

Abstract

The author deals with the phenomenon of dumpster diving. Being focused on those divers who are used to dumpster dive not being pressed to it by their financial situation, she concentrates on their definition of purity and their way of dealing with symbolic boundaries of clean and unclean. After summarising social-environmental and social scientific background of the phenomenon in context of the theoretical frame based on Mary Douglas and her book about purity and danger the author presents a qualitative analysis of participant observation and in-depth interviews with informants who dumpster dive voluntarily. Based on quantitatively and representatively tested public opinion on dumpster diving she points both the colourful composition of dumpster divers' motives and ideological beliefs and their reflection and norm-based boundaries categorization that is connected to food they are used to eat. In connection with informants' conception of food value the author argues that through inspiring power of the first dumpster diving experience informants' understanding and dealing with those boundaries have changed. Nevertheless, she stresses that despite being convinced their way of consumption is right and thus pure the informants tend to apply and present themselves by pattern of conduct that corresponds to the former symbolic boundaries. They believe they could defend their own, their relatives' and friends' social identities and positions that have been challenged through dumpster diving. Thereafter the author considers the application possibilities of the informants' conception of purity without the danger of stigmatization.