Crafting identities: how do consumers in the craft beer subculture construct their identities?

A qualitative study on the Dutch craft beer consumer

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Abstract

Title:	Crafting identities: how do consumers in craft beer subculture construct their identities?
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Keywords:	consumer identity, subculture, craft beer consumption, craft beer
Thesis Purpose:	The purpose was to find out how consumers in craft beer subculture construct their identities.
Methodology:	A relativist stance combined with a social constructionist stance and a qualitative study with an abductive approach was used to gain deeper understanding of craft beer consumers in order to assign them to consumer categories in a synthesized model.
Theoretical Perspective:	Literature on Consumer Culture Theory, consumer identity and consumer (sub)culture has been analysed.
Empirical Data:	The empirical data consists of 35 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with craft beer consumers in The Netherlands.
Conclusion:	Craft beer consumers can be divided into the categories casuals, socials, adventurers, elitists, devotees and experts and were also found to have multiple identities at once.

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1 Introduction

As Belk (1988) greatly stated, we are what we consume, which means as much as that in the postmodern world where we live in, consumers build their identity through consumption. This so-called process of identity construction is a phenomenon that has attracted lots of attention to researchers in the Consumer Culture Theory field, and several studies have examined identity construction through consumption of food and both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. Interestingly, the researchers found that the topic of identity construction through consumption of craft beer remains relatively unexplored, despite the immense rise of craft beer consumption over the past years worldwide, hence this is why this will be the subject of this thesis. This chapter will first shine more light on the rise of craft beer consumption, as well as familiarizing the reader with the constructs of the postmodern consumer and identity construction through consumption, as a basic understanding of these topics is essential to be able to grasp this thesis. It then follows with a problematization of past research, explaining the contribution of this study to the research field. Next, the research purpose, research question and research context are presented. The chapter then ends with an outline of the thesis.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The rise of craft beer consumption

Between 1900 and 1980, the number of breweries worldwide declined dramatically. Breweries were merged, taken over by multinationals, or simply stopped producing (Garavaglia & Swinnen, 2017). This trend was mainly caused by technological automation of production processes and the development of advanced distribution networks, which led to greater economies of scale, in which bigger companies thrived the best (Adams, 2006; Gourvish, 1994). A homogenization in terms of beer taste was the result, in an attempt to

appeal to as many consumers as possible. In some countries only a handful of breweries remained. But from 1980 until now there has been a revolution in the beer market where new, small breweries started entering the market, offering and experimenting with new beer styles: the rise of craft beer consumption (Cabras & Higgins, 2016; Garavaglia & Swinnen, 2017).

Terms like microbrewery and craft brewery are used to describe breweries that "recently" started brewing "different" types of beer on a "small" scale, but there is no general definition to distinguish (Garavaglia & Swinnen, 2017). Some characteristics that describe craft beer breweries are innovation in taste, use of non-traditional ingredients and production processes, high involvement in communities and a high level of integrity and independence (Baiano, 2020; American Brewers Association, 2022). The most popular craft beer style is Pale Ale, under which multiple subcategories can be defined like New England IPA, Hazy IPA and Session IPA (Baiano, 2020). The American Brewers Association was one of the first organizations that proposed general guidelines for defining a craft brewery: it is small: maximum production of 6 million barrels per year, and independent: less than 25% is owned by an alcohol industry member that is not a craft brewer (American Brewers Association, 2022). This definition is used in other countries as well, but naturally, in different-sized countries different measures to define "small" are used (Garavaglia & Swinnen, 2017).

The factors that influenced the rise of craft beer consumption have been described by Garavaglia & Swinnen (2017). Firstly, a demand for variety in beer taste grew among consumers as a reaction to the homogenization in the market. The consumers simply wanted something different and new breweries started to fill this gap. Secondly, there was a growing interest in local and sustainable products as aversion against globalization was on the rise. Thirdly, the increase in income across industrialized countries after World War II stimulated a demand for more expensive products that offered more variety. Furthermore, consumer associations aiming for more diversity in the beer landscape were created in several countries which stimulated the first small breweries that entered the craft beer market. Good examples are CAMRA in the UK and PINT in The Netherlands. These associations also stimulated homebrewing, which resulted in more entrepreneurs entering the market. As the craft beer movement started to pick up, the availability of technical equipment for small-scale brewing increased, and more parties such as banks were willing to facilitate start-up capital, which further accelerated the growth of the industry.

Over the past years the craft beer industry has especially flourished in the UK, the Netherlands, Italy and the US (see appendix X), but also in Denmark, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Canada, Australia and Brazil craft beers have won popularity among consumers (Koch & Sauerbronn, 2018; Schnell & Reese, 2014; Swinnen & Emmers, 2017). The craft beer industry finds itself in a highly competitive and fast growing market. Linchpin (2022) has expressed that according to research the craft beer industry is becoming a saturated market in many countries, and therefore the question that should be asked by craft breweries is how to get the attention of consumers and stand out against competition. Additionally, big multinational beer companies are joining in on the craft beer trend by acquiring small craft breweries and by brewing their own craft style beers, making the fight over market share in craft beer consumption even more challenging (Cabras & Higgins, 2016).

In today's time, craft beer is mostly consumed by people between the age of 21 and 40 (Long et al., 2018; Murray & O'Neill, 2012). As craft beers are usually more expensive in comparison to pilsner or lagers, it is no surprise that several studies have found that consumers with a high income are more likely to purchase craft beer (Baiano, 2020; Lerro, Marotta & Nazzaro, 2020). In addition, research found that education level is also a factor in craft beer consumption as consumers are usually well educated (Lerro et al., 2020; Rivaroli, Calvo-Porral & Spadoni, 2022). It appears that more men than women consume craft beer; roughly 60% of craft beer consumers are men opposed to 40% of women. There is however an apparent shift where a clear increase in female craft beer consumers is measured over time, indicating that such beers are becoming more popular among women (Long, Velikova & Dodd, 2018).

1.1.2 The postmodern consumer and consumer identity

The origin of the contemporary state of consumer identity has been related to postmodernism by many researchers (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Belk, 1988; Gabriel & Lang, 2006; Holt, 2002; Larsen & Patterson, 2018). Postmodernism is a reaction to modernism which started in the 20th century, roughly after World War II (Featherstone, 1991; Firat & Venkatesh, 1995). Postmodern consumerism can be best described through the conditions fragmentation and decenteredness: consumers started redefining their identity in a fragmented and decentered landscape (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995). Consumption became more than just consuming

something to fulfill a need: it became a way of expressing identity. Consumers became aware of the possible selves they can be and started building different identities and selves, trying to relate to different subcultures and ideas (Featherstone, 1991). People started building on both individual and collective identity projects, where examples of collective identity projects are subcultures (Kozinets, 2001; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995), tribes (Goulding et al., 2013) and brand communities (Schau et al., 2009). In the postmodern world where we live in, consumers have become producers of their self-images and own (hyper)realities, in which the possibilities for consumers are endless. This shift in attitude towards consumption, labelled by Firat & Venkatesh (1995) as the reenchantment of consumption, has shaped our consumption society to what it is today and explains the way companies market their products. Postmodernist consumerism has lead society to a constant search for new fashions, styles, sensations and experiences (Featherstone, 1991). It opened up endless possibilities for companies to develop and market products in such a way that they can be used in the consumers' processes of identity construction (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995).

1.2   Problematization

Research within Consumer Culture Theory has been looking into consumer identity and identity construction, which have been extensively studied by, to name a few; Arnould & Thompson (2005), Gabriel & Lang (2006), Holt (2002) and Larsen & Patterson (2018). The main thought where researchers agree on is that in postmodern and Western society, consumers use cultural capital and consumption to construct their own unique identities. These processes, where consumers constantly build on, are called consumer identity projects, which can be both individual and collective (Arnould & Thompson 2005; Belk, 1988; Bocock, 1993). Furthermore, research within Consumer Culture Theory has been done on how consumers utilize subcultures as a specific form of collective identity projects, which are fueled by group members' commonalities (Bozilovic, 2006), and often find their origin in deviance from the mainstream when people fail to reach their aspirations (Cohen, 1955) or due to misalignment between culture and the social system (Merton, 1967).

Topics like identity construction, self-expression and consumption meanings have been extensively studied in relation to food and beverages (Fischler, 1988; Gabaccia, 1998; Levy,

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1981; Lupton, 1996 & Southerton, 2001; Smith et al., 2008). More relevant to the topic of this thesis, there are some works that talk about identity in wine and champagne consumption practices (Charters et al., 2022; Guy, 2002; Rokka, 2017), which have found to show similar concepts as in the practice of craft beer consumption (Thurnell-Read, 2018).

Even more specifically, there are some studies to be found that specifically look into the phenomenon of craft beer consumption, although the total amount of these is limited. Most of these studies have been connecting topics around the consumer's identity to the craft beer consumption phenomenon. So did Taylor & DiPietro (2017) who determined the motivational factors of American consumers to microbrewery taprooms and defined two different segments, Carvalho et al. (2018) who analyzed characteristics, habits and motivational factors for consumption of Brazilian craft beer consumers and Long et al. (2018) who defined different craft beer consumer segments through analyzing South/Mid-West American craft beer consumers. A study that relates identity to craft beer in a different way is the work of Thurnell-Read (2018) who studied consumption of Real Ale in the UK and how middle class consumers use the consumption practices of craft beer to elevate their social status.

Other than relating to the topic of identity, researchers have been looking at craft beer consumption from the point of (sub)culture, such as Koch & Sauerbronn (2018) who analyzed Brazilian craft beer consumers and defined different consumer categories, and Filho et al. (2021) who analyzed the consumer culture of craft beer and identified different categories by looking at different levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioural engagement.

Despite the presence of the studies mentioned above, the constructs of the craft beer consumer's identity and subcultures in craft beer consumption still remain relatively unexplored, as the amount of studies to be found is limited. Furthermore, almost all studies draw certain categories among craft beer consumers, but they rarely agree with each other on how to separate them exactly. This overall lack of exploration and general consensus can be seen as a first research gap.

Additionally, as Shields (1992) and Maffesoli (1996) reason, postmodern consumers have become fluid, unstable and able to wear multiple 'hats' at the same time, which they refer to as multiple identifications. However, the topic of multiple identifications in relation to craft beer consumption remains practically unexplored. The lack of academic attention regarding

the topic of multiple identification in craft beer consumption can therefore be seen as a second and more specific research gap.

In order to bridge these research gaps, we should form a better understanding on topics like consumer identity, subcultures and multiple identification in craft beer consumption, hence it is valuable to further study the subculture of craft beer consumers and how craft beer consumption is part of the consumer's identity.

1.3   Research Purpose

The overall purpose of this thesis is to further investigate the phenomenon of craft beer consumption in an attempt to broaden our understanding about the phenomenon and bridge the theoretical research gaps. In particular, we want to understand how craft beer can be part of a consumer's identity and how they can be separated in different consumer categories. We are therefore interested in prior research on craft beer consumers and identity narratives from the consumers about their craft beer consumption, their preferences and motivations. We also want to better understand how different consumers are part of the craft beer subculture and what set of roles they perform in this subculture. We are therefore interested in the consumer's narratives that tell us more about the craft beer subculture. One of the concepts we want to highlight is that of multiple identification, as the earlier described research gap points out that there is a lack of attention regarding this topic.

With this thesis, we aim to contribute to the field of Consumer Culture Theory by adding on to the literature stream of consumer identity and the literature stream of consumer subculture.

1.4   Research Question

Following from the research purpose, the following research question has been drawn:

How do consumers in craft beer subculture construct their identities?

1.5   Research Context

The theoretical research context of this thesis is limited to the topics of consumer identity and subculture in relation to craft beer consumption. The thesis will focus on the intersection of these topics.

Furthermore, the empirical research context is limited to the Dutch craft beer consumers. This choice has been made because The Netherlands is among those countries where microbreweries are flourishing and craft beer consumption is popular among consumers. For ages, the Netherlands has been among the top countries that continuously shape the craft beer industry (inter)nationally (Van Gelder, 2021). The Netherlands therefore lends itself as an excellent research context as the possibilities to find respondents are widely present and there is a high chance to recognize different types of craft beer consumers, from low involved craft beer drinkers to high involved drinkers.

Finally, the empirical research context is limited to millennials, as several studies found that craft beer is mainly consumed by people between the age of 21 and 40 (Long et al., 2018; Murray & O'Neill, 2012).

1.6   Outline of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five main parts. The first chapter is the introduction. The second chapter consists of a literature review and theoretical review of appropriate literature and theories in the field of consumer identity and (sub)culture of consumption. Chapter 3 will then follow with a description of the methodology used to perform the study. In chapter 4, the findings of the study will be analysed in detail. Finally, in chapter 5, the conclusions and discussion will be presented.

2 Literature Review

As this study takes its approach from the field of Consumer Culture Theory, this research field will shortly be introduced, after which the two literature streams within Consumer Culture Theory will be explored that are most relevant for this study. Firstly, this study looks into the literature stream of consumer identity, and mainly into consumer identity projects and how they become constructed. This is relevant for this study because before trying to understand how craft beer consumption could be part of a consumer's identity, it is essential to familiarize with the broad definitions and theories. Secondly, this study looks into the literature stream of consumer culture or marketplace culture, and especially into consumer subcultures and how they originate. This is relevant for this study as the aim is to analyze craft beer consumption from a subcultural perspective, hence it is essential to study the broad definitions and theories first. Finally, this study looks into earlier academic research on the craft beer subculture of consumption. This is relevant for this study as it serves to derive a synthesized model from the analysis of these studies, that will later form the departure point for the empirical research.

2.1 Consumer Culture Theory

The term Consumer Culture Theory was coined by Arnould & Thompson (2005) who in their study looked back on 20 years of consumer culture research. They defined Consumer Culture Theory as the field of study in which the sociocultural, experiential, symbolic, and ideological aspects within consumption are being addressed. Consumer Culture Theory "refers to a family of theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings." (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p.868). Consumer Culture Theory aims to understand matters such as complex exchange relationships like gift giving, any consumption practices and possession practices, and how consumption is used in role and identity projects and transitions. Arnould & Thompson (2005) defined four

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main themes within the Consumer Culture Theory field, to help categorizing further building of research. These four main themes are consumer identity projects, marketplace cultures, sociohistoric patterning of consumption, and mass-mediated marketplace ideologies and consumer's interpretive strategies.

2.2   Consumer Identity

2.2.1 Consumer Identity

The first relevant literature stream for this study is that of consumer identity projects. To better be able to understand the concepts within this literature stream, a quick glance on the broader concept of consumer identity is first needed. One definition of identity within Consumer Culture Theory is that of Schouten (1991), who defines identity as "the cognitive and affective understanding of who and what we are" (p. 413). Another definition of consumer identity that was intended to be used interdisciplinary is that of Reed et al. (2012), who define consumer identity as "any category label to which a consumer self-associates either by choice or endowment" (p. 8). In this definition, a category label has to be seen as a clear, representing image that tells something about what a person with that category label looks like, thinks, feels and does (Oyserman, 2009). Whether some of these category labels are more stable, like mother or friend, some might be more impermanent, unstable in nature, like lawyer or Mac-user (one might switch to a different profession or brand).

While researchers like Reed et al. (2012) pose that a consumer has to actively initiate the process of acquiring a certain category label before it can be reckoned to his identity, researchers like Ibarra & Barbulescu (2010) pose that identities are not only the meanings a person attaches to himself, but also the meanings attached to a person by others. To relate to the topic of craft beer, one could see or develop seeing himself as a craft beer drinker, but others could also label someone as a craft beer drinker.

Much research uses the concept of self in relation to identity. According to Belk (1988), the concepts of self and identity can be used interchangeably. Sirgy (1982) defines 'self' by posing a multidimensional definition: he separates actual self, which is how one sees himself, ideal self, which is who one wants to be, social self, which is how one presents himself to

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others, and ideal social self, which is how one wants others to see him. Similar concepts have been posed by Belk (1988), who talks about extended self but also about ideal self. Belk claims that all human consumption contributes to the extended self. He explains that we are what we consume; whatever we consume becomes a part of our consumer identity. In addition to that, he also explains that what is consumed can become part of a group identity; it will then express the belongings of a group (Belk, 1988).

Identity is not static, it is rather hybrid or fluid. This is often referred to as multiple identity. Within Consumer Culture Theory, Belk (1988) talks about multiple levels of self: individual self, family self, community self and group self. Schau & Gilly (2003) looked into self-representation on digital platforms where consumers build multiple identities that are together forming the integrated self. A recent study by Saint Clair & Forehand (2020) looked into the concept of the many-faced consumer and how he balances multiple identities. Consumers own multiple identities and try to create harmony or cohesion between those identities in different situations, while keeping an overall sense of themselves. This need of making sense of one selves identity has also been recognized by Arnould & Thompson (2005). Apart from the field of Consumer Culture Theory, many researchers within social psychology also looked into how individuals can have multiple identities. Hogg, Terry & White (1995) found that based on the groups or circles an individual finds himself in a certain moment, the identity role will be different. To relate to the topic of craft beer, one's identity role could be different depending on the situation or the people he would be with.

2.2.2 Consumer Identity Projects

As mentioned in the first chapter, in postmodern society, Western consumers are widely considered to be identity-seekers, who feel the need to construct and conform their own unique identities, which process is being facilitated through consumption (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Gabriel & Lang, 2006; Holt, 2002; Larsen & Patterson, 2018). These processes of building on certain identities are usually defined as consumer identity projects. Consumer identity projects are usually regarded to be goal driven (Mick & Buhl 1992; Schau & Gilly, 2003), although these goals might be vague or unexpressed by the consumer (Arnould & Price 1993; Thompson & Tambyah, 1999). Often, the road towards these goals is

marked by conflicts and contradictions, in which the consumer uses consumption as a tool to negotiate their position (Mick & Fournier, 1998; Thompson & Tambyah, 1999).

Even consumers that are not in the position to fully partake in society express their identity by building on – or in better words, holding on to - consumer identity projects, which points out that consumer identity construction processes are deeply rooted into modern day Western consumption society. So have homeless women been studied by Hill (1991) and Hill and Stamey (1990), who found that even if people are homeless, they still hold on to certain possessions that express a part of their identity, such as photos from family or things that remind them about a better past, which serves them as inspiration for a better future. Similar findings were drawn from a study on drug addicts (Hirschmann, 1992).

Consumers work on multiple identity projects at the same time and they use consumption as a way to build on these projects (Arnould & Thompson 2005; Belk, 1988). This building process is often referred to as identity work, which Ibarra & Barbulescu (2010) define as "people's engagement in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening, or revising their identities" (p. 137). This identity work can take place through a various range of activities, for example through showcasing products or items in one's home or in one's outfit (Belk, 1988), or simply by consuming a certain product and talking about it, which is often referred to as identity talk (Schouten, 1991). Furthermore, people also experiment with different identities in different settings, to see if a certain identity would be something they would want to work towards (Ibarra, 1999). Within the field of sociology, Snow & Machalek (1984) recognize identity work taking place through seeking association or disassociation with certain people or groups. To relate to the topic of craft beer, identity work could be experimenting with craft beer, developing an interest in craft beer, trying to associate with other craft beer drinkers and talking about craft beer with other people.

Consumer products have a striking ability to facilitate as building blocks for consumer identity projects, which is because of the cultural meanings that are attached to products (Solomon, 1983; Belk, 1988). These cultural meanings become generated by society but can be influenced by companies, for example with advertisement strategies. Through product characteristics, packaging, promotion, price, or association with a certain lifestyle, products can become symbols that consumers can match with their identity projects (Sirgy, 1982). To relate to the topic of craft beer, one could for example be attracted by the distinctive taste,

packaging design, advertisements or the lifestyle of typical craft beer consumers if any of those fit the identity projects one is building on. More about cultural meanings attached to products will follow in chapter 2.3.1, where we elaborate on consumer culture.

Consumers partake in a various range of identity projects, which can both be individual or collective in nature (Larsen & Patterson, 2018). Individual identity projects are dominant in the Western consumption society as this society is mainly driven by individualization and individuality (Jafari & Goulding, 2008). This is manifested in the narrative of freedom of choice, through which consumers are able to pursue fulfillment, autonomy and freedom (Bauman, 1988). However, collective identity projects also play an important part in identity construction as people have a basic need for sameness, communal affiliation and support to give them ballast (Holt, 2002; Thompson & Tambyah, 1999). Collective identity projects can take shape in brand communities (Schau et al., 2009), consumer tribes (Goulding et al., 2013) and subcultures (Kozinets, 2001; Schouten & McAlexander 1995). As mentioned in the introduction, craft beer consumption has priorly been researched as an example of subculture. Hence, collective identity projects that take shape in the form of subcultures are most interesting to this study and this topic will therefore be further addressed in chapter 2.3.2.

2.3   Consumer Culture and Subculture

2.3.1 Consumer Culture

Before trying to understand subculture, one has to understand consumer culture in general. Consumer culture is a socio-economic phenomenon induced by the market that describes the relationship between the public (consumers) and the products or services they consume. It consists of consumers' sets of established collective opinions, experiences, meanings and behaviours towards commercial goods and services and helps them to guide through them (Maholtra & Arnould, 2022; Westjohn, Singh & Magnusson, 2012). It finds a place in postmodernism, in which the public finds meaning behind the symbolism of products and where identity is derived from sources such as purchased goods (material culture) as they have symbolic meaning (Saltik, Firat, Kutucuoglu & Tuncel, 2013; Skandalis, Byrom & Banister, 2019). Arnould & Thompson (2005) defined marketplace cultures as a separate

research stream in Consumer Culture Theory, which investigates how consumer culture is being applied in different cultural settings and how the processes of applying cultural meaning to products or services exactly work. An influential study in this field is that of McCracken (1985), who studied how cultural meaning was applied to consumer goods by the culturally constituted world in the past and how it is now being applied to consumer goods by individual consumers.

By applying cultural meaning to consumer goods, cultural capital is being created which can be acquired by consumers to build their knowledge and identities (McCracken, 1985). There are two kinds of cultural capital: general cultural capital and field-dependent cultural capital, which is cultural capital related to a subculture (Holt, 1998; Arsel & Thompson, 2011), which brings up the next topic: that of consumer subculture.

2.3.2 Consumer Subculture

Postmodern consumption intensifies the relationship between the market and community, which leads to forming subcultures within the consumer culture (Cova, 1997). Consumers engage in behaviours that lead to the 'aestheticization of social life' to add value to their identity. They assimilate a brand's style and imagery by transforming them into symbolic practices, forms of expressions and actions that are unique and considered suitable to that brand (Elliott & Davies, 2006; Williams, 2019). When these features are shared among consumers, subcultures arise, fueled by group members' commonalities which leads to a shared group identity; a subcultural identity (Kozinets, 2002; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995; Bozilovic, 2006). There are two accepted theories about the underlying motive behind the formation of subcultures that seem to overlap. A classic theory that comes from sociology is that of Cohen (1955), who states that when consumers feel they are unable to attain their coveted aspirations it leads to deviance. Consumers then start to rebel against society and form subgroups to reach certain goals. A similar definition of Hebdige (1979) has been very influential in Consumer Culture Theory: he defines subculture as "a form of resistance in which experienced contradictions and objections to this ruling ideology are obliquely represented in style" (p. 133). However, sociologist Merton (1967) has a slightly different theory: he explains that subcultures appear due to misalignment between culture and the social system. These experienced disruptions cause tension and friction which consumers

quench with deviance, resulting in them modeling and adjusting culture to fit their personal demands. What these theories have in common is that they are built upon the premise that subcultures originate from consumers experiencing a structural problem. The forming of subcultures can be seen as the consumers solution to said structural problem, to cope with the tension and friction and attempt to realize their desires. When looking at craft beer consumption through the lens of subculture, this could translate into craft beer fulfilling certain needs or desires and give symbolic meaning to consumer's identities.

2.3.3 Subculture of Craft Beer Consumption

If subcultures are the result of experienced tension and dissatisfaction, there have to be several motives present among craft beer consumers that solve some kind of tensions or dissatisfactions. Craft beer consumption has been studied through the lens of subculture by some researchers, and indeed they found different motives that fulfill certain needs that the consumers could not fulfill by consuming traditional beer styles. There are three fundamental considerations that fuel other motivational factors: "desire for more knowledge, new tasting experiences, and to move away from the mainstream beer consumption" (Gómez-Corona et al., 2016, pp. 363). Consumers do not choose to drink craft beer because of the functional attributes it provides; they choose craft beer because of symbolic meanings it has to offer, which adds to the consumer's identity. Craft beer provides an unmatched authentic identity as opposed to mainstream off-the-shelf beer (Koch & Sauerbronn, 2018). This is an important finding as it means that craft breweries have a serious advantage in comparison to mass-produced beer brands. They provide something that large mainstream beer brands do not: an authentic and unique identity. The more consumers view craft beer as part of their identity, the more involved they are, leading to experienced levels of attachment to brands and sales growth (Taylor et al., 2022).

Several studies have researched the craft beer subculture, trying to define the landscape of craft beer consumption. Each of these studies have found and defined varying consumer categories, however, the definitions are found to be quite scattered. Therefore, all found consumer categories have been analyzed and mapped by the researchers of this study into a synthesized model that covers all the consumer categories that exist within the craft beer culture (according to the analysed studies). This synthesized model, shown below as Figure

1.1, forms the departure point for the empirical study. The consumer categories have been mapped from low involvement to high involvement (left to right). The main categories that the found consumer categories have been mapped in are casuals, socials, adventurers, elitists, devotees and experts. Each category will now be further explored and substantiated.

Studies		Synthesized model of craft beer consumer categories					
		Low involvement ←------------------------------------→ High involvement					
		Casuals	Socials	Adventurers	Elitists	Devotees	Experts
	Taylor & DiPietro (2017)	Leisure experience	Subjective norms	Personal experience			
	Carvalho et al. (2018)	Pleasure drinkers	Social drinkers		Gastronomical drinkers		
	Long et al. (2018)	Preservers Tradesmen		Adventurers Conservatives		Learners	
	Koch et al. (2018)		Novices	Explorers		Enthusiasts	Specialists Homebrewers
	Filho et al. (2021)	Beginners		Adventurers	Beer snobs	Enthusiasts	Experts

Figure 1.1: Synthesized model

Casuals

The Casual consumer category exists out of consumers that have the lowest level of involvement; craft beer is not part of their identity, and they are not primarily craft beer drinkers. They do not experience deep levels of attachment towards beer brands and styles, or towards craft beer in general; they might be beginners and have little knowledge about craft beer (Filho, da Silva & Gaião, 2021). This consumer category seeks convenience: craft beer is consumed when it is easily available; they would not go out of their way to purchase craft beer and they do not care much for consumer practices and traditions related to craft beer. Members show stability in their choice and usually stick to one style of beer, for example IPA. A variety of styles and flavours is not interesting to this group; they do not feel the need to experiment and try new beers (Filho et al., 2012; Long, Velikova, Dodd & Scott-Halsell, 2018). In addition, they do not care for sustainable matters related to craft beer; for example, whether the beer brand is local or whether the ingredients are of organic locally sourced nature (Long et al., 2018). This consumer category seeks to find enjoyment, relaxation, and entertainment: craft beer offers these factors of convenience to this consumer category (Taylor & DiPietro, 2016; Taylor & DiPietro, 2017). They experience feelings of satisfaction

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and contempt when craft beer is consumed. It is a solution to fight the mundane and simply get away from the busy everyday life (Carvalho, Minim, Nascimento, Ferreira & Minim, 2018).

Socials

The Social consumer category consists of consumers who have a low level of involvement and attachment towards craft beer; they do not experience craft beer to be part of their identity and they enjoy drinking regular beer as well. However, they experience higher levels of involvement and attachment compared to the Casuals as they are likely to consume craft beer frequently with close ones (Taylor & DiPietro, 2016; Koch & Sauerbronn, 2018). Members consume craft beer because of normative influences: the social aspect is the driving factor for their craft beer consumption (Taylor & DiPietro, 2016). This means that they mainly drink craft beer in social settings, for example when they are around friends and relatives who are also drinking craft beer, or when they are invited to craft beer related activities by friends. They want to belong to a group and seek social interaction; consuming craft beer offers social approval to them (Carvalho et al., 2018; Koch & Sauerbronn, 2018). It is a solution to be part of a community or group and enjoy time with others. These consumers experience feelings of relaxation that have similar roots to why Casuals experience feelings of contempt: drinking craft beer in combination with social interaction provides a distraction from the busy everyday life (Carvalho, 2018; Taylor & DiPietro, 2017). Because of this, socials rarely drink alone, as that does not give them the incentive they are looking for (Koch & Sauerbronn, 2018). This consumer category is also likely to look for information about beer online through (social media) apps and websites, and they might look to become part of online groups related to craft beer as well. In addition, they might be interested in and follow trends within the craft beer market (Carvalho, 2018; Koch & Sauerbronn, 2018). Recommendations related to craft beer are important to these consumers as they have little knowledge about this subject, and they are especially subjective to opinions from friends and family members who are part of the Expert and Devotees subcultures. When Socials consume craft beer over a longer period, they become more familiar with styles and flavours and are likely to transition to the Adventurer consumer category (Koch & Sauerbronn, 2018).

Adventurers

The Adventurers are consumers who have a moderate level of involvement towards craft beer; they have an intrinsic interest in craft beer, and they experience levels of enjoyment when beers are consumed. They can feel that craft beer is part of their identity and do not mind putting in some extra effort to get a hold of a unique craft beer, but regular beer is also enjoyed on frequent occasions (Filho et al., 2021; Koch & Sauerbronn, 2018; Long et al., 2018). This consumer category thrives on variety; their main priority is to try new styles and tastes. While craft beer is frequently consumed, they are not stable drinkers as novelty and variety is important to this group; they are constantly looking for unique beers they have not tried before (Filho et al., 2021; Koch & Sauerbronn, 2018). Adventurers seek new experiences and are eager to discover extraordinary and authentic breweries, styles, and flavour profiles. They are somewhat interested to learn about new trends and knowledge related to craft beer, but do not actively look for knowledge about beer themselves and do not show great interest in consumer practices (Filho et al., 2021; Taylor & DiPietro, 2016). Aesthetics are important to this group (how cans or bottles are designed) and limited-edition beers are appealing to Adventurers. They might also collect cans and bottles that are seen as aesthetically appealing. In addition, they might also 'collect' or keep track of the total amount of unique craft beers they have consumed (Long et al., 2018). Members of this category are somewhat sustainably conscious; they might care whether craft beer is locally produced or relatively environmentally friendly (Long et al., 2018; Taylor & DiPietro, 2016). This consumer category seeks to fight the repetitiveness of everyday life by looking for novelty; the wide variety of craft beer styles and tastes provides a solution; a new thrill-seeking experience to consumers (Filho et al., 2021; Long et al., 2018; Taylor & DiPietro, 2017). In addition, members seek social recognition among other craft beer consumers and want to belong to a group; something that is offered to them by being part of the craft beer subculture (Koch & Sauerbronn, 2018).

Elitists

The Elitists have a moderate level of involvement towards craft beer that is similar to the Adventurers' level of involvement. This group associates craft beer with high levels of sophistication and gastronomic value (Carvalho et al., 2018). Members are very interested in knowledge related to craft beer and like to show off their understanding and skills about craft

beer. Rituals and consumer practices are important to them; they enforce rules (Carvalho et al., 2018; Filho et al., 2021). This group is disliked among other groups, as their behaviour is frequently experienced as bragging about their moderate expertise (Filho et al., 2021). Members associate the consumption of craft beer with a higher social status. This is mainly because of the pricey and exclusive image of craft beer, as well as the finer and unique raw materials that are used in craft beer in comparison to what is used in mass-produced beer. The broader flavour palette is seen as enlightening (Carvalho et al., 2018; Filho et al., 2021). Summarized, members of this group seek to be part of an elite and exclusive group; craft beer provides the quality and status that they are looking for, as well as the elite group they aspire to be part off. Superiority is shown by consuming craft beer (Filho et al., 2021).

Devotees

Devotees together with Experts form the hard core of the craft beer subculture. Devotees have high levels of involvement towards craft beer and see it as part of their identity (Filho et al., 2021; Koch & Sauerbronn, 2018). They have a genuine interest in craft beer and as a result mainly consume craft beer on most occasions. They engage in activities related to craft beer, such as visiting breweries. However, regular beer is also consumed on some occasions; mainly when the purpose of drinking is to get inebriated as it would defeat the purpose of appreciating the taste and texture of the beer (Filho et al., 2021). They are experienced and thus stable drinkers, preferring certain styles of beer. However, they do like variety and novelty at times (Koch & Sauerbronn, 2018; Long et al., 2018). For Devotees, consuming craft beer brings pleasure and enjoyment to their life. In addition, they get enjoyment out of learning about craft beer related educational facts, such as the science, history, and rituals behind it. Consequently, they are educated about craft beer and like to share this knowledge with others. They often recommend beers to friends and family (Filho et al., 2021; Koch & Sauerbronn, 2018; Long et al., 2018). On another note, they are environmentally conscious and care about where and how craft beers are produced; this is also part of their interest, and they are vocal about it (Koch & Sauerbronn, 2018; Long et al., 2018). Summarized, Devotees are looking for fulfillment: the world of craft beer offers a life-enriching solution (Filho et al., 2021; Koch & Sauerbronn, 2018).

Experts

The last consumer category is the Experts, the hard core of the craft beer culture that has the highest levels of involvement towards craft beer. It is part of their identity, and they are well-educated on the history, science, rituals, and consumer practices related to craft beer (Filho et al., 2021; Koch & Sauerbronn, 2018). This consumer category can be appreciated and seen as role models by all other consumer categories within the craft beer industry. Members of this group create phenomena, jargon, trends, and definitions and like to share this with others. Their knowledge can go as far as glass selection, proper storing, and the detailed brewing process (Filho et al., 2021; Koch & Sauerbronn, 2018). Furthermore, they like to educate others online about craft beer, sharing their knowledge, opinions and critics with both friends, relatives, and strangers. This goes as far as giving critical reviews on craft beers or writing blog posts about craft beer (Filho et al., 2021). They are deeply involved and show great in depth-knowledge about craft beer; they might also brew their own batches of craft beer that they proudly share with others (Filho et al., 2021; Koch & Sauerbronn, 2018). Sustainability is important to this group, and they might create awareness about this subject. Members actively host and engage in events that are related to craft beer where they share recipes and give lectures or workshops (Koch & Sauerbronn, 2018). This group shows great levels of affective commitment towards craft beer and members are proud of what they know and might have brewed. Like Devotees, Experts are looking for life fulfillment. The difference however is that for Experts craft beer gives deeper meaning to their life and is experienced as being part of them; it is related to their self-worth. Craft beer offers both meaning, life enrichment and purpose to this consumer category (Koch & Sauerbronn, 2018).

2.4   Chapter Summary

In this study, it will be researched how consumers in craft beer subculture construct their identities. Therefore, this chapter provided the theoretical foundations that are needed to be able to research these topics. As this study takes its approach from a Consumer Culture Theory perspective, the basics of Consumer Culture Theory have been introduced first. The chapter then proceeded with theories about consumer identity and consumer identity projects. Next, it proceeded with theories concerning consumer culture and consumer subculture.

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Lastly, prior academic literature in the craft beer subculture of consumption has been analysed, which was then used to construct a synthesized model with different consumer categories that can be recognized within the craft beer subculture, which forms the departure point for the empirical research.

3 Methodology

In this chapter, an argumentation will be given for the methods used to conduct the study. Firstly, the research philosophy will be discussed and it will be argumented which ontological and epistemological position has been taken. This will then be followed by the research design and a description of the data collection process. Finally, the data analysis process and the quality of research will be discussed.

3.1 Research Philosophy

3.1.1 Ontological Position

The ontological position tells one how researchers look at reality. This is an important aspect in research as taking different stances results in different research approaches. It is therefore needed to argue which stance to take as a researcher by thinking about what the most suitable stance is for the research and what impact taking a different stance would have on the outcomes. The main ontological positions in social research are realism, internal realism, relativism and nominalism (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021) This study used a relativist stance as the research intended to uncover different truths. This choice has been based on the analysis of several studies on craft beer consumers in chapter 2.3.3, where it appeared that different consumers showed different motives for consuming craft beer (Taylor & DiPietro, 2017; Carvalho et al., 2018; Long et al., 2018; Koch et al., 2018; Filho et al., 2021). The studies showed that some consumers drink craft beer to try to elevate their social status, while others drink craft beer to express their adventurous personality. The version of the truth one gets, depends on the type of craft beer consumer one asks, hence a relativist stance has been regarded as most suitable.

3.1.2 Epistemological Position

Epistemology is about the nature of knowledge and about methods of gaining knowledge. The epistemological position tells one how the researchers want to acquire knowledge. The main epistemological positions in social research are positivism and social constructionism (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). By using a social constructionist stance, which is most common when taking a relativist stance as ontological position, the different meanings that craft beer consumers apply to craft beer consumption and how they became constructed could be studied. Taking a social constructionist stance allowed the researchers to emphasize different experiences that the different consumers had.

3.2   Research Design

3.2.1   Qualitative Approach

Following from the research philosophy, the research design has been drawn. Firstly, a selection has been made between a qualitative and quantitative research approach. A relativist stance combined with a social constructionist position is usually paired with a qualitative research approach (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). A qualitative approach also suited the study, as the goal of the study was to gain a deeper understanding of motivations, preferences, considerations, social setting, education and identity of different craft beer consumers. Hence, a qualitative approach has been taken for this study.

3.2.2   Abductive Approach

Theory and research can be related to each other through either a deductive, inductive or abductive approach. Where a deductive approach takes departure from existing theory, which is used to form hypotheses, which then act as starting point for the observations and findings, an inductive approach is used to create theory as a product from the study's observations and findings, An abductive approach can be used as a solution to overcome limitations of either the deductive or inductive approach. It is used when there is the need to combine elements of the deductive and inductive approach and is said to depart from certain surprising facts or

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puzzles which can't be fully explained by existing research. Accordingly, the goal of the abductive approach is theory generation or theory extension, departing from existing research (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). In the case of this study, there were elements of both the deductive and inductive approach. While the departure from a synthesized model of existing studies about different craft beer consumers pointed towards the deductive approach, the wish to extend the theory at the intersection of subculture and consumer identity pointed towards the inductive approach. Hence, the researchers took an abductive approach as it allowed to combine these inductive and deductive elements in the study.

3.2.3 Semi-structured, In-depth Interviews

The research technique the researchers chose to use was semi-structured, in-depth interviewing. A semi-structured, in-depth interview allows the interviewer to elaborate on interesting statements and move freely between questions, while still keeping a structure (Wilson, 2014; Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). The aim was to understand the motivations, preferences, considerations, social setting, education and identity of craft beer consumers in a more advanced way, hence the researchers needed to allow themselves to ask follow-up questions or take certain directions during the interview to get the most out of the conversation. Hence, a semi-structured, in-depth interviewing has been regarded as most appropriate for the study.

In the process of finding the right research technique, the researchers first started out by experimenting with a projective method. A projective method aims to bypass the respondent's defences and lets them project their own psychological material onto imaginary characters and/or situations, resulting in more insight in underlying motivations for their behaviour (Murray, 1938). This method has been tested in a pilot study which was part of an earlier program course, but after finding that this method gave an interesting but highly varying kind of results, this method has been discarded as the main research technique. Instead, some projective questions have been included in the semi-structured, in-depth interviews. For instance, all respondents were asked: *"Picture and describe the average craft beer consumer. Who do you see? What does he/she look like? What kind of social status, job, place of residence, hobby's etcetera?"*. The goal of this question was to let the interviewees project

their own psychological material in their description, which in some cases worked, but in some cases not.

3.3   Data Collection

3.3.1 Sampling Method

As sampling method, a purposive sampling method has been selected, which is the most common sampling method in qualitative research. A purposive sampling method is a method where the researchers purposely set some criteria based on the needs of the study and then look for people that match the criteria and that are willing to participate, until a certain level of saturation in the data is reached (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). It also suited the study as a the study's focus was on a specific part of the population that was at least somewhat involved in craft beer consumption and had to fit a certain age group. Interviewing consumers that have no involvement in craft beer whatsoever would have led to zero insights.

The sampling criteria that have been set were, firstly, that the respondents have to have some level of involvement in craft beer consumption, regardless the level being low or high. Ideally, all levels of involvement should be recognizable in the analysis so the researchers tried to select respondents accordingly. The second sampling criterium was that the respondents had to be millennials: people between 21 and 40, because it has been found that craft beer is mostly consumed by this age segment (Long et al., 2018; Murray & O'Neill, 2012). Ideally, the researchers were looking for a somewhat even age distribution as different ages could display different results. Thirdly, the researchers looked for people from The Netherlands that have lived there for the vast majority of their lives, as the research scope was tailored to the Dutch craft beer consumer.

3.3.2 Respondent Set

The final set of respondents consisted of 35 Dutch people. The age range varied from 23 to 40. 22 respondents were male and 13 respondents were female. The highest level of education that the respondents had completed will now be mentioned, in order from higher to lower

education. 10 respondents had completed a university master and 4 had completed a university bachelor. 1 respondent had completed a University of Applied Sciences master, and 15 had completed a University of Applied Sciences bachelor. 4 respondents had completed post-secondary vocational education. 1 respondent had only completed his senior general secondary education. While 21 respondents lived in major cities in The Netherlands, 8 respondents lived in smaller cities and 6 respondents temporarily lived outside of The Netherlands. For an overview of the demographics of all respondents, see Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1: Overview of respondent set

Respondents (pseudonyms)	Age	Sex	Current occupation	Highest level of education	Place
Floris	23	Male	Work	University master	Rotterdam
Laurens	23	Male	Study	University bachelor	Rotterdam
Vincent	24	Male	Study	University bachelor	Rotterdam
Pepijn	24	Male	Work	University master	Leiden
Jeroen	24	Male	Work	University master	Tilburg
Niek	25	Male	Work	University of Applied Sciences bachelor	Groningen
Bren	26	Male	Work	University of Applied Sciences bachelor	Heiloo
Gayan	26	Male	Work	University of Applied Sciences bachelor	Groningen
Thijmen	26	Male	Work	University of Applied Sciences bachelor	Groningen
Aron	27	Male	Study	Post-secondary vocational education	Groningen
Levi	27	Male	Study	University of Applied Sciences bachelor	Groningen
Pieter	28	Male	Study	Senior general secondary education	Groningen
Frank	28	Male	Work	University master	Amsterdam
Remco	29	Male	Work	University master	Groningen

Max	30	Male	Work	Post-secondary vocational education	Koudekerke
Tobias	30	Male	Work	Post-secondary vocational education	Nieuwegein
Bram	30	Male	Work	University of Applied Sciences bachelor	Harkstede
Jorrit	31	Male	Work	University master	Groningen
Ben	34	Male	Work	University of Applied Sciences bachelor	Rijen
Arjen	36	Male	Work	University of Applied Sciences bachelor	Nordhorn (DE)
Dylan	39	Male	Work	University of Applied Sciences bachelor	Leeuwarden
Duco	40	Male	Work	University of Applied Sciences bachelor	Spanga
Ying	22	Female	Study	University bachelor	Nijmegen
Milou	24	Female	Study	Post-secondary vocational education	Oss
Floor	24	Female	Work/study	University bachelor	Lund (SE)
Celyne	24	Female	Work	University of Applied Sciences master	Groningen
Anouk	25	Female	Study	University of Applied Sciences bachelor	Rotterdam
Hannah	26	Female	Work/study	University of Applied Sciences bachelor	Groningen
Femke	27	Female	Work	University of Applied Sciences bachelor	Groningen
Eline	28	Female	Work	University of Applied Sciences bachelor	Sint-Maarten
Nadine	28	Female	Work	University of Applied Sciences bachelor	Zwolle
Emma	28	Female	Work	University master	London (UK)

Britt	28	Female	Work	University master	Sint-Maarten
Lianne	28	Female	Work	University master	Sint-Maarten
Laura	35	Female	Work	University master	Nieuwegein

3.3.3 Planning Process

This paragraph describes the process of how relevant interview themes have been selected and how the interview was designed accordingly. The general interview themes were motivations, preferences, considerations, social setting, education and identity. These themes have been drawn from the in chapter 2.3.3 analysed studies on craft beer consumers (Taylor & DiPietro, 2017; Carvalho et al., 2018; Long et al., 2018; Koch et al., 2018; Filho et al., 2021) and cover a complete set of thoughts and experiences within craft beer consumption. Getting insights on these themes therefore would enable to later separate the respondents into the different categories of the synthesized model, as presented in chapter 2.3.3 (Figure 1.1). Starting out, craft beer consumers can be separated into categories by the motives they have for drinking craft beer, which have been addressed by including the interview themes *motivations* and *preferences*. For example, a social drinker has different motives and preferences than an adventurer. The themes *considerations* and *social setting* have been included to gain deeper context about what kind of craft beer drinkers the interviewees are, in what settings they drink craft beer and how high their involvement is. Next, the thing that separates more expert craft beer consumers from other consumers is that they actively educate others and are sometimes involved in knowledge development. Therefore, the interview theme *education* has been included. Lastly, the interview theme *identity* has been included to find out to what extent craft beer is part of the interviewees' identities. Following from the set themes, an interview guide has been constructed with 4 to 10 questions per theme. The complete interview guide can be found in Appendix A.

Demographical questions have been planned at the start to later be able to contextualize quotes of the respondents. The demographical questions, together with some introductory questions like "How were you introduced to the world of craft beer, where did it start?" also acted to get the conversation going and relax the respondents, which is advised by Bell,

Bryman & Harley (2019). The researchers planned that when we as interviewers thought a theme was fully covered, they would move onto the next theme.

The chosen medium to perform the interviews was online meeting program Zoom. The interviews were recorded with the in-built recording function, after asking consent from the respondents. The respondents have been informed that the interviews would be anonymised, firstly to comply to data collection regulations and secondly to make them feel comfortable about alcohol related consumption, as this topic was considered by the researchers as potentially sensitive.

3.3.4 Interviewing Process

Over a timespan of 4 weeks, 35 interviews have been conducted. The timespan of each interview was between 30 and 50 minutes. To optimize the interview guide, the researchers took an iterative approach and made some improvements over the course of undertaking the interviews. Firstly, some questions have been deleted that appeared to be double or irrelevant. Secondly, changes to some questions have been made and follow up questions have been improved. Thirdly, a question was added to ask for certain rituals when drinking craft beer (think of things like smelling, tasting, specific glass), which can say something about involvement and expertise levels. Furthermore, after a while the researchers recognized recurring themes, which then got more focus in the following interviews. A strong example of that was the surprisingly strong interest for local beers among the interviewees, where links have been discovered to theory about identity projects: consumers use local beers to build on their 'local' identity project, the identity project of their own city that they are proud of to live in and to represent.

3.3.5 Transcribing Process

The way the researchers went about the transcribing process is by making field notes during the interview and listening back to all the recordings to further work out the transcriptions in detail, as is suggested by Bell, Bryman & Harley (2019). Additive words that are common in spoken language such as 'ehm', 'so', 'actually' that did not add anything substantial have been deleted. Some follow-up questions that broke stories into parts were also deleted, in

order to make the answers more cohesive narratives, as is suggested by Rennstam & Wästerfors (2018).

3.4 Data Analysis

In order to prepare the data for the analysis, the data has been coded through the analysing software Atlas TI. Code groups have been made to be able to recognize the different consumer categories from the synthesized model among the respondents. After coding all the interviews, the data has been systematically analyzed by analyzing all the interviews per consumer category and per interview theme. The analyzing process is done through a content analysis method, where the presence of all codes and themes were grouped and relationships between codes and themes were explored (Bell, Bryham & Harley, 2019).

3.5 Quality of Research

When doing research, it is important to live up to the academic research quality standards as much as possible. According to Bell, Bryham & Harley (2019), the quality of research when performing a qualitative method is determined by looking at the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the results. Next to this, ethical code is also important. This means that the researchers ask consent for the gathering and processing of the data and value the privacy of the respondents, which the researchers did. It has been made sure to ask consent and to anonymise the data in order to protect the privacy of the respondents. Lastly, it is important to be aware of limitations that come with choosing a certain research technique. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews have been chosen as research technique. The researchers could also have gone for observations or focus groups, or a combination of these methods together with interviews. This would have improved the quality of research, but regarding limited time the researchers decided to go with the most common research technique in qualitative studies, which is interviews. Now, an elaboration will be given on the aspects of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability regarding the study.

3.5.1 Credibility

The credibility of research focuses on how believable the findings are, which can be achieved by knowing the context of the research field (Bell, Bryham & Harley, 2019). Before gathering the findings, the researchers did a thorough analysis of the Consumer Culture Theory field. Secondly, the researchers based themselves on existing research on craft beer consumers and in that way, they had a solid departure point and a good understanding of the craft beer market and its different consumers. By gathering data from all different consumer categories, the researchers attempted to ensure a high credibility. Indeed, respondents have been found that fit in all recognized consumer categories. However, regarding the consumer categories casuals, elitist, and experts there were gathered few respondents which resulted in limited data about these consumer categories. By gathering more respondents from these consumer categories, the credibility of the study could have been improved. Also, because the time was limited, only 35 consumers have been interviewed. By increasing the number of respondents, the credibility of the study could also have been improved. Lastly, the respondent set consisted mainly of men, while women, and especially women of higher age were in the minority. This could also be an improvement point regarding credibility.

3.5.2 Transferability

The transferability of research focuses on if the findings are applicable to other contexts (Bell, Bryham & Harley, 2019). The study was focused on Dutch craft beer consumers, which means the context was country-specific and influenced by culture and other contextual factors. Therefore, the transferability of the findings to other markets is questionable. General findings could be transferable, but to be able to transfer all findings to another market, a same or similar study should be done in that specific market.

3.5.3 Dependability

The dependability of research focuses on the reliability and trustworthiness: if the findings are likely to apply at other times. This is done by taking an auditing approach, where researchers keep track of all the stages in the research process so that it can be reviewed by other researchers (Bell, Bryham & Harley, 2019). The researchers of this study have kept good

track of all the stages in our research process by saving documents of all the transcripts and taken decisions, but the study has not been peer reviewed, as this was not a necessity in the process of writing this study. However, the work could be peer reviewed by others.

3.5.4 Confirmability

The confirmability of research focuses on how objective the findings are, and if they have not been influenced by preoccupations of the researchers or by manipulating the interview guide or interview questions (Bell, Bryham & Harley, 2019). The researchers have been as objective as possible and tried not to include any preoccupations in the questions. However, in some interviews, some questions have been skipped when the researchers thought a theme had been covered enough or when there was a lack of time. This is not in line with guidelines for qualitative research, as Bell, Bryham & Harley (2019) advise asking the exact same questions to all respondents. By asking the exact same set of questions to all respondents, the confirmability therefore could have been improved.

3.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the used methods and research philosophy of the study have been presented. A relativist stance in combination with a social constructionist stance have been used. A qualitative approach in combination with an abductive approach has been taken. The used research technique was semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The respondent set has been presented and the planning process, interviewing process, transcribing process and data analysis process have been described. Lastly, the quality of research has been evaluated.

4 Findings & Analysis

In the literature review, previous studies on craft beer consumption have been reviewed. It was found that, although these studies all define certain consumer categories, the overall categorization remains scattered. Therefore, a synthesized model has been developed by the researchers, where all prior categorizations have been mapped into six main consumer categories. These six main consumer categories are: casuals, socials, adventurers, elitists, devotees, and experts. Through the empirical analysis, it has been tried to match all respondents with these six main consumer categories. The findings showed that respondents fall into the categories, however, some respondents seemed to have characteristics of two consumer categories at once. In this chapter, the findings will be presented per consumer category, guided by the six themes that were used during interviewing and coding: motivations, preferences, considerations, social setting, education, and identity.

4.1 Casuals

Motivations

For Casuals their self-reported motivation behind craft beer consumption mainly appears to be enjoyment and the desire to try something different from what they are usually consuming. Britt, whose primary consumer category is Casual, explains:

> ''Craft beer is something that you really take the time for to appreciate, you really enjoy it. It is not something you drink rapidly; it is something that you take the time for to really enjoy''.

In addition, respondents explain they enjoy the diversity of flavours craft beer has to offer as it brings them an alternative flavour experience as opposed to regular pilsners. Bren, whose primary consumer category is Casual: *''I just really enjoy it. It is a little bit different from*

what you usually drink, especially in comparison to regular pilsners. It has got more flavour, it is tastier''. These findings seem to correspond with the motivations Carvalho et al. (2018) and Taylor & DiPietro (2017) found that consumers within this category mostly enjoy craft beer because of leisure experience and to experience feelings of relaxation after a busy day. It also corresponds with findings from Filho et al. (2020) which states that consumers within this category mainly consume craft beer because they desire a *''higher quality beer that pleases the taste''* (pp. 388). It is important to note however that Filho et al. (2020) refer to this category as *beginners*. This does not correspond with the findings of this study, where all Casuals said to have been drinking craft beer for at least four years.

Preferences

When it comes to preferences, Casuals seem to prefer regular pilsners and other types of beer on most occasions. It is consumed in larger quantities and more frequently in comparison to craft beer. Bren:

> ''If I am sitting at a terrace with the purpose of drinking one or two beers, if that is the plan for the day, then I prefer craft beer. Because then I can enjoy my craft beer in peace. During festivals or when I go out to party somewhere for example, I prefer pilsners''.

While this seems to correspond with literature from Filho et al. (2020) and Long et al. (2018) who state consumers within this category are stable drinkers that prefer mainstream pilsners, both studies also state that Casuals are stable drinkers in terms of the number of craft beers they consume and the styles they prefer. This does not match the findings, as it turns out that while Casuals do not seem to be driven by variety and novelty, they do seem to occasionally enjoy trying a beer and style they have not had before. Bren explains:

> ''Every beer is different, and I am curious to different tastes. I don't always necessarily have to try the newest beer on the menu; however, I have tried a variety of different craft beers''.

However, Casuals do seem to prefer mass-produced beers from large-scale breweries such as La Chouffe and Jopen and admit to frequently order craft beers they are already familiar with, something that shows a level of stability in their choice of preference. This is the case for

Aron, whose main consumer category is Adventurer, and second consumer category is Casual:

> ''If there are many options on the menu, in the first place I like to try something new. However, I also appreciate ordering a safe option I am familiar with. When I recognize a certain craft beer and I think, 'last time this beer was a success', I will take it again.''

Another preference within this consumer category which seems to be a new finding, as it is not mentioned in previous literature that was analysed for this study, is availability. Respondents explain to purchase craft beer in stores or restaurants and cafes when it is easily attainable but would be just as likely to purchase other types of beer such as pilsner when it is simply not available. Lianne for example, whose main preference is novelty and variation as her primary consumer category is Adventurer and secondary consumer category is Casual, describes:

> ''Here in our villa, we only have regular pilsners in our fridge. So occasionally I drink craft beer, but 99 percent of the time I only drink Heineken when I am home. And sometimes when I go somewhere I order a craft beer, but here on Sint-Maarten craft beer is not really available like it is in Groningen. When I was still living in Groningen, I often had a few IPAs in my fridge so that I could drink that whenever I had guests over. I really liked having craft beer at home at all times.''

Regarding consumer customs and rituals, Casuals seemed disinterested towards them, except for the use of an actual glass together with craft beer. Bren:

> ''Craft beer really should be drunk from a glass. I have a bad habit of making my regular beer go flat whenever I drink it out of a glass, that happens less when I drink that from a bottle, but with craft beer I really think it should be drunk from a glass.''

Just like all members within this consumer category, Aron feels the same: ' *Well when I drink [craft beer], I prefer to drink it out of a glass. But for the rest I don't really engage in rituals or something, no''*. This seems to correspond with findings from Filho et al. (2020) that showed members within this category are ignorant towards consumer customs, rituals and traditions related to craft beer.

Considerations

Like Casuals' preferences, stability in style and brewery seems to be a consideration for members within this consumer category. Respondents explain that while they sometimes like to purchase a craft beer they have not tried before, they do usually stick to craft beers and breweries that they are familiar with. Bren:

> ''Usually, I purchase something that I am familiar with and from which I already know that I like and enjoy it. Then I usually go for IPA, something that I already like. If I want to try something new however, I look at the beer style, dark or light. I don't really like dark beers so then I go for something light.''

This reported consideration in combination with the finding that Casuals drink other types of beer, such as pilsners or lagers, in larger quantities and more frequently than craft beer, corresponds with research from Filho et al. (2020). They explain that while members within this consumer category show a low level of loyalty towards products, they are loyal towards preferred styles and breweries.

Respondents within this consumer category reported sustainability was neither one of their considerations nor something they care about. When Max, whose primary consumer category is Adventurer and secondary consumer category is Casual, was asked whether sustainability is part of his considerations, he replied: *''No, definitely not. Craft beer usually only gets more expensive if it is sustainable.''* Similar, when Bren was asked the same question, he replied: *''No, not really. That is not something I think about when I order or purchase craft beer''*. This seems to correspond with findings from Long et al. (2018) that consumers within this category are not environmentally conscious in their considerations regarding craft beer. Along with sustainability Long et al. (2018) also states that these consumers show a disinterest in the locality of craft beers and do not feel that they are supporting the local economy by purchasing local brews. In this study however respondents did show a (slight) interest in the locality of craft beers. Bren:

> ''When I am in a village where I have never been before, I could go for a local craft beer. But I won't choose a bock when I don't like it just because it is local, for example''.

Concerning the same subject matter, another new finding that was not mentioned in the previously analyzed literature is the Casuals' stance on macro breweries purchasing small-scale breweries to respond to the craft beer trend. All Casuals reported to feel indifferent about that. Britt explains: *''I have never really thought about it. But yeah, if everyone is happy with it, it is fine for me. I do not have anything against big or small breweries''*. Similarly, Lianne said the following: '*'If both parties agree then I don't mind. Yeah, right? Then they should just say no if they don't want to''*.

Social setting

Respondents within this consumer category reported to enjoy craft beer in a social setting with friends and family at places where craft beer consumption is natural in its environment, for example at pubs and terraces and occasionally at home. Bren:

> ''I drink it when I am really free from obligations, so when I am free or when I go to a place that I am excited to go to where it is natural to drink a craft beer''.

He later adds:

> ''[I drink craft beer] mostly when I am at a terrace and sporadically at home. And other than that, sometimes at a friend's house for example, but then he coincidentally has to be a fan of craft beer''.

This seems to match literature from Long et al. (2018) that found consumers within this category only drink craft beer within environments where it is natural, mostly at pubs and restaurants and at home. This study however did not look into whether respondents drink craft beer by themselves. While research from Carvalho et al. (2018) did report respondents frequently consume craft beer alone, it was not described to which consumer category this applies. This study found that while casuals clearly state to prefer drinking craft beer within a social setting, they do occasionally consume craft beer by themselves. The reported reason to consume craft beer alone seems to be relaxation. Britt: *''When you're alone you really crave a delicious type of beer. It's more about relaxation''*. Similarly, Lianne explained the following:

> ''I almost never do it. But I have done it occasionally, having a beer by myself. But not every evening. It's more that when I come home after a long and busy day of hard

work, and I see an IPA standing in my fridge, and I think by myself; 'oh nice', then I drink an IPA. When you drink that IPA [by yourself] it really is a way to blow off steam after work, that really is how it feels.''

When it comes to activities, all respondents within the Casual category reported to engage in activities related to craft beer occasionally. The activities seemed to be limited to the catering industry. Britt for example describes:

''I sometimes visit a brewery, then I go on a special trip for it. Also done beer tastings, they organize that in pubs sometimes. Then you get matching snacks with it. Have also done a bock beer tour once during autumn, you go visit several pubs in the city to drink a bock beer. That was really fun.''

While all respondents reported to engage in activities, not all respondents seemed to be intrinsically interested in the activities they took part in. This is the case for Bren for example who said the following:

''Once a year my friends and I go on a holiday together, usually there is a brewery at the location we are visiting. Or a craft beer café. But I am not the one who arranges this, because I am not really interested in the process behind how craft beer is made. I go along, but that is just for the social interaction with my friends. It really is a social interaction kind of thing for me.''

Additionally, respondents were also questioned whether they ever hosted activities related to craft beer. Most Casuals reported to have only ever hosted a casual craft beer evening with friends where they tried different craft beers without seriously discussing it or looking at it from a professional angle. Aron:

''Well, we do occasionally hang out with our friend group sometimes and agree to buy a few craft beers and try them out together. We don't look anything up about the beers, it's more the information we get from the advertisements for example. Or we just try something new.''

As previously analyzed studies have not investigated consumer engagement in craft beer related activities for this category, these findings seem to be new. Respondents were also asked about their social media behaviour regarding craft beer. Among the two respondents

that fit primarily into the Casual consumer category, Bren explained not to use social media at all, and Britt explained she sometimes posted pictures of craft beer on het Instagram:

> ''Not necessarily specific information or something but [I do post] photos with craft beer on it. In December I went to a brewery for example, then I post about that. But not in an app like *UnTappd* [an application where you can check in, rate and review beers, and keep track of what friends are drinking] or something. I just post a photo from a glass with some nice beer in in it, not specific info. I just find it fun to share what I am doing and where I am at that moment. And also, for myself, it is fun to look back at all the things I have done.''

Education

Casuals report to not look up any type of information about craft beer, nor do they report being interested in doing so. Britt: *''I don't read actively about craft beer when I am alone. But I do when I'm at a brewery, there I read the information pamphlet. But never on my own''.* In addition, when questioned about their overall knowledge regarding the subject of craft beer, respondents also described it as minimal and limited. Bren:

> ''I roughly know how it is made, but yeah, sometimes you see on apps that people start describing the craft beer. I shouldn't start with that; I don't have that interest either. What exactly is in those beers and whether it has fermented for a longer or shorter period… I don't care at all. I don't have to brew it myself anyway.''

The overall lack of knowledge and indifference towards any type of knowledge regarding craft beer seems to correspond with literature from Taylor & DiPietro (2017) that shows knowledge is not a motivational factor that members within this consumer category have regarding craft beer. Both Filho et al. (2020) and Long et al. (2018) have also found that these consumers seem to show low levels of interest towards the history and science behind craft beer production, something that appears to match the findings of this study.

Identity

Members within this consumer category reported that they felt craft beer was not part of their identity. Britt explained: *''I really love it, but I wouldn't say that it is part of my identity''.* Another example is Aron, who said the following:

''I don't really see [craft] beer as part of my identity, I think. Because I might as well live without craft beer. When people think about me, they don't think 'oh, he drinks a lot of craft beer', or something.''

Whether respondents feel it is part of their identity seems to be a new finding, as previously analyzed studies did not mention anything about members within this category referring to identity. Another construct that previously analyzed studies did not seem to explore was whether consumers within this category feel they are part of the craft beer subculture. This study did look at this construct, and Casuals seemed to give contradictory opinions. When asked directly whether they felt they are part of the craft beer subculture when they are consuming craft beers, all Casuals replied they did not. An example is Britt: *''No, not when it comes to craft beer. I don't really feel connected with other craft beer drinkers''*. However, when asked whether the respondents could give a description of the craft beer subculture followed up by the question whether they felt they are a part of it, they all replied that they were. Britt: *''Yeah. I also love togetherness, fun and going to the pub. And talking to other people, drinking craft beer. I fit in there.''* Another example is Lianne. When she was asked whether she felt she was part of the craft beer subculture when consuming craft beer, the answer was *''No, I don't''*. When the same question was asked after she described her image of the craft beer subculture, she replied:

''I find it difficult to say whether I am a part of it based on my consumption, but yes, in principle. If it [subculture] really exists, and you can really call it a subculture, then I think I am a part of it. Yes, I would see myself as a part of it.''

Within the subject matter of subgroups, Casuals recognized Elitists as a consumer category and clarified to dislike members within this category.

''You also have beer snobs, I find them really annoying, you seem them at breweries sometimes. They act hoity-toity. Those are people who pretend they are very knowledgeable about craft beer, but they actually aren't, you see them being corrected by staff working at the breweries at times. The staff then says something else than the beer snob was saying which shows that the beer snob actually doesn't know everything. Or you have people who really exaggerate during tastings, that is also something that works on my nerves. They say stuff like, 'oh, this really has notes of wood'. Then I think, 'get lost'. But there is a difference between people who are truly

knowledgeable about it and can tell something fun about it with passion, and people who are taking it a step too far by exaggerating it. It's a thin line.''

This seemed to correspond with literature from Filho et al. (2020) which showed that members within all consumer categories had a negative attitude towards consumers who are seen as beer snobs. On another note, Casuals did not seem to associate craft beer with any form of social status. Britt: *''No, everyone drinks craft beer, regardless''*. Another example is Aron: *''No, not necessarily. I don't think that is the case''*. As previously analyzed literature has not mentioned social status, this seems to be a new finding.

4.2   Socials

Motivations

The primary motivation for members within this consumer category to consume craft beer seems to be the social aspect. Respondents report that togetherness and sociability are crucial motivations to drink craft beer, together with experiencing the same enjoyable activity together with friends. Pieter, whose primary consumer category is Social, explains his motivation to drink craft beer:

> ''It is fun to do it together, with friends for example in a pub or at a terrace where everyone can try a different craft beer, you know. So, it is the sociability.''

Celyne, whose primary consumer category is Adventurer and secondary consumer category is Social, describes:

> ''I honestly find it really fun and sociable; I mostly drink it with people who also drink craft beer frequently. And I really see it as an important part of the activity that you are doing at that moment. I think that is the most important motivation to me''.

This seems to correspond with literature from Taylor & DiPietro (2017) who explain that members within this segment mainly drink craft beer to socialize and enjoy the craft beer experience with others. It also matches findings from Koch et al. (2018) who showed that these consumers mainly consume craft beer to be and feel part of the craft beer subculture.

Preferences

Just like Casuals, Socials seem to have a preference towards mass-produced craft beer from macro breweries, such as La Chouffe, Duvel and Brouwerij 't Ij. Niek, who's primary consumer category is Social, explains:

> ''The La Trappe and the La Chouffe are just the big brands, I see them as the big boys. They just make famous and standard beer, so it's always a safe choice''.

When it comes to craft beer style, all Socials reported to favor fresher, lighter, and fruitier flavours in most occasions. However, some respondents also mentioned to prefer triples or doubles occasionally, depending on the social setting that they were in. In addition, Socials also explained to mostly stick to these style preferences when ordering or purchasing craft beer. Pieter:

> ''I really like an IPA. I also like Weizen. And Tripels as well. Those are my favourites … I have a few specific craft beers that I really like within these styles. But oh well, maybe I need to explore other styles a little. But with triples you have Karmeliet, with Weizen you have an Ijwitje, these are amazing to drink in the sun. Just a fresh Ijwitje in the sun, delicious. So it depends a bit on the setting. And per setting I have a few styles that I really like. And those are mostly craft beers within the styles I favor.''

These findings appear to correspond with literature from Koch et al. (2018) and Taylor & DiPietro (2017) who explain that members within this consumer category mostly prefer mass-produced craft beer and stick to lighter, softer styles as they are seen as more accessible and easier to drink. Koch et al. (2018) also explains that the reason why they prefer softer and fruitier flavours is because they are new to the craft beer world as they are beginners. This seemed true for some respondents, such as Yin, whose primary consumer category is Social:

> ''[My partner] recently introduced me to the world of craft beer. He was able to estimate very well which beers were accessible for me, and I also took a sip from his beer sometimes to try it out. And it turned out to be quite tasty.''

However, not all respondents seemed to be beginners, as some had been consuming craft beer for several years. It seems that they simply have not experimented much throughout those years as they explain to have stayed within the range of styles they favor. So, while some

respondents indeed said to be new to craft beer, not all of them were beginners. This does not seem to match findings from Koch et al. (2018) who specifically characterizes this consumer category as beginners.

When it comes to other types of beer, respondents were divided in their preferences. Half of respondents explained to choose craft beer over other types of beer when they were in a social setting. Jeroen, whose primary consumer category is Social and secondary consumer category is Adventurer, stated: *''Lately I've been drinking more craft [beer]. When I am sitting at a terrace it's mainly craft [beer] these days. At home [I drink] pilsners''*.

The other half, however, explained to consume other types of beer in larger quantities and more frequently as opposed to craft beer, mainly due to the price and the setting they are in. Again, whether their company seems to be consuming craft beer seems to be a consideration. Respondents explained that they viewed it unnecessary to always go for craft beer when other types of beer are just as much enjoyed. Celyne for example explained this in detail:

> ''I find craft beer to be something that goes together with togetherness and sociability, within a smaller group. So, when I go out clubbing for example, I think regular pilsners are a good choice. Or at a concert or something. Those are activities where craft beer is an afterthought. You are there for another reason. Craft beer is definitely delicious, but I find a regular beer, like pilsner, also very nice. Also, especially because at those settings, like a concert for instance, you also buy rounds for others. And especially if everyone is sticking to regular beer, what usually happens, then I would feel a bit burdened to order craft beer each time. Especially because I do not think it is necessary.''

These findings are more elaborated than what was found in research from Carvalho et al. (2018) and Koch et al. (2018), who only state that members within this category prefer to drink regular pilsners. In this study, this did not seem to be the case for half of the respondents within the Social category.

Lastly, looking at rituals and consumers customs, the only preference Socials reported was to pay extra attention to the first sip and a matching glass with their craft beer. Other than that, respondents said to be indifferent towards consumer rituals. Niek:

> ''When I try a new craft beer, I always taste the first sip with extra attention. And I also want a matching glass in a restaurant. That gives a bit more ambiance to be honest. When I am home, I also try to do that, but I don't have many [matching glasses].''

As previously analyzed literature did not investigate consumer customs and rituals for this category, this seems to be a new finding.

Considerations

For Socials, recommendations from others seem to be an important consideration. Several socials mention that they value opinions and advice from friends, online reviews and the bartender or staff who is working at the establishment they are residing. Jorrit, whose primary consumer category is Adventurer and secondary consumer category is Social, elaborates:

> ''I ask my friends for recommendations. But I first ask the bartender what he recommends. And if he says, 'this and this is nice', then I just choose that one. I don't know it anyway and that way you get to try something new … so I mainly base my advice on the recommendation from others. But I also choose myself sometimes, then I look at the menu and look at what matches my preferences. And sometimes I Google craft beers to see the reviews, and if it is good then I'll take it.''

This matches literature from Koch et al. (2018) and Taylor & DiPietro (2017) who state consumers within this category base their purchasing decisions regarding craft beer on the recommendations of others, as they are sensitive to subjective norms and looking for validation. Koch et al. (2018) also describes that these consumers are somewhat insecure or unsure about their choices and tend to stick to safe options. This is also seen in the findings of this study, several Socials admit choosing beers, styles, or breweries they are familiar with. If not, they will again consult others. Niek for example explains:

> ''I usually order something I am familiar with. But I also try something new sometimes. But when I do that, I always need a frame of reference so I can identify whether the beer will be tasty. If I don't know a craft beer, but I know the style, for example a triple, I at least know which flavour to expect. Or a recommendation from someone else; if they say, 'this is a nice beer', then I am likely to try it. But if I don't know anything, if I have zero information about a certain craft beer, then I will ask the

bartender. I also use their recommendation as a reference. But if no one can tell me about the craft beer then I will not take it.''

A new finding is that Socials reported to take aesthetic features into consideration upon purchasing craft beer. Several respondents mentioned to look at design of the bottle or can and base their purchasing decision on the looks of the label. Jorrit:

''If it has a crazy pattern or a fun colour or something, then it catches my eye. It grabs the attention, stands out. And for the rest, the text on the bottles. I also look at the name or title of the craft beer, of course. But I mostly think the pattern, the colours, and the shape of the bottle.''

None of the respondents within the Social consumer category reported to take sustainability into their consideration. They seemed to show a lack of knowledge and interest, and several respondents said they were indifferent towards sustainability in relation to craft beer. Pieter: *''No, I don't care about sustainability at all. Absolutely not''*. Research from Taylor & DiPietro (2017) indeed stated that sustainability is not one of the considerations within this segment, so these findings seem to correspond with the previously analyzed literature.

Another new finding is that Socials do moderately seem to care about whether craft beer is locally brewed. The self-reported reason behind this again seems to have a social ground, as they explain it makes them feel that they are part of the city where the craft beer is brewed. They explain it provides them with feelings of togetherness, especially when it is a craft beer originating from the city where they are currently living. Jeroen for example explained:

''I like it [when it is local]. For example, the 013 Brewery in Tilburg, the name and the titles of the craft beers all have to do with something related to the city of Tilburg. And that does give you that Tilburg feeling, the feeling of your own city, which is part of your identity. They also do not want to sell their beers outside of the city, so it really belongs to the city, that beer.''

Lastly, while some socials mentioned to think it is either good or bad that macro breweries purchase small-scale breweries to go along with the craft beer trend, most respondents within this consumer category seemed to be neutral towards it as long as it does not change the identity or flavour of the beers. This also seems to be a new finding as previously analyzed literature did not look at the attitude from respondents towards this issue. Anouk, whose

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primary consumer category is Social, said: *''If the beer and the brand stay the same, I don't really have an opinion on it''*.

Social setting

Socials seemed to drink at any type of social gathering where it is natural to consume craft beer with others. Some examples that were mentioned were pubs, family gatherings, craft beer festivals and at home with friends. Again, the social aspect of it seems crucial, and members within this consumer category do not drink alone. Anouk:

> ''I always drink in a group. I don't like to drink alone because it for me is about the social aspect. I think it is more fun to share the experience with someone else who also enjoys it.

Another good example is Niek:

> ''It sounds very dumb, but actually [the reason why I drink craft beer] is peer pressure. I would never go to a bar by myself, for me the sociability and togetherness go together with drinking craft beer. I would never drink craft beer alone. I always drink in the company of others. Whether I drink craft beer is completely based on sociability and the people who I am with.''

These findings correspond with literature from Carvalho et al. (2018) and Taylor & DiPietro (2017) who explain that as the social aspect is a crucial motivation to drink craft beer for this group, they prefer to drink in social settings where there is social interaction.

When it comes to activities related to craft beer, one social said to have been to a craft beer festival once, and all other Socials said to have only done craft beer tastings at pubs or at hone with friends. They also did not seem to host any activities related to craft beer other than casual craft beer evenings at home where the beers are not analysed professionally or seriously. The social aspect again seem to be the driving factor here. Niek for example explains:

> ''The only thing I have hosted is a dinner at my place, where I bought several craft beers. But that is not really about the craft beer. I do decide what to buy and of course I also try to purchase something delicious for my friends, but conviviality is key.''

Socials report to occasionally post about craft beer on their social media, with the purpose of showing others the activity they are doing and to share with others that they are consuming craft beer. Celyne described the following

> ''On Instagram [I share that I am drinking craft beer] sometimes. But not every beer that I drink. I sometimes post that I am sitting at a terrace with others or something, the activity that I am doing, and then with craft beer on the photo as well.''

Within the same subject matter, more than half of the members within this consumer category said to have used UnTappd in the past. However, all of them deleted the app after a while because they felt it was too much work and too much of a hassle. Both findings seem to be new as previously analyzed studies did not mention anything about social media for this segment.

Education

All Socials reported to have a low level on knowledge regarding the history and science behind everything related to craft beer. They mentioned that their knowledge was limited to being able to distinguish certain styles and recognize which flavours they like. Pieter:

> ''I'm not someone who knows much, but I have developed my own taste. I am able to distinguish categories. For example blondes, ciders, doubles, triples, quadruples. That knowledge I have. I also know some of the big subcategories and their characteristics. But if you talk about the small differences among blonde beers or among doubles for example, I can't tell you that and I also can't taste that.''

This seems to correspond with literature from Koch et al. (2018) who found that members within this consumer category have a lack of knowledge and insight into craft beer. Again, it is important to note that Koch et al. (2018) argue their lack of knowledge is due to them being new craft beer consumers. In this study it was found that some consumers seemed to have been consuming craft beer for several years, but simply sticked to their favoured styles and tastes. When it comes to sharing knowledge, most respondents within this consumer category said to both enjoy sharing random facts about craft beer and recommendations about beers they have already tried before. This too seems to correspond with literature from Koch et al. (2018) and Taylor & DiPietro (2017) who explain consumers within this category enjoy socializing and talking about craft beer with others to experience an activity together. Milou,
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whose primary consumer category is Social and secondary consumer category is Adventurer, explained:

> ''When I am sitting at a terrace somewhere I do like to share which craft beers I like, and I also recommend others about which beers I think that person would enjoy. I want that person to experience how delicious craft beer is, by tasting and experiencing it together.''

Most Socials said to have a slight interest in information related to craft beer, however they also reported they do not go out of their way to look up information on- and offline. In this study, respondents mostly reported to gain their knowledge from friends or staff who work in craft beer establishments. The only thing some respondents said to look up online was information about a certain craft beer to get an idea of what to expect. This does not seem to match findings from Koch et al. (2018), who found that members within this consumer category often look up information about craft beer online and are moderately interested in knowledge around the subject of craft beer. Jorrit:

> ''Yes, [I do look up information about craft beer online] sometimes, when I am looking for a frame of reference about whether a craft beer is tasty. And sometimes when I go on holiday to another country, I look up which craft beers are nice within that region.''

Identity

All Socials did not seem to see craft beer as part of their identity. Some respondents explained that they felt it was one step too far to say that craft beer is part of their personality and identity. Some others explained that they did not consume enough craft beer for it to be actually part of their identity. Milou for example: *''I don't see craft beer as part of my identity. I don't drink it nearly enough for it to be''.* As previously analyzed literature did not mention anything about the attitude of respondents towards the relationship between their identity and craft beer, this seems to be a new finding. Similarly, to Casuals, Socials seemed to give contradictory answers when asked whether they felt to be part of the craft beer subculture when consuming craft beer. When directly asked, all Casuals said they did not feel they were a part of it. However, when they were asked to describe the craft beer subculture

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combined with a follow up question whether they felt to be part of that description of the craft beer subculture, most respondents said they did feel they were part of that subculture. Niek:

> ''You have to like it, so it is something that you have to learn to appreciate and learn to drink, it's not for everyone. But in practice there is something tasty for everyone. So it is accessible for everyone, and I think I am a part of it.''

Furthermore, Socials did not associate craft beer with any type or form of social status. Yin for example stated: *''I don't think there is a certain class that drinks craft beer more frequently than other classes''*. Pieter was the only respondent who said that he could see that craft beer is somewhat related to social status:

> ''When I think about it, it is a luxury product in some way, so maybe a little higher [social status]. Yeah, just a little. A little bit of a higher social status.''

4.3 Adventurers

Motivations

For Adventurers, the self-reported main motivation to consume craft beer seems to be the variety and novelty craft beer has to offer. The variation in styles, flavours and breweries seems to appeal to this group as they feel it gives them a new or unique experience to enjoy. Vincent, whose primary consumer category is Adventurer and secondary consumer category is Devotee, explains:

> ''I really like the taste and I really appreciate how different it is in comparison to regular beer. For me it really is an experience to drink craft beer. There are so many styles and variations. At some times you can drink a light and fruity beer, at other moments you can, at other times you can drink a darker beer. I addition curiosity plays a big role; I always want to try new craft beers.''

Another example that portrays the Adventurers motivation is the explanation of Ben, whose primary consumer category is Devotee and secondary consumer category is Adventurer:

> ''The journey of discovery is the most important motivation [to consume craft beer] for me. I think that if I would drink juices or whiskey, I would like to create a similar journey of discovery. There is always something new to explore.''

These findings seem to correspond with literature from Filho et al. (2020), Koch et al. (2018), Long et al. (2018) and Taylor & DiPietro (2017), who explain that respondents within this group are driven by curiosity and a sense of exploration. They explain that these consumers' main concern is discovering and trying as many new different craft beers as possible, as it brings them a thrill, elevated levels of excitement and new sensory experiences.

A second motivation to consume craft beer for Adventurers seems to be togetherness and sociability. Respondents explain that they view craft beer as inseparable linked to conviviality and illustrate that sharing their experiences with others is half of the fun. Hannah, whose primary consumer category is Adventurer, elaborates:

> ''Firstly, it [craft beer] is nice to drink because there are so many flavour variations in craft beer. Secondly, I find it super fun to try out different flavours with someone. And third, I really like sociability, for example at a terrace. Craft beer really is linked to a social setting.''

This seems to match findings from Koch et al. (2020) who explained that members within this segment look for social belonging and recognition, and enjoy talking about and sharing their experiences with others.

Preferences

Adventurers' main preference is variation and novelty. Respondents report to dislike stability and appreciate the diversity craft beer has to offer, as they explain that there is something for every season or mood. Levi, whose primary consumer category is Adventurer, said:

> ''[I prefer] variety, that there are so many different options. For every season there is a suitable beer. So, in the winter something heavier, like a bock for example. In the summer a delicious blonde beer or a Weizen. For every mood there is a beer. I really like that.''

Literature from Taylor & DiPietro (2017) matches these findings where they explain that consumers within this category score high on variety seeking. In addition, it also seems to

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match findings from Long et al. (2018) who found that Adventurers have an aversion towards stability.

Looking at style, Adventurers do not seem to have a strong preference towards one specific style like Casuals and Socials: some respondents like lighter, fresher beers, some like darker, creamier beers. This seems to vary for each respondent. While almost all consumers within this group reported to have a style they preferred, respondents emphasized that they did not limit their choices to just that style. They seemed to like experimenting with different flavours and beer styles. The description from Arjen, whose primary consumer category is Adventurer, illustrates this:

> ''I have a preference towards IPA and Stouts. I find them very delicious. IPA is very fresh, fruity, I love that. In IPA and stout, you have so many variations. You have heavier stouts that taste like coffee and chocolate. Lighter stouts that taste like dessert, that is called pastry stout. That tastes like cheesecake for example, it's very delicious. Imperial stout is a bit darker. Those are mostly between ten to fourteen percent, it takes some time to finish it. But that does not mean I only choose craft beers within these two styles, I like to experiment with other styles too, you know. I think it's important to emphasize that.''

The preference of variety and novelty seems to correspond with literature from Filho et al. (2018) and Koch et al. (2020) who explain respondents within this consumer category like to try all sorts of different craft beer styles as they seem to have an intrinsic craving towards novelty and diversity. Within the same line, these studies also found that Adventurers like to experiment with unusual and uncommon ingredients. This too seemed to match the findings of this study, as respondents expressed to have a genuine interest in unique and unusual flavours. Floor for example, whose primary consumer category is Devotee and secondary consumer category is Adventurer, said:

> ''If it is like a niche flavour combination where I am like ''oh that sounds so interesting''. Like if it is infused with like, lemongrass for example, which isn't even actually that wacky, but you know just crazy flavours, it just titillates my tastebuds a little bit more. It makes me literally salivate, you know what I mean, mmm.''

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Considerations

The primary consideration for Adventurers again seems to be novelty and variety. As earlier discussed within this subsection, this corresponds with findings from Filho et al. (2018), Koch et al. (2020), Long et al. (2018) and Taylor & DiPietro (2017). Frank, whose primary consumer category is Devotee and secondary consumer category is Adventurer, explained:

> ''I always look at something that I have not tried before when I am in a pub or store. So, there is always something new in stock that I have not tried yet. That is the first thing I consider.

Aesthetics also seemed to be another important consideration for consumers within this category. Authentic designs, catchy titles and colourful labels that catch the eye seemed to be important considerations to purchase or order craft beer. Lianne clarified:

> ''With craft beer they of course have fantastic packaging. Let's say I am standing in a supermarket and they have a wide variety of choices, I am drawn to the packaging of craft beers. And if there is a random drawing or image on it, like for example a unicorn, a very random thing, then I am very tempted to buy it. I am really drawn to packaging from which I think, 'that really is the most crazy unique packaging I have ever seen'. Everything is possible and allowed with craft beer, nothing matters. The more colourful and crazier, the more it grabs my attention.''

Interestingly, while aesthetics seems to be the second most important consideration for Adventurers in this study, previously analyzed literature did not mention anything about this consideration among respondents within this consumer segment, thus it appears to be a new finding.

Recommendations from others are another consideration for Adventurers. However, unlike Socials, Adventurers only seem to turn to people who they feel are knowledgeable about craft beer, such as experienced friends or staff working at craft beer establishments. Vincent:

> ''I first look at craft beer I don't immediately recognize. Almost always I look at the rating from these beers on UnTappd. If there are several beers I have not tried before, I choose the beer with the highest rating. I also ask the bartender to recommend me something, then I would order his recommendation without looking at the reviews online.

I also ask my friends for advice sometimes, also without looking at the reviews. But it does depend on who recommends me something. If my dad would recommend a beer to me for example, I would be very critical because he is a less experienced and different type of craft beer drinker.''

As previously analyzed literature did not seem to report recommendations to be a consideration for this consumer segment, this seems to be a new finding.

When looking at sustainability, Adventurers seemed to be slightly interested in considering it, however they did not seem to be deeply involved. Remco for example, whose primary consumer category is Devotee and secondary consumer category is Adventurer, explained:

''I do think it's nice when breweries care about sustainability, Grolsch for example is seriously trying to waste less water. I do find it important, but it is not necessarily a deciding factor when I purchase a craft beer.''

Another example is Arjen:

''I know you have those breweries who brew craft beers with sea water or rain, but I don't really look at that. I do think it is important, but it is not something I look at when I am deciding on which beer to purchase.''

The slight interest seemed to differ from the findings Long et al. (2018) reported, where they explained that there was a moderate interest in sustainability. This did not seem to be the case in this study. This same study also found that Adventurers are sensitive to locally brewed beers. Studies from Filho et al. (2020) and Koch et al. (2018) also reported that members within this consumer category find locally brewed beers to be more unique and feel that the locality of it adds to the consumer experience. Respondents within this study indeed argued that locality was an important consideration as they are seen as more authentic, limited and special. Femke, whose primary consumer category is Adventurer, said:

''When I have found a [craft] beer that is not sold anywhere else except for in that specific area, then I really enjoy that beer even more. Then it really feels like I have found some sort of treasure, a hidden gem. It has some kind of charm.''

Respondents within this consumer category said to feel divided on macro breweries purchasing small-scale breweries to keep up with the craft beer trend. They voiced that on one hand it is a shame when it erodes the core and identity of the craft beer, but on the other hand they also saw the benefits from it. As previously analyzed literature did not investigate the attitude from respondents towards this issue, this seems to be a new finding. An example is a quote from Remco:

> ''On the one hand it is a shame when breweries lose their identity as a consequence from the take over, Heineken has done that a lot in the past. On the other hand it also offers opportunities to scale up and bring the price down, and become more widely available.''

When looking at consumer customs and rituals, Adventurers reported to find a matching craft beer glass important, together with taking the time to really appreciate and taste the first sip of a new craft beer. Gayan, whose primary consumer category is Adventurer, explained:

> ''With some beers I want a matching glass. With Duvel for example there is a whole science behind it where the shape of the glass ensures a perfect layer of foam. Furthermore, I also smell my beer before I take the first sip, to see and smell which flavour I can expect. Just like with wine I sometimes smell certain aromas, whom I try to taste after smelling them.''

This seems so match with literature from Filho et al. (2020) and Koch et al. (2018), who found that Adventurers do not care much for consumer rituals and customs.

Social setting

Like Socials, Adventurers reported to drink craft beer at any type of social setting. The difference is that more adventurers reported to enjoy craft beer alone from time to time. When craft beer is consumed alone, it is related to quality time or seen as a well-deserved treat. Femke:

> ''I also drink alone sometimes. In those situations, the reason is that I feel like I have deserved it, for example when I have had a very busy day at work. And usually, I only drink one or two, I don't drink more than that. And then I really take a moment for

myself to appreciate and enjoy the beer. In those situations, it's always a craft beer, not a regular beer. It feels like an extra treat.''

This finding does not seem to correspond with previously analyzed literature, as they have not mentioned Adventurers to consume craft beer by themselves.

When it comes to activities related to craft beer, members within this consumer category report to occasionally go to beer tastings, craft beer festivals and breweries. However, these activities do not seem to take place on a regular basis. In addition, when it comes to hosting activities, respondents reported that they host casual beer tastings with friends and invite others to join them to engage in craft beer related activities. Jorrit:

> ''Yeah, I invite people sometimes to try out a variant of craft beers at home. Or to go to a craft beer pub to enjoy some craft beers. And for the rest. I may not be the organizer, but I do like to invite others to join me to visit the craft beer festival.''

This seems to match research from Koch et al. (2018) and Taylor & DiPietro (2017) who found that adventurers like to visit craft beer related events as it provides a fun and new experience.

Looking at social media, respondents reported that they did not post on social media about craft beer. However, several respondents did mention to use the app UnTappd. They mainly reported to use it for reviews or to keep track of all the different beers they tried in the past, as it creates an overview of liked and disliked beers. As previously analyzed literature did not investigate social media behaviour among Adventurers, this seems to be a new finding. Arjen:

> ''I mostly look at which beers some pubs have and what their reviews are. If I found a nice beer on the menu, I can check the app whether I have tried it before. I look at the description, how the beer is brewed and what it tastes like … it's like a log, I like to try new beers, I prefer not to drink too much of the same style or flavour.''

Education

Adventurers self-reported to have a moderate level of knowledge regarding craft beer. Respondents argued that because they had tried a wide variety of styles and flavours, they have a somewhat more refined and experienced flavour palette. They also stated that they

knew some facts about the history or science behind craft beer because of the activities they attended. Nadine for example, whose primary consumer category is Adventurer, said:

> ''I know a lot of beers, and I know a lot of breweries. I am also very good at explaining which beer is which. I know something about the brewing process because I have attended several tours at breweries, but most of the information I tend to forget easily. So I would say that my knowledge is average.''

Research from Filho et al. (2018) and Koch et al. (2020) indeed found similar results where the overall knowledge of consumers within this category is very limited. Those same studies did find however that these consumers do like to share their existing knowledge and talk about craft beer with others. This also seemed to be the case in this study, where Adventurers reported to like giving recommendations to others and discussing craft beer while drinking it in the company of others. Jeroen explained:

> ''I definitely like to share my knowledge, I even got my girlfriend into drinking craft beer. I am good at estimating what she will like and I like to give tips about that. I also like to discuss craft beer together and explore what we like.''

Consumers within this category showed a low level of interest in information and knowledge about the history, rituals, and science behind craft beer. They did not look up information off- and online, other than reviews and background information about craft beers and breweries. Frank:

> ''I do read the news from breweries about craft beer. If I know a brewery and I see something from that brewery in a store or pub, I do look up the website and read a bit about the brewery. Or about the craft beers. So I mostly read about the beers and the brewery, not really about the process or technical aspects regarding how craft beer is made. I am not that interested in that.''

This seems to match literature from Filo et al. (2018), Koch et al. (2020) and Long et al. (2018) who state that Adventurers show little interest in consumer practices and the history and science behind craft beers.

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Identity

For Adventurers craft beer seemed to moderately part of their identity, as they self-reported to have some level of attachment and liking towards craft beer, however, not enough to say it is fully part of their identity. They explained that this is because they are not heavily involved in the world of craft beer. Jorrit explained:

> ''I think it is somewhat part of my identity. I am not someone who drinks craft beer every day or something, I mostly drink it during the weekend. And I am also not concerned with craft beer every day or something. I just think it's fun. If I compare it with regular beer however, I would say it is definitely more part of my identity.''

As previously analyzed literature did not mention anything about the respondents' attitude regarding the relationship between craft beer and their identity, this seems to be a new finding. Within the same subject matter another new finding was discovered. Just as with Casuals and Socials, Adventurers said not to feel part of the craft beer subculture when consuming a craft beer. However, when asked to describe the craft beer subculture followed up by the same question, almost all adventurers said to feel part of the craft beer subculture. Vincent:

> ''In the craft beer culture there is a certain level of knowledge. This culture is friendly and welcoming. I do feel a part of this because I do drink craft beer with friends and use UnTappd, which really is an online community.''

Several adventurers have mentioned to come across beer snobs (Elitists) in their environment. All Adventurers seemed to dislike consumers within this category and expressed to experience them as obnoxious and superciliously. Arjen: '*'Beer snobs don't seem like nice people to me, I don't like people who are showing off their knowledge to others''*. This seems to correspond with literature from Filho et al. (2018) who explained that that all consumer categories dislike beer snobs, as they are experienced to boast and brag about their knowledge and understanding of rituals, history and science behind craft beer.

Most consumers within this category did not associate craft beer with any type or form of social status. The respondents that did associate craft beer with social status, related it to middle-class as craft beer is on the pricy side in comparison to regular pilsners or lagers. Celyne for example said:

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''Of course craft beer is more expensive compared to regular beer or a non-alcoholic drink. From that point of view you need enough money to purchase it. So I can imagine that if you are short on cash or don't have a big budget, you wouldn't choose to buy craft beer. But I also don't feel that you have to be rich to buy craft beer. Just middle-class.''

This seems to be a new finding as previously analyzed studies have not investigated consumers' attitudes towards social status in relation to craft beer.

4.4   Elitists

The Elitists consumer category seemed to be characterized by only the following characteristic: superiority and enforcing consumer customs and rituals. These consumers seem to associate craft beer with a high social status and like to show off their knowledge in relation to craft beer. This seems to match literature from Koch et al. (2020) who shows that other than these characteristics elitists share similar characteristics to any of the other consumer categories. An example of an Elitist characterization is a quote from Floris, whose primary consumer category is Elitist: *''I like to act like I know a lot about craft beer, it's all part of the act to show others you know about the topic''*.

4.5   Devotees

Motivations

For Devotees the main motivation to consume craft beer seems to be enjoyment; respondents explain that they deeply appreciate craft beer and the whole history and science behind it. They report to be enthusiastic about craft beer and it seems to be party of their lifestyle, as they are actively involved in the world of craft beer. Floor for example explained:

''[I would describe myself as] appreciative of the work that has gone into it, have a lot of respect for the people who brew the beer. I'm an enthusiast. When I really like something, whether it is a certain flavour profile, the story behind the brewery or an interesting way of brewing, I get very excited about it.''

In addition, respondents said to experience levels of respect and appreciation for the craft behind craft beer. Eline for example, whose primary consumer category is Devotee, commented:

> ''I have respect for the complexity of how it [craft beer] is made, and that on the one hand you only need a few ingredients to make it, but that on the other hand those few ingredients can be so determinative of the kind of flavour it will turn into. And there are so many things in the brewing process that can go wrong, which actually makes craft beer a very valuable product. It's always a question whether a batch is going to fail or succeed.''

These findings seem to match research from Filho et al. (2018) and Koch et al. (2020) who explain that consumers within this category have deep levels of appreciation towards the craft of craft beer production and are intrinsically enthusiastic about craft beer, as it is part of their lifestyle.

Preferences

Devotees state to prefer the flavour and characteristics of craft beer over other types of beer. Therefore, they say to prefer craft beer on most occasions, except when the purpose of an evening is to get inebriated. They explain that it is hard to really appreciate flavour notes and the complexity of craft beer when they are drunk. A quote from Ben illustrates this:

> ''I drink pilsners because they're functional. When I am in the city or at a party, I sometimes drink pilsners, mostly because they are less pricey and because I think it is a waste of the flavour palette to quickly drink several craft beers within a short time. It goes against the purpose of craft beer in my opinion; taking the time to really appreciate the diverse flavours of the beer, you know.''

This seems to correspond with literature from Long et al. (2018) who found consumers within this category prefer craft beer on most occasions unless the purpose is to get intoxicated as craft beer cannot be enjoyed properly and flavours. They explain that respondents within this group mainly prefer to consume craft beer to deeply enjoy its complexity and getting drunk goes against this preference. In addition, literature from Filho et al. (2018) found that consumers within this segment know what they like as they are experienced drinkers and stick to the style they like. This did not seem to match the findings of this study. While most

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Devotees did report to favour certain craft beer styles, they explained to enjoy and consume other craft beer styles regularly. Another preference that was not reported in previously analysed literature is that Devotees see food pairing as a preference. Respondents expressed to get enthusiastic about pairing different types of beer with the food they are preparing. It seems to be a niche hobby for this consumer group. Bram for example, whose primary consumer category is Devotee and secondary consumer category is Adventurer, explained:

> ''I really like to cook with [craft] beer. I like to drink a beer that I can also add to my stew, for example. Craft beer can match really well with an appetizer or little snack. The quest for a nice beer and food combination really is a reason for me to go to the store and purchase a craft beer especially for the dish I am making, so that you can put something delicious on the table.''

Unique breweries with an interesting or original back story also seem to be a preference for Devotees. Especially local and small-scale breweries seem to be favoured among these consumers. Another quote from Bram demonstrates this:

> ''I like Brouwerij Martinus, a local brewery where I worked. I like to support the local breweries, but I mostly like their view on [craft] beer. They follow the Reinheitsgebot, which means that you get a lot of barley and real flavours from the hops, purely natural. I love that. They make a lot of good beers.''

Findings from Long et al. (2018) seemed to correspond with this preference, as they state that consumers within this category prefer local small-scale breweries.

Literature from Filho et al. (2018) found that Devotees care about rituals and consumer customs and take them very seriously. This study also found that Devotees care about certain rituals, although the preferred consumer customs seem to vary for each respondent. Remco for example explained:

> ''I definitely care about rituals, I have over fifty craft beer glasses at home, several cupboards filled with them. I really find a fitting glass important. You are not going to drink a triple out of a vase, that is sacrilegious.''

Another example is a quote from Ben:

> ''[I prefer a] matching glass, glasses don't go in the dishwasher, I never put down my craft beers because then you have a chance of yeast formation. If someone tilts their bottle to read the label, I will say something about that. How you are supposed to taste it is to always smell the beer first and then take a sip, something that became an automatic custom for me.''

Considerations

In contrast with other consumer categories, the considerations that Devotees make upon purchasing or ordering craft beer seem to vary among respondents. While some respondents mention to be drawn to aesthetics for example, original and colourful designs and titles, others state that this is not part of their consideration. The same goes for considerations such as alcohol percentage, weather, setting and price. Each Devotee seems to have their own personalized considerations. This does somewhat correspond with literature from Filho et al. (2018) who explains that each consumer within this segment develops their own taste.

Two considerations that almost all Devotees consider however is sustainability and locality. Where Adventurers reported to like locality because of the uniqueness of the craft beer, respondents within this consumer category mostly mentioned to consider locality because of solidarity; they find it important to support local businesses. Eline for example explained:

> ''I think it's way cooler to go to a local brewery and support them, to spend money on their beers. And also, nice to know what everything looks like from the inside. I think that's way more valuable than the idea of a macro brewery who already has enough money without any personality.''

This seems to match findings from Long et al. (2018) who found that members within this consumer category like to support the local economy. It also corresponds with findings from Filho et al. (2018) who argues that these respondents find it important to contribute to local breweries as they are knowledgeable about the challenges small-scale breweries are facing. Within the same subject matter, Devotees report to take sustainability into consideration when they are aware that a certain brewery is sustainable. Frank for example explains:

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''When I know that a brewery is sustainable in the way they carry out business or produce the craft beers, it's definitely an advantage. I am not very knowledgeable when it comes down to sustainability. So I don't know by heart which breweries are sustainable and which aren't. But if I know a craft beer is sustainable then it's definitely something I take into consideration, I want to stimulate that.''

Literature from Filho et al. (2018) and Koch et al. (2020) seems to correspond with these findings, as they explain consumers within this category proudly take a political stance among sustainable issues related to craft beer and like to support solutions to environmental challenges within the craft beer industry.

Devotees seemed to dislike the practice where macro breweries take over small-scale breweries as they felt it erodes the authenticity of craft breweries. Floor for example elaborated:

''I think it's shitty. What makes a brewery a brewery is the people behind it, so the founders, with their passion for brewing and not necessarily selling. I think it often merges out of a passion, and I think a little bit of that magic is lost when bigger corporations buy out those smaller breweries. I know it's not the same sort of thing, but by comparison … I think the management tends to take over and becomes a visual brand, but the values behind it are lost''.

As previously analyzed literature did not investigate the attitude from respondents towards this issue, this seems to be a new finding.

Social setting

When it comes to the setting Devotees like to consume craft beer, respondents said to enjoy it on any occasion where craft beer consumption is possible. Frank: *''Actually everywhere where you can drink craft beer, I prefer to drink craft beer''*. In addition, Devotees seemed to enjoy craft beer with family, friends, dates, and colleagues. This seems to match research from Koch et al. (2020) where they explain that craft beer is a lifestyle for members within this consumer category, it is part of their life.

All respondents reported to partake in activities related to craft beer, such as craft beer festivals, brewery tours, and tastings. They reported to thoroughly enjoy these activities,

especially when they are accompanied by friends. Looking at hosting activities, some respondents also mentioned hosting both casual and professional tastings. Remco for example said:

> ''Every Thursday I have a cheese and craft beer evening with roommates, from light to dark. We look things up online, for example the last time we printed out flavour palettes on paper.''

Devotees do report to post on social media about craft beer. The purpose seems to be to spark conversation about topics related to craft beer, encourage others to consume it and to inform or share knowledge related to craft beer. This is the case for Eline for example:

> ''I post on Instagram or Facebook. I like to post about a fun activity I am doing related to craft beer. Like a tour for example, or just a photo from the beer itself. Or the knowledge I have related to craft beer. I think I post those things to get a reaction from people. Like, 'hey guys, look how awesome this new beer is'. And the purpose of it is to inform others and share knowledge. I hope they will think something between the lines of, hey, awesome, which beer style is this, can you tell me more about this. And also to convince them to drink it.''

This seems to match literature from Filo et al. (2018) and Koch et al. (2020) who explain that consumers within this segment like to discuss and share their opinions and knowledge with others at it seems to be a big part of their lifestyle. They like to seek social interaction with others to discuss craft beer trends and topics. These studies did not look into apps that were used by these respondents. This study found that many Devotees made use of the app UnTappd to track which beers they have had, share their opinions and knowledge with others and to keep up with what their friends are drinking. Frank explained: *''I use the UnTappd app a lot. I track everything I try; I like to see what I've said about previously consumed beers. Because I can't remember all of them.''*

Education

Respondents reported to have an above average level of knowledge regarding the history, rituals, and science behind craft beer, but also acknowledged that there are experts who are more knowledgeable than they are. Bram for example elaborated on this:

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''Through my work I know a lot about the process of craft beer. I have done a lot of tastings. I have tried a lot of beers, talked to a lot of people, even with guests, but also with the chef about where certain flavours come from and how you can recognize them. I have learned a lot from this. Several people at my work had finished the Stibon, which is a beer sommelier training. I know quite a lot about beer, but I definitely don't know as much as a brewer or beer sommelier.''

In addition, they also reported to be enthusiastic about and highly interested in information and knowledge regarding the science, rituals and history behind craft beer. They actively look up information on- and offline. Ben:

''I recently followed a craft beer course so that I can give better and more validated reviews on UnTappd and my YouTube channel where I review craft beers. Furthermore, I like to read about the yeasting process, and I like to attend tastings to increase my knowledge.''

This corresponds with literature from Filho et al. (2018), Koch et al. (2020) and Long et al. (2018) who found that consumers within this category are highly interested in subjects and issues related to craft beer as it is seen as part of their self-description. In addition to that, these studies also found that these respondents like to share their knowledge with others with the purpose of encouraging others to try craft beer and gain more understanding in the complexity behind it. This also seemed to be the case in this study, where respondents reported to enjoy discussing the topic of craft beer with others and sharing their knowledge. Emma explained:

''I like to share knowledge with others. I just find it interesting, there are so many interesting stories within the craft beer world. So I really like to share them. Craft beer just has a very interesting history and I think that is awesome.''

Identity

Devotees self-reported that craft beer is part of their identity, as they explain to be very involved in and enthusiastic about everything craft beer has to offer. Tobias, whose primary consumer category is Devotee and secondary consumer category is Expert, said:

> ''Oh yeah, I definitely think craft beer is part of my identity. When others think of me, they think, 'craft beer'. I love talking about it, reading about it, sharing about it and drinking it, so others know that I am very involved in the world of craft beer''.

This seems to match literature from Filho et al. (2018) and Koch et al. (2020) who state that for consumers within this category craft beer is part of their self-worth and identity. In addition, respondents also said to feel part of the craft beer subculture upon consuming craft beer, especially when it is consumed with others who are enthusiastic about craft beer and like to discuss it. This seems to match literature from Filho et al. (2018) and Koch et al. (2020). Who found that consumers within this category feel attached to the craft beer subculture.

Several Devotees mentioned to have come across beer snobs. All of them reported to strongly dislike this consumer category. A quote from Emma portrays this well:

> ''I find [beer snobs] them very obnoxious. They truly are connoisseurs. I do believe they have some knowledge about craft beer, but they seem to oversell it and have a somewhat superior attitude towards others about. I think it's super annoying.''

When asked about social status, Devotees explained that they only felt craft beer is linked to a somewhat higher social status due to the price point, as it is more expensive in comparison to regular pilsners or lagers. As previously analyzed studies did not investigate this, it seems to be a new finding.

4.6 Experts

Like the Elitists, this consumer category is different from other consumer categories. This group shares almost the exact same characterizations as Devotees, with the exception that they are more knowledgeable about anything related to craft beer as this group usually exists of expects such as brewers or sommeliers. Another characterization is that for this group craft beer is inseparable connected to their identity, and they are seen as the people who create phenomena due to their knowledge. This seems to correspond with literature completely as both Filho et al. (2018) and Koch et al. (2020) state that there is a thin line between Devotees and Experts, but that the difference mainly lies in experience and knowledge.

4.7 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the results of the study have been analyzed which show that all six consumer categories (casuals, socials, adventurers, elitists, devotees and experts) that have been proposed in the synthesized model, have been recognized. During the analysis, it also appeared that many respondents can be linked to two consumer categories at once. These findings have been summarized in Table 1.2, which can be found in Appendix B.

5 Discussion

In this chapter the primary findings from the analysis are presented and summarized. An improved model is presented, and the dual identity theory is explored.

5.1 Main findings

This study explored the different consumer categories that are present within the craft beer subculture. Five previous studies (Carvalho et al., 2018; Filho et al., 2018; Koch et al., 2020; Long et al., 2018; Taylor & DiPietro, 2017) that investigated consumer segments and motivations within the craft beer subculture were analysed. It was found that their reported categories were scattered and variated from each other. Thus, similarities and differences were summarized and mapped out, and eventually translated into six final consumer categories to create an overview of possibly present consumer categories: Casuals, Socials, Adventurers, Elitists, Devotees and Experts.

Findings from the qualitative study showed that the six summarized consumer categories did indeed match with consumers and a detailed characterization of each category was found. The synthesized model presented in the literature review has been revised and a new model is presented in Table 1.2, which is shown on the next page. Here, the most important characterizations from each consumer category are summarized. As it provides a clear overview of different types of consumers within the craft beer subculture, marketeers can use this to reach their target audience more effectively.

	Motivations	Preferences	Considerations	Social setting	Education	Identity
Elitist	Sophistication	Consumer customs & rituals			Moderately educated	
Devotee	Life-enrichment Enjoyment	Craft beer Food pairing Small-scale & locality Consumer customs & rituals	Support local breweries Sustainability	Frequently drink alone High interest craft beer related activities Posts about craft beer on social media Frequently use UnTappd	Well-educated High interest in craft beer related information High interest in sharing knowledge	Highly part of identity High connection to subculture High involvement
Expert	Life-fulfillment			Creates on- and/or offline content about craft beer	Expert knowledge about craft beer Create phenomena within the craft beer industry	Inseparably attached to identity
Casual	Leisure experience Enjoyment and relaxation	Traditional beer Mass-produced beer/breweries Availability	Familiarity with styles/breweries	Rarely drink alone Slight interest in craft beer related activities	Uneducated about craft beer Low interest in information about craft beer	Low product loyalty Not part of identity Low connection to subculture Low involvement
Social	Togetherness and sociability	Mass-produced beer/breweries Light, fresh and fruit styles	Recommendations Familiarity with styles/breweries Aesthetics	Do not drink alone Low interest in craft beer related activities Shares craft beer related activities on social media	Uneducated about craft beer Low interest in information about craft beer	Not part of identity Moderate connection to subculture Low involvement
Adventurer	Novelty & variation Thrill-seeking Togetherness & sociability	Novelty & variation Unusual & uncommon ingredients/flavours	Novelty & variation Aesthetics Recommendations Locality	Occasionally drink alone Moderate interest in craft beer related activities Moderately use UnTappd	Moderately educated about craft beer Low interest in information about craft beer Moderate interest in sharing knowledge	Moderately part of identity High connection to subculture Average involvement

Table 1.2: Extended synthesized model: consumer categories

5.2 Multiple Identities

While each respondent had a clear primary consumer category, it was found that more than half of consumers also showed characteristics from one other category. It seemed that those respondents had a primary consumer category, something that has not been mentioned or investigated in previously analysed literature. This is valuable information as it means that while marketeers try to segment consumers, it is very possible that consumers have a multiple identities which could hint towards the fact that consumer categories are not solid but rather fluid. This could imply that marketeers should not limit their focus strategies on segmented consumer categories alone but should also put their focus on exploring possibly existing multiple identities.

5.3 Chapter Summary

In summary, an improved model is presented to categorize craft beer consumers within the craft beer subculture. However, while six clear consumer categories with distinctive characteristics were found, several respondents seemed to have a secondary consumer category, hinting towards consumer segments being fluid.

6 Conclusion

In this final chapter, reflection will be given on the research aims and if the research aims have been accomplished. Also, the research question will be answered. Furthermore, the practical implications, future research and limitations of the study will be discussed.

6.1 Research Aims

The purpose of this thesis was to answer the research question: How do consumers in craft beer subculture construct their identities? This research purpose has been accomplished by deriving a synthesized model from prior research on craft beer consumption and by extending this model in the discussion chapter. Craft beer consumers can be divided into the categories casuals, socials, adventurers, elitists, devotees and experts and were also found to have multiple identities at once.

6.2 Theoretical Contribution

This study contributes to the existing literature on consumer identity and consumer (sub)culture. Secondly, it contributes to the research field of craft beer consumption. In contrast to prior studies, this study has been focusing on the intersection of identity and subculture within craft beer consumption, which adds to a relatively scarce explored area. The study also delivers theoretical contribution in the scattered landscape of consumer categorization in craft beer consumption. It might also add to consumer categorization of subcultures in general, which would have to be proven by using the adapted synthesized model as departure point in research within different subcultures, which will further be discussed in chapter 6.4 Future Research.

6.3   Practical Implications

The practical implications of the results of this study entail that researchers in the broader research field of consumer identity can use this study to acquire insights on the topic of identity within subcultures, as the synthesized model with the consumer categories (casuals, socials, adventurers, elitists, devotees and experts) might also be applicable to other subcultures, for example the Apple subculture. Also, the results provide valuable insights for researchers that specifically study the craft beer consumption phenomenon. For practitioners, and mainly for craft beer brewers that want to get to know their consumers better in order to better market their craft beer, the results can be found useful to sharpen their marketing strategy towards the defined consumer categories among craft beer consumers. Not much research has been done on craft beer consumption and craft beer consumer identity, so it is important information for brand managers, especially those in The Netherlands. Practitioners should first define which type(s) of craft beer consumers they are targeting, after which they can get useful insights out of this study about deeper motives and preferences of their preferred target group(s). In addition, these results can help managers of established breweries create strategies to increase consumption of their products by partially changing their characteristics or creating new types of beer, as well as to promote their products through marketing actions, including advertisements based on the main associations and motivating factors, in order to establish a clear, objective and attractive communication so that it can arouse the curiosity and interest of even those who still do not consume the product.

6.4   Future Research

Research on the intersection of identity and subculture remains scarce, hence more research on these topics would substantially add to the ongoing academic discussion about these topics. It would also be valuable if the synthesized model would be taken as a departure point to study different contexts. Different contexts can mean other subcultures, like the Apple subculture and other tech subcultures, music subcultures, or any other subculture. Different contexts can also mean performing a similar study, so related to craft beer consumption, but then on a different market, to see if cultural differences might result in different findings. Any

follow up study on craft beer consumption will be valuable, as the topic remains relatively unexplored.

6.5 Limitations

This study has taken its approach from a Consumer Culture Theory perspective. This limits the view of the research to a consumer centric scope. The limitation that comes with this is that the effect of any other actors in consumption society, like government or companies, have not been incorporated in the study. It would therefore be interesting to highlight the topic of craft beer consumption also from a marketing management perspective, or from a governmental perspective.

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Appendix A

Interview guide

Demographics

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your highest level of education?
4. What is your current occupation (work/study)?
5. In which city/place do you live?

Introduction to craft beer

1. How were you introduced to the world of craft beer?
2. What made you start consuming craft beer?

Motives

1. What are the primary reasons for you to consume craft beer?
2. What are the benefits you experience from consuming craft beer?
3. What makes you choose craft beer over other types of beer?

Preferences

1. Which aspects about craft beer do you like?
2. Which craft beer styles do you enjoy? Can you tell me why you like these styles?
3. Say you are in a restaurant or pub. What kind of craft beer do you usually order?
4. Do you have any favourite breweries? If yes, which breweries and why are they your favourite?

Considerations

1. What do you look (visually) at when purchasing craft beer?

2. Say you are standing in a store. How do you choose which craft beer you are going to purchase?

3. Can you give a description of the process of entering a craft beer bar and choosing what to drink?

4. Which aspects about craft beer are important to you (and why)?

5. Say you are in a restaurant or pub. How do you decide which craft beer to choose?

6. Do you ever drink any other beer than craft beer? If so, how frequent and what do you choose, why not only craft beer?

7. What difference does it make for you if the beer is from a local brewer?

8. Do you make any sustainability related considerations when purchasing craft beer? If yes: what do you look at and how much does this factor weigh in on your purchasing behaviour?

9. Do you feel different emotions when purchasing a craft beer from a small craft brewery, opposed to purchasing a craft beer that is from a bigger brewery? Why?

10. What do you think about companies buying out smaller breweries in order to join in on the market potential? Why?

Social setting

Can you name a place or some places where you usually purchase craft beer?

1. In which setting(s) do you drink craft beer?

2. With whom do you enjoy craft beer? Also alone sometimes? What are the differences between drinking with those group(s) and alone?

3. How would you describe your friends as beer drinkers?

4. Do you feel like you are part of a group/subculture when drinking craft beer?

5. At what occasions do you consume craft beer?

6. Do you have any rituals when drinking craft beer?

7. Do you engage in activities related to craft beer? If yes, which activities?

8. Do you ever host any activities related to craft beer? If yes, which activities and why?

Education

1. Do you feel like you need a certain level of skill and knowledge to properly appreciate craft beer?

2. How educated do you feel that you are on the subject of craft beer? Why do you feel that way?

3. In what ways have you educated yourself about craft beer? (how did it develop?)

4. Do you ever share your knowledge about craft beer with others? If yes: with whom, when, why? (Follow up: do you enjoy sharing knowledge about it?)

5. Do you actively read about craft beer? If yes, what are you interested in?

Identity

1. What comes to mind when you think of craft beer?

2. What about craft beer is appealing to you?

3. How would you describe yourself as a craft beer consumer? (follow up with how do you describe your friends! Follow up with do you have experts/people that know more as friend? Do you aspire to be like them?)

4. How would you describe the craft beer culture? (Follow up: do you feel part of it?)

5. Who is the typical craft beer drinker in your opinion? Describe the person. Status, looks, occupation. Do you associate yourself with this person/do you aspire to be anything like that person?

6. Can you share your thoughts/opinions on different kinds of craft beer consumers (negative/positive)?

7. Do you associate craft beer with any kind of social status?

8. It has been studied that the consumption of craft beer enables middle class people to lift their social status. What do you think of this and do you see any of this happening in society? (can you imagine this happening or don't you think it works like that for people?)

9. Do you ever post on social media about craft beer? If yes, why and what do you post about?

10. Do you use any apps related to craft beer? If yes, which app, why and how do you use it?

Appendix B

Overview of found (multiple) identities among respondent set

Respondent	Primary consumer category	Secondary consumer category
Bren	Casual	Social
Britt	Casual	Adventurer
Pieter	Social	
Niek	Social	
Anouk	Social	
Jeroen	Social	Adventurer
Laurens	Social	Elitist
Milou	Social	Adventurer
Yin	Social	

Hannah	Adventurer	
Levi	Adventurer	
Femke	Adventurer	
Lianne	Adventurer	Casual
Celyne	Adventurer	Social
Nadine	Adventurer	
Aron	Adventurer	Casual
Thijmen	Adventurer	
Jorrit	Adventurer	Social
Laura	Adventurer	Elitist
Arjen	Adventurer	
Gayan	Adventurer	

Vincent	Adventurer	Devotee
Pepijn	Adventurer	
Max	Adventurer	Casual
Floris	Elitist	
Frank	Devotee	Adventurer
Eline	Devotee	
Floor	Devotee	Adventurer
Emma	Devotee	
Dylan	Devotee	Adventurer
Tobias	Devotee	Expert
Remco	Devotee	Adventurer
Ben	Devotee	Adventurer

Bram	Devotee	Adventurer
Duco	Expert	

Table 1.3 Found primary and secondary subcultural identities within respondents