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Beyond the Bin: Dumpster Diving as an Alternative Consumer Practice

Investigating the Motivations and Methods of Urban Foragers

by

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Abstract

Title: Beyond the Bin: Dumpster Diving as an Alternative Consumer Practice - Investigating the Motivations and Methods of Urban Foragers

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Keywords: Dumpster diving, Social movement, Consumer resistance, Theory of planned behavior (TPB).

Purpose: The study investigates dumpster diving motivations, methods, and its role as a resistance against conventional consumption patterns. This exploration addresses dumpster diving as a social movement with a focus on the issues of food waste.

Theoretical Framework: The research draws on Consumer Culture Theory, Consumer Resistance, New Social Movement Theory, and Theory of Planned Behavior to contextualize dumpster diving and its role in society.

Methodology: A qualitative micro-ethnographic approach is adopted, employing participant observation and purposive as well as snowball sampling. The researchers participated in three unique dumpster diving experiences to gain an in-depth understanding of the practice.

Empirical Data: A thematic analysis of empirical data reveals social interaction, anti-waste ideology, and economic considerations as principal motivations. It also outlines a detailed sequence of dumpster diving activities, including preparation, diving, relationship to personnel and law-enforcement, and post-diving procedures.

Discussion: The practice of dumpster diving is presented as both a statement against food waste and a form of alternative consumption. The central role of the community in validating and propagating dumpster diving is highlighted, emphasizing the unity among divers towards the common goal of salvaging food. Despite a shared goal of combating food waste, dumpster divers demonstrate diverse attitudes and practices, highlighting the multifaceted nature of the activity.

Conclusion: The study underscores dumpster diving as a new form of social movement since the divers protest more in silence compared to traditional social movements. Key drivers are environmental consciousness, economic concern, and a sense of community, positioning dumpster diving as a form of consumer resistance against the conventional way of food consumption.

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1 Introduction

Growing up, one would often witness grandparents meticulously saving leftover food, reusing containers, and turning scraps into compost. This frugal behavior, born out of necessity and wisdom, starkly contrasts with the food waste epidemic that plagues society. As the global population increases and environmental concerns heighten, the issue of food waste has become increasingly pressing, necessitating innovative strategies and sustainable solutions to address the problem.

In recent years, dumpster diving, the act of salvaging discarded food from containers and trash bins, has gained traction as both a social movement and a means to mitigate food waste. Despite its potential to raise awareness about the gravity of food waste and contribute to a more sustainable food culture, dumpster diving remains a controversial and legally complex activity.

This paper delves into the world of dumpster diving in Sweden, exploring the factors that contribute to the perceived value of discarded food items for those who engage in the practice. By examining the motivations behind dumpster diving and the methods used to assess the value of discarded food items, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the practice and its implications for the broader discourse on sustainable food systems. In doing so, this study aims to bridge the gap between the well-known motivations driving social movements and the relatively unexplored activity of dumpster diving, shedding light on an unconventional yet increasingly relevant approach to addressing the global issue of food waste in the context of sustainability.

1.1 Background

Food waste is a critical global issue that has far-reaching consequences for the environment, society, and the economy. The United Nations points on the issues about food waste and how it is contributing significantly to greenhouse gas emissions and overburdening landfills (UNEP, 2021). Food waste not only exacerbates climate change but also represents a lost opportunity to feed millions of people who suffer from food insecurity (Buzby, 2022). In response to this problem, various strategies and practices have emerged to mitigate food

waste and promote sustainability, one of which is dumpster diving. The practice of retrieving discarded food from containers and trash bins, has gained both supporters and critics over recent years. While some view it as an environmentally responsible way to reduce waste and save good food from being discarded, others see it as unsanitary, dangerous, and potentially illegal. The legal landscape surrounding dumpster diving is complex and varies across countries, often leading to confusion and conflicting interpretations of the law.

The legality of dumpster diving is a complex and nuanced issue, particularly in Sweden where the practice exists in a legal gray area. While there are no specific Swedish court cases addressing dumpster diving, several relevant laws can be considered. For example, theft and damage to property could be relevant if a container is damaged or its contents are considered to have economic value (e.g., for recycling or heating purposes). Furthermore, trespassing and littering may also be pertinent legal considerations, as dumpster diving often takes place on private property or in spaces where the public has access. In Sweden, theft, damage to property, trespassing, and littering are regulated by *Brottsbalken* and the *Miljöbalken*, respectively. However, ambiguity remains as to whether dumpster diving should be considered theft, especially when items are perceived as abandoned. Consequently, the legal landscape surrounding dumpster diving remains unclear and can lead to varying interpretations and enforcement of the law, further complicating the discussion on the practice's sustainability and legitimacy. The laws surrounding dumpster diving in other countries are not entirely dissimilar to those in Sweden. However, the primary factors that render the practice illegal may vary. In contrast to Sweden, trespassing laws predominantly grant property owners the right to evict dumpster divers. However, the issue is mainly governed by local laws (Findlaw, 2022). Meanwhile, in Germany, dumpster diving is explicitly considered theft, but the low value of the items often leads to a lack of prioritization by law enforcement (Gesley, 2022).

Dumpster diving, as an activity, traces its roots back to the inception of dumpsters themselves. Individuals have been drawn to this practice due to financial necessity, often catalyzed by periods of economic instability. The modern era, as it turns out, is not immune to such economic turmoil. As per recent projections by the Swedish Konjunkturinstitutet (2023), Sweden is entering an economic recession in 2023, characterized by a declining Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and surging inflation rates. This economic downturn is expected to exacerbate financial pressures on Swedish households, potentially compelling

more individuals to consider alternatives to conventional consumer practices. One critical area impacted by these economic conditions is the cost of food. According to Statistiska Central Byrån (2023), food prices in Sweden have seen a steep rise over the past year. Between February 2022 and February 2023, food prices increased by 20,95%. This inflation, coupled with the forecasted economic recession, suggests that the financial accessibility of food might become a pressing issue for many Swedes.

In this light, the relevance of dumpster diving becomes increasingly pronounced. As the cost of food escalates and economic conditions deteriorate, dumpster diving may provide a practical means of handling food expenses for some households. Therefore, the motivations, practices, and implications of dumpster diving warrant further exploration, both to understand its role in the context of these economic circumstances and to potentially inform policies and initiatives aimed at alleviating food insecurity.

The prevalence of dumpster diving in Sweden has increased in recent years, with growing public awareness of the practice potentially leading to even more individuals participating in the future (Vinegar et al., 2014). Some businesses have recognized the need to address food waste by offering discounted products with short expiration dates, but there remains significant room for expansion in this area. Innovative business opportunities have emerged to tackle food waste, such as mobile applications like Too Good To Go, which connects consumers with surplus food from local retailers, preventing it from going to waste (TGTG, 2023). As dumpster diving becomes more widespread and public understanding of the issue deepens, it is crucial to continue exploring sustainable solutions and innovative approaches to reduce food waste.

This underscores the commercial interest in understanding the motivations and practices of dumpster divers. Stakeholders can gain valuable insights from the behaviors of dumpster divers to develop products, services, or strategies that align with the values of these consumers. As the market evolves to address food waste more effectively, understanding this consumption pattern can guide businesses in designing sustainable and economically appealing solutions. Hence, the dumpster diving phenomenon is not only an interesting sociological trend but also a valuable source of commercial knowledge for forward-thinking businesses.

1.2 Research Problem

The impacts of human activities have caused alarming global environmental issues to our post-industrial society (Borrello et al., 2017). These issues call for re-thinking of how to use resources and organize economic and social relations. Our current lifestyles, supply chains, organization and regulation as well as political structures are restraining us, and there is a need to develop innovative strategies to transition to a more sustainable society. Waste and pollutants are produced along the chain of supplies, and much of the material that could have been reused or recycled goes to waste. This system is not durable since it exceeds our planet's capacity to supply us with resources and handle all the waste and pollutants.

According to Borrello et al. (2017) consumers in food insecure countries are more careful not to waste food, which is why food waste is particularly practiced in the Western countries where there is an abundance of food. The abundance of food makes people afford to waste it, and to discard food that is still edible. The estimated amount of food being wasted in the world is roughly a third of all the produced food (The World Counts, 2023). Due to confusion of dates on packaged food, 20% of the food is thrown away (FDA, 2019). Even though more than enough food is produced for the population on this planet, around 29,3% of the population in 2021 were moderately or severely food insecure according to the World Health Organization (2022). This number increased by 350 million people compared to before the Covid-19 pandemic.

In a report made by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2017) the wastage of society with huge amounts of food waste exacerbates climate change and pollutes the environment with greenhouse gas emissions. In turn, future changes and extreme weather conditions such as drought can destroy harvest land and crops which could cause damage to the food supply chain. Also, when people throw away food, the fuel and fertilizers that was used to produce the foods causes even more climate change as a result of greenhouse gas emissions (United Nation, n.d.).

People participating in dumpster diving activities prove it is possible to recover the value of discarded food products, and that the food should not be considered as waste (Lehtonen & Pyyhtinen, 2020). Even though waste is unwanted by some, discarded food products can be reassessed and valuable by others. Simply put, waste does not have to be the opposite of

value. According to Patsiaouras (2022) there is an interconnection between consumption, lifestyles and social movements. However, empirical research is lacking regarding the impact of their interrelations, and therefore it would be of value to investigate it further with the focus on dumpster diving as a consumption practice.

1.3 Research Questions

With the purpose of investigating the factors contributing to the perceived value of discarded food items for individuals engaged in dumpster diving in Sweden, this paper aims at answering the following research questions:

- 1) *What are the motivations behind engaging in dumpster diving?*
- 2) *What strategies and methods are employed when practicing dumpster diving?*

1.4 Research Purpose

The objective of this study is to delve into the somewhat uncharted territory of dumpster diving, seeking to understand the motivations and practices that underpin this emergent consumer behavior. The research aims to uncover the multifaceted factors that discarded food items hold for those who partake in dumpster diving. By doing so, this study seeks to expand the existing understanding of this practice within the context of sustainability.

This research will bridge the gap between the established motivations that fuel social movements and the less explored, yet increasingly relevant, activity of dumpster diving. In doing so, we aim to shed light on this unconventional approach to addressing the global issue of food waste.

To address this research objective, the study will explore the following aspects:

- The motivations behind dumpster diving and how these motivations intersect with broader socio-economic and environmental factors.

- The strategies and methods used by dumpster divers to evaluate the value of discarded food items, and the implications of these methods within the context of Swedish law and societal norms.

2 Literature & Theoretical Review

In the following section, readers will first and foremost learn more about previous research about dumpster diving. Moreover the reader will be introduced to definitions and critical theories that underpin this thesis. The theoretical framework will encompass consumer culture theory, consumer resistance, social movements, and the theory of planned behavior.

2.1 Previous Research on Dumpster Diving

In Jahnke and Liebe's (2021) research article *Dumpster diving for a better world*, they explore dumpster diving in the light of political protest action against food waste. They view dumpster diving as unconventional, since it refers to people recovering and reusing food items that have been discarded but are still edible, and also because people mainly dumpster dive from containers located at grocery stores. They also explore dumpster diving in Germany, where it is completely illegal, and some dumpster divers have been brought to face court and potential prison sentences between three months up to ten years. Dumpster diving is considered theft in Germany, however, some people still do it as they want to change the food system and modify the way food is produced, distributed and consumed. The authors refer to dumpster diving as unconventional protest behavior, and state that this area is still underresearched in regards to studies on social movements as well as social protests. The authors also focus their research on to what extent the general public is willing to accept the phenomenon of dumpster diving.

The researchers found that the general public does show a high level of support for dumpster diving (Jahnke & Liebe, 2021). Although, dumpster diving remains illegal. They also found that the activists partaking in dumpster diving do it for political, social, environmental, financial and leisure-related reasons. Some of the activists and the general public do not necessarily see dumpster diving as an unconventional protest action, but rather as a lifestyle politics. Furthermore, they state that dumpster diving is embedded in a broader social movement that could be called an "anti-(food)waste movement".

Another study, conducted by Lehtonen and Pyyhtinen (2021) focuses their research on dumpster diving in Finland. The authors examine how the practice provides an alternative

way to consume within capitalism, where people are confined by limits imposed on their daily lives. For the dumpster divers it is important to sustain their ecologically sustainable and morally coherent lifestyle through the practice of dumpster diving. The authors explore how dumpster diving can provide people with a sense of autonomy as well as a feeling of not being confined by the limits imposed on people. They view dumpster diving as a practical form of criticism. The name of this article, *Living on the margins: dumpster diving for food as a critical practice*, implies that the people participating in the practice live a different life compared to how most people live, as well as them feeding themselves off what other people have thrown away. Ultimately, they criticize overproduction, overconsumption and the fact that people do not take into consideration the limitations of our planet. Rather than focusing on organized and public actions of social movements, the authors want to bridge the gap and explore the private lifestyle-centered practices to social change.

The results of the study show that dumpster divers do not seek public visibility and their main objective is not concerned around the food supply system (Lehtonen & Pyyhtinen, 2021). Their motivations are directed inwards, rather than outwards, as they seek to live an ecologically sound and morally coherent lifestyle. Dumpster divers seek satisfaction inwards rather than confronting the state or the social structure. The results also show that the practice is not an organized social movement, but rather consists of private actions with like-minded friends, with efforts to social change. While dumpster diving creates a critical distance from traditional retail forms, it also provides the participants with food for free, as well as the possibility for a pleasurable joint activity and sharing findings among each other.

In the article *Combating food waste: dumpster diving as a form of consumer resistance*, Vaughan (2018) focuses on food waste in North America. The author examines the issue of food waste from a social and cultural perspective by shedding light on the consumer culture taken for granted in the West. Dumpster diving has served as a form of resistance against our wasteful consumer culture.

While for some people dumpster diving is a means to obtain food out of necessity, for others it is a means for non-food related motivations. These motivations go beyond food insecurity and engage individuals in the practice of dumpster diving. It might be for political activism, thrift and self-reliance, and/or positive social experience. For some dumpster divers the practice is a way to protest against the modern industrialized food system, while for others it

is a social activity to participate in. As an example of this is the various forms of “diving etiquette” that dumpster divers engage in. They often follow informal and unwritten codes of behavior that guide them in their diving activities. These include keeping the area where they dumpster dive as clean as possible, only taking what the divers’ need, sometimes helping other divers, and finally sharing the findings with others. All of these practices give the divers a sense of community, which they highly value.

Dumpster diving is a counterculture act and it aligns with the concept of “freeganism” (Vaughan, 2018). People considered as freegans adopt a minimalistic lifestyle using various strategies that go against mainstream culture to adopt an alternative living. Most freegans have to adjust somewhat to the capitalist nature of society in order to survive, however, some have managed to avoid the system entirely and still have a comfortable living.

With the increasing popularity and awareness of the phenomenon of dumpster diving, it may contribute, over time, to a societal shift regarding the behavior of consumers (Vaughan, 2018). The practice contains pro-environmental behaviors which has the possibility to influence others, and pressure them to incorporate environmentally friendly practices. In this case these practices would become normalized within social groups. At the very least, dumpster divers do encourage consumers to change their wasteful behaviors and start to question the dominant food system within our capitalistic society. Food used to be valued higher, however, it is now taken for granted and with no thought of how it ends up on our plates. Finally, the phenomenon of dumpster diving does serve as a form of consumer resistance fighting against the dominant power of the industrial food system. Divers do not only encourage people to be mindful of how to consume, they also challenge the existing capitalist structures as well as the conventional ways of thinking.

2.2 Consumer Culture Theory

Consumer culture theory (CCT) explores the diversity of meanings and cultural groups overlapping each other within the broad picture of market capitalism and globalization (Arnould & Thompson, 2018). CCT is about what consumers do and how they construct their identities by using marketplace resources. A central aspect within CCT is the relationship between consumers and consumption, namely that consumers are what they consume, and

they consume to communicate what they are (Schau, 2018). Therefore, identity is translated into consumption, and consumption can reveal one's identity.

According to Schau (2018) consumers are social actors and use symbols, ideas and commercial products to construct their identity projects. They engage in consumption practices together with others who they associate themselves with, to align their identities with specific objects and practices while simultaneously avoiding others. Cova and Shankar (2018) argue that it is not the object per se that brings value when consuming, instead, it is the motivation to consume and the experience of social interactions with like-minded consumers that creates value. This statement shows that consumption is a collective process, and not separated from others like the dominant logic in marketing argues. Furthermore, a CCT approach considers how marketplace cultures can provide a sense of collective experiences by providing consumers with strong emotional benefits (Cova & Shankar, 2018). CCT research demonstrates the active role of consumers regarding the value creation process, such as reusing products and making them meaningful for them (Karaba & Scaraboto, 2018).

The following section will explain an important topic within the CCT literature. When marketing practices and communication tactics try to influence individuals and groups with certain behaviors, prescribe norms and ideologies, consumers will act to resist. Therefore, consumer resistance can be transformative and change marketplace practices as well as combat the power relationship to force social justice.

2.2.1 Consumer Resistance

Consumer resistance is about what an individual or group perceives as power, pressure or any attempt to influence one's behavior (Roux & Izberk-Bilgin, 2018). It involves action, and not only thinking or having intentions about something. When consumers regard practices as manipulative or exploitative they create a behavior of resistance to the power they perceive is being used against them. Hence, resistance is an outcome of power.

In a marketplace, power can be used on individuals and groups to serve a corporations' financial interests (Roux & Izberk-Bilgin, 2018). Through different discourses corporations can try to influence consumers to make a certain choice, however, these discourses show a

great example of the dynamic between power and resistance which could trigger a counterculture reaction. The discourses can therefore enforce specific norms, behaviors and ideologies that are resisted. In turn, consumer resistance can lead to transformation, changes in marketplaces and shifts in power relationships. According to the authors, consumer resistance can either be expressed by individuals or a collective, by standing up against market players with a lot of power and/or by (re)creating alternative ways of consuming. Because of individuals taking on many roles in society such as workers and producers they deal with economic, social and ethical issues regarding consumption and production of goods. This is why consumer resistance is fundamentally political since it reflects how people envision to consume and what is perceived as good versus bad for people (Roux & Izberk-Bilgin, 2018).

Previously, although not that long ago, consumers were seen as co-producers, who used different brands to identify themselves, but today they are defined as cultural entrepreneurs, who challenge the status quo by critically and creatively observing and transforming markets (Roux & Izberk-Bilgin, 2018). Although consumer resistance is not something new, it has been here as long as there has been humans, the term consumer resistance is emerging in the marketing literature. It is important to understand consumer resistance as it has many implications for companies, consumers and politicians since the actions of people participating in resistance by e.g. reshaping markets, changes companies' strategies in the future as well as regulations and political decisions.

Roux and Izberk-Bilgin (2018) explain that consumers are worried about macro-level trends that have a big impact on people's everyday life. Sociohistorical, economic and political trends control how companies and the marketplace operate. One consistent trend is globalization, where problems such as fast and cheap access to resources, more consumption worldwide and environmentally unsustainable manufacturing have made global warming even worse. With greater awareness about the consequences for humans and the environment, this has led to massive resistance demonstrations. According to the authors, the environment is not the only concern when it comes to consumption, people are also much more aware and care about the conditions for the workers when they buy goods and services. Being aware and making requirements have made the consumers more empowered through consumption.

Consumer resistance is practiced in everyday life and includes behaviors like rejecting, restricting and reclaiming (Roux & Izberk-Bilgin, 2018). All of these behaviors are practiced because of concerns for the environment, dislike regarding over-consumption and understanding of economic as well as social inequalities. As a result, some people make an effort to really downsize their lifestyles and to make their ecological footprint as little as possible by reusing and reclaiming to counter waste. According to Roux and Izberk-Bilgin (2018), both individuals and the collective are trying to consume differently and make changes that will matter in the long run. As long as power is exercised over individuals and groups consumer resistance will continue to exist.

2.3 New Social Movement Theory

Before reading this subchapter, the authors of this study would like to clarify that we will begin by explaining the difference between “new” and “old” social movements, however, further on we will use both “social movement” and “new social movement” in the text, but both of the terms refer to the “new” social movements. This depends on the use of terminology of each referenced author.

From the 1960s and onwards (i.e. post-industrial society) new social movements (NSMs) appeared to present the meaning of “new” movements in the Western societies, compared to the “old” working-class movements (Buechler, 2013). The theory of NSM emerged in the 1980s in Europe and is accountable for a new wave of social movements, as well as their differences compared to former social movements of industrial society. The main difference between them is their goals, as the former focused on materialistic qualities such as economic well being, and the current one focuses on issues related to human rights, gender, race, countercultures, environmentalism and the like (Buechler, 2013). The NSMs want social changes in culture, develop new lifestyles, transform identities and consumption patterns, rather than changing specific public policies. The theory also focuses on the relation to culture, ideology and politics. The participants in NSMs differ as well, since they tend to come from the new middle-class, rather than lower classes. Furthermore, Buechler (2013) argues that NSMs prefer decentralized forms of organizations, equality and participation where the values and member identities are more important than the organizational forms.

By the twenty-first century, the term “social movement” was recognized by people all over the world (Tilly, Castañeda & Wood, 2020). It was described as a counterweight to oppressive power, and a message to people to act against a series of injustices. Johnston (2014) describes social movements as driving forces to social change in modern society. He continues by stating that they are strategically led by the people participating in the social movements and all of them are guided by a purpose. Coglianesse (2001) offers his definition of social movements, describing them to have strong organizational efforts to change structures in society or the distribution of resources. Another distinguishing attribute for social movements according to Staggenborg (2016) is that they operate through enduring collective action to bring political and cultural change, e.g. through alternative consumption practices. It is important to understand how social movements can accomplish change, but also their limitations in doing so.

The purpose of some social movement groups is to create a more equitable world, and therefore to organize for social change (Staggenborg, 2016). Meanwhile the purpose for other groups is driven by dissatisfaction and to make the participants do something out of their ordinary lives (Johnston, 2014). The movements are typically challenging the status quo, which other forces try to resist and therefore a conscientiousness to the movements’ actions are considered. Johnston also explains that the most explicit capacity of all social movements is their ability to move history along. Therefore, it is important to know their goals to be able to understand the current society and where it is headed in the future.

2.3.1 Social Movement Distinctions

Johnston (2014) characterizes social movements by defining them to be driven by big ideas that will create change in society in various ways. These ideas will guide the group or organization, as well as unit them. The author's first distinction is between social revolutions and social movements, where the former has huge goals and are aimed to change the social, political and economic systems in a society. The goal is also to create new ways of thinking about relationships between humans and human nature. Examples of great social revolutions in history are the French Revolution and the Iranian Revolution.

The following one is social movements, which Johnston (2014) distinguishes to be smaller in their scope of change and is rather about big ideas that will develop into trends. Examples of such trends are environmentalism, feminism, racial (in)equality as well as gender (in)equality. New social movements' actions are embedded in historically and socially long-standing political issues, related to human rights, wealth and social change (Patsiaouras, 2022). They try to challenge cultural norms and dominant economic ideologies both locally and globally. Earlier movements in history were e.g. giving women the right to vote, as well as the LGBT movement, which provided acceptance of sexual diversity and marriage equality (Staggenborg, 2016). One of the biggest movements of all time was the battle for basic rights for blacks in the 1950s and 1960s.

A third distinction suggested by Johnston (2014) is even smaller social movements that might focus on specific policy issues or e.g. being against nuclear energy. These are also considered big ideas, but less extensive regarding their visions for the future. According to Johnston, it is important to consider how small versus big social movements the researcher wants to study, and still be able to claim the label "social movements", rather than more limited ideas such as "protest campaigns".

2.3.2 Key Elements of Social Movements

According to Johnston (2014) there are three different spheres that can be described as the key elements to a social movement. The author describes social movement groups and organizations as connected through network structures with people having overlapping memberships, rather than them standing alone. The members are interconnected as well as the leaders who might have contact with each other. Since the network structure ties the different groups and organizations together, no matter if they are small or big, they can instead be referred to as the structural sphere of a social movement (Johnston, 2014). With a similar definition of the network, Staggenborg (2014) defines them as a social movement community. This label symbolizes the relations between the individual participants, the groups and the organizations that the movement consists of. According to Johnston (2014), the structural sphere is very important because it makes it possible for resources to be mobilized among the organizations and e.g. getting people out to the streets to put pressure on politicians. These relations and collaborations can also be described as the skeletal

structure, and are important for the social movement's unity and its continuity. Sometimes groups dissolve and organizations are faced with discontinuation, but the persistence for the general movements carries on and is bigger than just the fate of one group (Johnston, 2014).

The second sphere of social movements is the ideas that guide it forward and give the movement fuel to continue as well as cohesion. Johnston (2014) talks about ideologies, values, goals and interests as important factors for the movement, however, the key element that ties people in a group or organization together is a feeling of a collective identity. Also, significant insight from movement research has shown the importance of the collective action framework. This framework helps the participants to interpret events, and it can also work as a systematic ideology with somewhat defined cultural values and norms. Johnston emphasizes that both the collective identity and the collective action framework are an ongoing process among the participants and anchored when they interact with each other in different situations.

In the third sphere, when Johnston (2014) refers to social movements, he emphasizes the performances of a movement, and does not focus on its protest events. He uses the metaphor to emphasize that the typical movement performances are strongly symbolic because they refer to a much deeper meaning, and their statements go far beyond than the content of their songs, placards and speeches shed light to. Johnston also uses the metaphor because social movements do performances since they have an audience who is witnessing their actions, interpreting what they do and acting upon what they have witnessed and interpreted. The audience will also have an impact on how the performances act out. By viewing social movement acts as performances it puts the participants of the movements and the audiences in a dynamic relationship.

The figure below is a general model of social movements, where the circles represent the three spheres. According to Johnston (2014) the structural sphere focuses on the networked relations among the groups and organizations, the ideational-interpretative sphere focuses on the collective identity and the framework, and finally the performative sphere focuses on the collective actions and performances. All of these are key elements that represent social movements which are at the core of the figure. It is common to initially focus on only one of the spheres, but there is a strong interrelationship reinforcing all three of them. The figure also shows how two spheres intersect with each other, and in these areas the figure captures

how associated groups, ideas and actions that are not strictly a part of the movement still might be interesting for the researcher since they share the same core.

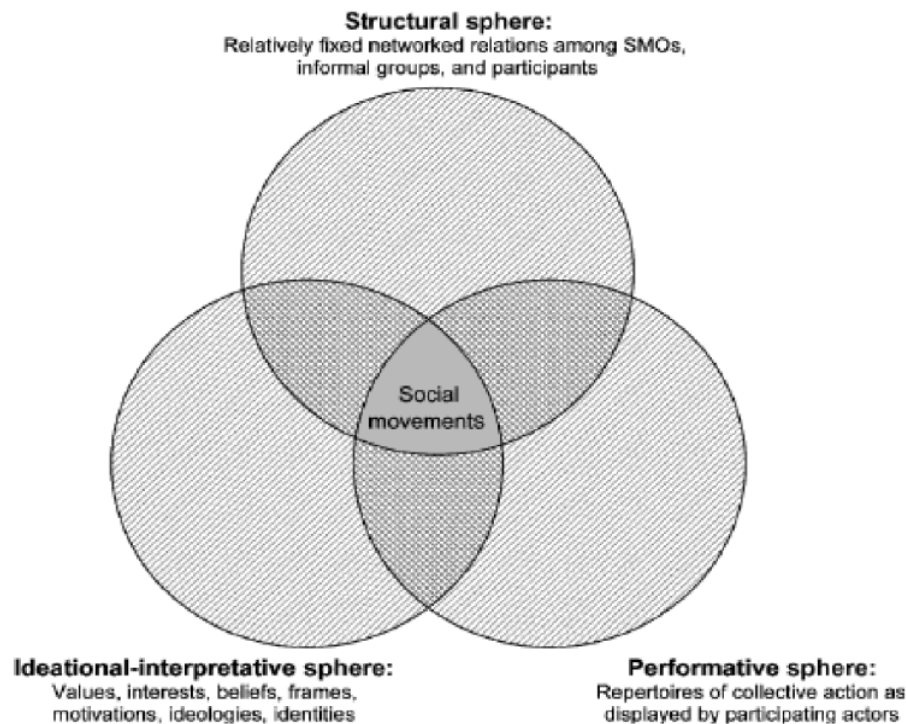


Figure 1: Key Elements of Social Movements

2.3.3 Fundamental Reasons to Participate in Social Movements

Klandermans (2004) distinguishes three fundamental reasons for why people want to participate in social movements: (1) people have the desire to change their circumstances, (2) they want to be part of a group and act as a member, (3) they would like to contribute meaningfully to the world and express their feelings and perceptions. The author suggests that social movements can fulfill these desires, and the more the movement fulfills these desires the more satisfied the participants will be. To refer to these desires Klandermans uses concepts such as instrumentality, identity and ideology. These three concepts are the main motivations why people participate in social movements. The participants want to extend their efforts in order to reach a goal.

Instrumentality refers to participants trying to affect the social and political environment (Klandermans, 2004). It can start by a demand for change because of feelings such as dissatisfaction or injustice, and experience of inequality. The participants believe they can influence the situation with reasonable efforts that make them take part in the movement. They also have the resources and opportunities to make an impact. If the goal is achieved, people will be satisfied by the experience. This also shows the importance of collective identity as a factor for participation in movements.

Identity refers to participants trying to identify with a group. Klandermans (2004) states that there are more than costs and benefits to consider when participating in a movement. One of those is the feeling of belonging in a group. People do often have many roles in society, such as being a student, unemployed, a soccer player or a farmer. All of these roles form one's personal identity, and when sharing these identities with other people they turn into collective identities. The collective identities take place when they are shared with other people, referring to a specific place, whereas personal identity refers to various places in society (Klandermans, 2004). By having a strong identification with the group members, participation in social movements are more likely to occur. However, identification is not all that movements offer, they also provide opportunities to celebrate the collective identity through rituals, meetings, common codes, symbols, and the like.

Ideology refers to participants searching for meaning and trying to express one's views (Klandermans, 2004). People might be angry or upset and want to make that known by participating in social movements to enforce change. However, they do not only participate to enforce change but to obtain dignity in their lives by action and moral expression. The group must weave together a package of collected attitudes, morals and emotions. According to Klandermans (2004) people often look for others with the same kind of feelings and experiences, which a social movement can provide. The environment in the social movement can therefore be a place for participants to exchange experiences, express their feelings and tell stories to each other. The better they deal with emotions, the more committed people will become. On the other hand, if they fail people might abandon the movement.

Furthermore, creating a shared definition of a situation is called collective action frames, and can be defined through terms such as injustice, identity and agency. It is possible to assume that people who join the movement share some of the ideologies of the movement's action

frame, and when sharing them together they create meaning in their lives. They do not invent these ideas, but instead they build upon ideological heritage which they relate to current themes and values in society.

2.4 Theory of Planned Behavior

The theory of planned behavior (TPB), a psychological framework put forth by Icek Ajzen in 1991, offers a comprehensive understanding of how an individual's attitudes, beliefs, and intentions shape their behavior. TPB is a versatile theory, as it has been applied in various domains such as health, consumer behavior, and environmental studies, providing a reliable tool for predicting and understanding a wide spectrum of behaviors (Ajzen, 1991).

In the TPB, the primary driver of behavior is an individual's intention to engage in that behavior. This intention does not emerge in a vacuum; rather, it is shaped by three core factors: the attitude towards the behavior, the influence of subjective norms, and the person's perceived behavioral control.

The first factor, *attitude towards the behavior*, refers to an individual's overall positive or negative evaluation of the behavior in question. This evaluation is subjective and can be influenced by various factors, such as personal beliefs about the benefits and drawbacks of the behavior, and an individual's perception of its value (Ajzen, 1985). The more favorable the attitude towards a behavior, the stronger the intention to perform it. This personal evaluation is not a simple binary of positive or negative. It is more nuanced, reflecting the individual's subjective perspective, and shaped by various factors that interact in complex ways.

An individual's personal beliefs about the behavior includes their understanding of what the behavior entails, the consequences it might lead to, and its relevance to their life (Ajzen, 1985). For instance, if a person believes that regular exercise leads to better health and this is a highly valued outcome for them, their attitude towards exercising regularly will likely be positive. Furthermore, another factor that shapes the attitude towards a behavior is the perception of its value. This involves both tangible and intangible aspects. Tangible value could be related to material benefits like money, while intangible value could include

emotional satisfaction, social recognition, or alignment with personal values (Ajzen, 1985). For example, a person might perceive volunteering as valuable because it provides a sense of fulfillment, contributes to the community, or aligns with their value of helping others, and thus have a positive attitude towards it.

The subjective nature of these factors means that attitudes can vary significantly between individuals, even towards the same behavior. It is also important to note that attitudes are not static; they can evolve over time as individuals gain new experiences, information, and insights. In TPB, it is posited that the more favorable an individual's attitude towards a behavior, the stronger their intention to engage in it. This means that if individuals see a behavior as beneficial and valuable, they are more likely to intend to perform it. Conversely, if they view the behavior negatively, their intention to perform it will likely be weaker (Ajzen, 1985). Therefore, understanding an individual's attitude towards a behavior can provide valuable insights into their behavioral intentions.

The second factor, *subjective norms*, pertains to the social pressures that influence an individual's behavior. This includes an individual's perception of whether significant people in their life approve or disapprove of the behavior, as well as the motivation to conform to these perceived social expectations (Ajzen, 1985). The social environment can have a significant impact on an individual's intention to engage in a particular behavior. It encompasses the perceived social pressures or expectations that individuals feel from important people in their life, such as family, friends, or colleagues.

Subjective norms are based on an individual's perceptions of what important others think they should do. For example, if a person believes that their friends and family think they should eat healthily, this belief can influence their intentions and decision to follow a healthy diet. It is important to understand that subjective norms are not objective realities; they are perceptions and can be accurate or inaccurate reflections of what others really think. This factor also includes the individual's motivation to comply with these perceived expectations. This motivation can be influenced by several factors, such as the desire to fit in, respect for the other person's opinion, or fear of social disapproval. If an individual is highly motivated to comply with the perceived expectations of others, they are more likely to adopt behaviors that align with these expectations (Ajzen, 1985).

The influence of subjective norms on behavior underlines the social nature of human beings and how social environments shape our actions. People often modify their behaviors to align with their perception of what is socially acceptable or expected, especially when these expectations come from important people in their life. However, the impact of subjective norms on behavioral intentions can vary among individuals and across different behaviors. Some people might be more influenced by social pressures than others, and some behaviors might be more susceptible to social influence (Ajzen, 1985). For instance, behaviors that are more public and visible might be more influenced by subjective norms than behaviors that are private and less observable.

In summary, understanding the role of subjective norms can provide valuable insights into why individuals choose to engage in certain behaviors and help predict future behaviors.

Finally, *perceived behavioral control* represents an individual's belief in their ability to perform the behavior successfully. This factor encapsulates both internal factors and external factors that can affect an individual's sense of control over the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The stronger an individual's perceived behavioral control, the more likely they are to have a strong intention to perform the behavior.

Internal factors include elements like personal skills, knowledge, and self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their own ability to achieve goals or complete tasks. For example, someone who believes they have the skills and knowledge to complete a marathon, and also has high self-efficacy, is more likely to have a strong intention to train for and complete a marathon. External factors include resources, opportunities, and constraints that exist in an individual's environment (Ajzen, 1991). For example, having access to a good training program and a safe place to run can enhance perceived behavioral control, thereby increasing the likelihood of training for a marathon. On the other hand, constraints such as lack of time, injury, or poor weather conditions could reduce perceived behavioral control and lessen the intention to perform the behavior.

The concept of perceived behavioral control recognizes that our behaviors are not always entirely within our control. There can be external constraints that limit our ability to perform a behavior, regardless of our intentions. However, the perception of control over a behavior is critical. Even in the face of actual constraints, if an individual perceives they have control,

they are more likely to attempt the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In essence, perceived behavioral control is about the confidence in one's ability to perform a behavior and the belief that it is up to them, despite potential obstacles. The stronger an individual's perceived behavioral control, the more likely they are to intend to perform the behavior and actually perform it. In conclusion, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) presents an exceptionally robust and insightful framework for understanding the intricate dynamics of human behavior.

3 Methodology

The following chapter will present the methodology for this study which include; research philosophy, research design, data collection method, data analysis, ethical implications, as well as validity and reliability.

3.1 Research Philosophy

Understanding the philosophical foundations of one's research is crucial as it underlies the research design and methods used to gather valuable knowledge about reality (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). Research philosophy clarifies the roles of the researchers, as well as underpins the relationship between theory and data. Bryman, Bell and Harley (2022) explain that the way we conduct our research depends on how we understand and use theory. Furthermore, knowing one's philosophical assumptions is necessary to acquire the desired outcomes of the research, and it will also indicate limitations of some approaches not suitable for the particular research project (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021).

The first component in understanding why the philosophy of social science matters is ontology. Ontology means having assumptions about the nature of reality (Bryman, Bell & Harley, 2022). Either the researcher believes that social phenomena exists objectively, without external impact from observers (an objectivist ontology), or the researcher believes that social phenomena are made real by the influences of humans, as well as their attached meanings to them (a constructionist ontology). In other words, as Easterby-Smith et al. (2021) present constructionism, reality is constructed and given meaning by people in their social interactions with others. Having a constructionist position means that the researcher has the assumption about many different realities, hence the researcher has to gather multiple perspectives to be able to generalize into theoretical abstraction (Bryman, Bell & Harley, 2022). Our research relates to constructionism, since we believe that dumpster diving as a social phenomenon is produced through social interactions, as well as the phenomenon being in a constant state of change. In accordance with Easterby-Smith et al. (2021), we also understand and appreciate how the experience is perceived differently by people, because of how people act in different situations. Hence, we have focused on the various constructions and meanings which our participants have placed upon their experience of dumpster diving.

Having defined our ontology, we will now address our epistemological considerations. Epistemology logically follows ontology, meaning that our ontological assumptions will imply a particular epistemological position (Bryman, Bell & Harley, 2022). Having clarified our ontological view of how we understand reality, epistemology clarifies our understanding of how we can gain knowledge from that reality. The interpretivism approach is underpinned by the social constructionist ontology. Interpretivism implies understanding the social world by examining the interpretations of its participants. The primary concerns are to understand human behavior, as well as the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of social action. The researcher will expose how the members’ of a social group interpret and shape the world around them, by observing and/or interviewing them (Bryman, Bell & Harley, 2022). Since we have adopted an interpretivist epistemology, we have used methods that allow us to gain an understanding of the people dumpster diving and their subjective understandings of reality. With this in mind, this epistemology approach is the most appropriate one, in an attempt to contribute to a greater understanding of dumpster diving.

3.1.1 Qualitative Study

Conducting a qualitative study for dumpster diving, research is a crucial approach to thoroughly investigate the intricate factors and experiences that contribute to the perceived value of discarded food items for individuals engaged in dumpster diving in Sweden. According to Easterby-Smith et al. (2021), qualitative research offers several advantages that make it particularly suitable for examining complex phenomena, such as dumpster diving, where understanding human behavior, motivations, and social interactions are essential.

First, qualitative research allows for an in-depth exploration of the subjective experiences of individuals engaged in dumpster diving. Through methods such as interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, researchers can gain a rich understanding of the motivations, attitudes, and emotions that drive individuals to participate in this activity. These insights would be difficult to capture through quantitative methods, which typically rely on numerical data and may overlook the nuanced, context-dependent aspects of human behavior (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021).

Second, qualitative research provides the opportunity to explore the social and cultural context in which dumpster diving takes place. By focusing on the interactions between individuals and their environment, qualitative methods can uncover the social norms, values, and beliefs that influence dumpster diving behavior and the perception of value in discarded food items (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). This contextual understanding is crucial for identifying the factors that contribute to the phenomenon and for developing effective interventions to promote sustainable waste management practices.

Third, qualitative research is characterized by its flexibility, allowing researchers to adapt their methods and data collection techniques as new insights emerge during the study (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). This adaptive approach is particularly valuable for studying dumpster diving, as it enables the researchers to respond to the unique challenges and opportunities that may arise during the investigation. The flexibility of qualitative research also facilitates the exploration of unexpected findings, which can lead to novel insights and a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

3.1.2 Abductive Approach

The abductive approach starts off with the researchers encountering an empirical phenomenon, which is missing in existing theory, and then trying to identify conditions to clarify the phenomenon (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2022). This approach combines elements of both inductive and deductive research, allowing researchers to develop new theoretical insights by moving back and forth between empirical observations and existing theories (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). In the context of our dumpster diving research, we have chosen to conduct an abductive study for several key reasons. An abductive study provides us with the flexibility to explore the complex and multifaceted nature of dumpster diving. This approach acknowledges that our understanding of the phenomenon will likely evolve as we collect and analyze data, enabling us to refine our research questions, theoretical framework, and interpretations accordingly (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). By allowing for iterative adjustments throughout the research process, an abductive study ensures that our findings are grounded in the rich and nuanced experiences of individuals engaged in dumpster diving.

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Ethnographic Approach

Ethnography is an investigative approach that involves a thorough and methodical examination of a specific culture or group. According to Bell, Bryman and Harley (2022) the ethnographers are watching and listening to what people of the culture or group say and do, they engage in conversations and take copious field notes. This research strategy involves not only participant observation, where researchers immerse themselves within the group, but also incorporates other data collection methods such as interviews, surveys, and document analysis (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). These various techniques aim to provide a holistic understanding of the subject under study.

In traditional ethnographic research, the process demands extensive periods of deep observation and engagement with the group or culture being studied (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). This long-term commitment allows researchers to gain an insider's perspective, ultimately leading to a richer and more nuanced understanding of the social dynamics and cultural norms within the group. However, in our study, we adopted a *micro-ethnographic* approach, which is a more condensed version of the conventional ethnographic process. In this case, we briefly immersed ourselves within a community of dumpster divers to gain insights into their practices and beliefs. Despite the shorter timeframe, micro-ethnography still maintains the core objective of standard ethnographic studies: to construct a detailed and well-rounded portrait of the group or culture under investigation (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). Micro-ethnography is particularly useful for researchers with limited time and resources, or when studying groups that are difficult to access for extended periods. This approach, though condensed, still offers valuable insights and can uncover distinctive characteristics about the group or culture being studied.

Before conducting an ethnographic study, Aspers (2011) points out the importance of understanding the relevance of self-reflection for researchers in relation to the field. It is essential for them to take themselves into account and critically examine their biases, beliefs, and experiences. However, he also emphasizes the importance of not letting self-reflection overshadow the research question itself, as striking a balance is key. It is of significance to carefully plan the entire study in advance, particularly focusing on the entry and the exit from the field. By doing so, researchers can ensure that they establish a clear structure for their

research. A critical aspect Aspers highlights is the need for acceptance from the field being studied. To achieve this, we as researchers have been transparent about our identities and intentions, fostering trust and open communication with the research participants. Both the entering and the exiting of the field is declared and agreed upon in mutual understanding with the individuals being studied.

3.2.2 Participant Observation

Participant observation is a research method often seen as synonymous with ethnography (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). Both approaches aim to comprehend the behaviors, beliefs, values, and cultural aspects of a particular group. The underlying principle of these methods is that, in order to genuinely understand a group or culture, researchers need to immerse themselves in it and examine the subject from an insider's perspective. In participant observation, the researcher actively engages in the activities of the group under study, in this case, a community of dumpster divers. By becoming a member of the group and interacting with its participants during their activities, the researchers of this study gathered valuable firsthand experience and insights. This involvement allowed us to take detailed field notes, make observations, and reflect on our own experiences as well as those of the group members (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021).

Ethnographers take field notes based on their observations, which might include summaries of events, the participants' behaviors and reflections on them (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2022). Sometimes, taking field notes straight away when something interesting happens may influence people to become self-conscious. Because of that we, as researchers, decided to write down our detailed notes as quickly as possible after our observation. Furthermore, field notes serve several purposes, one of them being for personal reflection, and the second one as a source for data.

Ultimately, participant observation is a powerful tool for gaining an in-depth understanding of a group's inner workings. By engaging in the group's activities and interacting with its members, researchers can access valuable insights into the behaviors, beliefs, and values that shape the group's culture. Through this process, the researcher can uncover subtle nuances and complexities within the group that might otherwise go unnoticed.

3.2.3 Participants-as-Observers

According to Easterby-Smith et al. (2021), various levels of observational studies exist, depending on the extent of the researcher's participation. For the current study, we employed the "participants-as-observers" model. This approach entails the researchers fully engaging in the activities under investigation while being transparent about their research intentions and identity within the organization or community. In the context of our micro ethnographic study, the primary objective was to collect data on the behaviors and attitudes of individuals participating in dumpster diving. By adopting the participants-as-observers model, we immersed ourselves in the dumpster diving community, actively participating in their activities while maintaining our role as researchers. We asked our participants to proceed as they normally would, since we did not want to interfere with their usual routine. Our presence may have affected the participants to some extent, however, mainly when we were distracting them with questions during the observations. On the other hand, we were able to see if their answers matched their actions, which is a great advantage with observational studies. Our data collection consisted of observing individuals during their dumpster diving endeavors and conducting follow-up interviews to further explore their motivations and reasons for engaging in this activity. This approach allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural norms surrounding dumpster diving and to uncover the intricacies of this practice.

The rationale for using the participants-as-observers model in this study was to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the motivations behind dumpster diving and to provide insights into the cultural context in which it occurs. By actively participating in the dumpster diving community, we were able to access valuable firsthand experiences and insights, which in turn contributed to a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. On the other hand, Aspers (2011) emphasizes that while the goal is to become integrated into the field, researchers must be cautious not to "go native". In other words, researchers should be careful adopting the interests and motivations that drive the actions of those within the field. There is an inherent conflict between striving to become as natural and embedded in the field as possible while maintaining objectivity. The more integrated a researcher becomes, the more challenging it is to maintain the necessary distance. However, considering the short duration of this observation and the transparency maintained by the researchers towards the field, there should not be a significant risk of losing oneself in the field. By being open about our research intentions and maintaining a clear timeframe for our involvement, we can

effectively minimize the possibility of becoming overly immersed or biased in our interpretation of the data. This approach ensures that we can collect valuable insights while preserving the objectivity necessary for a reliable and credible study.

This study opted for an active role during participant observation, as suggested by Bell, Bryman, and Harley (2022), to establish higher trust and rapport within the group under investigation. By actively engaging in the group's activities and contributing to their actions, we demonstrated genuine interest in understanding their experiences, which in turn fostered a more open and honest communication with the group members. This active involvement allowed us to gain deeper insights and firsthand experiences of the group's behaviors, beliefs, and values, providing a nuanced understanding of the context and motivations behind their actions. Furthermore, the active role facilitated a more authentic involvement into the community, ultimately enhancing the quality and reliability of the data collected.

3.3 Data Collection Method

In this study, we employed a combination of purposive sampling, snowball sampling, and direct observation to collect data on the motivations and behaviors of individuals engaged in dumpster diving. Our data collection process consisted of several steps to ensure a diverse and representative sample of participants, drawing on the guidelines provided by Patton (2002).

Initially, following Patton's (2002) recommendations, we conducted a purposive sampling strategy by identifying and joining social media groups related to dumpster diving. The dumpster diving groups that we joined had their base in Lund, which is located in the south of Sweden and one of Sweden's biggest student towns with a number of 40 000 students (Lunds kommun, 2023). We kept the study to one area, depending on the scope and resources of the research. We aimed to find individuals who could provide valuable insights into the dumpster diving community, and after joining these groups we posted an explanation of our research objectives and requested members to participate in our observational study. However, this method proved to be unsuccessful, as none of the respondents were available during our research period. As a result, we decided to modify our sampling strategy and directly contact individuals who had been active in the groups.

By analyzing the social media groups, we identified a number of active members and reached out to them individually. Through this process, we managed to find four participants who were willing to be a part of our study. In turn, some of them recommended three other dumpster divers, who also participated in our observations. In total we had seven participants and three observations. The number of participants depended mostly on the limitations to finding dumpster divers who were available to participate in our research. Seasonality effects such as the dumpster diving season coming to its end because of the temperature getting higher outside causing food spoilage is another factor that decreased the number of participants. The amount of observations was also affected by these reasons, however, after collecting data from three observations we felt satisfied with the empirical findings that we had gathered.

When we had decided a date, time and a place with our participants we met them at our meeting spot. After greeting each other, we let the participants take the lead and we actively observed the sequences of events. During our time with the participants, we conducted direct observations of their dumpster diving activities, taking notes on their practices, motivations, and interactions with others, as suggested by Easterby-Smith et al. (2021). As questions arose during the observation, we took the opportunity to ask the participants for clarification or elaboration on specific aspects of their behavior. This in-situation questioning allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' motivations and experiences, and to collect data that was both contextually relevant and timely (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2022). At the end of each observation we asked some further questions related to the process after getting home, as well as their routines regarding cleansing the food items. The day after every participant observation, we gathered our experiences and memories from the night before and wrote down the whole observation in detail. The thick description included events of what had happened in chronological order, what kind of food we had saved, as well as our conversations with the participants while dumpster diving.

3.3.1 Sample Strategy

Bryman, Bell and Harley (2022), state that the criterion for sample size differs, depending on the amount it takes to achieve saturation. Therefore, in regards to the timeframe for

conducting this study, a combination of purposive and convenience sampling were used when collecting our data. Using more than one sampling strategy is quite common, particularly in the process of contacting initial participants as a purposive sampling, and then use these initial contacts' networks to identify additional participants through a snowball sampling (Bryman, Bell & Harley, 2022).

Purposive sampling involves selecting units of analysis purposely on the bases of their likelihood to contribute to reach the goals of the research (Bryman, Bell & Harley, 2022). Therefore, purposive sampling involves the researcher to have predetermined criterias that is necessary when selecting the participants to allow the research question to be answered (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). Thus, the units of analysis included people who dumpster dive in order for us to observe as well as ask the participants questions that lead us to reach the goals of this study. We also had a sequential approach, meaning that the process begins with an initial sample and then gradually evolves by adding to the initial sample to benefit the research question (Bryman, Bell & Harley, 2022).

Snowball sampling, which is a form of convenience sampling, is particularly useful when the researcher needs to access groups that are difficult to reach, or the research topic is sensitive in regards to illegal or morally questionable behaviors (Bryman, Bell & Harley, 2022). In such cases, according to Easterby-Smith et al. (2021), a high level of trust and confidentiality is important to provide the participants. This sampling strategy involves the selected participants to recruit or recommend other participants with relevant experience or characteristics to the research topic, that the researcher then uses to establish contact with (Bryman, Bell & Harley, 2022).

In the table below is a presentation of the participants of this research. We have summarized the table with the name of each participant, unless for one participant who we randomly met during the first observation. We have also stated their level of employment, where we can notice that all of our participants, except for the older woman, are students. Furthermore, we present each and one of their experiences regarding dumpster diving. As the table shows, Belinda is the person with less experience as she dumpster dived for the first time during our second observation. Since we do not know for how long the older woman has dumpster dived, we will assume that Emma, from our first observation, is the most experienced one, with her three years of dumpster diving. The rest of them have dumpster dived between four

to seven months each. Moreover, we have written down what date each of the observations took place, and lastly, we will briefly describe how each of the participants were recruited. They were either directly contacted through social media, as a purposive sampling, or through recommendation, as a snowball sampling.

Observation	Participants	Level of Employment	Experience	Observation Date	Recruitment Process
Number 1	Emma	Student	3 years	17-04-23	Purposive sampling - Through Social Media
	The older woman	Unknown	Unknown	17-04-23	Snowball sampling - Through Recommendation
Number 2	Sally	Student	7 months	19-04-23	Purposive sampling - Through Social Media
	Belinda	Student	First time	19-04-23	Snowball sampling - Through Recommendation
	Jennifer	Student	4 months	19-04-23	Snowball sampling - Through Recommendation
Number 3	Simone	Student	4 months	26-04-23	Purposive sampling - Through Social Media
	Rebecca	Student	4 months	26-04-23	Purposive sampling - Through Social Media

Table 1: The Research Participants

3.4 Data Analysis

This study has employed the theoretical perspective of thematization as suggested by Braun & Clarke (2006). This approach allowed us to systematically process and sort the empirical material, revealing themes and patterns that were relevant to our research questions and research aims. Braun & Clarke (2006) highlight the importance of applying a thematic approach to data analysis, as it enables researchers to identify and explore underlying structures and connections within the data.

According to Braun & Clarke (2006) the process of thematization involves several key steps. First, researchers should carefully read through their empirical material to become familiar with its content. Second, they should identify and mark relevant passages, quotes, or observations that are related to their research questions and aims. Third, these marked passages should be organized into preliminary themes, which may be further refined and developed as the analysis progresses.

As recommended by Braun & Clarke (2006) we began our data analysis by sorting and processing the gathered empirical material. We carefully read through our material and marked relevant passages, quotes, and observations that were related to our research questions and aims. This step was essential to identify the relevant information that would help us achieve our research aim and answer our primary research question.

After thoroughly examining our empirical material, we sorted the relevant data into distinct categories based on common themes and patterns observed across the collected data. These categories were created with a focus on the interplay between social movement, consumer resistance, and the theory of planned behavior as they relate to dumpster diving. Since we wanted our analysis to follow the sequences of a typical dumpster diving tour, our themes are based on this process. First, we present a short backstory of each of our participants as we wanted the reader to learn how each and one of them learned about dumpster diving and how it all started for them. In the next theme we dig deeper and describe the participants' motivations for dumpster diving. We could notice some repetition among the participants, as some of them shared their motivations to participate in dumpster diving. The third theme, as we move along in the sequence, is the preparations' part. In this section we learn how they prepare when they are about to dumpster dive. Our next theme is interactions/relations with

store employees and policies. We show how the participants' attitudes differ and/or are similar to each other in regards to how to approach the store employees when dumpster diving. Next theme involves which strategies the participants have for finding food items, as well as how they assess the food quality. Last theme revolves around post-dumpster diving activities, which is the last step of the process of a dumpster diving tour and the end of our analysis of empirical findings.

Braun & Clarke (2006) emphasize the importance of continually revisiting and refining themes throughout the analysis process to ensure that they accurately represent the underlying patterns within the data. In our analysis, we continually revisited and refined our themes as we progressed through the data analysis process. Once we had categorized our findings according to the themes, we synthesized the data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between dumpster diving, social movement, consumer resistance, and the theory of planned behavior. This ultimately led to a more robust and nuanced analysis of our empirical material. We used this to address our research questions and draw conclusions about the implications of our findings for both theory and practice.

3.4.1 Applying Theory of Planned Behavior in Qualitative Analysis

While TPB is inherently a quantitative theory, it offers valuable insights that can also be applied in qualitative research. One of the key strengths of TPB is its focus on the subjective interpretation of the individual. This focus aligns with qualitative research, which prioritizes understanding the lived experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of individuals. In a qualitative context, TPB can be used as a guiding framework to develop research questions or guide the interpretation of data. For example, observations and questions can be designed to explore participants' attitudes towards a behavior, their perceptions of social pressures, and their sense of control over the behavior. Similarly, when analyzing qualitative data, themes can be identified that correspond to the three components of the TPB. Thus, while the TPB was originally designed as a quantitative theory, its emphasis on individual perceptions and beliefs makes it a flexible tool that can also be adapted for use in qualitative research. This adaptability enhances the utility of TPB, allowing it to contribute to a rich and nuanced understanding of human behavior across a variety of research contexts.

By incorporating the TPB into the theoretical framework and the analysis of this research, the study can systematically explore the factors that contribute to the perceived value of discarded food items for individuals engaged in dumpster diving. This comprehensive approach will enable the research to examine the motivations, decision-making processes, and contextual factors that influence dumpster diving behavior, providing valuable insights into the dynamics of this subculture and its relationship with broader societal attitudes towards waste, sustainability, and consumption.

3.5 Ethical Implications

With regards to the legality of dumpster diving, it is important to recognize the delicate nature of the issue for the individuals involved, as it can have personal and social implications for them. Consequently, we, as authors, have been diligent in ensuring that our engagement with the participants is handled ethically and responsibly.

One of the primary concerns is the preservation of the participants' anonymity. Using pseudonyms in the study allows us to protect their identity and ensure that they do not face any potential harm or negative consequences from their involvement in the research. This kind of ethical consideration is in accordance with Bell, Bryman and Harley (2022), for which they recognize as avoidance of harm. Making sure individuals in the research cannot be identified based on the information given, is particularly important in qualitative research. By maintaining anonymity, we are also fostering an environment of trust and openness, encouraging the participants to share their genuine perspectives and experiences without fear of reprisal. This consideration is especially relevant in cases where the participants' views or experiences might be controversial or stigmatized. Applying this approach not only helps to create a more accurate representation of the diverse opinions and experiences related to dumpster diving but also upholds the ethical standards of research involving human subjects.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

In qualitative studies the researcher acts as the analytical instrument, therefore, being meticulous and structured in all parts of the research is very crucial. There are high demands in the interpretation process, where the researcher has to separate the phenomenon being

studied and the researcher's own biases. The authors of this study would therefore like to discuss and evaluate the validity and the reliability of our data collection method, in order to ensure trustworthiness and high quality of standards.

In accordance with Bell, Bryman and Harley (2022) two of the most prominent criteria for evaluation of business research are validity and reliability. The authors state that validity is in many ways the most important criterion, concerning the integrity of conclusions made from the research. Furthermore, Easterby-Smith et al. (2021) refers to validity as to which extent the researcher observes or identifies what the researcher has intended to. It is important for the research findings to represent an accurate piece of the research. Meanwhile, the meaning of reliability concerns whether or not the study results are repeatable (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2022). In order for the study to be reliable, Easterby-Smith et al. (2021) argue that it is important to carefully describe the research process and be transparent about how the data was collected, in order to achieve consistency. Rose and Johnson (2020) also state that justifying the methods used in the analytical process is significant to increase the reliability of the study. Being transparent also increases the likelihood for other researchers to conduct a similar research project. The criterias of validity and reliability increase the level of transparency and, at the same time, decrease the possibility for biases in the qualitative research.

First of all, the participants were carefully selected as they needed to be highly relevant for the purpose of our study. Thus, we selected participants who actively dumpster dive in order to gather first-hand data and gain insights into their attitudes and beliefs of the phenomenon, as well as their motivations to participate in dumpster diving. The sampling strategy we used, included purposive sampling as we wanted specific candidates to successfully pursue the purpose of this study. We aimed to achieve more in-depth, honest and transparent observations and interviews with the participants in order for the findings to indicate trustworthiness. Moreover, the participants' identity remained anonymous as we had assured them in the initial phase of them taking part in our research, as more thoroughly discussed in the previous section. We also let the participants know our intentions with the observations and why we would ask them additional questions related to the dumpster diving activity. As ethnographers we moreover explained our role as participants-as-observers as well as the active role we would pursue while dumpster diving together with the participants.

Despite building trustworthiness through validity and reliability, one of the most popular forms of increasing trustworthiness is member checking (Rose & Johnson, 2020). This technique is conducted by sharing collected data with participants of the research in order to receive feedback about the findings, interpretations and explanations regarding the phenomenon that the researcher has been studying. Member checks usually involve some of the participants of the research, although it is also possible to include others within the culture who did not take part in the data collection process. This would in turn increase the trustworthiness even more, according to Rose and Johnson (2020). Although we only did member checks with our participants who took part in the observations, we asked all of them to give us feedback on our interpretations and explanations as well as to verify our collected data from the occasion they participated in. As a result, we built trustworthiness for our data collection process.

4 Analysis of Empirical Findings

This chapter delves into the analysis of our findings, using the previously established theoretical framework as the foundation. As the analysis is rooted in a thematic approach, findings will be presented sequentially. The appendix provides the raw material, including photographs, an even more comprehensive presentation of each of the three observations.

4.1 Backstory of The Participants

First and foremost we would like to give the reader a short backstory to how each of our participants learned about dumpster diving and how it all started for each and one of them.

Our first participant, who we contacted through social media, is Emma. She is a student and lives in Lund. Emma learned about dumpster diving three years ago from another student in her student corridor where she used to live. Dumpster diving has been a huge part of Emma's life since she learned about it, and she usually dumpster dives once a week during the dumpster diving season. During our observation we could tell she had many years of experience and how passionate she is about saving discarded food items. The older woman, that we encountered during our observation of Emma, has been dumpster diving for a while, however, we do not know for sure how long or how she was introduced to the activity. What we do know is that the woman dumpster dives fairly frequently. We learned that for a while she dumpster dived almost every night, however, for the most part she goes a couple of times a week.

Sally, in our second observation, has been dumpster diving since October last year. She was also, just like Emma, introduced to dumpster diving through a fellow student in her student corridor. Since Sally was introduced to dumpster diving she has been dumpster diving almost once a week, with some exceptions during Christmas and some travels. Dumpster diving is likewise a big part of Sally's life, and we could tell she is already confident and experienced when dumpster diving. The next participant in our second observation is Jennifer. She was introduced to dumpster diving through Sally in January this year. Jennifer does not dumpster dive as frequently, as she goes every other week. She would most probably not be dumpster

diving if it was not for Sally, although she likes the experience and has not encountered any obstacles when dumpster diving that would stop her from continuing. The third participant in our second observation is Belinda. What is interesting with Belinda is that the night of our observation was her first time dumpster diving. She had heard about dumpster diving before, and had been wanting to try it and now finally she was introduced to it through her friends as well. We could tell that she did not have the same amount of experience like the others, but she was participating and learning just like we were. Sally and Jennifer adjusted their routines so Belinda more easily could follow and try for herself. Belinda told us that she would like to go dumpster diving again, and that she liked the experience.

In our third and last observation we observed Simone and Rebecca, two international students. They had never tried dumpster diving before they came to Sweden since it is illegal in their home country, so now when they are in Sweden they are excited to do it. Both of them started dumpster diving in January this year, and they usually go dumpster diving every other week. The reason why they go every other week is because they usually find so much food that lasts them for two weeks. As mentioned during the observation, they usually dumpster dive together with another friend as well, who they refer to as their expert. This friend of theirs is the one who introduced them to dumpster diving, and according to them she has more experience than them which is why they refer to her as the expert among the three of them. As far as we could tell Simone and Rebecca seemed experienced as well and comfortable doing it without the other friend. They followed their usual routine, except for both of them diving into a big container at the store for the first time.

4.2 Why? - Motivations for Dumpster Diving

After learning more about our participants and how each and one of their dumpster diving journeys started, we will now dig deeper into their motivations for dumpster diving.

The motivations for dumpster diving, as discovered during our three observations, vary from different fundamental reasons depending on each of our participants. As we will notice some of them do it because of environmental concerns regarding food waste, while others do it because of the social interactions with others as well as for economic reasons. In this section

we will analyze the participants' different motivations to participate in the phenomenon of dumpster diving.

4.2.1 Environmental Concerns

All of the participants analyzed in this study expressed some sort of concern about the environment. Beginning with Emma, we uncover an individual deeply motivated by the environmental implications of food waste. Emma's environmental motivation is deeply ingrained, transforming dumpster diving from a mere act into a personal mission to reduce food waste and promote sustainability. Her primary motivation to dumpster dive is to save food and reduce food waste, as well as caring for the environment. Emma also explained that she saves a lot of money when she dumpster dives, but as she reasoned the money aspect is just a byproduct of her willingness to save food. Most important for her is to reduce food waste and make a positive impact on the climate in the long run. Her motivation to dumpster dive is therefore driven by a goal to reduce food waste and promote a sustainable future. Being driven by a goal and extending one's efforts to reach that goal is a fundamental reason to participate in social movements (Klandermans, 2004).

Furthermore, Emma feels dissatisfied and wants to influence the social environment by using reasonable efforts and resources to make an impact, as well as achieve her goal to become satisfied by the experience. This is an example of instrumentality, which is one of the three reasons that Klandermans (2004) mentions as a reason to participate in social movements. Emma showcases her strong desire to reduce food waste and her passion for the environment many times for us. She explained that dumpster diving and saving food is almost a necessity for her to promote a sustainable future, and she sees the problem of food waste as significant. Her actions of saving food that has been discarded, makes her able to express her attitude as well as her morals by participating in dumpster diving.

"Emma continues describing her conscience as clean, feeling that her actions are not wrong. Instead, the fact that she could and needed to dumpster dive is the real issue. She finds it almost bizarre to purchase a food item when she knows she can find it for free in the container just a couple of hours later. We also asked Emma about her views on new apps and

business ideas that address the same theme such as the app Too Good To Go. She responded that she welcomes all types of initiatives aimed at reducing food waste.”

This commitment to her values translates into her participation in dumpster diving, allowing her to express her attitudes and morals. As Klandermans (2004) describes, this refers to ideology which is a way for people to search for meaning and to express their views. Emma expressed to us her concerns about how much food is being wasted, and by participating in dumpster diving she gets to express her feelings and potentially enforce change.

On moving to the narrative of Simone and Rebecca, we find a shared motivation to save food unnecessarily discarded, echoing Emma's initial reasons. As they expose the magnitude of edible food being wasted, it further fuels their determination to rescue this otherwise lost resource. Simone and Rebecca want to reduce as much food waste as they are able to. It does not sit well with them that so much food goes to waste everyday when it is still edible. They view dumpster diving as a meaningful way to contribute to the reduction of food waste, and at the same time have a positive impact on the environment. Simone and Rebecca's story deepens their connection to the environment and their shared resolve to mitigate food waste. Like Emma, they are unsettled by the extent of food waste and recognize dumpster diving as a practical solution. This practice offers them a pathway to meaningfully contribute to food waste reduction and, consequently, to the betterment of the environment. A reasoning that we also find in the second observation with Sally, Belinda and Jennifer.

We find a common thread of environmental consciousness and dedication to minimizing food waste. Whether it is Emma's goal-driven approach, her ideology reflected in dumpster diving, or Simone and Rebecca's shared drive to rescue wasted food, each of these stories contributes to a broader understanding of the motivations behind such a unique environmental movement. This fusion of personal motivations creates a powerful tapestry of environmental advocacy, shedding valuable light on the practice of dumpster diving.

4.2.2 Economical Concerns

In our exploration of the motivations behind dumpster diving, a second significant theme emerges under the headline "economical concerns." A variety of individuals, including Sally,

Belinda, Jennifer, Simone, and Rebecca, reveal how economic factors influence their decision to engage in this activity.

Our journey into this facet of dumpster diving begins with Sally, Belinda, and Jennifer. All three participants primarily dumpster dive to mitigate the cost of food. They find the food prices are so high, they want to find alternative ways rather than to buy food at the stores, and dumpster diving fits this need perfectly. They have shown us the astonishing volume of fresh, edible food that is simply discarded, reinforcing the dual benefits of their actions - both economic and environmental. Despite this, it is noteworthy to mention that neither of them will probably continue with dumpster diving when they graduate from the university, because then they will be working and have more money.

Sally's story underscores the economic dimension of dumpster diving. When Sally began dumpster diving she felt a desire to save money. She wanted to explore how much she could save if she started with dumpster diving. Sally believed she could influence her own situation with reasonable efforts, which she proved she could. During the night of our observation she mentioned to us that her goal for the upcoming week is to spend no money on food, and just eat the food from dumpster diving. Since her goal always is to save money, she will most likely be satisfied by the experience as long as dumpster diving can provide her with enough food for her to consume. This is an example of Klandermans' (2004) concept of instrumentality. As Sally proves, she is able to affect her own social situation and at the same time share her feelings with her fellow dumpster diver friends.

Jennifer's story provides an intriguing addition to Sally's story. Jennifer was not as concerned about saving money as Sally was, but she was concerned enough to start with dumpster diving. She explained to us that she most probably would not have started dumpster diving if it was not for Sally. Sally introduced her to dumpster diving, and then when Jennifer had realized how much food there is and how much money she could save she was hooked on the experience.

Next, we consider Simone and Rebecca, who, like Sally, Belinda, and Jennifer, cite economic concerns as their primary motivation for dumpster diving. The high food prices catalyzed their dumpster diving activity, which, coupled with their newfound awareness of the vast amounts of discarded edible food, strengthened their commitment to the practice. Since both

of them know that they can have different foods for free when dumpster diving, they think it is unnecessary to go to a store and buy it at such high prices.

In the first observation, another compelling narrative emerged, one that underscores the economic survival aspect of dumpster diving. The woman, a frequent figure at the store's dumpsters, dives primarily for economic reasons. In her case, dumpster diving is not just an act of ecological mindfulness or a choice to offset high food prices. It becomes evident that for her, this activity is a necessity, a lifeline. The food she salvages from her dives serves as her main sustenance, indicating a more critical reliance on dumpster diving. Her frequency of dumpster diving highlights the intensity of her economic need. She sometimes dives daily or at the very least, several times a week. Interestingly, her presence is almost a constant, often coinciding with Emma's weekly visits. This regularity suggests that dumpster diving is an integral part of her routine, a critical survival strategy in her economic circumstances.

In essence, her narrative reveals another dimension to dumpster diving - one that transcends the boundaries of environmental concern or simple thriftiness. It is a story of resilience and survival, where dumpster diving serves as an alternative pathway to secure basic necessities amidst financial constraints. It is a stark reminder of the economic disparities that persist in our society, and the unconventional means some resort to for survival.

In drawing these narratives together we can see the diverse ways in which economic motivations intertwine with the practice of dumpster diving. From mitigating the cost of food to reshaping personal circumstances, these stories present a detailed portrait of how economic factors drive participation in dumpster diving.

4.2.3 Community

These observations offer an intriguing glimpse into the varied motivations and experiences of those who engage in dumpster diving. They reveal not just economic and environmental concerns, but also emphasize the significance of social aspects in shaping these dumpster diving practices.

In the second observation, Belinda did not quite feel any concerns about money when she started dumpster diving. She explained to us that she had heard a lot from her friends talking about the activity and seen some pictures of their findings, and was more excited to try it herself rather than any other reason. Belinda did not try dumpster diving particularly to save money, even though that is something positive about dumpster diving in her mind, however she wanted to experience it herself since she had already learnt so much about it through her friends.

Sally, Belinda and Jennifer expressed the importance for them to engage in dumpster diving together. Neither of them have ever been dumpster diving alone, and from a consumer culture perspective, they want to engage in this alternative consumption practice together with their like-minded friends who they associate with (Schau, 2018). For the three of them it is not the activity per se that brings them value, it is the experience of social interactions together with their friends that motivates them to dumpster dive. The collective experience is therefore crucial, even though Sally expressed that she could do it alone but prefers to go with her friends. Belinda and Jennifer would not go dumpster diving alone, even though they know how to do it. Moreover, all three of them dumpster dive to save money and to reduce food waste, however the majority of them would not consider dumpster diving if their friends did not do it. Being part of a group and sharing the experience is important for all of them, which is something social movements can provide its participants with, according to Klandermans (2004).

Further noticed during the observation, with Sally, Belinda and Jennifer, is that the three of them all have different roles outside the experience of dumpster diving. They share their role of being a student, but they also have plenty of other roles in each of their lives. However, when they dumpster dive they share their identities with each other which creates a strong identification within their group. According to Klandermans (2004), having a strong identification among the group participants makes it more likely for them to partake in the movement. This example shows one of the main reasons why people participate in social movements, which is identity and being able to identify with like-minded people. Except for identity, their group also provides sharing rituals, meetings and common codes which is part of the dumpster diving activity. Sharing all of this also makes the identification within the group even stronger.

Also, in observation number three one important reason why they dumpster dive is to do the activity with their friend(s). The collective identity is an important factor for them to participate in dumpster diving. Simone and Rebecca both told us that neither of them would dumpster dive alone. They would only do it together with at least someone else. Rebecca also mentioned that she feels safer being with someone else, as well as having mental support while dumpster diving late at night. Without each other and their other friend, neither of them would dumpster dive, but as long as they do it together they feel satisfied, both because of the experience of doing it with their friends as well as collecting food for free.

Since Simone and Rebecca initially told us that they are no experts at dumpster diving, and that their other friend who could not join the night of our observation is their expert, they feel that they have different roles when dumpster diving. Their friend, as they refer to the expert of the group, is the one who introduced them to dumpster diving and got the most experience. Then both Simone and Rebecca started dumpster diving pretty much at the same time. So, initially they had no experience and have learned basically everything from their friend, however, since then they have dumpster dived multiple times and feel comfortable doing it without their friend as well. On the other hand, they mentioned that it was a bit weird going without her. They also mentioned that usually neither of them dive into the big dumpster at the store, because that is the other friends' role, but the night of our observation both of them entered the big container for the first time. This example from our observation shows that they share their identities and roles with each other and have specific rituals and common codes which they follow when dumpster diving. Klandermans (2004) refers to this as identity, and it is very beneficial when the participants of the group feel a strong identification with the other members as they are more likely to stay. Since both of our participants were introduced to dumpster diving by their friend, who also taught them the whole process of a dumpster diving night, they all share the same routines and rituals as well as codes such as how they approach dumpster diving. This also strengthens the identification within the group, as they share the whole experience together.

Furthermore, their group shares the same attitudes, morals and emotions which also is important when being in a group. When sharing all of that the group can together search for meaning and express their ideological views (Klandermans, 2004). Even though Simone and Rebecca would like to encourage change regarding the laws in their home country, they also want to minimize food waste. By participating in dumpster diving they get to live out their

opinions and morals by consuming outside of the regular market. They highlighted that the food system is not working efficiently as a huge amount of food is being discarded, and they would like to see a change and make people aware of the problems with food waste. Simone and Rebecca seem to be aligned in many economical, environmental and societal issues and share the same kind of emotions, which is typical for a social movement according to Klandermans (2004). He moreover explains that people often look for others with the same kind of feelings and experiences, which is something social movements can provide its members. As for Simone and Rebecca, the environment in their group allows them to exchange experiences and feelings together, as well as deal with emotions that arise when dumpster diving. The better they are at dealing with these emotions the better group dynamic they will have. It is also more likely for them to stay committed to each other and continue dumpster diving together.

However, the first observation featuring Emma provides a contrasting perspective. Despite the recurring theme of shared experience in the other observations, Emma dumpster dives alone. The identity aspect of participating with a group to feel a sense of belonging, is not her primary reason to engage in the activity. She prefers to do it alone, because then she can be spontaneous and she does not have to adjust herself to other people. She can therefore decide the time and the place that suits herself the best. Besides, she usually meets other dumpster divers when she goes dumpster diving. As an example of this is when we observed Emma, she met another woman that she sees almost every time, since both of them dumpster dive at the same grocery store.

“The reasons why she does it alone are because she can be spontaneous and does not have to adjust to someone else. She feels comfortable doing it alone, and she explains that it only took her one time to learn how to dumpster dive.”

Together, we approached the container situated next to the parking lot and encountered a woman who had already opened one of the container doors. The two greeted each other warmly, explaining that they often bump into each other and help search for food items. Their friendly interaction included sharing findings and asking if the other was looking for anything specific.”

So, even though Emma dumpster dives alone, she gets to share her role as a dumpster diver together with other dumpster divers, if she meets with them, and then their identities turn into a collective identity when they share the experience at a specific place together (Klandermans, 2004). However, except for identification, social movements can also offer rituals, meetings and common codes that seems to be more important in Emma's case.

It is common to look for other people who share the same kind of feelings and experiences, which dumpster diving can provide. Although Emma does not feel the need to share her emotions and feelings with others, she does enjoy exchanging the experience with fellow dumpster divers such as the woman that she met during our observation.

4.2.4 Legal Motivations

Both Simone and Rebecca are international students and have been enjoying dumpster diving since they started with it here in Sweden. They explained to us about the legality aspect of dumpster diving in their home country, where it is illegal, and expressed their wish for it to be legal. They told us about the ongoing debate about making it legal in their home country, which they consider to be a step in the right direction since they believe dumpster diving can reduce an amount of food waste. As for now they live here in Sweden where dumpster diving is more of a gray zone and they do not feel a need to try to change the political environment. On the other hand, they would like the laws regarding dumpster diving in Sweden to influence the laws in their home country. Simone and Rebecca see the potential of dumpster diving and its positive impact for both people who want and/or need to dumpster dive as well as for the environment. These feelings of a demand for change are referred to as instrumental reasons to participate in a social movement, according to Klandermans (2004). The relationship and the attitudes towards law enforcement will be further analyzed under 4.4.

4.3 How? - Preparations

Knowing our participants' motivations for dumpster diving, the next step is to learn about how they prepare when they are going dumpster diving. The preparation for dumpster diving, as observed in the three observations, includes a combination of practical aspects such as clothing, equipment, timing, and also psychological and social aspects. In this section, we

will analyze the different aspects of preparation undertaken by the participants during their dumpster diving activity.

4.3.1 Timing, Locations and Interactions in Dumpster Diving

An essential aspect of preparation for dumpster diving is the timing of the activity. Emma ensures that the store personnel have left the premises before she begins her search. She arrives at the store approximately 15 minutes after closing time, which allows her to feel more comfortable and less likely to be confronted by store employees. The time of year also plays a role in the preparation, as Emma mentions that the dumpster diving season is nearing its end due to the summer heat, which accelerates food spoilage and odors. This suggests that dumpster divers take seasonal changes into account when planning their activities.

The observation showcases that the dumpster diving site chosen by Emma is located behind a well-known Swedish grocery chain in Lund. This chosen location is mainly based on accessibility since these empirical findings do not cover people that break into containers when it is locked. Emma dives in a container next to the parking lot, this provides easy access to the dumpsters and allows the participant to carry out the activity with minimal interference.

Another factor that may influence store selection is the divers' familiarity with the dumpster diving spots and the frequency of container emptying. Emma mentions that the container at her chosen site is usually emptied once a week, which allows her to time her visits accordingly to maximize her findings. Familiarity with the schedule and the store's waste disposal practices plays a role in ensuring the divers can find fresh and edible food items during the dives. Furthermore, Emma considers the day's haul as "good", but she also mentions that on days with less food, she might visit another store. This indicates that divers may have a mental list of potential locations to visit based on their experiences and the expected availability of discarded food items. In this way, they can adapt their dumpster diving plans as needed to ensure the best possible outcomes.

The social aspects of preparation are also relevant in this observation. During the activity, Emma encountered the older woman who was already diving. They greeted each other

warmly and shared information about the findings, asking if the other was looking for specific items. This interaction highlights the importance of communication and collaboration among dumpster divers, who can share their experiences, knowledge, and resources to maximize the success of their activity. The older woman's concerns about the publication of their dumpster diving location also highlights the importance of maintaining a level of secrecy in their preparations.

“We made sure to tell her that we would not publish any names or the location of the store, however she was still worried and told us that she was concerned that they would put locks on the container if it became published that they dumpster dive here.”

They fear that increased attention to their activities might result in locked containers or other barriers to their access. This awareness influences the choice of location and the level of discretion used during the dumpster diving activities.

4.3.2 The Role of Clothing and Equipment in Dumpster Diving

The process of preparing for dumpster diving involves a carefully considered choice of clothing, demonstrating the participants' practical approach to this activity. As observed in the second instance, participants dressed warmly in casual clothing that they wouldn't mind getting dirty. This choice reflects their consideration of comfort, as well as readiness for potential mess associated with the activity.

In the first observation, Emma took this practicality a notch higher. Her preparation involved the use of durable clothing, gloves, and a headlamp - key protective measures against varied types of waste one might encounter within the dumpster, such as food residues, cans, and cartons. In addition, she came equipped with bags, backpacks, and other carriers, facilitating easy and safe transport of the salvaged food items. This detailed preparation points to a well-thought-out approach to ensure efficiency and safety in the dumpster diving activity.

Observation three presented a slightly contrasting approach by Rebecca, who gave more priority to visibility over specific clothing or gloves. This variance illustrates that while there are common elements in preparation, the level of adaptability to individual comfort and

experience differs. Rebecca's emphasis on using a headlamp, similar to Emma, signifies the importance of visibility during the activity, enabling the divers to quickly identify and collect edible items.

In addition to clothing, other equipment plays a significant role in dumpster diving preparation. Backpacks and plastic bags, in particular, are essential for carrying found items. Moreover, the importance of headlamps, as mentioned across observations, cannot be understated, as they provide the necessary visibility when rummaging through containers and trash bins.

4.3.3 "...only do it together"

Rebecca and Simone, the two international students, seem to have developed a routine for their dumpster diving activities. They have chosen to go every other week, which they find sufficient to supply them with enough food for two weeks. This indicates that they are deliberate in their planning and have adapted their schedule based on experience.

Another aspect of their preparation is the decision to engage in dumpster diving as a collective activity. The social dynamics of dumpster diving play a significant role in their preparation, as evidenced by Rebecca and Simone's preference for partnering up during the activity. Their rationale for this decision is rooted in concerns for safety and mental support:

"Both of them answer that they would only do it together, minimum two people at a time. For them, it is an activity they want to do with friends, and Rebecca also mentions that she feels safer going together with someone."

This furthermore illustrates the importance of social interaction and collaboration in their dumpster diving experiences. By diving together, the participants not only benefit from increased safety and reassurance but also foster a sense of community and shared responsibility in their pursuit of addressing food waste and consumption issues. This social aspect serves as a crucial element in their preparation process and shapes their overall dumpster diving experience.

The preparation aspects of observation three reveal that the participants engage in a thoughtful and deliberate process before and during their dumpster diving activities. Their decision to dive with a partner are all crucial components of their preparation, reflecting a practical and responsible approach to this unconventional method of obtaining food.

4.3.4 Preparations and The Literature

Analyzing the preparation aspects of the three observations, we can see that the individuals engaged in dumpster diving activities are driven by a complex interplay of factors, including consumer culture, consumer resistance, social movement dynamics, and the theory of planned behavior.

Consumer culture theory (CCT) can help us understand the participants' motivations for dumpster diving as a response to the dominant consumption patterns in society (Schau, 2018). The desire to save money and prevent food waste reflects a resistance to the consumerist mindset that promotes overconsumption and disposability. This resistance is further evident in their choice of clothing and equipment, which focuses on practicality and protection rather than status and appearance. This demonstrates a commitment and determination; the careful preparations can be seen as evidence of intent and dedication to living according to this type of consumer culture.

Drawing on the Social Movement Theory, the social movement aspect of dumpster diving becomes increasingly evident through the interactions between participants and the sharing of information and resources. As observed in the companionship between Emma and the older woman (Observation 1) and Rebecca and Simone's preference for diving with a partner (Observation 3), these social connections play a crucial role in reinforcing and sustaining the activity. Furthermore, these relationships offer emotional support and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and skills, which contribute to the development of a collective identity among dumpster divers.

The key elements of social movements, as outlined by Johnston (2014), are the structural sphere (networked relations among groups and organizations), the ideational-interpretative sphere (collective identity and framework), and the performative sphere (collective actions

and performances). Dumpster diving can be analyzed through these elements to better understand its social movement aspect and the practical preparations undertaken by participants.

In the structural sphere, the networked relations among dumpster divers facilitate the sharing of information and resources (Johnston, 2014), which enhance the practical preparations for the activity. Participants exchange information on the best locations and times for dumpster diving, safety precautions, and effective techniques for finding usable items, all of which contribute to the success of the activity.

The ideational-interpretative sphere emphasizes the collective identity and framework that unifies the dumpster diving community. Participants in this social movement are driven by common values and goals (Johnston, 2014), such as reducing food waste and promoting sustainable consumption practices. This shared identity encourages individuals to collaborate, learn from one another, and continually engage in the activity.

Lastly, in the performative sphere, dumpster diving is characterized by collective actions and performances that convey the movement's deeper meaning and objectives. These actions, such as diving in groups or sharing resources, demonstrate the participants' commitment to the movement and their desire to challenge the status quo. In other words, these observations show that social interactions contribute to more well-thought-out preparations.

Furthermore, TPB can be applied to the preparation process of dumpster diving, as it emphasizes the role of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control in shaping individuals' intentions and actions. Perceived behavioral control refers to the individuals' confidence in their ability to perform the activity and navigate the associated challenges (Ajzen, 1991), such as timing, clothing, and equipment choices. Applying the TPB to the observations, we can identify specific aspects of the participants' preparation that reflect their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

The choice of timing in all three observations demonstrates a desire for privacy and discretion, as well as a consideration for store employees. This decision is influenced by their attitudes towards dumpster diving as a morally justifiable activity and the perceived norm that it should be done discreetly to avoid conflict or attention. Likewise, The selection of

clothing and equipment, such as wearing sturdy clothes and gloves, dressing warmly, and bringing headlamps and bags (Observations 2 and 3), illustrates the participants' perceived behavioral control in managing the physical challenges of dumpster diving. These practical preparations enable them to engage in the activity efficiently and safely, while minimizing potential risks and discomfort. Finally, the development of criteria for assessing food quality and the sharing of information and resources indicate the participants' capacity to adapt and learn from their experiences, further enhancing their perceived behavioral control in dumpster diving activities.

4.4 How? - Interactions/Relations with Store Employees and Policies

Since we already have learned about how our participants first came in contact with dumpster diving, their motivations to participate in the phenomenon and how they prepare, we would moreover like to address how they interact with the store employees as well as relates to certain policies in regards to the activity.

Understanding the dynamics between dumpster divers and store employees is crucial in examining the practices of dumpster diving. This section of the analysis focuses on the interactions and relationships between the dumpster divers and store personnel, as well as the policies implemented by the stores in response to this activity, and law enforcement. We will explore how these interactions influence the behavior and approach of dumpster divers while engaging in their activity. By delving into the practical aspects of these interactions and policies, we can gain further insights into the complex social dimensions of dumpster diving and its implications on both the divers and the stores involved.

4.4.1 The Tacit Agreement and Handling Law Enforcement

The empirical findings from the first observation highlight the dumpster divers' interaction with store personnel and the underlying policies that influence their activities. The observed divers, Emma and the older woman, mentioned a tacit agreement with the store employees, who do not interfere with their activities as long as the divers clean up after themselves. This mutual understanding demonstrates, according to the participants, the concept of consumer resistance within the context of dumpster diving, as the store employees seem to passively

support the divers' endeavors to combat food waste, rather than actively enforcing the store's policies.

The theory of planned behavior can be applied to understand the divers' interactions with store personnel and their adherence to certain guidelines. According to the theory, an individual's intention to engage in a particular behavior is influenced by the subjective norms (Ajzen, 1991). In the case of the observed dumpster divers, their attitude towards dumpster diving is primarily driven by their concern for food waste and the desire to reduce it. This attitude is further reinforced by the subjective norms of the quiet but still mutual support from the personnel perceived by the participants. In other words, the perception of having a mutual understanding is enough to gain the support needed, even though Emma and the older woman do not know whether they have the support or not.

The fear of locks on the containers, as expressed by the older woman, highlights the precarious nature of this understanding. The store has previously locked the container when people left a mess, demonstrating a willingness to enforce boundaries when necessary. This action is in line with the theory of planned behavior, as the store's response to the mess may be influenced by perceived social pressure to maintain cleanliness and order. However, the removal of the lock suggests that the store might still be sympathetic to the cause of dumpster diving and is willing to allow access as long as the implicit agreement is upheld.

The perceived behavioral control in this context is represented by the divers' actions to ensure the store personnel have left before commencing their activities. They also maintain cleanliness around the dumpster, complying with the tacit agreement with the store employees, which in turn allows them to continue their activities without disruption. This reflects the divers' strategic approach to navigating the store's policies and maintaining a positive relationship with the store employees, ultimately enabling them to pursue their goal of reducing food waste. In terms of practical aspects, the divers pay close attention to the store's closing time and schedule their dumpster diving activities accordingly. This demonstrates their awareness of the store's operational routines and the importance of not interfering with the employees' work. Moreover, the divers' commitment to keeping the area clean indicates their recognition of the potential consequences of their actions, such as the store locking the dumpster, which could impede their efforts to combat food waste.

The interaction between Emma and the Securitas' worker demonstrates the nuances surrounding dumpster diving and the range of responses it may elicit from store personnel and security staff. The worker's inquiry could be perceived as a form of initial confrontation, possibly assessing whether Emma and her companions posed any threat to the store's property or reputation. However, the worker did not take any further action to stop or penalize them, suggesting that the practice of dumpster diving might be tolerated as long as it does not disrupt the store's operations or lead to any negative consequences for the store.

“...a Securitas’ worker had stopped at the store checking what they were doing. However, the worker had only asked what they were doing and then left. Emma continues describing her conscience as clean, feeling that her actions are not wrong.”

This ambivalence may stem from a few factors, including an understanding of the motives behind dumpster diving and its potential benefits in addressing food waste. The worker might recognize that the divers are engaging in a form of consumer resistance against wasteful practices, rather than seeking personal gain at the expense of the store. In this context, the worker's decision to leave without taking further action could be interpreted as a tacit endorsement of the practice or at least a willingness to overlook it, as long as certain conditions are met, such as discretion and non-disruptiveness. However, this is only based on the participants perception and interpretation of the situation.

4.4.2 Differences in Attitudes and Adaptation

The second observation also highlights the importance of dumpster divers' awareness of legal boundaries when engaging in their activities. A crucial aspect of this awareness is their respect for store personnel and their working hours. Sally, an experienced diver, advises the group to wait until the personnel have left the premises before starting the dive. By doing so, the divers demonstrate a conscious effort to minimize any disruption to the store operations and avoid causing discomfort or embarrassment to the employees, while also reducing the risk of potential confrontations or legal consequences. Much in line with our first observation..

In addition to respecting the store personnel's working hours, the dumpster divers in this observation are careful to avoid any actions that may be considered criminal offenses. Sally emphasizes that they never break into containers or locks, as this could be viewed as vandalism or trespassing.

“...the personnel are still there and Sally tells us that they usually wait until the personnel have left in respect for them to finish their job. She also tells us that they never break into any container or break any locks, since that could be considered a crime to either vandalize or trespass if the gates to the recycling area are closed.”

By adhering to this rule, the divers not only demonstrate a sense of responsibility towards the store and the wider community but also show a keen awareness of the legal boundaries surrounding their activities. This awareness of legal boundaries and adherence to ethical guidelines likely plays a significant role in shaping the divers' experiences and interactions with store employees and policies. By avoiding actions that may be considered criminal or confrontational, the divers can minimize the risk of negative encounters and potential legal consequences. Furthermore, their responsible approach may contribute to fostering a degree of understanding and acceptance among store employees, as evidenced by the employee who offers them a bag of bread and cinnamon buns during the dive.

However, even though they usually wait for the personnel to leave, this time they did not strictly adhere to their standard practice. Two other girls arrived at the scene and, disregarding the presence of the store personnel, went directly inside the area to access the trash bins. This unexpected move led to a brief discussion among Sally, Belinda, and Jennifer. The fear of potentially missing out on valuable findings posed a challenge to their usual practice. It led to a consensus that they too should venture inside, despite the presence of the store personnel.

Interestingly, rather than engaging with the two newcomers at the trash bins, they chose a different course of action. They decided to explore a big container separately, maintaining a sense of respect towards the other dumpster divers' space and potential findings. This suggests that, while the presence of personnel and other divers can challenge the norms and practices of dumpster diving, the divers are flexible and adaptable in their approach. They

demonstrated an ability to balance their respect for store personnel, legal boundaries, and other divers with their motivations to salvage valuable food items.

This flexibility was further exhibited when two store employees emerged from the store. The divers' initial nervousness about a potential confrontation was quickly replaced by relief as one of the employees offered them a bag of bread and cinnamon buns. This friendly interaction signifies the potential understanding and acceptance that can develop between store personnel and dumpster divers when the latter demonstrates respectful and responsible behavior. It underlines the complex dynamics at play in dumpster diving, which not only involve navigating legal and ethical boundaries but also involve managing social interactions within the dumpster diving community and with the wider public.

4.4.3 Gray Zones and The Role of Legal Awareness

In the third observation, Rebecca and Simone, the international students who engage in dumpster diving, demonstrate a strong awareness of the potential legal consequences of their actions and the importance of maintaining a positive relationship with store personnel. Their experiences and interactions with store employees and policies provide valuable insights into the motivations and practical aspects of their dumpster diving activities.

Rebecca and Simone's introduction to dumpster diving highlights the significance of personal networks and legal awareness in shaping their engagement with this activity, as presented under 4.2.4. Their friend, who they regard as an expert in dumpster diving, played a crucial role in initiating their involvement in this practice. Their previous knowledge of dumpster diving, albeit not engaging in it due to its illegality in their home country, shows their awareness of the broader context surrounding this activity.

“Both of them had heard about dumpster diving before, but in their home country it is illegal. They also mention the gray zone regarding dumpster diving here in Sweden, and seem to be aware of the laws regarding the activity”

Upon arriving in Sweden, they learned about the gray zone concerning dumpster diving and familiarized themselves with the local laws. This understanding of the legal framework plays

a vital role in shaping their approach to dumpster diving, as they make conscious efforts to avoid breaking any laws or engaging in confrontational behavior with store personnel. The influence of their friend's expertise and the difference in the legal context between their home country and Sweden have facilitated Rebecca and Simone's adoption of dumpster diving. Their case underscores the importance of personal networks in spreading awareness of and encouraging participation in such activities. Furthermore, their keen understanding of the legal nuances surrounding dumpster diving in Sweden demonstrates the significance of being well-informed and adhering to the laws and regulations in order to minimize potential risks and maintain positive relationships with store employees and authorities.

When store personnel at times offer food from trash bags they are about to dispose of, which initially made Rebecca and Simone nervous. However, they eventually understood that the personnel were accepting of their dumpster diving activities. This interaction suggests that the store employees might have a level of understanding and tolerance towards the divers, possibly due to their responsible behavior and the fact that they do not cause any harm or disruption to the store operations.

Like in 4.4.1, Rebecca and Simone also emphasize the importance of leaving the area tidy and closing trash lids or container doors before they leave. By doing so, they demonstrate a sense of responsibility and respect for the store and its employees, which likely contributes to fostering positive relations and maintaining a non-confrontational environment.

Moreover, Rebecca and Simone's experiences indicate that the amount of food available in the trash bins and containers has been reduced over time. This finding might reflect the store's efforts to minimize food waste or discourage dumpster diving activities. It highlights the importance of understanding the dynamics between dumpster divers and store policies to better comprehend the motivations and practical aspects of dumpster diving.

4.5 How? - Strategies for Finding and Assessing Food Quality

In this next section we will continue to describe the following events happening while dumpster diving. We will now address the strategies used by the dumpster divers to find food from the dumpsters, as well as learn more about how they assess the food quality of their findings.

Dumpster divers utilize various strategies to find food and assess its quality during their dives. In the observed cases, the participants demonstrate a depth of exploration, going inside the container and turning items over and opening trash bags to locate food products. This indicates that a thorough search is essential to ensure that the divers find as many edible food items as possible.

Rejecting and reclaiming are two behaviors practiced in everyday life when engaging in consumer resistance (Roux & Izberk-Bilgin, 2018). These types of behaviors are practiced especially by dumpster divers out of concern for the environment and an understanding of economic as well as social inequalities. As a result, many dumpster divers really try to downsize their consumption and lifestyles to make their ecological footprint as little as possible, by reusing and reclaiming to counter food waste. In accordance with Roux and Izberk-Bilgin (2018), both individuals and the collective make efforts to try to consume differently and make changes that will matter in the long run. The authors also state that as long as people perceive that power is exercised over individuals and groups, consumer resistance will remain.

4.5.1 Meticulously and Trust in Your Senses

When it comes to assessing food quality, Emma in the first observation relies on her senses, such as touch and smell. She mentions that if something feels good and does not smell bad, it is likely safe to eat. The divers' experience and familiarity with various food items also play a crucial role in their assessment of quality. For example, Emma is better able to judge the freshness and edibility of bread compared to the observers, who lack her experience and knowledge. Since Emma has been dumpster diving for three years she has a lot of experience assessing different food items from the dumpsters. These skills, which Emma performs, helps her to successfully fulfill her intentions regarding dumpster diving. Her knowledge, skills and self-efficacy can be described as internal factors, which are one component in perceived behavioral control within the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Feeling a sense of possessing these internal factors increases the individual's beliefs about their ability to be successful in their performance.

As stated before, Emma prefers to dumpster dive alone, however, she does not mind being accompanied by the older woman who she usually meets when she goes dumpster diving. Emma and the older woman are friendly and we were able to feel the warmth between them when they greeted each other the night of our observation. As a sign of their friendliness they helped each other to find what they were looking for. They also helped each other by telling the other one if they had already searched in one of the trash bags or if the quality of the food that was left was good or not. Moreover, they helped each other to find and assess the available food in the dumpster.

Considering the smell from the dumpster one could get fooled not to go inside it, however, to really see and feel everything one would have to go inside the container to explore the food items inside. Being able to get inside the container can be described as an external factor, within the perceived behavioral control, which opens up for opportunities according to Ajzen (1991). If the container would be locked the individual's perception of control might be influenced negatively and influence their ability to successfully dumpster dive. As mentioned during the observation, Emma and the older woman told us about one time when there had been a fire inside the container and the store had locked it for a while after the incident. Then the dumpster divers were not able to go to that store for a period of time, until they removed the locks. An example of when external factors stopped their planned activity.

This particular container had two openings, so Emma was searching from one of the openings and the older woman was searching from the other opening. While Emma was inside she used her senses to assess the food, considering if it was worth taking out of the container or not. The food that she wanted to keep she gave to us to place on the ground until Emma was done. Since it was dark inside the container she used a headlamp, a very essential tool when dumpster diving, to both be able to see as well as to assess the food items. Inside the container she opened trash bags and turned items around to find even more food hiding underneath. In two of the trash bags she found some bread. She could feel that one of the bags with bread was from yesterday because the bread was really stiff, but the other bag contained bread that had been thrown away earlier that day. Emma decided to take the fresh bread out of the container, since it was still edible.

Once Emma was satisfied with her findings she got out of the container and continued doing a second evaluation of the food items that we had placed on the ground. Most of the food

items she found were still fresh and edible, however, since there was too much of e.g. ginger that any of us would be able to consume, Emma threw the rest of it back inside the container. Some other food items that neither of us usually eat also got thrown back inside. Then all the food left was divided and packed up in our various bags that we had brought. Before we left Emma and the older woman made sure to tidy up and leave nothing laying on the ground.

Emma also told us that if she does not find a lot at this store she usually goes to another store as well, but she always begins at this store because it closes one hour earlier than the other store. So, if she would want to go to the other grocery store the same night she would have to hang around for a little while until they close.

When we followed Rebecca and Simone into the recycling area during the third observation, they tilted two of the trash bins standing on the ground, but that night they were pretty much empty and the food inside was too mashed to even consider taking out to assess further. The four of us headed over to the big container, and Rebecca jumped inside. She was the only one with a headlamp, which is essential when being in the container since it otherwise would be completely dark and almost impossible to locate the food items. She looked for edible food and the ones she found she placed on the ground next to the container. After Rebecca was done she asked if Simone wanted to go inside as well, which she wanted so she borrowed the headlamp from Rebecca. While inside she lifted and turned the trash bags to be able to see if there was anything hiding underneath, since Rebecca already picked up the food items on the surface level. When Simone dug at one place in the container she happened to find broken pieces of glass. She proceeded cautiously and put back the items she had moved before she reached the broken glass.

After Simone could not find any more valuable food items she came out of the container. With all of the different fruits and vegetables in front of us, both of them told us that since they started with dumpster diving they have begun to eat much healthier, as well as being more creative when cooking. Of all the apples, Simone has started making her own apple sauce, and her own tomato/pasta sauce of all the tomatoes. Both of them have also made a lot of banana bread lately, since they always find so many bananas. While we divided the food items between the four of us we asked how they decide what to bring home to eat.

“...they respond saying that they look for holes and cracks in the food, or if the bag or whatever stores the food is broken they usually do not take it. Although, they sometimes open up the broken bag and take out what is still good and throw away the rest that is bad. [...] Usually when it comes to dates, they take outdated food if it is maximum two or three days old.”

We noticed how meticulous they were when examining the food items, before they decided what was still good versus bad. They used their hands to touch the food to see how it felt, and smelled it as well as used their sight to determine whether or not to bring the food home. We also asked if the amount of food that was found tonight is the usual amount, to which they responded saying that it is less than usual. Sometimes they find almost too much food for them to bring home with them, however that was not the case this time. Simone and Rebecca also told us that the availability of some foods, e.g. lemons, limes, cucumbers and oranges differ a lot depending on the season. During winter they were able to find huge amounts of those food items, but lately they have been reduced a lot. They also mentioned that the overall amount of food waste at this store has been reduced since they started in January this year. Before Simone and Rebecca returned home they made sure to leave the place tidy and closed the trash lids and container door.

While observing Sally, Jennifer and Belinda we learned about different levels of experience when assessing the quality of the food. Sally, the one with the most experience, was quick to judge if the food items were edible still. Jennifer, on the other hand, was more cautious and tended to leave the food if she was not sure about the quality. A couple of times Sally reassessed the food items that Jennifer had left and explained that it can still be eaten, in her opinion. This example shows that Sally was not as concerned about the quality of the food as Jennifer might have been. Since it was the first time dumpster diving for Belinda she tended to observe more and asked Sally and Jennifer about the quality when she was not sure whether to take the food item or not. Belinda was also a bit more cautious like Jennifer, but it was not surprising since she was doing it for the first time.

This cautiousness might have to do with the level of experience of the dumpster diver, as it seems as if the diver has more experience of eating food from the dumpsters one might not be as particular and cautious compared to someone who is not used to eating food from the dumpsters. The example above shows how internal factors, within TPB (Ajzen, 1991), such

as knowledge, skills and self-efficacy can be determining for how successful the performance of dumpster diving turns out. Furthermore, the previous experience of the individual may affect the perceived behavioral control of this activity.

As a general rule, Sally told us that she does not bring home food with cracks and holes in it, nor if it smells bad. However, if the food is not too damaged she usually takes it home and then cuts off the bad parts of the fruit or vegetable. Then it is perfectly fine to eat. We could also notice that they used their hands to feel if e.g. the avocado was too mushy or if it was worth taking home. They also looked at the expiration date of the food items, but they do not take it into account too much since it usually lasts for another week or even longer sometimes. Worth mentioning is that this observation was in the middle of April, so this might not apply when it is warmer outside. Neither of Sally and Jennifer eat meat, so meat is something they would never consider taking home. Sally mentioned that she would not take meat home from the dumpster even if she was not a vegetarian. Likewise with eggs, because of the risk of getting sick.

Lastly, considering the quality of the food, Emma informed us that the dumpster diving season is coming to its end. When it gets warmer outside, the temperature accelerates food spoilage and odors. The best season to dumpster dive is therefore during late fall and winter. Although, Emma will most likely dumpster dive until the end of the school semester and then have a little break during the summer. Yet another external factor (Ajzen, 1991) that plays a role when they are able to dive.

4.5.2 External Attitudes and Stigmas

Sharing the same attitudes towards the behavior is another component within TPB which is important regarding the overall perception of the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Our participants share an overall positive experience of the phenomenon, and consider the benefits of engaging in dumpster diving as greater than the drawbacks. Since the three of them dumpster dive they clearly do not mind eating most of the foods from the dumpsters, however, it was interesting to learn about how their family and friends responded to them dumpster diving, and if they would consider eating food from the dumpsters. We will further examine if the participants' attitudes align with or diverge from the broader societal values by learning what

their family and friends think. Belinda even told us that she will not tell her family nor her boyfriend that she has been dumpster diving.

“... her parents would be so worried of her not having enough money to buy food from the store and send her money. She also says that she would not tell her boyfriend because he would be disgusted and not wanting to eat the food she cooks anymore.”

This example shows that her family would mostly be concerned about Belinda not having enough money, however, her boyfriend would not even eat any of the food from the dumpsters if Belinda was to use it in her cooking. Now she can get away with it since Belinda and her boyfriend do not live in the same area. So, even though Belinda and her friends would assess the quality of the food and cut away any bad parts, it is the idea of taking food from the dumpsters that her boyfriend gets disgusted with. Furthermore, Belinda told us about one of her friends that considers dumpster diving as stealing from the grocery stores, so she decided not to tell him about her doing it either. This is an example of how the subjective norms, within TPB (Ajzen, 1991), among Belinda’s inner circle could influence her perceptions of dumpster diving since they do not approve of her actions and do not comply with her opinions. Belinda does not get the support she might need if she is to continue with dumpster diving, since the most important people in her life disapprove of her engagement in dumpster diving.

When Sally told her friends about her going dumpster diving they were really impressed about it, and thought it was cool. They support her doing it and some of her friends have already tried some of the food that she has dumpster dived, so they have no problem eating it. According to Ajzen’s (1991) TPB this shows that Sally gets approval from her friends, and that they are motivated to comply with her opinions. Her parents, on the other hand, are not into it. Sally explained that when she told them about her dumpster diving they reacted really badly, and they have not talked about it since then. Her parents disapprove of her behavior, however, Sally told us that she would not be influenced to stop dumpster diving because of that. She said that they probably know she dumpster dives to a certain extent, but not how frequently she goes. One time she had sent them a picture of all the food she had found which they responded:

“...that they do not like that Sally “breaks” into supermarkets’ dumpsters during the night.”

Their response might depend on their perception of dumpster diving since it is illegal in Sally's home country where her parents live. Even though her parents are not on board with Sally dumpster diving, she still believes that they would eat the food she has found after she has washed it and placed it in the fridge. She explained that they do not like the process of dumpster diving but would not mind eating the food.

When asking Jennifer the same questions we learned that her family is very supportive of her dumpster diving. All of them are really impressed by the amount of food that Jennifer finds and they have shown much interest in the phenomenon. She believes her family would not mind eating the food that she has found, even though it comes from the dumpsters. This shows that her family approves of her behavior. Their shared subjective norms may encourage Jennifer to continue this alternative form of consumption. However, her friends have quite different views and opinions on dumpster diving. Jennifer told us that most of her friends are supportive of her doing it, and she has had one friend who joined her one time, and that friend also liked it. On the other hand, when she told two of her male friends about her engaging in the practice they had reacted a bit negatively and said:

"...that they felt disgusted about eating food from the trash. They also told her that they would never go dumpster diving, and Jennifer is pretty sure that her male friends would not eat any food from the trash that she has dumpster dived."

Even though most of her friends approve of her behavior, her two male friends do not approve and do not share the same attitudes towards food waste reduction and this alternative way of consumption as Jennifer. This example highlights how different opinions people can have regarding dumpster diving and how likely or not people are to consume food from the dumpsters. As we have shown with these examples from our observation the phenomenon of dumpster diving seems to be a watershed among people.

We also asked Simone and Rebecca in the third observation what their family and friends think of them dumpster diving, as well if they would eat food from the dumpsters. Simone told us that her mother had been kind of surprised when she first heard about it, but thought it was cool. At the same time she had been worried, but after Simone sent her pictures of all the food her mother had been really impressed. Simone had also explained that it is not explicitly

illegal here in Sweden, which it is in her home country. Simone's friends were also very impressed and mentioned how much money Simone must be able to save when dumpster diving and getting food for free. Some of her friends also dumpster dive, even though it is illegal in their home country, so for them it was not a big deal when they found out that Simone does it here in Sweden. Whether or not Simone's friends and family would eat food from the dumpsters she told us:

"... yes, because even though it might be disgusting when taken from the trash they would not notice, even if she tells them, when she has washed it all and the smell is gone."

According to Ajzen (1991) subjective norms refers to an individual's perception of getting approval from the most important people in their life, which Simone gets. Both her mother and her friends feel motivated to comply with Simone's opinions and support her engagement towards food waste reduction through dumpster diving.

When we asked Rebecca the same questions, she told us that her sister and her friends are really impressed by the amount of food Rebecca finds when dumpster diving. Rebecca always sends them pictures after she has washed the food items, which is appreciated by her sister and her friends. While Rebecca's sister is supportive and has shown interest in the phenomenon, Rebecca has not told her parents about it. She thinks her mother would be really concerned and she does not know how her father would react. However, when Rebecca moves back to her home country she will probably tell them, as she is not planning on continuing with dumpster diving since it is illegal in her home country. Lastly, Rebecca thinks her sister would most definitely eat food from the dumpsters, but her parents would probably only eat e.g. bananas or oranges that you can peel off, and avoid food items like yogurt.

In Rebecca's case her sister and her friends approve of her behavior, and support her dumpster diving. However, she is not sure she will get approval from her parents, as they might not share her opinions. According to Ajzen (1991) the subjective norms of one's important people in life might influence the perceptions and attitudes towards the practice. By not telling her parents she avoids getting potential social pressure from them, since she believes they would be concerned.

Furthermore, Emma told us that tonight was a “good” dumpster diving occasion considering the amount of food that we found. Sometimes when she finds a lot of food she brings home some extra to share with her friends as well. We asked Emma what her family and friends think of her engaging in dumpster diving, and she told us that they have no problems with it. Emma has done it for so long now that they are all used to her doing it. Emma shares with us that she has friends who also dumpster dives and all of them get happy if Emma brings some food for free to them as well. This example shows that Emma and her family as well as friends' attitudes align with each other, and that she gets support to dumpster dive. According to Ajzen (1991) this can be described as the attitude towards the behavior. Both Emma and her friends, who get to share some of the food, perceive the value of engaging in dumpster diving as beneficial. Ajzen also mentions subjective norms, which include the example of Emma and what her family and friends think of her engaging in dumpster diving. All of them approve the behavior, and according to Emma they comply with her opinions.

4.6 How? - Post-dumpster diving activities

Last but not least, we will learn more about what the dumpster divers do when they get back home with all of their findings. This is the final step of the dumpster diving process and after reading this section the reader will have an overall knowledge of what it is like to participate in the phenomenon of dumpster diving.

The empirical findings moreover provide insight into the activities that take place after the dumpster diving session, which include cleaning, storage, and sharing of the found items. Once the food items are collected, it is essential to wash them thoroughly to ensure their cleanliness and safety for consumption. This step is crucial in minimizing any health risks associated with consuming food from the dumpster. The next step is proper storage of the found items, since it is essential to preserve their freshness and quality. The divers need to be aware of the appropriate storage methods for different food items to maximize their usability and longevity.

In observation one, Emma explained that when she comes home she rinses all the food items underneath the sink to get it clean. She then freezes items like bread to prevent it from getting moldy, and stores the rest of it in the refrigerator. Having this knowledge is an example of an

internal factor which is much valued within TPB (Ajzen, 1991). Also, being able to store all the food is a necessity which creates the opportunity to prevent food spoilage. This can be considered as having available resources, which are a part of the external factors within the perceived behavioral control component. Moreover, if Emma has taken some extra food with her she shares it with her friends, as they appreciate getting some food for free. Since Emma only went to one store this time, which closed at 21:00, she was able to go to bed at a reasonable time. Otherwise when she goes to the other store as well, which closes at 22:00, she goes to bed much later.

Before we said goodbye after observation number two we asked what they would do when they got back home. They told us that they will wash everything thoroughly and then cut off any bad parts and/or throw away damaged food items. Sally and Jennifer told us that they always take a picture of the findings, and afterwards place everything in the fridge and freezer. Cleaning all the food that we found took approximately one hour and then feeling pretty exhausted we went to bed around 01 in the middle of the night. We spent around 45 minutes at the store, however, washing everything was the part that took the longest time.

Sally, who lives in a student corridor, sometimes takes some extra food with her and shares it with the others in her corridor. Although she felt good sharing some of the food with the rest of the corridor in the beginning of her dumpster diving experience she has gotten a bit tired of it because no one shows any sort of appreciation anymore. She also felt that some of them expected her to bring food to the rest as well.

Since it was the first time for Belinda we asked if she would like to continue with dumpster diving, to which she responded that she would. When asking Sally the same question she told us that as long as she is in Sweden she will continue, however when she goes back to her home country she will most probably not continue. This is because dumpster diving is illegal in her home country. According to Ajzen (1991), this is an example of an external factor that constrains her from dumpster diving. It might also influence her perceived behavioral control and uncover how discarded food items are perceived. However, if they change the laws regarding dumpster diving Sally would consider continuing, although she believes it would be difficult to find a place where she would be able to do it since the dumpsters have been locked for such a long time. If there is a possibility to continue she would.

However, if the possibility is limited she might start using apps like Too Good To Go and Karma, which she previously used to buy cheaper food from before she started with dumpster diving. She then stopped since she collected so much food for free already. If she would go back to using the apps she told us it would mostly be to reduce food waste, and not for economical reasons since she will most likely work by then. Jennifer responded similarly to Sally, that she will probably not continue with dumpster diving after her studies since she will have more money when she starts working.

Simone and Rebecca, in observation three, told us that they would go home and clean all the food, and then place it in the fridge respectively the freezer. If some of the food items have cracks or holes they cut it off before they place it in the fridge and freezer. Since the store closes pretty late at night, and then cleaning takes a bit of time they always go to bed later than usual the night when they dumpster dive. However, doing it every other week is not that problematic and considering the amount of food they find and how much money they save, it is all worth it. Their reasoning shows that the perceived value of collecting discarded food items is high. According to Ajzen (1991) this will most likely influence their decision to continue their engagement in dumpster diving, as long as they are in Sweden.

Since Simone and Rebecca find a lot of food when dumpster diving they think it is unnecessary to buy it at such high prices at the grocery store. Although, Simone and Rebecca told us that they will not continue with dumpster diving when they return to their home country, since it is illegal, Simone might start using different apps again such as Too Good To Go. She told us that she likes the initiative and the possibility to buy cheaper food, as well as to counter food waste. Just like Sally, in our second observation, is constrained by the laws regarding dumpster diving in her home country, so is Simone and Rebecca in their respective home country. This is an example of Ajzen's (1991) external factors within the component of perceived behavioral control. However, in comparison to Sally, Simone and Rebecca did not mention that they would like to continue with dumpster diving if the laws would eventually change.

5 Discussion

In this chapter, we delve into the analysis outcomes, tying the three observations together in relation to the research objectives. Throughout the analytical process, every theme was related back to the theoretical basis, with each case being examined in greater detail. The focus of this section is primarily on underlining the main discoveries that pave the way towards the study's ultimate conclusions.

The exploration of motivations and methods used by urban foragers contributes to a richer understanding of this alternative consumer practice. Through our research, we shed light on the complexities and intricacies of dumpster diving, viewing it not merely as an act of survival or rebellion, but as an established and evolving consumer practice with its own community, culture, and norms. By examining the phenomenon from the consumer's perspective, our research also offers a new lens through which to view the issue of food waste and sustainability. It brings to the fore the contradictions and inefficiencies inherent in our current consumption patterns and waste management practices, sparking critical reflection and discussion on potential paths towards a more sustainable and equitable society. Therefore, our study does not merely contribute to the existing body of knowledge on dumpster diving; it opens up new avenues for further research and exploration of the broader discourse on sustainable consumer practices.

The study was grounded in a comprehensive understanding of dumpster diving, with the intention to bridge the gap between the well-known motivations driving social movements and the relatively unexplored activity of dumpster diving. This was done in an attempt to shed light on a non-traditional yet increasingly relevant consumer trend that addresses the global issue of food waste within the context of sustainability. The empirical findings of the study highlighted the meticulous processes involved in dumpster diving, the community built around it, and the variety of factors influencing the value attributed to discarded food items.

5.1 A New Form of Social Movement

As discovered among our participants, dumpster divers act against traditional consumption patterns by saving discarded but still edible food items. Dumpster divers also contribute to

the fight against food waste, a pervasive issue that not only contributes to environmental degradation but also epitomizes the inefficiency of our current food systems. The participants of our study are not only motivated by the economic benefits of obtaining free food but also by their desire to make a positive impact on the environment. Moreover, dumpster diving plays a role in combating food waste, which is a significant issue globally, with vast amounts of food being discarded while still edible. This practice not only contributes to environmental problems, such as greenhouse gas emissions from food decomposition in landfills, but also signifies a wasteful use of resources used in the production, transportation, and storage of food. Dumpster divers, by salvaging and consuming discarded food, contributes to the issues of food waste.

Dumpster diving acts as a form of resistance against the existing conventional consumer cultures, which is characterized by overconsumption and wastefulness. The individuals participating in dumpster diving, as discovered in our study, consume outside of the conventional system. It is a relatively silent protest as they practice dumpster diving together with their friends, after the stores' operating hours, and want to avoid interaction with the store employees. This could be argued to be a new form of social movement since traditional social movements protest more loudly compared to the participants of our study.

5.2 The Influence of Community in Dumpster Diving

The sense of community among dumpster divers has a significant impact on the practice and appears to play a vital role in fostering and maintaining engagement in dumpster diving. This was evident in our study, where the participants often dumpster dived in pairs or groups, sharing their findings, and even dividing the salvaged food amongst themselves. These actions enhance the practicality and safety of dumpster diving, as most of our participants mentioned that they would not consider dumpster diving alone, although Emma is an exception to this statement.

In fact, the sense of community may act as a form of social support by having one's friend(s) with them, also validating the participants' actions to participate such as sharing the same motivations to why they want to engage in dumpster diving, and helping them navigate the challenges associated with dumpster diving in regards to the legal gray zone and helping each

other to assess the food quality. This is particularly important given the stigma and legal issues that can be associated with the practice. The shared experiences and mutual understandings within the dumpster diving community can help to mitigate these challenges and contribute to a collective identity among dumpster divers.

The importance of community in the practice of dumpster diving is further underscored by the observation that all participants in the study were introduced to dumpster diving either through friends or students from their respective student corridor. This finding suggests that social networks play a crucial role in the spreading of dumpster diving as a practice. The initiation through friends or other associates not only provides a practical introduction to the activity such as how to do it and what time to do it, but also a form of social support. This reliance on social networks for introduction to dumpster diving might also indicate that the practice is more widespread than it might appear at first glance.

The influence of social movements on the dumpster diving community is also worth noting. Dumpster diving can be seen as part of larger social movements advocating for sustainable consumption, reduced food waste, and opposition to the excesses of consumer culture. These wider social movements can provide a broader ideological framework for dumpster divers, aligning their individual actions with larger societal goals. The role of the community and social movements also ties into the Theory of Planned Behavior, which posits that subjective norms - the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform a behavior - can influence an individual's behavior (Ajzen, 1991). As shown in our study, some of the dumpster divers introduce their friends and motivate them to engage in the practice.

5.3 The Differences in Attitudes

There is a clear divergence in attitudes and practices among dumpster divers as observed in the study. On one hand, we have individuals like Sally, Belinda, and Jennifer, who show a high level of respect towards store personnel and their working hours, adhere strictly to ethical guidelines, and avoid actions that could potentially be considered criminal offenses. They demonstrate an awareness of the potential negative implications of their actions, both in terms of possible legal consequences and in terms of causing discomfort or embarrassment to

the store employees. They consciously strive to minimize disruption to the store operations and maintain a harmonious relationship with the employees.

On the other hand, the study also highlights dumpster divers who do not necessarily adhere to the same principles. The arrival of the two girls who dived into the area despite the presence of the store personnel demonstrated a different approach. Their willingness to dive while the employees were still on site could be perceived as a lack of respect for the store personnel and their working hours. It also suggests a more opportunistic attitude and a willingness to take risks to secure valuable finds.

This divergence of attitudes shows that dumpster diving is not a homogenous activity, but rather one that is shaped by the individual attitudes, motivations, and risk tolerances of the participants. However, even though all dumpster divers do not react the same way in a given situation, this example shows the importance of salvaging valuable food items as a common goal for their participation. Therefore, while the diver's practices and attitudes may vary, their overall goal remains the same.

5.4 The Effect of Seasonality on Dumpster Diving

The role of seasonality in dumpster diving surfaced as a significant factor during the research. It became clear that the timing of our observations, conducted during a few weeks in spring, had a direct impact on the study's findings. As the dumpster diving season was coming to an end, there was a noticeable decrease in the quantity and variety of discarded food items available that were edible. This reduced availability due to accelerated spoilage and odors could potentially alter the perceived value of dumpster diving for the participants, and thus their motivations and behaviors. This could indicate that dumpster diving is a sensitive form of an alternative consumption practice, since it is dependent on the season of the year, and thus perhaps not be a satisfactory alternative to traditional food consumption.

The impact of seasonality was also apparent in the participant selection for the study. A number of potential participants were unable to be observed because they abstain from dumpster diving during the warmer months. As seen during the first observation, Emma's statement highlighted how the practice is seasonal for many, with a preference for diving

during colder months when food can stay fresh for longer in the outdoor conditions. This confirms that seasonality not only affects the availability and variety of food waste, but also the participation rate in dumpster diving.

Moreover, the seasonal variation in the availability of certain food items has significant implications for dumpster diving as a sustainable practice. Participants mentioned the fluctuation in availability of specific food items, like lemons, limes, cucumbers, and oranges, depending on the season. This further emphasizes the importance of understanding the practice within its environmental context. Thus, while dumpster diving can contribute to mitigating food waste, its effectiveness may be constrained by factors such as seasonal variations in food waste generation and diver participation. However, considering that less food items are available is a positive sign for the environment, but at the same time it means less food for the dumpster divers. This could indicate dumpster diving to be a less sustainable consumption practice in terms of availability of food for the participants.

6 Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, we encapsulate the study's insights derived from the comprehensive analysis and discussion of our empirical findings.

6.1 Research Aims

Dumpster diving, as an emergent phenomenon, presents an exciting opportunity to bridge the gap between our understanding of social movements, consumer trends, and unconventional practices like dumpster diving. The observational study plays a crucial role in shedding light on the motivations of our participants, how dumpster diving is practiced, and their attitudes, thus providing a nuanced understanding of this less-explored phenomenon. On one hand dumpster diving reflects a social movement that challenges traditional notions of waste, consumption, and sustainability. On the other hand, it represents an unconventional consumer trend that is driven by economic considerations, environmental consciousness, and a rejection of wasteful consumerism.

Furthermore, the study also captures the diversity of attitudes and practices within the dumpster diving community. It highlights the different approaches and ethical considerations among the divers. Although all of our participants somewhat share these considerations there were other divers who we met that had a different approach when e.g. waiting for the store personnel to leave before the divers entered the recycling area. In result, this provided a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. This diversity reflects the multifaceted nature of social movements and consumer trends, demonstrating that even within niche practices like dumpster diving, there is a wide range of motivations, attitudes, and behaviors.

6.2 What are the Motivations behind Engaging in Dumpster Diving?

Throughout the course of our research, we have discovered that the motivations for engaging in dumpster diving are diverse and multi-faceted.

Environmental concerns: As discovered from our observations we noticed that all of our participants share concerns about the environment. For one of our participants, her primary reason to engage in dumpster diving is to save food because of her significant concern for the

environment. She considers buying a food item that she knows she can find in the container for free a couple of hours later as bizarre. Being able to dumpster dive edible food is the real problem, not the divers. Through dumpster diving all of our participants are able to express their attitudes and morals by their actions. They are driven by different goals, however one of them is related to the environment. Being able to rescue food contributes to a level of satisfaction in the process of achieving the goal. Moreover the participants want to make an impact in the long run for a sustainable future by saving discarded food items.

Economical concerns: Many of the participants expressed their motivation to engage in dumpster diving as a means to save money. The food prices are high and their interest to find alternative ways to the traditional consumption practice led them into dumpster diving. All of the participants have noticed the amounts of edible food among the trash, that they can just bring home to clean and then eat. The volume as well as the quality of the food makes them question the management of our food systems, since the divers are able to find so much and so fresh food in the dumpsters. We also discovered that neither of them will continue with dumpster diving when they graduate from the university, since they will have more money then. So, dumpster diving seems to be just temporary while they are students and being in Sweden, since some of our participants are foreign students where it is illegal to dumpster dive in their home country. Moreover, one of the participants mentioned her goal to only eat food from the dumpsters and not buy any food from the grocery store during one week to save as much money as she could. As long as she finds enough food when dumpster diving she can achieve her goal and be satisfied by her experience. Furthermore, some of our participants consider going to the store to buy food at such high prices unnecessary when they know they can have it for free, both saving money and food. Lastly, the older woman who we met seemed to be the one most in need to dumpster dive for economical concerns as she expressed her concerns, and the amount of times per week she goes dumpster diving.

Community: As discovered in our research all of our participants, except for one, value the idea of engaging oneself in dumpster diving in order to do it together with their friends. Some of them would not even consider dumpster diving if their friends did not do it. Having at least one friend with them was expressed by one of our participants as necessary in order to feel safe being out late at night and for mental support. Having like-minded friends is an important part of the experience and motivates them to continue with dumpster diving. They share the experience together and belong to a group, with their shared rituals, codes and

meetings which strengthens the bonds between them. Having a strong identification within the group makes it more likely for the participants to continue being part of the movement. The group also shares many of the same emotions, attitudes and morals, which is considered important for the group. On the other hand, one of our participants prefers to do it alone since she likes the possibility of being flexible and not having to adjust to other people. She can also be spontaneous and dumpster dive when it suits her best.

Legal motivations: This mainly concerns our international students who expressed their motivations to dumpster dive since it is legal here in Sweden, compared to in their home country where it is illegal. They consider dumpster diving a means to reduce food waste and a possibility for people who feel a need to do it, and wish that the laws in Sweden could influence the laws in their home country. Neither of them would consider continuing dumpster diving when they go back home since it is illegal, which is why the gray zone in Sweden opens up for the possibility of retrieving free food for them while they are studying here in Sweden.

6.3 What Strategies and Methods are Employed when Practicing Dumpster Diving?

After thorough analysis of the empirical findings and discussions, the following conclusions have been drawn about the practical enactment of dumpster diving:

Preparation: Dumpster diving requires thorough preparation. Divers equip themselves with tools such as gloves, bags, and headlamps to aid in the search and recovery of discarded food items. These tools ensure safety, convenience, and efficiency during the process. It is a meticulously prepared activity with a social aspect as well. Alongside equipping themselves, divers coordinate time and location decisions within their community. Thus, the preparation stage becomes a collaborative effort, integrating physical readiness with shared strategic planning, emphasizing the community-centric nature of dumpster diving.

Interactions/Relations with Store Employees and Policies: The interaction between dumpster divers and store employees varies. Some divers maintain a low profile to avoid confrontation or to respect the store's operational activities. The reaction of the employees can range from

indifference to hostility, influencing the strategy and timing of the dumpster diving activities. Most divers follow unwritten rules within the community, such as only dumpster diving after the stores are closed as well as waiting until the personnel have left in respect for their work. Neither do the participants break any locks, if there would be any on the containers, nor do they enter the backside of the store if the gates were to be closed. Lastly, as long as the dumpster divers make sure to clean up after themselves the store will let them continue diving there.

Strategies for Finding and Assessing Food Quality: Dumpster divers have developed sophisticated strategies for finding and assessing the quality of discarded food items. They conduct meticulous searches within the dumpsters, opening trash bags and inspecting items individually. Assessing the quality of food often depends on visual inspection, smell, and sometimes taste. Over time, divers gain experience and knowledge, allowing them to better judge the freshness and edibility of various food items.

Post-Dumpster Diving Activities: Once the food items have been retrieved, a series of post-diving activities are conducted to ensure the safety and usability of the food. These activities include thorough washing, cutting away any spoiled parts, and proper storage (refrigerating or freezing) to extend the shelf life of the items. Any surplus food is often shared within their community, ensuring that the retrieved items are used and not wasted.

These conclusions provide a comprehensive picture of the practice of dumpster diving. The process is not simply about retrieving discarded food items, but involves careful planning, specific strategies for searching and assessing, and post-retrieval processes to ensure the safety and longevity of the collected food. Moreover, the interaction with store employees highlights the social dynamics and potential challenges inherent to dumpster diving. The research thus presents dumpster diving as a complex practice that requires skill, knowledge, and a certain level of risk management.

The practical aspects of dumpster diving, as observed in this study, align well with the constructs of the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The attitude towards the behavior, the influence of subjective norms, and the sense of perceived behavioral control all play integral roles in the enactment of dumpster diving. The third component, perceived behavioral control, is manifested in the various practical aspects of dumpster diving identified

in this study. The divers' preparations, their interactions with store employees, their strategies for finding and assessing food, and their post-dive activities all indicate a degree of control and proficiency over the behavior. The divers' belief in their ability to successfully perform the behavior, including navigating potential legal issues and ensuring the safety and usability of retrieved food, is evidence of a strong sense of perceived behavioral control. This fusion of theory and empirical findings enhances our understanding of dumpster diving as a practice in the light of consumer culture theory.

6.4 Practical Implications

This observational study of dumpster diving presents a variety of practical implications for various stakeholders, including businesses and the dumpster diving community itself. As we aim to bridge the gap between what we know about social movements and consumer resistance and the relatively unknown phenomenon of dumpster diving, several key areas emerge for consideration. While this study does not provide definitive solutions for sustainability challenges, it does illuminate the issues that our participants perceive as significant, thereby contributing to a broader dialogue about potential practical implications based on the learnings from the practice of dumpster diving.

6.4.1 Business Opportunities

Dumpster diving as a rising phenomenon underscores a pressing call for corporations, specifically those in the food and retail sector, to reassess and reconstruct their waste management protocols and overall value chains. The ability of dumpster divers to maintain their lifestyle through discarded food items signals a clear inefficiency and wastefulness present in today's prevalent business models. Understanding why people engage in dumpster diving can help businesses gain a deeper understanding of changing consumer values and behaviors.

The fact that dumpster divers can often find large quantities of perfectly edible food in dumpsters indicates that many businesses have significant room for improvement in their waste management practices. By understanding the types and quantities of food being thrown away, businesses can identify potential areas for reducing waste in their supply chains and

operations. The motivations behind dumpster diving can inspire innovation and create new business opportunities. For example, if dumpster divers are motivated by a desire for less expensive or free food, businesses might explore new business models that can meet this demand while also reducing waste. This could include selling 'imperfect' produce at a discount, partnering with food rescue organizations, or developing platforms to connect consumers with surplus food.

6.4.2 Implications for Social Movements and Consumer Resistance

The findings of this study, particularly those regarding dumpster diving as a form of social movement and consumer resistance, provide significant insights that can be utilized by various groups.

In terms of community building, understanding the motivations behind dumpster diving can inform the development of more effective strategies for fostering a sense of community and collective identity. Dumpster diving is not merely an individual act but a shared activity that brings together individuals with similar values and goals. Recognizing this social aspect can help social movement organizations to establish stronger connections between members and create a more cohesive and supportive community.

In addition, the study underscores the impact and potential of consumer resistance strategies like dumpster diving in challenging and disrupting prevailing consumption norms. This understanding can be integrated into broader campaigns against waste and for sustainability. For instance, movements can use this knowledge to highlight the absurdity of food waste and challenge the idea that 'perfect' looking food is the only kind worth consuming. Moreover, the strategies employed by dumpster divers can also inspire new ways of resisting unsustainable practices. By demonstrating that it is possible to consume discarded food, dumpster divers effectively challenge the need for overproduction and overconsumption. This message can be leveraged in campaigns to promote mindful consumption and waste reduction.

Overall, the insights gained from studying dumpster diving can be used to inform and stimulate social movements and consumer resistance strategies towards more sustainable and equitable food systems.

6.5 Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights into the practice of dumpster diving in Sweden, there are certain limitations that should be noted. First, the seasonal timing of the observations may have introduced a potential bias. The observations were conducted during a few weeks in spring, at the end of the typical dumpster diving season. As a result, the availability of discarded food items and the number of active dumpster divers were likely lower than during the winter season.

In addition, the study's focus on dumpster diving in Sweden may limit the applicability of the findings to other contexts. Dumpster diving practices and the associated legal, social, and environmental factors can vary greatly between different countries and cultures. Therefore, the specific motivations, methods, and perceived values identified in this study may not be representative of dumpster diving practices elsewhere.

Future research could address these limitations and further expand on the findings of this study. For instance, conducting observations over a full year or across different seasons could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of seasonality on dumpster diving. Additionally, comparative studies could be conducted in different countries or cultural contexts to explore the similarities and differences in dumpster diving practices globally.

Furthermore, the influence of community and social movements on dumpster diving, while examined in this study, could be explored in greater depth. As this study has shown, dumpster diving is not just an individual act of resistance against food waste, but also a communal activity deeply embedded in a broader social movement. As we continue to deal with issues of waste, consumption, and sustainability, the lessons learned from dumpster diving are more relevant than ever. The phenomenon of dumpster diving stands as a testament to the possibility of an alternative way of consuming. As dumpster divers go 'beyond the bin', we continue to learn about their practices.

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Appendix

Facebook Post

[English below]

Hejsan! Vill du delta i en undersökning av dumpster diving? Då är det rena julafton idag! Jag och min kompis Vendela Melin skriver just nu vår master thesis om dumpster diving, och vi är väldigt intresserade av att få följa med vid några dumpster diving-tillfällen. Se vad ni gör och hur ni går tillväga, kanske ställa lite frågor längs vägen osv. Vi följer helst med minst två personer eller en liten grupp. Självklart är det helt anonymt! Kommentera eller skriv i DM om det skulle vara nått som ni kan tänka er. Skulle vara till fantastiskt stor hjälp för oss, alla tips är välkomna! Det är bara att höra av er om det skulle vara någon fråga. Tusen tack på förhand! 😊😊😊

Hello! Would you like to participate in a survey on dumpster diving? My friend Vendela Melin and I are currently writing our master's thesis on dumpster diving, and we are very interested in joining in on some dumpster diving occasions. We want to see what you do and how you go about it, perhaps ask some questions along the way, etc. We prefer to accompany at least two people or a small group. Of course, it is completely anonymous! Comment or write in DM if it is something you can consider. It would be of great help to us, and all tips are welcome! Just get in touch if there is any question. Thank you very much in advance! 😊

😊😊

Observation Number 1: 17-04-23 in Lund

It is the middle of April and there is still some daylight left, even though it is starting to get dark outside as the later evening is approaching. After arranging a meeting with Emma* at 21:00 one evening, we biked to her usual dumpster diving spot, located behind a well-known Swedish grocery chain in Lund. Upon meeting Emma, we introduced ourselves and she told us that she also is a student in Lund. We then asked her to carry on with her routine while we observed as if we were fellow dumpster divers. Before she gets started she usually makes sure that the personnel have left, which is why she always comes around 15 minutes after they have closed. The store's parking lot was empty and all the lights inside the store were switched off. While confirming that the personnel had left, we inquired about Emma's dumpster diving experience and learned that another student introduced her to the activity three years ago. Since that first joint excursion, Emma has mostly dumpster dived alone, about once a week. The reasons why she does it alone are because she can be spontaneous and does not have to adjust to someone else. She feels comfortable doing it alone, and she explains that it only took her one time to learn how to dumpster dive.

Together, we approached the container situated next to the parking lot and encountered a woman who had already opened one of the container doors. The two greeted each other warmly, explaining that they often bump into each other and help search for food items. Their friendly interaction included sharing findings and asking if the other was looking for anything specific. The woman also welcomed us, inquiring about our preferences and whether we sought any particular items. We asked the woman if she dumpster dives often, and she told us that she does it a couple of days a week. A while ago she used to do it almost everyday. As the woman asks us some questions we can tell that she got a bit nervous when we told her that we are mostly observing the events of tonight to gather data for our thesis. We made sure to tell her that we would not publish any names or the location of the store, however she was still worried and told us that she was concerned that they would put locks on the container if it became published that they dumpster dive here. Emma also told us later that the woman gets most of her food from here, and needs it for economic reasons.

Furthermore, the older woman mentioned a tacit agreement with the store employees: they would not interfere as long as the dumpster divers cleaned up after themselves. Consequently, the group was meticulous about picking up any fallen items. She also shared that the store had previously locked the container when people left a mess but later removed the lock. Whether the store or another dumpster diver removed it remained unclear. The woman and

Emma also told us about a fire inside the container, which consequently had led to them not being able to dumpster dive at this store for a while.

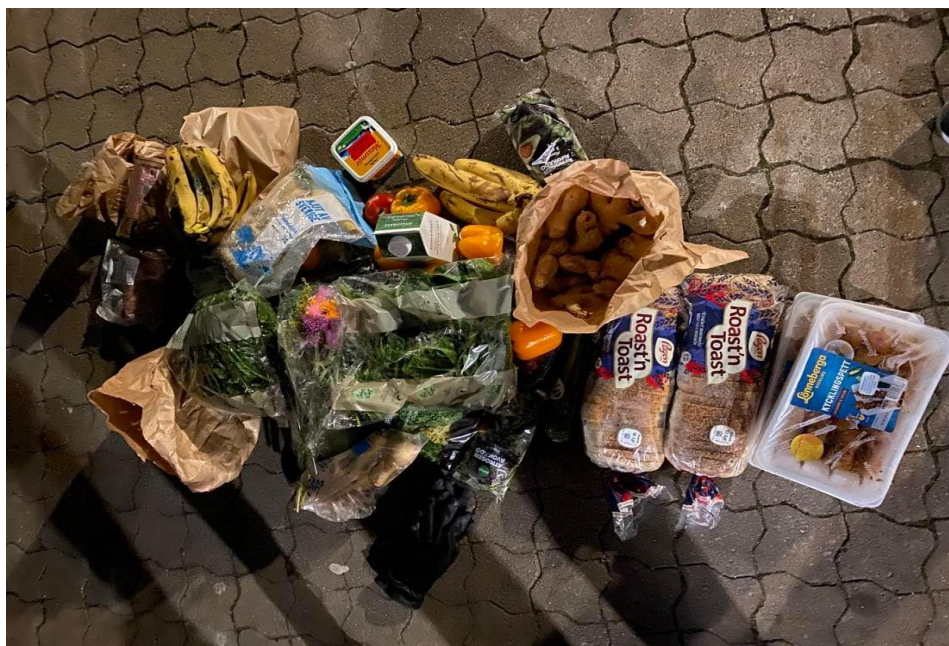
The smell emanating from the container was striking. Emma mentioned that it was usually emptied once a week, with the timing being quite apparent. An intriguing aspect of their search was the depth of their exploration. To really see everything and find the food, one would have to go inside the container. The container had two openings and the woman was at one of the openings, so Emma then jumped into the other opening of the container. While inside she turned items over and opened trash bags to find more products. In some of the bags she found a lot of bread, some of them were from yesterday and not so fresh anymore, but some of them were from today and still edible.

As we asked Emma about her feelings towards dumpster diving, we admitted our own caution since it was not a natural activity for us. Emma did not see any issue if someone was to catch or confront her, as she views the problem of food waste as significant. Emma then told us that one time when she had been dumpster diving at another store, her friend and herself had stayed for a bit longer just talking to each other after being done with the dumpsters, a Securitas' worker had stopped at the store checking what they were doing. However, the worker had only asked what they were doing and then left. Emma continues describing her conscience as clean, feeling that her actions are not wrong. Instead, the fact that she could and needed to dumpster dive is the real issue. She finds it almost bizarre to purchase a food item when she knows she can find it for free in the container just a couple of hours later. We also asked Emma about her views on new apps and business ideas that address the same theme such as the app Too Good To Go. She responded that she welcomes all types of initiatives aimed at reducing food waste.

Emma was highly engaged and vocal during her search. She provided live commentary on her choices, describing the need to practice and trust one's senses. If something felt good and did not smell bad, it was likely safe to eat, she reasoned. We tried this as well but noticed that Emma's experience guided her decisions better than ours. Efficiently sorting through the contents, Emma handed us the food that she found inside the container and we then placed the food items on the ground next to the container. Once Emma felt satisfied, she exited the container for a second assessment of the products that she had found. We then divided the food such as potatoes, ginger, bananas, avocados, bell peppers, kale, spinach, salad, milk, cucumber and bread, and loaded them into various bags, backpacks, and carriers which we had brought with us.

After spending around 30 minutes at the site, we packed up and left, with everything appearing neat and tidy. On our way home, Emma informed us that the dumpster diving season was nearing its end. The summer heat accelerates food spoilage and odors, making winter the preferred time for the activity. We have included a photo of the total amount of food collected during this dive, which Emma considered a "good" day due to the substantial haul. On days with less food, she might visit another store, but on this particular day, the limiting factor was carrying capacity. When Emma mentioned that we found a lot tonight, she also shared that she sometimes takes extra food items to give to her friends. Thus, even when she can not consume everything herself, she shares her findings with others. We also asked Emma what her friends and family think about her dumpster diving and if they would eat the food that she had found. She told us that she has done it for such a long time now that they do not think it is strange and they support her doing it. She also adds that her friends get happy when they also get some free food from her dumpster diving tours.

When we had packed up all our food in the bags we thanked Emma for bringing us with her and she told us she was glad to help. Once home, it was essential to wash everything thoroughly and freeze items like bread to prevent spoilage. Reflecting on the experience, we noted the cold, dark conditions and the unpleasant smell. Wearing sturdy clothing and gloves was necessary due to the presence of other trash, including receipts, food, cans, and cartons. Afterwards, we felt tired and cold, and the refrigerator was filled mainly with fruit, vegetables and bread.



Picture 1: Findings from observation one of dumpster diving

Observation Number 2: 19-04-23 in Lund

It is a late evening in April. The temperature has gone down, compared to earlier that day when it was around 14 degrees, and the darkness has fallen. Since both of us have been dumpster diving before we already know what to wear; dress warm enough and have clothes that could get dirty. Since we are participating in the dumpster diving activity as well, each of us has brought a backpack and some plastic bags to put the findings in. We bike to our meeting point, where we are supposed to meet at 22:00, since then we will have enough time to bike to the store and the personnel will probably have left when we arrive. We have been told that you want to be the first ones there since it is first come first serve.

At our meeting point we meet with Sally* and Belinda*. Both of them are students living in Lund. One necessity to have when dumpster diving is a headlamp, which makes it more practical to see what is inside the container and trash bins. We bike together to the store, where we meet with Jennifer* who is also joining tonight. We are the first ones there, but the personnel are still there and Sally tells us that they usually wait until the personnel have left in respect for them to finish their job. She also tells us that they never break into any container or break any locks, since that could be considered a crime to either vandalize or trespass if the gates to the recycling area are closed. They also make sure to tidy up after themselves before they leave, e.g. if they already have a lot and can not bring any more food they will put it back into the container or trash bin.

While we are waiting outside of the recycling area, two other girls arrive. They do not care that the personnel are still there and go inside to the trash bins. Sally, Belinda and Jennifer discuss whether or not they should also go inside since otherwise the two girls might take all the good food. All of us decide to also go inside, but instead of going to the trash bins where the two girls are, we go to the big container. First, Sally jumps inside and she puts all the findings on the ground, or hands it to us. Around 10 minutes later two of the personnel walk out of the store, and one of them walks towards us with a big trash bag. She greets us and says it has some bread and cinnamon buns inside if we want, otherwise we can just throw them inside the container. We thanked her and then she left. For a moment we were a bit nervous she would confront us, but everything was fine. After a while, Sally asks if anyone else wants to have a go, and then Vendela jumps inside. There are a lot of carrots, cucumbers, bananas, apples, bell peppers, grapes, limes, lemons, salads, tomatoes, potatoes, two packages of milk, yogurt, garlic, mushrooms, oranges, broccoli, oat and such like in the container, and even though we are five people everyone gets a fair share to bring home.

After collecting everything we divide the food between the five of us. We ask how they decide which food is still edible and they tell us as long as the food does not have any cracks or holes, or smell bad they will take it home to eat. They also look at the expiration date, but tell us that it usually lasts for another week or even longer sometimes. Some of the food that has small damages, they just cut it off and then it is fine. We also ask for how long they have been dumpster diving, and Sally says she started in October 2022 and then she introduced Jennifer to the activity in the beginning of this year, and for Belinda it is her first time. Sally got introduced to dumpster diving here in Sweden by a person at the student nation where she lives, but she has known about it for many years, but since it is illegal in her home country she has not done it back home. When we ask them why they dumpster dive, they mention that they want to save money, and save food that has been discarded unnecessarily. It is very bad that so much food has been discarded, on the other hand, they can collect more food for free instead of buying it at the grocery store. For some of the girls, they sometimes bring extra something and give it to the people in their corridor.

When we ask if they have told their friends and family about them dumpster diving, Belinda says that she will not tell them that she has dumpster dived tonight, because then her parents would be so worried of her not having enough money to buy food from the store and send her money. She also says that she would not tell her boyfriend because he would be disgusted and not wanting to eat the food she cooks anymore. She also adds that her boyfriend lives in another city in Sweden, so they do not live together. She tells us that this will be her little secret. Belinda continues telling us that she told one of her friends that she would try dumpster diving, but that friend was not very supportive and considers dumpster diving as stealing food from the stores. So, if Belinda were to continue she would probably not tell them.

Sally, on the other hand, tells us that her friends are really impressed about it and think it is very cool. They support her doing it, and have told her that they would also like to try. However, Sally's family is not into it. The first time she told them they reacted really badly and since then they have not really talked about it. She tells us that they probably know to a certain extent that she is still dumpster diving but not how frequently she does it. She tells us that she had sent them a picture of all the food she had found, but their response was that they do not like that Sally "breaks" into supermarkets' dumpsters during the night. Even though her parents do not want Sally to dumpster dive she believes they would still eat the food from the dumpsters after she has washed it and stored it in the fridge. She adds that they do not like

the process of it but would not mind eating the food. Her friends would eat the food for sure, as she has already had friends eat a lot of the food she has dumpster dived. Sally also tells us that she would probably not continue with dumpster diving after her studies, since it is illegal in her home country. If they change the laws regarding dumpster diving she would consider continuing, but she thinks it would be harder to find a place where she would be able to do it since the dumpsters have been locked away for such a long time and it would be difficult to get to them. If there is a possibility to continue she probably would. Lastly, Sally says that before she started dumpster diving she used to buy cheaper food from the apps Too Good To Go and Karma, but does not use them anymore since she gets so much food for free already. Maybe she will start using similar apps again when she goes back home, even though she might not need it as much for economic reasons when she has a job but to prevent food waste.

We also asked Jennifer the same questions, and she tells us that her family is very supportive of her dumpster diving and most of her friends. When she first told her family about it they were really impressed by all the food she had found and got very interested in the phenomenon. Most of Jennifer's friends are supportive of her doing it, and she has had one friend who joined her one time and that friend also liked it. She also tells us that two of her male friends did react a bit negatively when she told them, and that they felt disgusted about eating food from the trash. They also told her that they would never go dumpster diving, and Jennifer is pretty sure that her male friends would not eat any food from the trash that she has dumpster dived. On the other hand, the rest of her friends and family would not mind eating the food. Lastly, Jennifer says that she will probably not continue with dumpster diving after her studies as she will have more money when she is working.

Before we said thank you and goodbye we asked what they would do next when they come back home. They tell us that they wash everything and then put it in the fridge or the freezer. They also add that the amount of food we found today is usually how much they find every time they go dumpster diving. Sally usually goes every week, while Jennifer usually goes every other week, and for Belinda it was her first time today but she would like to go again. Neither of them has ever done it alone, and they like to go at least two persons at a time, but Sally says she could dumpster dive alone as well. Usually she always meets someone that she has met before when she goes dumpster diving, however she likes the idea of going with a friend.

Coming back home we cleaned all the food and then feeling pretty exhausted we went to bed around 01 in the middle of the night. However, it was exciting to go with the group of girls dumpster diving and we were able to save a lot of food that would have gone to waste otherwise. All of us also saved a lot of money. We spent around 45 minutes at the store, but then washing everything was the part that took the longest time. We are very thankful that we could both participate and observe the group of girls dumpster diving, giving us the full experience and lots of answers to our questions that will be very helpful for our research project.



Picture 2: Findings from observation two of dumpster diving

Observation Number 3: 26-04-23 in Lund

It is the last week of April, but still it is pretty cold outside. The wind makes it feel even colder. Tonight we have decided to go with two international students dumpster diving, Rebecca* and Simone*. Vendela and Simone meet at 22:00 to bike together to the store since they live pretty close to each other, and Adam and Rebecca meet us there. We arrive about a quarter past after the store has closed. Inside the recycling area we can still see a bike standing there, probably belonging to one of the personnel. While waiting for the personnel to leave we ask Rebecca and Simone how often they dumpster dive, and both of them tell us that they usually do it every other week, because each time they go they are able to find so much food that it lasts them two weeks. All of us have brought either backpacks and/or plastic bags to put the food in.

Rebecca and Simone tell us that other dumpster divers usually come to this store as well, but so far we are the only ones here. They also mention that they are not really familiar with any other dumpster divers but they would be able to recognize a few of them, because it is often the same people coming here. Rebecca and Simone tell us that they usually go together with another friend as well, but for now she is not in Lund. The girls mention that they are no experts at dumpster diving, and they have never done it without their friend who they refer to as their expert. However, both of them have done it enough times to be comfortable doing it without their friend.

We ask them if their friend introduced them to dumpster diving and how long ago it was. Both Rebecca and Simone were introduced to dumpster diving by their friend in common, and both of them started dumpster diving this year in January. Both of them had heard about dumpster diving before, but in their home country it is illegal. They also mention the gray zone regarding dumpster diving here in Sweden, and seem to be aware of the laws regarding the activity. Neither of them would ever break any locks on containers or enter the area if the gates were closed. At this store we notice that there are gates into the recycling area but they are open. Simone tells us that she had been told that the gates were closed for a while, but as long as she has been dumpster diving they have been open. Neither of them have heard of any dumpster divers being confronted here in Sweden, and they also tell us that sometimes the personnel, on their way out, ask if they would like some of the food in the trash bags that they are about to throw away. The first time that had happened they got a bit nervous but since then they learned that the personnel is accepting them dumpster diving at the store. Rebecca and Simone explain that they do no harm, and they also make sure to leave the place tidy and close the trash lids or container door before they leave again.

After a few minutes two of the personnel leave the area and when they have left we enter the recycling area. Rebecca and Simone start to dig into each of the trash bins standing there, but they realize pretty quickly that the little amount of food that is in there is too mashed to even consider taking out to assess it further. Instead, the four of us go to the big container. Rebecca is the only one with a headlamp so she jumps inside the container and begins to pick up the food looking edible. She puts it on the ground, and while she is inside the container we ask Simone her reasons for dumpster diving. She responds that her main reason is to save money because the food prices are so high. She also mentions that dumpster diving is for a good cause since she saves food that would otherwise go to waste, when you can still eat it. She thinks that the food system is not working efficiently since this much food goes to waste.

When Rebecca feels done in the container she comes out and she asks if Simone wants to have a look as well. So then Simone borrows the headlamp and goes inside the container. She does a bit of digging since Rebecca already has taken the food at the surface level. Simone finds some more food, but at one place in the container where she has been digging down a bit she notices broken pieces of glass. She is cautious and puts the things she had lifted away back on top of the broken glass again. While Simone does that we ask Rebecca her main reasons why she dumpster dives and her response is very similar to Simone's. Rebecca also wants to save money, and now when she knows that she can get so much vegetables and fruits for free she thinks it is unnecessary to buy it at such high prices at the grocery store. She also cares about the environment and feels uneasy when perfectly edible food is being thrown away. Both of them want to reduce the amount of food waste by their actions of dumpster diving.

When Simone is done she also comes out of the container and we continue the conversation. Both of them tell us that since they started dumpster diving they have begun to eat much healthier since they now have so much vegetables and fruits at home to cook with and eat. They also mention that since they started they have become much more creative in cooking different dishes depending on what food they have at home. Simone has e.g. begun to make home made apple sauce of all the apples, and her own tomato/pasta sauce. Both of them have also made a lot of banana bread lately because of having so many bananas. When we finish the conversation we start to divide the food depending on what everyone would like to bring home. The food we found tonight were a lot of apples and bananas, salad, cucumbers, chocolate, parsnips, haricot verts bonner, grapes, avocados, lots of bell peppers, pears, broccoli and bread. We ask them how they decide which food they consider edible or not, and

they respond saying that they look for holes and cracks in the food, or if the bag or whatever stores the food is broken they usually do not take it. Although, they sometimes open up the broken bag and take out what is still good and throw away the rest that is bad. We notice how they use their hands to touch the food to see if it feels, and how they smell the food as well as use their eyes to determine whether or not the food is worth taking home. Usually when it comes to dates, they take outdated food if it is maximum two or three days old.

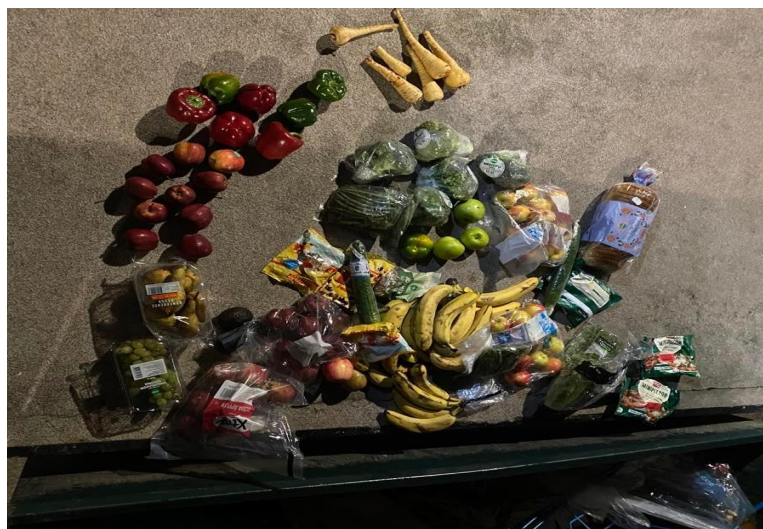
While we divide the food we ask them some more questions, this time if they would go dumpster diving alone or if they only do it together. Both of them answer that they would only do it together, minimum two people at a time. For them it is an activity they want to do with friends, and Rebecca also mentions that she feels safer going together with someone. Having someone else with her as mental support makes her feel safe when she is out so late at night. We also ask if the amount of food we found tonight is the usual amount that they find. Both of them consider it to be less than usual, because sometimes they find almost too much food to carry home with them. We then ask if they have noticed any difference in the availability of the food as long as they have been dumpster diving. They tell us yes, and explain that especially during the winter season they always found huge amounts of lemons, limes, cucumbers and oranges. Lately though, those foods have been reduced a lot. Also, the overall amount of food in the trash bins and the container has been reduced.

Our last questions regard how their family and friends feel about them dumpster diving, and how they reacted when they found out. We also asked if their family and/or friends would eat the food they have been dumpster diving, and finally if they will continue after their studies. Simone told us that when she first told her mother she was kind of surprised but thought it was cool. On the other hand she was a bit worried, but when Simone had sent her mother some pictures of the food she had found, her mother was really impressed. Simone also explained that it is not illegal in Sweden. Simone's friends were also impressed and mentioned how much money she must save on dumpster diving, and considering that some of her friends also dumpster dive in her home country where it is illegal they did not think of it as a big deal. Whether or not Simone's friends and family would eat the food from the dumpsters she said yes, because even though it might be disgusting when taken from the trash they would not notice, even if she tells them, when she has washed it all and the smell is gone. Lastly, Simone does not think she will continue with dumpster diving after her studies because then she will work and earn more money. Besides, it is illegal in her home country and none of her friends in her home town does it and she would not want to go alone. She finally mentions that she has previously used different apps similar to Too Good To Go in her

home country and might do that again, as she likes the initiative and the possibility to buy cheaper food as well as counter food waste.

We also asked Rebecca the same questions, and her answers differ a bit compared to Simone's. Rebecca has told her sister and her friends that she dumpster dives, and all of them are really impressed by the amount of food that Rebecca finds when dumpster diving. She always sends them pictures after she has cleaned the food items, which is appreciated by both her sister and her friends. Some of her friends have told her that they would also like to try dumpster diving. She also mentions that her sister is really supportive and fascinated about it, and has also asked Rebecca about the legal conditions regarding dumpster diving here in Sweden. On the other hand, Rebecca has not told her parents about it. She thinks that her mother would be really concerned and she does not know how her father would react. However, she will probably tell her parents when she comes back home, as she is not planning on continuing with dumpster diving since the laws are much stricter. Regarding the question if they would eat the food from the dumpsters she says that her sister would most definitely eat it, but she thinks her parents would only eat e.g. bananas or oranges that you can peel off and not foods like yogurt.

When we are done dividing and asking questions, we throw some of the apples and bananas back into the container because we already had so much. We take the food in our bags with us and grab our bikes on the way out. Adam and Rebecca are headed in one direction and Vendela and Simone in another direction. We are told that they will go home and clean all the food and then place it in the fridge respectively the freezer. We thank them for bringing us with them and then we all go back home.



Picture 3: Findings from observation three of dumpster diving