non-craft beer consuming people seem to have stopped when it comes to that development, which leave them standing "where we all began":

No but it feels a bit more fun to try something new, to not go for the same beer as you did when you were… like 18 years old. Then you just wanted the cheapest one.
− Adam, 25

Adam implied that the first years of drinking is all about to getting as much beer as possible, to the cheapest price. This seems to be something that William agreed with while saying that some consumers are "stuck" in this mindset, even though they are older:

Because you always have different friends, some friends haven't been keeping up and aren't at all interested about what the beer taste like, they're still stuck and counting alcohol per SEK. You might as well fill them up with Norrlands beer instead of anything else.
− William, 31

When asking why he thinks some of his friends are in that way, he argued that this product is not valued high enough in their eyes, that they see it as a low involvement product, only something helping them to get intoxicated and nothing else. Thereby their interest in beer ends up accordingly.

Just like earlier expressions have been demonstrating, these also showcase a character-building superiority when it comes to knowledge, which proves that the respondents look at themselves as more mature, not expressed by themselves though, but still proven by their expressions. Everyone wants to be more special and unique in one way or another, and by being able to achieve remarkable knowledge in this product that can be both enjoyed by themselves and showcased for others, this strengthens their character as a beer aficionado. Ultimately this generates a very high involvement among the consumers, since it provides them more meaning. Although this "geekery" proves that these are superior and knowledged consumers, one might question how superior and knowledged they really are when looking at

their expertise of sustainability within the area. It is interesting how there can be so much contentment around the know-how these consumers have, while they still do not seem to have an idea of how to consume the product sustainably, even though this is really important to them.

5.2.2.2 Establishment of Character by Belonging to a Group

The strengthening of character that the superior craft beer knowledge provides the responding consumers, also seems to create a belonging to a certain group, when listening to how many of the respondents expressed themselves. There seemed to be a longing of belonging to this group of connoisseurs where the interest was more enjoyed when shared and where it also could be developed further. Accordingly, Ella explained how she would like to enjoy the craft beer beverage:

... with other people that I know share the same interest, that you can share the experience with. My partner doesn't have a super refined taste haha. So, when I ask him to taste certain beer he just says "Ew, that is sour" or "Ew, that is bitter".

– Ella, 25

What Ella expressed also makes a distinct division between "the others" and "us", where "the others" do not share the same refined and developed taste as well as the same sophistication, as the group of craft beer devotees of which Ella belongs to have. This was something that clearly helped the establishment of character among the respondents. Additionally, it seems like some of the respondents think that there is a special image of the ultimate craft beer drinker that becomes desirable after entering the world of beer beverages and becoming an aficionado, which some of them in a way openly expressed that they sought inclusion and affinity from:

I don't know… You see how I look with beard and everything, I guess I'm caught into to it in some way, it's… I do not know. I think the whole world is quite appealing for… like when I started, in the twenties.

– Oliver, 30

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Belonging to a group like this and sharing this interest was according to Oliver of importance when entering the twenties - when one already has had the debut of drinking, but then was allowed to go explore all of what Systembolaget offers. The reason why, could possibly be that consumers by this age have started to develop who they are as a person, but sometimes also struggle with where to belong. Then, when finding this product that they can involve themselves so highly in, it becomes a way of expressing oneself as a person. Oliver further explained what he finds so appealing with the craft beer culture:

If I go to a beer-fair 50% of the people attending will look like me. So of course, you're caught into it somehow. But I still think that I got stuck in it since it's so developed… or I mean because they all the time develop and renew themselves. You get to try new things that's not tried otherwise. I mean that didn't happen before. Before the craft beer breweries entered the market, you couldn't try so many different beers. So, I think that has had a big impact. And then also that it's a quiet relaxed culture in comparison to many others. And I think that has a bit to do with… I mean they're not particularly smart always, these craft beer brewers. Just like I mentioned before they'll maybe push a little more hop into the beer just because it's good, even though it will cost them more and that just proves that you're more relaxed haha.

– Oliver, 30

Tom, in accordance with Oliver, expressed how and why he admires one of Sweden's most well-known craft beer brewers so much:

… Omnipollo is a Swedish brewery and are one of the toughest. They lead this indie-league right now. They have a bar on Södermalm in Stockholm at Mosebacke which is like "hipster-mecka". So that's what I'm talking about here, it's that type of beer I preferably drink and the one I'd try to look at and copy when I brew my own beer, what they are doing etcetera.

– Tom, 25

The appearance, the know-how, the superiority, the variety and the relaxed culture of craft beer are just a few ways to describe how craft beer connoisseurs seems very appealing and admirable for the responding aficionados that wants to achieve this level of superiority themselves. The uniqueness of the beer is contagious, and this is thereby something the respondents also see in themselves when consuming it and attaining knowledge about it. Just

like the craft beer stands out in the shelves at Systembolaget among the other beers, some respondents also emphasize on the impact this brings when they are consuming the beer in different contexts. This is expressed in the following quote by Tom:

Because I can absolutely go and buy an IPA at Systembolaget that will cost like SEK 60. And then you go like "NICE!". Do you know the phenomena… sunk cost – something? It's that the more money you invest in something, the more you will enjoy it. And it also says itself a bit; how unique isn't a beer that will cost you SEK 60? There will be no one else sitting with that beer at the pre-party.
– Tom, 25

For Tom it is all about the money he puts in to it, by spending this extra money on the beer, that it feels more exclusive, which also makes him part of a more exclusive group in comparison to everyone else at the party. Meanwhile, other participating consumers expressed that they just think that it feels more fun to drink this kind of beer in comparison to others, such as Carlsberg. Carl adds that the looks of the beer also makes the feeling of consuming the product much better:

… But… That it just stands out. It doesn't have to be a certain type or a certain logo on it. But I think it's nicer when they put more thought into the labels as well. Since that's also a part of you sitting and holding it… simply put it looks much nicer.
– Carl, 28

By holding an exciting and nice designed bottle of beer, Carl feels that he stands out more in the different contexts he is situated in. Parallels can be drawn between this and how they dress or chose their clothes, to reflect their identity outwards. The respondents find ways to express their character and who they are in a way, even though this is never something that is explicitly expressed by them. In fact, for some of them this is maybe not the case as these discussions and images is not expressed by all of them. However, for some, consuming this unique and special beer are creating meaning to their character and belonging to a group, of which many desires to belong when knowing what this kind of beverage is and what it can provide.

These quotes show hints of how consumers' meanings of craft beer go beyond what they often relate to taste, even if this by the majority of the participators is the first thing mentioned when talking about the product. Although taste and flavor for them many times are the primary aspect of choosing a beverage, there are many other aspects that permeate the choice of this kind of beer - that can be found in and around their discussions of this product, that they are so highly involved in. What makes this kind of beer so special and unique to them is now proven to be something that cannot be understood at the first glance, but exists underlying in consumers' way of explaining and expressing themselves, where portrayal of character plays an essential part and where meanings of different sustainability aspects also is hidden. Although it is interesting to reflect upon the reason for why all aspects of sustainability does not have an essential role among these craft beer aficionados, if it is something of which they substantially care about, especially from an environmental aspect.

6. Analysis and Discussion

This chapter of analysis and discussion will make a deeper reflection of the empirical findings that has been presented, where they also are put in context, related and compared to the theoretical approach that has been the foundation for this research. The chapter starts of with evaluating the first part of the empirical material which covers the consumers meanings of sustainability and thereafter it continues to evaluate the meanings of engagement and identity connected to consumer culture theory. Furthermore, in the different evaluation fields there are under-chapters to create clear distinctions for the reader when the analysis goes into a new area of discussion. The last part of this chapter completes the analysis with a finalising discussion with reflections of the most important outtakes from what has been determining for the conclusion and theoretical contribution of this study.

6.1 Evaluating the Meanings of Sustainability

Just like previous studies have shown that consumers express concerns about the environment (Abdulrazak & Quoquab, 2018) and have an uprising demand for eco-labeled and recyclable products (Thøgersen, 2010), this is similar to what this study's respondents show act and behavior of. The respondents of this study claimed and expressed concerns about the environment, and that they take this aspect of sustainability into consideration in their consumption habits. It was seen that the consumers' actions often were spread over different consumption practices, such as that they rarely fly anymore, that they make conscious choices of the meat they buy – if they even buy meat anymore – and that it is crucial for many of them that the meat is locally produced in Sweden due to concerns of the environment, ethics and their own health. This type of consumer behavior has also been confirmed in earlier studies, Banbury, Stienrock and Subrahmanyan's (2012) study proved what was similar to what is seen in this study; the respondents described how a sustainable lifestyle had started to decrease their overall consumption and purchases, for example by using more sustainable choices of transportation, living smaller, reducing their use of single use products and increasing their consumption of organically produced goods, etcetera (Banbury et al., 2012).

Moreover, just like the earlier study point towards, this study's respondents often expressed views from an environmental perspective when they talked about consuming sustainable,

what a sustainable behavior implies, and why it is important to have a sustainable approach in life. As mentioned, food was something that often came up to discussion during the interviews when the respondents talked about what kind of sustainable actions they do, for example as consuming locally produced meat or organic food. Contradictory though, was that sustainability, and especially from an environmental point of view, did not seem to play an important role in their consumption of craft beer. Rather the opposite, as some came to question what a sustainable choice of craft beer even would be - which also was discussed from an environmental perspective.

6.1.1 Attitude-Behavior Gap Among Conscious Consumers

Further, it became quite clear that there was a difference between how the respondents talked about sustainability in relation to their overall consumption and lifestyle, and how they actually seemed to consume craft beer. Thus, a gap appeared between what they say and how their actions and behavior actually are. This can be likened with what Nicholls and Lee (2006) call the attitude-behavior gap, which symbolizes the gap between the respondents' word and actions. Boulstridge and Carrigan (2000) describe this gap as the difference between consumers indicated concern and awareness for sustainable consumption, in contrast to the actual consumer behavior, which often is inconsistent in relation to the pro-sustainable attitude.

Some respondents clarified this gap themselves and meant that the distinction between meanings of sustainability in relation to consumption of, for example, food versus consumption of beer, lies in their habits and regularity of consumption. First of all, they consume food to a much larger extent, which creates the assumption that this have a bigger impact on the environment. Further, as they consume food more regularly and thereby encounter information about the food industry more often, information about what choices and ways of consuming that are sustainable or not, are more graspable for the respondents. Thus, they have another level of knowledge and insight within this industry, which ease their habits and choices of being a sustainable consumer of everyday groceries.

6.1.2 All about Routines and Habits

Deci and Ryan (2008) highlight this as well, that a consumer's act of a sustainable behavior is dependent on the context, meanwhile Thøgersen (2010) raises that it is also dependent on the individual. Thøgersen (2010) speaks, among other things, about how patterns of a sustainable consumption behavior may be obstructed by strong routines and habits, just as discussed above in relation to this study's respondents. Further, Thøgersen (2010) implies that besides routines and habits, a lack of resources such as expertise, capital and time may obstruct sustainable consumption.

What was apparent when conducting and analyzing the empirical material for this study, was that a majority of the respondents think there is a lack of information about the subject of sustainability in relation to craft beer, and even about beer in general. They showed confusion and, just what Thøgersen (2010) talk about, absence of expertise, which seems to affect the respondents in the way of that they first and foremost do not know what a sustainable choice of beer would be. Thereby, they do not take sustainability into consideration in this consumption practice, since they do not know how to do it, and so it requires effort and time from the respondents to dig into the subject.

That the aspect of capital would be something that restricts consumers' motivation to sustainable consumption (Thøgersen, 2010) is somewhat of a two-fold answer in this study. Craft beer itself is a more expensive product in comparison to "regular beer", though sometimes just a few SEK more, and other times about SEK 100 more. Also, this higher price seems to become sort of an "asset" for the product, as this appears to give the craft beer more quality and status in the eyes of the consumers. Obviously, these respondents are willing to pay and do pay a higher price for this kind of beer, but at the same time they all noted that it costs them more, which also restricts some of them to how much of this kind they can and will buy. Many said that they often mix craft beer with regular beer when shopping at Systembolaget – both due to the aspect of flavor, such as IPA, APA and Sour beer being much more flavorsome, which thereby makes it hard to drink several of them, but also due to the economic aspect. What is found here is a product that is highly engaging and something they keep engage in until their resources inhibits them or until they cannot drink it anymore because of the "heaviness" of the drink. The capital as well as the intent of buying the craft beer is there. What is not, however, is an intent to buy the craft beer product because it is

more environmentally sustainable, while the other aspects of sustainability seem to subconsciously exist in the uniqueness, which they actually are paying more for. One therefore might ask, if it is the environmental aspect that is top of mind for them, how can it not be valued more when it comes to the resources that is put into the product? One might argue that this lays in their mentioned justifications for why this is not given a thought in the first hand.

Thøgersen (2010) means that time also is something that can be a cause for absence of sustainable consumption behavior. Though, this does not really seem to be the case in this study, rather the opposite; respondents expressed that they put a lot of time into their interest of craft beer. This was shown in practices such as looking for new releases at Systembolaget's webpage, going to Belgium only for trying one specific type of beer, queue for hours to get a hold of a limited Christmas edition beer, going on beer conventions and brew beer at home. Nevertheless, an absence of time is not the cause for why these respondents do not take sustainability, at least not consciously environmental ones, into consideration in relation to craft beer. Although, as they mentioned that they often experience a lack of knowledge, they also implied that it would require them effort and time to dig into this area, to deepen their knowledge, which they did not seem to be willing to do. One respondent explicitly claimed that it is sometimes not comfortable to know everything about how one should do or act, since that could require more effort and might make the practice of consumption uncomfortable. This can be seen in what Carrigan and Attalla (2001) say about that the level of effort for making an ethical choice, requires that price, quality, time and comfort is as feasible as making a choice of a more unethical or unsustainable character, otherwise there is a risk that the ethical choice becomes deprioritized. Thus, it can be seen as more of a question of what one is willing to spend time on, rather than if there actually is time to spend. That in turn can be compared to what Thøgersen and Ölander (2002) say about how we chose to prioritize our values, which determine our behavior and thereby also our pro-sustainable behavior.

Nevertheless, the respondents claim that they do prioritize and value a sustainable living and consumption in general, however they do not consume or express a strong willingness to consume beer in a sustainable way, at least not from an environmental perspective. The cause for this contradictory behavior seems to be lying in what the respondents think is worth to scarify to maintain a sustainable behavior. When it comes to consumption of food, the

respondents possess more knowledge and information and they imply that this consumption activity has a larger sustainable impact, at least from what they know about it environmentally, since they consume food to a greater extent. Thereby, this behavior of consumption becomes higher prioritized in comparison to craft beer. The lower interest of consuming craft beer in an environmentally sustainable way, might be because the respondents realize that they would need to put more time and effort into consuming sustainably, which is something they do not seem to value enough. Also, as there in general seems to be a lack of information and knowledge in how to make sustainable choices of beer, consumers might not feel as guilty to consume beer in a more unsustainable way. This since the surrounding probably would not question one's choice in the same way, which can be the risk when it comes to other well discussed areas of consumption in relation to sustainability. In fact, guilt is something that Bray et al. (2010) points out as an important and driving factor behind ethical consumption behavior. Though, this does not seem to be a driving factor among the respondents to consume craft beer. Both because they explicitly said that sustainability is not a cause for their choice of craft beer, but also due to the just mentioned fact that there seems to be very few that even have the knowledge to judge one's choice of beer.

6.1.3 The Ambiguity of Sustainability

Furthermore, the respondents expressed that they think the concept of craft beer itself is very broad and almost a bit diffuse, and that it is difficult to find a clear definition of it. This could have something to do with that there are different dimensions of sustainability and a sustainable consumer behavior, such as the environmental, economic and social perspective (Belz & Peattie, 2012; Phipps et al., 2013). The ambiguity of the concept makes it challenging for consumers to know what to prioritize. Sometimes, what is sustainable in an environmental aspect, might not be sustainable from an economic or social aspect. Though, what could guide the consumers through this jungle of concepts and direct them to a sustainable path, considering their beer consumption, are directions from the society and media. For example, the respondents talked about how they have changed their use of transportation methods, that they are flying and using the car less, and that they instead are trying to take the bus or bike to places, with the aim to lower their greenhouse gases. Thus, they are aware of that green gases are affecting the environment in a bad way, and further that transports such as aircraft and car causes greater green gas emissions, which is the reason for

them taking the bike, bus or train instead when it is possible. Nevertheless, when considering their practice of transportation, a sustainable focus seems to be from an environmental perspective, because of what society have indoctrinated the consumers with.

Moreover, another example is that the respondents claimed to choose locally produced meat from Sweden instead of foreign meat, both due to environmental and health causes. This has also been well discussed within the meat industry, society and media, where there is almost a "wrong and right" behavior of meat consumption in Sweden nowadays. The focus of making a sustainable choice here, seems to lie in an environmental but also in an ethical and social aspect. Hence, the way the society and media guide the consumers towards what kind of behavior they should have, which sustainable aspect the norm tells one to focus on, and what the consequences are of their consumption behavior, we believe affects the consumers' way of behaving. Fishbein and Ajzen (1980) argue that, besides the individual attitude, social norms have an effect on how the consumers will perform sustainable actions, and as there seems to be an absence of norms regarding craft beer in relation to sustainability, there is not something that either guides or pushes the consumers to act in a certain way. It simply seems to become too difficult and uncomfortable to behave sustainably when it requires effort from the consumers, in that sense of finding out what a sustainable behavior even means and implies in a craft beer context, and further taking these actions into account in their own consumption.

Finally, we think that the attitude-behavior gap that is noticeable in this study, partly has an underlying cause in that the industry itself has not come to the point of highlighting sustainable consumption - yet. The beer industry in general does not highlight or raise the question of sustainability, which does not give the consumers a guiding direction of what sustainable aspect they either should turn to, nor does it push them to become a sustainable consumer. We think that is why environmental sustainability is not considered a driving force for consumption of craft beer. However, we see that both a social and economic aspect of sustainability sometimes is taken into consideration, although often subconsciously since these aspects always are not expressed in contexts of which sustainability is discussed. Maybe, taking social and economic sustainability into consideration when consuming craft beer makes one become a more conscious consumer, without having to put a lot of time and effort into gathering complementing information about the environmental aspect of beer. But also, there seems to be passivity among the consumers regarding the meanings of

sustainability in this product that becomes a bit confusing as it is a product of very high engagement, but also since sustainability is something of which they all seem to care about very much.

6.2 Evaluating the Meanings of Engagement and Identity

Flavor and taste were mentioned immediately as one decisive aspect of the fun, exciting and engaging part in the consumption of craft beer, and as discussions proceeded it was understood that this reasoning went past the strictly rational. When choosing to use words such as "explorative", "innovative" and "experimental", as well as when the respondents were explaining how much time and effort that were put into exploring the sensational types of beer and finding the right tailored flavor for just them, it immediately went inline with the type of consumption behavior that Laaksonen (2010) would term as high involvement. This since Laaksonen (2010) means that high involvement products are something of which a lot of physical and mental energy are put, which these respondents prove to be doing.

Although, this was already expected since the aim of the study was to reach out to craft beer devotees and aficionados, which put more than the effort needed for it to be called high involvement consumption, but it was favoring to also have this confirmed by the reasoning of the consumers during the interviews. Comparing this type of consumers to the FCB-grid exemplified above (Figure 2), there is however an inconsistency. The exemplified products taken forward by Ratchford (1987) do not confirm to the thoughts of the participating consumers in this study.

As the FCB-grid might suggest beer being something satisfactory (of high feeling and low involvement), the discussions of the respondents instead suggest that craft beer is affective (of high feeling and high involvement). Thereby, the respondents of this study do not have the same involvement as the average calculated consumer would have, in accordance to Ratchfords (1987) evolvement of the FCB-grid. Instead this proves, as argued by many different authors within the research of involvement, that the degree of involvement depends on the characteristics of the consumer in relation to the commodity (Laaksonen, 2010; Zaichkowsky, 1985, Wulf et al., 2001; Mittal, 1995; Kong and Zhang, 2013). Thereby it is rightful to assume that craft beer in this context, among these aficionados, is a highly involving product.

6.2.1 Practicing Hedonism

Continuing on the consumers explanations and associations to craft beer, where they referred to it as "magical" as well as "complex", and when making interpretations of their feelings when drinking craft beer with descriptions like "new cut grass" and "sunset" - the move down the emotional and irrational path continues. The high importance and bigger purpose of craft beer which were discussed in the empirical findings, are thereby found as similarities to the thoughts of Campbell, who stresses that the modern consumer practices hedonism, where imaginative illusions are attached to objects and then experienced through these (Sassatelli, 2007). Campbell (1987) poses that real consumption practices only is a product of the hedonistic practice, which goes on inside the mind of the consumer. Therefore, when having this in mind, while looking at the respondents explanations of magic, sunset and newly cut grass when consuming craft beer, their expressions makes perfect sense.

While the imaginative descriptions fit the ones of Campbell (1987), one can question if this theory and finding correspond entirely, since Campbell means that objects are let go of after the imaginations and dreams of them are experienced, while the consumption of craft beer just continues for these respondents. The interviewees explained how they keep on searching for new and exciting experiences and explore flavors continuously, where there is a thrill of trying something that has not been tried by everybody - thereby the product of craft beer is not let go of after experienced. On the other hand, their continual search for new and interesting flavors can be interpreted as a way of letting go of past experienced craft beer, enabling them to get new and interesting encounters. As Campbell's (1987) theory does not specify if the object that is experienced, and later let go of, can be the same type of object over and over again it is up for interpretation, and in this case, there might be a deviation between theory and practice.

Moreover, according to Campbell (1987) these hedonistic practices are strictly individual as they occur only in the consciousness of the consumers, which also seem to be the case with these respondents, as the feelings are differently described by all of them. There is therefore not any direct influence from either society or other groups when it comes to the hedonistic consumption. The hedonistic descriptions made by the consumers showed resemblance to the thoughts of Campbell (1987), although they showed no distinct signs of meanings of sustainability in this high involvement product. This theory thereby proves a truth in that the

consumers do not reflect particularly about the aspects of sustainability, even if it is something of which they care about. Maybe a reason for why is that this practice is purely individual and not influenced by the outer world and its rationality. Perhaps the world of hedonism blocks out all of the rational and responsible thinking as it is so imaginative and abstract. Although meanings of sustainability were not found here, it does not mean that they do not exist. As the respondents communicated other value expressions apart from these during the interviews, sustainability was brought up in other ways.

6.2.2 The Effect of Conspicuous Consumption

In contestation to seeing these value expressions as something strictly individual, without mixing in any thoughts and opinions of others - the respondents' communicated satisfaction from the uniqueness and visible higher quality in craft beer, which tells us something apart from what Campbell (1987) poses. Parting from the imaginary that occurs in the minds of individuals when practicing hedonism and instead seeing consumption as a process of social status enhancement, is an example of what by Veblen (1994, orig. 1899) is described as conspicuous consumption. Here, consumption occurs on an individual level as well, but it requires other people to see it for the consumer to be fully satisfied and to reach the purpose of the practice.

As the respondents explained how they enjoy that craft beer becomes more exclusive, unique and of higher quality through the processes of which it is produced and how it is portrayed, it seems to become something that also is more desirable to them since it also can improve their social position. Although, this is not something that is explicitly communicated by the consumers themselves, but the recurrent theme of wanting and enjoying something unique and exclusive, which thereby is more expensive, indicates that this is the case. It proves that this is a consumption habit of which they like to indulge, since it differentiates them from others.

Throughout the different empirical themes there are also signs of that the knowledge the respondents have make them superior from a social point of view, as well as that they enjoy spending more money on this type of high involvement product, as it makes them stand out. All of which proves that what Sassatelli (2007) has conducted from the thoughts of Veblen (1994, orig. 1899) is true. That products of high cost that demonstrates a strong economy for

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the surrounding, ultimately brings the consumer an experienced better reputation and higher social status, at least in the perception of the consumer. However, according to how Veblen (1994, orig. 1899) chooses to express it himself, it seems like the type of consumer he describes, exclusively see this type of consumption as a way of claiming your social position, which is not the sole purpose of these respondents high involvement consumption of craft beer.

As accounted for in the empirical review, the consumers make so much more of their craft beer consumption than only social status. For example, as contributing factors to the uniqueness and exclusiveness of the product, they mention the time, energy and thought that are put into the product by the brewing craftsmen, which ultimately makes it something of higher value. Though, this higher value is not just monetary, and status related for them, instead the consumption of this product seems to serve an even deeper purpose. This deeper purpose has somewhat to do with the character enhancing superior craft beer knowledge the consumers have in comparison to others, but that is only one side of it. Again, the meanings of sustainability here are vague and not that clear, although hints of social sustainability can be seen in how the respondents define what it is behind the process of craft beer that makes it so special and unique. Even though the respondents claim that their general perception of sustainability is not an essential part of their consumption of craft beer, the upcoming and finalizing paragraphs tells us the contrary.

6.2.3 Resisting Through Consumption

Throughout the interviews of this study, it was noted that the respondents participating continuously showed a disapproval towards the most well-known beers that are manufactured by the biggest breweries on the market - which are the opposite to craft beer. This resistance like behavior goes well inline with the concept of McDonaldization that was initiated by Ritzer (1993), which is an opposition to the globalization and mass production that the modern consumption society has brought the world. Sassatelli (2007) means that this has generated many new ways of consumption, one of which Sassatelli and Scott (2001) exemplify with the consumption of natural, local and traditional products. This goes well in hand with the expressions made by the respondents who often mentioned that craft beer was signified as being local, as well as containing natural produce and high quality.

Moreover, the principles of McDonaldization; efficiency, predictability, calculability and control (Ritzer, 1993), seemed to be something very unattractive for the craft beer consumers. These principles indicate a focus on profit rather than anything else, and the respondents recurrently mentioned that craft beer does not necessarily always have to be small-scaled and local in order to be called craft beer. Although the producers need to focus on experience and the rethinking of their offer continuously, for them to be seen as genuine. The favoring of different and unusual flavors may therefore, on a higher level, be seen as an unintentional sustainability resistance against the standardization we are experiencing in today's society. As this may be seen as a social aspect of sustainability, it may as well be related to economic sustainability as there could be a wish for the market being sustainable through continuously offering consumers new experiences of flavor.

This type of behavior is something the respondents practice on an individual level, although while discussing this intensively, one respondent reveals thoughts of it being part of a bigger political resistance, which Micheletti (2003) implicated as a result of consumers alternative consumption practices. As the respondent continues, he suggests it being a part of one big do-it-yourself revolution and a trend which everyone chooses to follow. If this is the case, this also becomes an act of being part of a societal change. As this cannot be rejected, what can be concluded is that the consumers choose to take a stand against the major players, either under the influence of the societal trend or as they genuinely do not like the effect of standardization and mass production. This ultimately proves that the product of craft beer has more meanings of sustainability, even though they do not include all sustainable aspects and are not explicitly expressed by the consumers.

6.2.4 Connoisseurship and De-commoditization

Going further down the individual meanings of this consumption practice, while keeping the theme of resistance, Goffman (1974) sees consumption as a procedure of de-commoditization where products, through knowledge, are reframed and keyed to something of a deeper personal meaning, which is exemplified in the last empirical chapter. The deeper meaning behind craft beer consumption is there seen in the way that the consumers clearly express their superior knowledge and belonging to a group as something advantageous, characteristicistic and identity wise. This is well aligned with Hämäläinen and Moisander's (2007) as well as Slater's (1997) thoughts of consumer culture theory, as this proves that

creation of character and identity is an important aspect of consumption. Although, according to the theories of Goffman, these meanings have more advantages than only enhancing character. Knowledge is also an act of resistance, since the de-commoditization protects the consumers from becoming commodities themselves, where they are enslaved by their own consumption (Goffman, 1974). Through the de-commoditization they instead become sovereigns of the market as they are the ones in control (Goffman, 1974).

Sassatelli (2007) suggests that this is associated to connoisseurship, where immense knowledge and proficiency in the commodity generates an ability of seeing past the utility of the product and instead experience it on a new creatively abstract level. This connoisseurship can be compared to the type of "aficionado behavior" that is exemplified repeatedly in the empirical material. As seen there, the consumers assert their greater knowledge and taste as something superior over having the basic knowledge you started with when first entering the field of alcoholic beverages.

The de-commoditization is something executed individually, whereby the knowledge and taste sophistication is something that generates satisfaction on an individual level, where the consumers generally is not influenced by others. Although as the consumers' afficionado-knowledge ultimately creates a connection to the deeply desired group of connoisseurs, this practice also generate satisfaction within a group where influence can be made. However, this influence today seems to be coming from what the connoisseurs are doing, and whether or not sustainability is important to them is not known, but if looking at Sassatelli's (2007) theory of connoisseurship as an act of sustainability - it is.

The theories of Goffman (1974) and Sassatelli (2007), as well as the other mentioned theories within consumer culture theory, seems to fit the empirical findings of craft beer quite well, although all can be questioned in one way or another. Moreover, when taking the majority of the empirical findings into account, the different meanings of identity and engagement, that reflect none or very few connections to the different sustainable aspects covered in this study, seem to be the ones that predominantly exists among these consumers. What can be seen in the creation of meanings behind the consumer cultural theories, is that the rational aspects of economic and social sustainability sometimes are allowed to burst through the emotional focus of which these theories have. But even though this is the case, these consumers are mostly concerned with the emotional and imaginative part in their craft beer consumption,

where practices of hedonism and conspicuous consumption seem to have the biggest effect on them.

Evidently, the consumers' response of craft beer consumption proves that it serves a bigger purpose than to only quench their thirst, but how big of a role meaning of sustainability have in this consumption practice can although be questioned.

6.3 The Outcome of Consumer Meanings in the Craft Beer Product

In summary, have the consumer perceptions of sustainability and craft beer, as well as the existing theory within sustainability, consumer culture theory and high involvement, enabled answers to the questions of which have been asked since the start of this research study. The Millennial craft beer aficionados seem to express their sustainable concerns predominantly through different environmental aspects when the topic is brought to their attention and further discussed on a general level. The environment is what is top of mind when asked about sustainability and it is also something that is cared for greatly in the consumers everyday life according to themselves. Thereby when considering sustainability in general, the social and economical aspects are not something that is touched upon particularly by the consumers.

The time that is put into the craft beer product, as well as the value and need the beer aficionados express for it, confirms that it evidently is a high involvement product like the ones of which is described by Laaksonen (2010). Thereby, the consumers are substantially engaged and involved in the product of craft beer, while at the same time holding great care for the environment, where the environmental factors are mentioned especially. Moreover, are the meanings of which they connect their high involvement consumption of craft beer, mainly focused around the strengthening of character and identity through consuming a craft of high quality and uniqueness, where meanings of sustainability have quite small focus. The consumption of this highly qualitative and unique crafted product thereby enables the Millennial consumers to the individual practices of hedonism and conspicuous consumption. This makes us understand what meanings lays behind the craft beer product for these consumers and also why they are so highly involved in it.

However, the meanings of craft beer do not correspond particularly much with those of which the Millennial craft beer aficionados have for sustainability. When going further into what creates the uniqueness and high quality in the meanings that the consumers have for craft beer, there are recurrent themes of local, small-scale, craftsmanship, taste and flavor - many of which correspond and can be connected to the aspects of social and economic sustainability.

Thereby do the meanings and aspects of sustainability, that is connected to the product of craft beer, not implicate a big role in the consumers general perception of sustainability. All because their main focus and meanings of sustainability revolves around the environmental aspects according to themselves. This ultimately proves that there is an attitude-behavior gap (Boulstridge & Carrigan, 2000) existing as well among the Millennial craft beer aficionados, which is supported by a number of justifications of which they mention as reasons for why sustainability cannot be cared for when consuming craft beer.

In conclusion, there are meanings of both social and economic sustainability aspects in the Millennial craft beer aficionado's high involvement consumption of craft beer. However, are they not the aspects of sustainability of which these consumers care for the most, thereby do they not matter to the same extent of which could have been assumed initially. What matters and engage these Millennial craft beer aficionados more and seem to have a stronger meaning within their high involvement consumption of craft beer, is the creation of identity and the imaginative experiences that are encountered through hedonism and conspicuous consumption.

7. Conclusion

The following chapter will conclude and summarize the main insights and outtakes that can be seen after conducting this qualitative research study, based on the ten in-depth interviews that was made with the Millennial consumer group of craft beer aficionados. First, the theoretical contributions of this study are given an account for and further on, the managerial implications of the discovered insights will be disclosed. The final chapter of further research will declare what can be done in forthcoming studies within the same research topic in order to advance the knowledge and understanding even more within the area of sustainability, consumer culture theory and high involvement.

7.1 Theoretical Contributions

This study ultimately reveals that the three different aspects of sustainability; environmental, social and economical (Belz & Peattie, 2012; Phipps et al., 2013), are quite inconsistent and does not play an equally important role among consumers' meanings of sustainability in high involvement products. Thereby are they not something that exists naturally through consumers high involvement consumption. What is top of mind amongst the consumers, is often the aspect of environment when talking about sustainability in general, and even though this is something of great importance and which the consumers care greatly about, it is not something which affects the consumption of high involvement.

What is confirmed and further understood from previous research is that the attitude-behavior gap (Boulstridge & Carrigan, 2000) is not only present in low involvement products, but also when consuming high involvement products. This allegedly contests what is implied by Coşkun, Vocino and Polonsky's (2017) study of involvement - that if low involvement products have low considerations of sustainability, then the opposite would be the case for high involvement products - which this study proves it not being. Among these consumers there are a passivity around their expressions of sustainability and within this inertia to act upon what they care about, there is a number of justifications for why sustainability is not cared for and affecting the high involvement consumption, especially from the environmental perspective.

These justifications contain explanations alike those mentioned by Thøgersen (2010), which further confirms his theories and expands them to involve highly engaging products as well.

The justifications and reasons for the obstructed sustainable behavior is excused with Thøgersen's (2010) mentioned elements of routines and habits, as well as resources such as expertise, capital and time. All of which can be assessed as insufficient explanations. The reason why is because time is available as the consumers evidently already put a lot of time in their interest of the high involvement product, and capital is there since they basically already put all monetary resources possible on this interest. Finally, the expertise can be debatable, but as these consumers often are alleged enthusiasts in the products of which they consume, their excuses of not finding the sustainable information needed about it is unlikely to be true in the sustainability focused society of which we live in today.

The arguments and justifications from the consumers are many and just like they express an ambiguity in the concept of sustainability, there also seems to be a paradox in the reasoning of themselves. Putting the facts together, one would think that consumers that engages and involves highly in a product, while at the same time caring a lot about the environment, ultimately would practice high involvement consumption in a sustainable way - which is not the case, according to the consumers themselves. The reason for why this is, also seems to have appeared in this conducted study.

While many of the mentioned theories in consumer culture theory, in one way or another, can fit into the consumption of high involvement products, all in combination are taken into account when reflecting about this. While the theories of connoisseurship (Sassatelli, 2007) and de-commoditization (Goffman, 1974) seem to reflect consumers subconscious sustainability actions in some of the aspects of sustainability, the theory of hedonism (Campbell, 1987) and conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 1994, orig. 1899) reflect no consumer actions of sustainability, in any of the three aspects. As a middle way, there is an expressed consumer resistance in the form of alternative consumption practices (Micheletti, 2003), which mostly reflect the social and economical aspect of sustainability, that is quite conscious among the consumers. But looking past the conscious and subconscious meanings of sustainability in these practices, as neither reflect the consumers' important aspect of the environment nor the other sustainability aspects, what is left is the practices of hedonism (Campbell, 1987) and conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 1994, orig. 1899). Although, these theories reflect no meanings of sustainability and we argue it is because of these consumer cultural practices, that sustainability does not get the role it should have among the sustainability conscious consumers.

Looking at and combining the theories of sustainability and the ones of consumer culture theory, there is a divergence between the two. Sustainability, and environment especially, seem to be something more pragmatic and rational, in comparison to hedonism and conspicuous consumption that is more related to pleasure, indulgence, status and identity. As a new contribution to what already exists within theories of high involvement, is that the emotional and pleasure seeking acts of hedonism and conspicuous consumption within consumer culture theory, is something which repress the rational and pragmatic aspects of sustainability. So even though sustainability is greatly cared for by the consumers, the needs for the emotional and abstract pleasures strikes higher, which leaves the environmental aspect of sustainability irrelevant in their consumption of highly involving products. Viewing the consumers through the theories of sustainability and consumer culture theory separately, a lot of the findings in high involvement consumption seems to fit into the theories. Although, when viewing them together with high involvement consumption, the meanings that are generated through consumer cultural consumption practices, suppress the ones of sustainability as accounted for above.

Maybe the answer for why consumers can be so highly involved in something while caring highly about sustainability, and yet not consider sustainability when consuming a high involvement product, lies in the experience of the product. The reason for why this is, could be that the consumers see this experience as something purely emotional and individual, where the rules and effect of rationality from the outer world do not matter. Perhaps the practice of hedonism and conspicuous consumption, which make a big part of high involvement products, blocks out and inhibits all responsible and rational thinking, as it is so imaginative and abstract. With this as a base, we can assume that hedonism as well as conspicuous consumption, seem to be pushing away thoughts of sustainability. The experience in the imaginative within this seems to be more important than sustainability, which results in the consumers' justifications of everything that is complicated with consuming high involvement products sustainable.

This leaves us concluding that the experience and the individual act of hedonism and conspicuous consumption, when consuming high involvement products, are more important for these consumers than any sustainable act or aspect of sustainability. As a result, are all meanings of environmental sustainability left out from this consumption practice and get no

room in the consumption of high involvement products because of its pragmatism and rationality. Left are the consumer meanings which seems to be mostly connected to the social and economic aspects of sustainability. Although, these can be strongly dependant on the characteristics of product that is looked at, which thereby might mean that meanings regarding the social and economic aspects of sustainability is not persistent in all high involvement consumption.

Lastly, when taking the FCB-grid (Laaksonen, 2010) into consideration, the new insights gained from this study might have given a new contribution to this model, when the element of sustainability is treated. As assumed in the analysis and confirmed by this conclusion - a high involvement product, like the one treated in this research, is something that could be assessed as an affective product in the FCB-grid (Laaksonen, 2010), which further implies it being of high involvement and much feeling. Moreover, when taking all concluding thoughts into consideration, one can assume that products of where sustainability would be taken into more account than what is done in this case, would fit in under the informative products in the FCB-grid (Laaksonen, 2010). Thereby, still being something of high involvement since this is something greatly cared for by the consumer, but the product at hand then needs to be something that creates less emotional meanings and feelings, where the rational side of the consumer can take the upper hand. Thus, high involvement products should be of the informative kind to reflect the sustainable care of consumers, and not the affective - which is the case for high involvement products among different devotees.

As this is a limited study with a restricted amount of participators, as well as with a special type of consumers, the transferability of these findings can be difficult. But as this is a qualitative study the findings do not have to be particularly transferable. What can be concluded about the Millennial consumer group is that their meanings of sustainability when consuming high involvement products mostly concern the aspect of social and economical sustainability. Although, these can be connected to the characteristics of the high involvement product looked at and may vary between different products. Concerns of environmental sustainability are not something that is touched upon at all in their high involvement consumption, since the emotional aspects of this practice outweigh the rational of where environmental sustainability is included. What this study then might have told us, is that even though a high care of the environment exists among the Millennial consumer group, it does

not mean that all aspects of the environment automatically is cared about when consuming high involvement products.

7.2 Managerial Implications

As these found insights might change the prerequisites for the practitioners that is in contact with this product on a daily basis, it is important to reflect upon and mention what this might imply for their future work.

For practitioners within the craft beer industry this might mean that if wanting to take a sustainable standpoint in the marketing and promotion of their product, where Millenials in particularly is targeted, a focus on social and economical sustainability should be held. But if not aiming for a sustainable approach of their product, they should definitely try to give their products more design features and focus on characteristics in marketing which is related to more imaginative and fantasy-like association, in order to get the Millennial beer aficionado hooked on their product.

Generally, it seems to be highly relevant for businesses, and in particular for marketers in today's environmentally focused society, to know whether or not they are working with something that is defined as a high involvement product by the majority of their consumers. This in order to know what characteristics to push and promote for their product, especially if it is a product with sustainable features. As sustainability is so tremendously discussed today, and in particular valued by Millenials, one might think that emphasizing on sustainable characteristics on a product would make it more popular - which in this study does not seem to be the case.

The insight is quite odd, considering our societal problems today, but as this is the case, practitioners wanting to emphasize on sustainable products characteristics might need to promote their products in other ways than how they are doing this today. The topic of sustainability needs to become more discussed among the connoisseurs of which the aficionados are inspired by. The information about sustainability needs to be more easily obtained and more straightforward, as well as it needs to become a central part of the high involvement product in order to be considered. Maybe then it can become something that the sustainability caring consumers actually act more upon when consuming high involvement

products. However, competing with the subconscious emotional values and practices of consumers is tough, and implementing thoughts of sustainability in these are really hard since they are individual hedonistic practices within the minds of the consumer. To be able to do this with these types of products, there needs to be a connection between the rational and the emotional aspects of consumption. There needs to be emotional advantages that connects to those who are rational, in the same way that the emotional characteristics of craft beer also are rational advantages from the aspect of social and economical sustainability.

7.3 Future Research

Along the way of doing this research, and when finished, a few new interesting ideas came up of what could have been done differently or done further in order to get other insights or outcomes from the study. One example of future research is that it could be interesting to have a selection of both beer aficionados, or even connoisseurs, as well as consumers that do not see craft beer as anything special at all. The probable difference between how these two types of respondents express meanings and thoughts about craft beer would be interesting to take part of. There could be a lot of new insights discovered if analyzing what these differences could imply, which further could provide a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of what the differences among these contrasting consumers are based on.

A second idea might be to do the study in a totally different region. This study is based in the region of Skåne and it seems like this area, including all parts of Greater Copenhagen, have many of the favorable local and small breweries that the consumers seem to value very much. Maybe this could be something that contributes people to consume more craft beer, or affect their meanings of it, as they may have a social connection to the brewery in someway. Thereby, by looking for consumers in other regions outside the ones covered in this study, their meanings of sustainability might look different since they would not have as many personal connections to the brewery. This could result in less favoring of the breweries in terms of social and economic sustainability aspects, but it might as well not. As the social relation often seemed to play a significant difference for the consumers in the craft beer, the result of removing this would be interesting to see.

As a last idea for future research it would have been interesting to see what the result of a study like this would be if the high involvement product of craft beer was exchanged to another product. One can wonder if sustainability from an environmental perspective neither would play a part in another type of high involvement product, or if it would be different. If it was the same with the two different products it would be interesting to see if the products have any common factors that creates this effect, which has not been found here. Or if different - it would be interesting to see what it is that could generate this difference.

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Appendix 1 - Interview Guide

Explain for the interviewee how we define craft beer in this study:

We have a broad definition of craft beer. A pilot study that we did showed that craft beer was associated with microbrewed and locally produced beer, experimental and rich flavors, as well as heritage and tradition. Though, we are interested in what your definitions of the craft beer product and concept are. There are no right or wrong answers.

Ethics

- Inform the interviewees about the purpose of this interview: only inform them about the purpose of investigating their associations and thoughts about craft beer.

Tell them their ethical rights; Inform them that they are going to be anonymous in the study and ask if it is okay to record the interview. They can walk away or stop the interview whenever they want, and if we are going to use a quote from them, we will inform them about this as well.

1. **Information about the Interviewee**

- Tell us about yourself; Age, civil state, occupation, educational background, what you enjoy doing during your spare time?

2. **Consumption of Beer**

   Generally, about beer:
- What do you like about beer?

- What factors in beer are important to you?

   About craft beer:
- What is craft beer for you? How do you define it?

- What would you say is difference between craft beer and "regular" beer?

- What is it in craft beer that appeals to you?

- When did your craft beer interest start? For how many years have you been a "beer aficionado"?

- Why do you buy craft beer? What motivates you to buy craft beer?

- Which values affect you when it comes to your consumption of craft beer and why?

- What type of (craft) beer do you like? Describe what you value with these.
   - What "traits" do you value/prefer when it comes to drinking beer?

- When do you drink craft beer, and why/how?
- How would you explain the feeling of consuming craft beer?

- What was the most recently craft beer you drank?
   - Why did you choose that particular beer?

- At times where you don't choose to drink craft beer, what is it that obstructs you in this choice?

- How does a visit at Systembolaget look like? Tell us about your last buy at Systemet.
    - What are you willing to pay for a beer?
    - What is that makes you willing to pay that for a craft beer?

- What is important to you when you go out on a pub for a beer with your friends or choose a beer at restaurant for your food?

- Show the different types of beer that are brought with to the interview (Appendix 2). Ask interviewees what they associate to and think of regarding the different types.

Further, there are some associations of craft beer to sustainability, which we also are interested in. Therefore, we would like to ask you some questions about…

3. Sustainability and Consumption Habits

- What is sustainability for you in a craft beer context?
    - How do you define sustainability? And do you value this?

- Do you think that you have the ability in terms of knowledge, habits and resources to make sustainable choices when you are buying craft beer?

- Do you think you have the opportunity in terms of availability and supply to make sustainable choices when buying craft beer?

- What is it that makes sustainable choices of craft beer more convenient for you?
    - Do you think that there is a lack of these options today?

- Do you think about sustainability in the same when you buy groceries as when you buy beer/craft beer?

- What do these expressions imply according to you and how are they valued by you, for example taking craft beer into consideration?

    - Local
    - Small-scale
    - Heritage/Tradition
    - Ethical consumption
    - Craft

- Which of these expressions do you associate the most with sustainability and why do you think that is?

Is there anything else you would like to address?

Appendix 2 - Interview Examples of Beer

Lundabryggeriet

Råå

Norrlands Ljus

Omnipollo

Brooklyn

Weissbier

Appendix 3 - List of respondents

Name (pseudonym)	Gender	Year of birth	Civil State	Education	Profession	Length of Interview
Tom	Male	1994	Single	Business & Economics + System Science	Student/Part-time working	1h 08 min
Lisa	Female	1995	Single	Industrial Engineering	Student	58 min
Ella	Female	1994	Partner	Industrial Engineering	Student	51 min
Daniel	Male	1995	Girlfriend	Industrial Design	Student	48 min
Oliver	Male	1989	Partner	Risk Management & Chemical Engineering	Risk Engineer	45 min
Adam	Male	1994	Partner	Service Management - Logistics	Student	1h 00 min
George	Male	1991	Partner	Road & Water Engineering	Engineers Constructor	1h 07 min
William	Male	1988	Married	Product Development & Design	Product developer	1h 03 min
Carl	Male	1991	Partner	Business & Economics	Student/Part-time working	1h 04 min
Henry	Male	1988	Single	Engineering	Roastmaster	1h 05 min