

# From Old to Gold

*An exploratory qualitative study on the sellers' and buyers' motivations for furniture flipping and its implications on gentrification.*



# **From Old to Gold**

*An exploratory qualitative study on the sellers' and buyers' motivations for furniture flipping  
and its implications on gentrification*

Sydney Delissen - 1024810

MSc Thesis – CHL80436

MSc Management, Economics and Consumer Studies

Specialization in Consumer studies

Chair Group: Consumption and Healthy lifestyles (CHL)

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Ir. Maartje Bulkens

Examiner: Dr. Melina T. Czymoniewicz-Klippel

Wageningen University and Research,

Wageningen

August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023

## Acknowledgements

First and above all, I would like to thank my supervisor Maartje Bulkens with all my heart for her invaluable guidance and support throughout this research journey, both on my thesis and beyond. Your support, encouragement and guidance have made this journey more enjoyable, and might I even add: fun.

Next, I would like to thank all of the participants that gave their time to share their experiences with me.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my friends that helped me in the final stages of my thesis (I am looking at you Lidewey, Juliette and Lieke), my family, and Thomas for standing next to me when things were difficult during this thesis process.

Enjoy reading my thesis! Feel free to send me an email on [sydneydelissen@live.nl](mailto:sydneydelissen@live.nl), if you have any future questions on this thesis.

## Table of Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>1. Introduction.....</b>   | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>2. Theoretical framework.....</b>  | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>Gentrification in relation to furniture flipping.....</b>  | <b>8</b>  |
| Consumption and identity.....   | 12        |
| Giddens perspective on lifestyles and identity in relation to consumption.....  | 14        |
| The expression of lifestyles.....   | 17        |
| <b>3. Method.....</b>   | <b>18</b> |
| 3.1 Data collection methods.....  | 18        |
| 3.2 Participants.....   | 19        |
| 3.3 Data analysis.....  | 20        |
| 3.4 Response Rate.....  | 23        |
| 3.5 Positionality.....  | 24        |
| <b>4. Results.....</b>  | <b>26</b> |
| 4.1 Sellers.....  | 26        |
| 4.1.1 Furniture flipping process.....   | 26        |
| 4.1.2 Motivations of sellers to flip furniture.....   | 31        |
| 4.1.3 Motivations for Buyers to purchase flipped furniture, according to Sellers.....   | 33        |
| 4.1.4 Furniture Flipping as a gentrified practice.....  | 38        |
| 4.2 Buyers.....   | 39        |
| 4.2.1 What is the motivation for buyers to purchase flipped furniture?.....   | 39        |
| 4.2.1 How can Furniture Flipping be seen as an expression of one’s identity?.....   | 45        |
| <b>5. Discussion and Conclusion.....</b>  | <b>52</b> |
| <b>5.1 Findings in relation to motivations for buyers and sellers in combination with consumption, identity and lifestyles.....</b> | <b>52</b> |
| 5.1.1. Buyers.....  | 52        |
| 5.1.2 Sellers.....  | 58        |
| <b>5.2 Findings in relation to the furniture flipping process and its relation to gentrification of consumption.....</b>            | <b>59</b> |
| 5.2.1 The furniture flipping process.....   | 60        |
| 5.2.2 gentrification of consumption.....  | 60        |
| <b>Strengths and limitations.....</b>   | <b>63</b> |
| 5.1.2 Credibility.....  | 63        |
| 5.1.3 Transferability.....  | 65        |
| 5.1.4 Dependability.....  | 66        |
| 5.1.5 Confirmability.....   | 67        |
| 5.1.6 Recommendations for further research.....   | 68        |
| <b>References.....</b>  | <b>70</b> |
| <b>Appendix.....</b>  | <b>74</b> |
| <b>Interview guide – Sellers Dutch.....</b>   | <b>74</b> |
| <b>Interview guide – Sellers English.....</b>   | <b>76</b> |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Interview guide – Buyers Dutch</b> .....   | <b>78</b> |
| <b>Interview guide – Buyers English</b> ..... | <b>80</b> |

## **1. Introduction**

Thrift shopping has been an occurring phenomenon since the 1980's (Williams and Paddock 2003). Whereas there was first a stigma on purchasing thrift store items due to the low status associated with thrift stores, there is now an ever-increasing popularity when it comes to buying from secondhand stores (Staley, 2018). This increased popularity is mainly due to the arguments that thrift shopping is more sustainable (due to the lower carbon emissions), gives a unique experience that entails the excitement of a good deal, hunting for treasures, finding unique clothing items and offers a cheap alternative to the full priced items in regular clothing stores (Park, Kwon, Zaman & Song, 2020). The article by Ronobir et al. (2020) discusses the fetishization of thrift stores, where upper middle class and wealthy shoppers purchase thrift store items to increase their social status. They discuss that thrift stores want to appeal to a younger audience, and therefore change up their inventory from cheap hand me downs to a more refined store with designer items. As a result, thrift stores with cheap clothing items are disappearing, where more expensive thrift stores are arising. Along these lines, thrift stores are being gentrified, as thrift stores are being upgraded to appeal to the upper middle class thrift consumers. Being able to choose for a more sustainable and cheaper alternative for regular priced items is a privilege and these practices hinder low socio-economic groups to be able to purchase items at thrift stores (Ma & Riggio, 2021) This is ironic, since thrift stores were originally intended for low-income groups (Roy, 2019). This more occurring phenomenon can be seen as problematic, since the concept that has been initially designed for low socio-economic households is no longer of service to them, due to the rising prices of the thrift stores. Furthermore, the increased prices of these secondhand items put an even bigger financial strain on low socio-economic households, which should be avoided to create more equality between lower socio-economic households and middle/higher socio-economic households.

Another popular phenomenon that has gained a lot of attention in recent years is furniture flipping, in which secondhand furniture items are being upgraded and sold commercially, to make a profit (Forrest, 2022). The reasons why consumers want to buy from secondhand stores have been widely researched and is therefore well known (Park, Kwon, Zaman & Song, 2020). However, the reasons why consumers wish to purchase flipped furniture items, which are also made from secondhand items, have never been researched before. To be more precise, the subject on furniture flipping in general has never been previously studied in scientific research. Therefore, this study aims to follow an exploratory to explore the concept and processes of furniture flipping, alongside with the motivations for both sellers and buyers to

produce/purchase flipped furniture. Furthermore, it is also valuable to see how the increased popularity of furniture flipping could contribute to gentrification, as was observed in the case of thrift shopping. Therefore, this study will also look at the social implications of the growing furniture flipping market, by approaching it from a perspective that focusses on gentrification. This research gap leads to the following main research question: “Why is flipped furniture bought or produced and how does this play a role in gentrification of consumption?”

To answer the main research question, the following sub-questions are formulated:

- What is the motivation for both sellers and buyers of flipped furniture to produce/purchase flipped furniture.
- How can furniture flipping be seen as an expression of identity?
- What does the process of flipping furniture look like?
- How do furniture flipping practices play a role in gentrification of consumption?

This study aims to research the processes involved when sellers flip furniture as well as the motivations behind the buyers purchasing or the sellers producing flipped furniture. The study also aims to shed a light on the overall implications of furniture flipping practices on gentrification of consumption.

## 2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, I will give a theoretical outline of the concept of furniture flipping and its connection to gentrification. Furthermore, I will review existing literature that explains the causes for the increasing popularity of thrift stores in comparison to flipped furniture, while linking it to the theory of Belk's Extended Sense of Self (1988). Next to this, the theory by Giddens (1991) provides a basis for how producing or purchasing flipped furniture could enhance identity and influence lifestyles. Lastly, the concepts of identity and lifestyles are linked to consumption.

### **Gentrification in relation to furniture flipping**

In the next chapter I will explain the concept of furniture flipping and provide a definition. Next to this, I will discuss the known scientific literature on thrift shopping; how it became popular and what the social implications were. Also, I will discuss the link of the social implications associated with thrift shopping to gentrification of consumption alongside with a definition of gentrification of consumption.

As of right now, the concept of furniture flipping is relatively unknown in scientific literature. However, the concept of furniture flipping is well known on social media sites, such as blogposts, TikTok and YouTube videos. To explain the concept of furniture flipping, 3 different popular blogposts from sellers of flipped furniture were compared to draft a definition (Cunningham, 2022; Barker, 2021 & Create and Find, 2022). Within these blogs, furniture flipping was generally described as: *"The act to collect used furniture that does not hold a lot of value to the public's eye and upgrade it by adding value so that it can be sold to the public with a profit."* Thus, flipped furniture is simply stated, upgrading a secondhand furniture piece. Within the scope of this research, the focus will be on the commercialization of furniture flipping, in which the flipped furniture items are commercially sold. The main re-occurring reasons for furniture flipping in these blogposts is the claim that the reader can make a big profit by selling flipped furniture on a regular basis, thereby making it a lucrative side business.

From scientific literature it is known that social media sites, such as blogposts, severely influence people's consumption habits and needs (Serman & Sims, 2020). Therefore, the impact of the increasing number of blogposts on the advantages of flipping furniture, could explain the increasing popularity rate of producing and purchasing flipped furniture and vice



versa. In these blogposts, the writers address the general steps involved that are needed to flip furniture pieces. However, scientific literature has yet to grasp onto the exact details of the processes involved to flip furniture. The overview of the processes involved when flipping furniture can provide a better understanding of what furniture flipping entails and give more insight into the motivations of sellers to produce flipped furniture. By understanding the motivations of the sellers and the furniture flipping process, it could provide an overview of what furniture flipping entails and how it could contribute to gentrification.

Since there is little scientific literature on furniture flipping, it is difficult to make an estimation of the possible future implications of such a phenomenon that seems to become more popular. However, when looking into similar sectors, it is possible to get an idea of the future social implications of such developments. A similar sector that has gained popularity at a fast rate recently, and that also sells secondhand (furniture) items similar to furniture flipping, is the secondhand market, more specifically: thrift stores. So, for what reasons did the popularity rate of thrift shopping increase? The article by Guiot and Roux (2010) acknowledges the increasing popularity for secondhand stores, among generation Z, Y and amongst Millennials (Jansen, n.d.). One of the reasons for this growth can be due to the decrease in purchasing power of the middle class, and thus they seek thrift stores due to their economic advantage (as a cheap alternative to regular retail stores), good deals as a way of showing off and expressing moral superiority for purchasing “the same clothes” for a lower amount of money. Next to this, another reason why people purchase secondhand is due to the ethical and environmental benefits that come with thrift shopping. The article mentions that newly purchased sustainable clothing is often very expensive, and that this is not within the budget of many millennials. Therefore, they purchase secondhand items from thrift stores to be able to practice sustainability within their budget (Guiot and Roux, 2010). Furthermore, the article by Borusiak et al. (2020) mentions how purchasing secondhand is seen as more sustainable by consumers, since it decreases overproduction and reduces excess waste. Although the above-mentioned motives for purchasing secondhand is in the context of thrift shops, it could form similar motives in the context of furniture flipping. With furniture flipping, consumers do not directly purchase secondhand furniture. Instead, the consumers purchase restored or upgraded furniture items that are marketed as a “new” second (or third) hand product.

Another reason entailed that the middle class seeks to satisfy certain hedonic motivations that are not obtainable from regular retail stores, in which thrift stores are seen as a unique

experience. This unique experience includes the process of treasure hunting for unique items, hoping to find a bargain, excitement, visual stimulation, social interaction and unpredictable offerings. These reasons all add up to the popularity rate of secondhand stores (Guiot and Roux, 2010). The article by Ronobir (2020) discusses the consequences of the popularity rate on clothing items in thrift stores. He discusses that the shift in the increased popularity rate for thrift stores has caused the prices of the items sold in thrift stores to rise Ronobir (2020). This rise in prices, is mainly due to the increase in demand of secondhand items as well as the increase of secondhand re-sellers. The article of Ronobir (2020) discusses that so called re-sellers purchase the secondhand clothing for a low price (thereby looking for brand clothing or other high quality clothing items), and re-sell these items for a higher price. As a result, the items that remain in thrift stores are of lower quality. Moreover, with the increase in demand for these secondhand consumer goods, the price for clothing in secondhand stores rises. An increased number of thrift stores therefore cater to a more refined audience and adjust both their exterior of the store (a more modern appearance) as well as the interior of the store (more expensive brand clothing) to appeal to both a younger audience and higher class clients. Furthermore, this increase in price causes an economic strain on low socio economic households, who often do not have another option than to go thrift shopping (Ronobir, 2020). The increasing exclusion of low socio economic households due to the increasing prices in thrift stores is ironic, since thrift stores were initially created for these lower income households (Roy, 2019). The displacement of lower income groups as a result of a growing popularity of a particular concept is not exactly a new phenomenon. When examining this in the context of urbanisation, this phenomenon is referred to as gentrification.

In previous research, the definition of gentrification is mainly used in the context of urbanization and is defined by Chapple and Loukaitou-Sideris (2019, p. 58) as: *“a particular kind of revitalization, targeting small areas or neighbourhoods, and characterized by both an influx of new investment and an inflow of new people, typically of higher educational and income levels than the original residents”*. The events of gentrification within the context of urbanization creates an attracting stream of new city residents with a higher income. The neighbourhoods are then being influenced by the trends and tastes of the millennials moving into the central cities (under the notion of rebirth of the city) and due to the houses being renovated and fixed to fit the newest trends, house market prices increase (Finio, 2021).

Within the contexts of this research, gentrification will be linked to consumerism, instead of the traditional context of urbanization. The article by Ilkucan and Sandikci (2005), argues that gentrifiers seek distinctiveness through consumption and that gentrification of consumption includes practices that display the expressive lifestyle of the consumer. In this process of gentrification of consumption (which is now also performed by predominantly middle class and higher middle class citizens), lower income groups are being driven away from the acts of consumption due to this gentrification, since they can no longer afford to consume these gentrified goods. They also mention the definition used by Zukin (1995, p.40 in Ilkucan & Sandikci, 2005) which defines gentrification as: “*gentrification’s consumption markers are explicitly identified with a specific type and use of space*”. Within the context of this research, a specific space could potentially entail the space in which the furniture flipping practices take place, such as specific secondhand-stores in which the secondhand seen-to-be-flipped furniture is often bought. Furthermore, the article by Ronobir (2020, p. 3) describes gentrification in the context of thrift shopping as: “*the act of making thrift stores more refined, polite or respectable in order to cater to a wealthier consumer base.*”. Based on the definitions of gentrification of consumption mentioned above, gentrification of consumption within the context of this research is considered to be the process in which secondhand consumer goods that used to be available to lower income groups, become increasingly exclusive and no longer accessible due to increased demands from higher income groups. According to the article of Zukin (1990), the people that perform gentrified practices (the so called gentrifiers) aspire to be authentic and they want to signal their “authenticness” to others by distancing themselves from other middle-classers. They do this by constantly searching for new ways that fuel their authenticness, which are often found in unique places where goods and services are catered to upper/middle class consumers. Secondhand stores have become increasingly popular for gentrifiers, as thrift store items were seen as unique compared to regular store mass produced items. This was mainly due to the viewpoint in which secondhand stores were seen as a rebuttal for mass produced items, and therefore had items that were more unique. The unique secondhand items could be seen as an extension of the identity of the gentrifier (if my clothing preferences entail unique clothing items, then I am different from the mass, therefore I am unique). The article by Jackson & Thrift (1995) expands on this, as they explain that the identity of the self is increasingly constructed by an increase in consumption, as the consumption goods portray a certain lifestyle. It is the visibility of the (new) unique lifestyle that the middle class gentrifiers wish to communicate to their peers, which gives them a sense of uniqueness and separates them from the rest of the middle class (Ley 1996). This is also mentioned by Mills (1998), who suggest

that gentrifiers are constantly looking out for specific home-based aesthetics to consume. Thereby wanting to signal the unique home aesthetics to their peers. It could be a possibility that these gentrified practices of consumption could also apply to the commercialised furniture flipping practices, as these items are often used as a part of home interiors.

### **Consumption and identity**

So why would people want to purchase flipped furniture? When looking at the scientific literature from thrift shops, there are multiple motivations provided why one would want to purchase secondhand items. Even though the literature on thrift shopping focusses partially on clothing items and not only furniture, it could still provide an indication of possible motivation of purchasing secondhand. As previously mentioned, consumers wish to purchase secondhand items due to economic advantages that purchasing secondhand items bring compared to purchasing new items. Next to this, consumers want to buy items from secondhand stores because they are considered to be more sustainable. The final reason to purchase from secondhand stores is because secondhand stores are considered to be a unique experience as well as a place where one can obtain unique items (Guiot & Roux, 2010). Next to this, it was previously mentioned that gentrifiers actively search for new and unique experiences or items, to express their unique identities (Mills, 1998). The influence of commodity goods on our identity is something that Belk (1988) also addressed in his article: Possessions and The Extended Self. In this article, he explains that people feel a connection between themselves and the products that they own. He gives an example of this by explaining that the connection between possessions and people can be quite strong. Even so, that when those possessions are stolen, the loss of these possessions can lead people to feel as if a part of their identity was taken with it. By showcasing this example, he shows that we feel connected to our possessions, and that they can contribute to our identity. As mentioned before, secondhand items are often sought after due to their unique characteristics as compared to mass produced items. The unique secondhand items are then seen as an extension of the identity of the buyer (if my clothing preferences entail unique clothing items, then I am different from the mass, therefore I am unique). The unique characteristics of flipped furniture could be an enhancer for the identity of the buyers, therefore uniqueness might be a reason for buyer to purchase flipped furniture.

Moreover, Belk (1988) mentions in his concept of the “Extended sense of Self”, how some possessions hold more importance for our identity than others. The belongings that we value

the most are closer to us and are more persistent to our identity over time and life phases. This is especially the case with tangible objects that are often seen as a reminder of the past, which often entails (family) history, memories and emotions that are connected to that object. The objects then hold sentimental value, in which the emotions and memories associated with the sentimental values are connected to the persons' identity. Belk expands on this in his work of "Possessions and the Sense of the Past", in which he states that family heirloom items are considered to be treated as treasure in a family, based on memories, relationships and certain occasions. Next to this, he also mentions how belongings that we value and are therefore more persistent to our identity can be found in purchasing old and antique furniture items, due to their rarity (serve as potential status symbol), simply the amusement of collecting curiosities, aesthetic preferences and preferences for handmade over mass produced works (Douglas and Isherwood, 1979 in Belk, 1988). Other possessions that are further away from our sense of self are more prone to changing over time and differ per person and between cultures.

So when do possessions become more valuable to us? In the Possessions of the Extended Self, Belk (1988) talks about factors that enhance our relationships between ourselves (our identity) and our possessions. He mentions that the more control we have over our possessions, the more connected we feel to that possession. We also actively contribute to our identity by making or transforming items according to our personal preferences, thereby also forming a closer bond to that possession. Next to this, as briefly previously mentioned by Belk (1988), possessions become more valuable to our identity when items are rare and seen as status markers. Furthermore, he describes how acquired possessions that are displayed in a prominent area in homes (e.g. the living room) are used as an extension of someone's identity by showcasing the possessions to others.

Furthermore, he mentions that the link between possessions and identity is not one-sided, but rather goes through a continuous process in which possessions influence identity but also where identity influence the choice for possessions. For example, an individual expresses their love for the 70's through their furniture, decor and wallpaper choices, thereby creating a space which is fully themed in the style of the 70's. This example demonstrates how possessions can be of influence on identity (I express my 70's lover identity by purchasing possessions in that style). However, at the same time, the act of acquiring and surrounding oneself with possessions in the style of the 70's, further enhances and reinforces the identity of the 70's lover that the individual identifies with. Someone's personal interior could therefore also

showcase someone's identity, as an interior can reflect someone's personal aesthetics, preferences or interests, signalling who one thinks she/he is or wishes to be (Belk, 1988).

### **Giddens perspective on lifestyles and identity in relation to consumption**

So why do we feel the need to express our identity through consumption practices? The idea that consumption plays a part in the construction of one's identity (Jackson & Thrift, 1995) is in line with the theory by Giddens (1991). According to Giddens (1991), Identity used to be fixed, and society pre-determined your identity based on your sex, age, work and/ or religion. The essential elements that made up an identity of someone were already pre-determined due to their inheritance or other traditions. Therefore, there was less incentive to search for ways to construct one's own identity. In modern times, identity is less fixed and more fluid as we are presented with more choices and a decrease in tradition that used to make up one's identity. For that reason, the desire and need to build one's own identity has grown. This brings a whole new dimension to the concept of identity, as someone now has the possibility to construct one's own identity, which comes with opportunities as well as challenges. Furthermore, sociologist Giddens (1991) explains that the development of modernity has provided the modern-day individuals with more space and time to focus on individual choices and personal responsibilities. In the current modern world, we don't rely as much on religion, work, family, and other traditional values to define our identity, but rather seek identity and reflection thereof in a more undefined and open way, which has made the construction of identity increasingly complex. This lack of stability in the forming of identity has caused a need for individuals to search for stability by personally constructing their own self-identity.

The work of Giddens (1991) describes that the absence of a predetermined identity requires one to actively engage in concepts that can build up one's identity. He discusses the possibility of society creating an opportunity for citizens to fabricate their own identity, through the use of lifestyles. Lifestyles are assemblages of certain habits or practices. Someone's identity is then expressed to others through performing the habits/practices that make up or are associated with a certain lifestyle. So what are lifestyles exactly? According to Giddens (1991) The habits and practices associates with a certain lifestyle can be to satisfy both practical (utilitarian) needs (you need to drive a car to work) as to fulfil pleasurable (hedonic) needs (The type of car you have can still signal a certain lifestyle to others). He defines lifestyles as: *“more or less integrated set of practices which an individual embraces, not only because such practices fulfil*

*utilitarian needs, but because they give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity'* (Giddens, 1991, p. 81). In other words, lifestyles encompass more than just meeting basic necessities (working, eating and sleeping); it entails a collection of habits and practices that is embodied through expressing self-identity. For example, someone can associate themselves with a sustainable zero waste lifestyle. To adhere to this lifestyle, someone must be performing actions and habits that are in line with that zero-waste lifestyle (e.g. not buying consumption goods that are wrapped in plastic). By performing these certain actions and habits associated with the zero-waste lifestyle, one expresses their identity of someone that values a zero-waste lifestyle to oneself and others. Giddens elaborates more on identity by describing his concept of the "reflective project of the self". In this concept, he states that individuals are continuously reflecting on how the current self is in relation to their desired self, and how they can achieve this desired self (certain lifestyle) through every day behaviour associated with that lifestyle. When applying the concept of the "reflexive project of the self" to the example above, it can be argued that the space between the current self and the self who we wish to be (the lifestyle) is bridged by executing the practices and performing the habits (not buying plastic goods) that make up that identity of someone who is a zero-waste consumer and values a more conscious consumer stream (lifestyle). He mentions that lifestyles are containers for identities, and therefore habits and practices are used to express one's identity and signal a certain lifestyle to others and visa versa. With "containers" Giddens (1991) tries to explain that we use practices or habits to express our identity to others. In this case, our actions (shopping secondhand, not driving a car) signal the social status, values and beliefs that make up our identity to others. Furthermore, the article by Jackson & Thrift (1995) mentions that the concept of identity is described by Johnston et al (2017), in which identity is described as a concept that combines the multiple selves and links it to larger social structures. They explain that identity is a reflection of these multiple selves when found in different environments and relationships. Identity thus changes in different contexts, settings and with different people. The concept of identity entails a large group of defining categories, such as gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity etc. By identifying yourself with these identities, you are able to express your individuality and at the same time connect to others that also express similar identities. Moreover, Giddens (1991) talks about the need for authenticity in modern society. In this process, individuals constantly seek to work towards an authentic sense of self through relationships, experiences and consumption choices in which individuals are able to separate themselves from the mass. According to Giddens (1991), authenticity consists of performing actions and practices that correspond with one's personal beliefs, values and desires, thereby

rejecting inauthentic aspects (such as mass consumption) that reflect a standardized inauthentic lifestyle.

Furthermore, he mentions that lifestyle choices/practices are routinized habits which have the ability to change in order to change one's self-identity. Therefore, when someone no longer wants to be associated with a certain lifestyle, one can change their habits and actions to change. When doing this, they change their identity of someone that no longer associates themselves with that lifestyle. Within this process, Giddens (1991) argues that this process can be iterative and ongoing, and therefore represents a complex and dynamic process of mutual influence on self-identity. Furthermore, he mentions that the changing dynamics due to the formation of new habits/routines are influenced by changes in consumption, environment (so different places one visits), interaction between people and activities and vice versa. Therefore, Giddens (1991) sees lifestyles as something that is fluid, rather than fixed. Since lifestyles are perceived as a fluid process, the routinized habits are for that reason practices to express who someone wants to be, not just who they are at that given time.

In his work, Giddens (1991) explains that the expression of a certain lifestyle is not a concept that is strictly for higher- and upper-class citizens, but rather argues that lifestyles are constructed by all classes based on the choices that the individuals within these classes make with regards to behaviour, attitudes and beliefs of individuals. He makes the statement that this viewpoint is different than what was previously thought by sociologists, in which only higher- and upper-class citizens were able to construct their own lifestyle. However, he does argue that higher- and upper-class citizens have more choices when it comes to choosing their lifestyle, as there are fewer financial restrictions. Moreover, the article by Bridge and Downing (2001) mentions that the middle class often sees oneself as an ongoing project that needs to be cared for and worked on. Furthermore, the middle class brings this ongoing project mentality into the households, in which homes are seen as ongoing projects that need to change as lifestyles change. The home atmosphere of the middle class is then subjected to lifestyle changes, which are determined by the identity of the self, and homes can therefore be seen as their own self (Mills, 1988; Ley 1996).

Overall, the theory on the forming of identity and lifestyle practices could provide a basis for the reasoning behind the motivations to purchase flipped furniture. Understanding the concepts of identity and lifestyles could provide insights in how individuals use flipped furniture to signal their identity and lifestyles to others.



## **The expression of lifestyles**

So what influences our desire for certain lifestyles? In the media, certain dominant ideas of lifestyles and social norms are expressed, which then contribute to shaping our own lifestyles and identity. According to Giddens (1991), the media portrays specific lifestyles and identities in a finetuned way, which suggests a certain standard in the way we should be living. The overexposure of these specific and limited selection of lifestyles with the sublime message of how we “should” be living influences our choices and self-image. This then influences our own habits, which then influence our identity and lifestyles. Therefore, our lifestyles might be more coherent to the mainstream lifestyles as portrayed in the media. Giddens (1991) mentions that individuals feel the pressure to conform to the mainstream ideas and ever changing lifestyle trends, social norms and expectations from the media. To keep up with the fast-changing trends that enhance lifestyle practices and identity, individuals might choose to engage in consumption acts that portray these fast changing trends. As a result, consumption is then used as a tool to construct, enhance and maintain ones identity and therefore lifestyle.

Next to consuming certain goods to create an identity to belong to a larger social structure, consumption is also often used to build an identity in which someone can stand out from the crowd. Giddens (1991) argues that through consumption, the individual is able to communicate certain beliefs, values and social status, as well as their personal interests, which all contribute to the forming of one’s identity. The book by Zukin (2004) also shares this viewpoint, since she touches on the subject of the extension of self-identity through consumption, by suggesting that the consumer’s desire for individuality is found through consumption. The article by Hearn (2008) explains that our sense of individuality and uniqueness is frequently associated with internal qualities, such as personalities, interests or sense of humour. Thereby suggesting that people seek for uniqueness in consumption goods to express their unique qualities, personalities, interests or sense of humour. Next to this, the ability to display or show off unique items also is a way for people to express their identity with corresponding beliefs, values and social status to others (Giddens, 1991). Consumption can then be seen as an expression of individuality, which is ironic, since most goods available for sale are mass produced and thus purchased by many individuals that want to express their uniqueness through consumption. Buyers of flipped furniture could be motivated by their desire to express their individuality through consumption, since flipped furniture is not available in conventional stores.

### **3. Method**

This research tried to provide an answer on the research question of the motives of sellers to produce flipped furniture and the motives for buyers to purchase flipped furniture, by the means of a qualitative study. An Exploratory study design was chosen, since existing literature does not touch the subject of furniture flipping, let alone why consumers engage in furniture flipping practices. A qualitative research design is capable to support exploratory studies, since the nature of a qualitative study is flexible. Furthermore, a qualitative study enables the respondents to give extended answers to questions. Moreover, when participants are asked to elaborate, they could come up with stories relevant to the research, that would not have been their initial thought. Therefore, it could be possible to stumble upon new findings or a deeper understanding of the phenomenon that is being researched. A qualitative exploratory study design was therefore chosen, since it was capable of getting a better and deeper understanding of the buyer's and seller's motives of the furniture flipping process and whether/how this could have contributed to their identity and lifestyles.

#### **3.1 Data collection methods**

The data that was used for this research was collected through both interviews as well as a literature review. Within this literature review, there was a definition provided of gentrification within the context of consumption, information collected on previous research on related thrift shopping gentrification practices, as well as their means for thrift shopping and its impact on low socio-economic groups. Furthermore, the theory by Belk (1988) on the link between possessions and identity was addressed, as well as the work by Giddens (1991), which provided a description in which consumption in relation to identity and lifestyle was explained. The literature review provided a scientific basis, which were then also used to construct the interview guide. The interviews were then used to gather data to answer the sub and main research questions.

With the use of interviews, this research tried to get a deeper understanding of the motives for purchasing or producing flipped furniture, as well as how it affects their identity and how it is expressed through their lifestyle. Furthermore, the interviews also provided another viewpoint, mainly that of the seller of flipped furniture to see their motivations why they engage in furniture flipping. The exploratory study was executed by purposively selecting participants based on their previous experience with flipped furniture shopping or their previous experience in flipping furniture. After they were selected and they gave permission to participate in the

research, the buyers were asked about their previous experiences of buying flipped furniture and their motives to buy flipped furniture. Furthermore, the sellers were asked about their motives to flip furniture as well as their previous experiences in flipping furniture. The interview guide (found in the Appendix) was used as guideline when conducting the interviews. The interview guide was made by using question from the literature, as well as additional questions that contributed to finding answers to the main- and sub-questions. The literature-based questions were formed based on the theory on identity and lifestyles by both Giddens (1991) and Belk (1988). Furthermore, there were questions added about motives to purchase or produce flipped furniture. A pilot interview was then conducted in order to test the interview guide. Any additional questions that could contribute to the main research question were added after completing the pilot interviews, as well as being aware of potential biases that could have occurred when performing the final interviews. Moreover, the questions that were considered irrelevant were deleted. The interviews used in this research were semi structured to leave room for elaboration on interesting concepts or remarks made during the interviews.

### **3.2 Participants**

This research had a total of 12 interviews, with 4 sellers and 8 buyers of flipped furniture. The reason for this uneven split was because I expected the motives from the furniture flippers (sellers) to be cohesive, since the furniture flipping process follow more or less the same steps for every furniture flipping project. For example, one seller that always flips bedside tables follows more or less the same steps as someone that flips dressers, or coffee tables (buying high quality low price, sanding, painting, adding elements etc.). Since they follow the same processes every time, it can be assumed that their respective motives for flipping furniture follow the same thought process. On the other hand, I expect buyers motives to be more diverse when compared to the sellers motives, especially since they do not follow a particular process to purchase flipped furniture. The reason why someone purchases an item might be more diverse and depending on one's environment, personal likings and many other factors. Therefore, I expect to extract a diverse set of data from the buyers participants. The procedure of collecting participants was done by looking up online websites or social media platforms from furniture flippers in The Netherlands. From here, the furniture flippers (the sellers) were approached through either email, DM (Direct Message, used in social media platforms), or by calling. From here, the sellers were asked whether they wanted to participate in this research, which involved getting to know the motives of sellers and buyers to flip furniture. If the sellers agreed to the interview, then their contacts were written down and a meeting was scheduled.

Then, the seller was asked whether they had any contact information or whether they were in the position to contact their customer base to ask whether their customers were interested in participating in the interviews specifically designed for furniture flipping buyers. In both cases (so whether the seller agreed to the interview or not), the seller was asked whether they had contact information of their customer base. In total, there were 4 furniture flipper sellers and 8 furniture flipping buyers that were interviewed. Since there are very few methods for locating participants in this field, the study is not restricted to any particular ages or geographic areas.

The interviews were audio recorded after informed consent from the participants. Furthermore, the participants were ensured of confidentiality by anonymizing the data as well as avoiding of any recognizable data that could be linked back to the participants.

### **3.3 Data analysis**

The interview transcripts were analysed by the use of codewords. The article by Brown and Clarke (2006) with their thematic analysis approach was used to categorize replies and to learn insights of the personal experiences, motivations and viewpoints of furniture flipping buyers and sellers. The thematic analysis approach includes the identification, analyzation as well as reporting the themes (patterns) that occur within the collected data. With this method, the transcripts are divided into smaller chunks and are coded in accordance with any recurring themes. The codes can then be arranged into more general themes that best represent the experiences and viewpoints of the participants. Furthermore, in order to have a systematic analysis and interpretation of the data, they describe a 7 stage thematic analysis process, which is listed below:

1. **Familiarization:** within this stage, the researcher gets acquainted with the data, which includes reading the transcripts as well as making observations. Within this research, the transcripts were typed out word-by-word based on an audio recording of the interviews. By using word-by-word transcripts, the interpretation of quotes, phrases and sentences on paper were minimized, perhaps even eliminated. The process of doing the interviews, listening to the audio recordings and typing out the transcripts word-by-word was a great way of familiarizing oneself with the collected data.
2. **Generating initial codes:** within this stage, the usable data (quotes, phrases, sentences etc.) are identified and systematically coded using a descriptive label that summarizes the essence of the sentences, quotes, or phrases. After this, similar bits of data are

categorized, and reoccurring patterns are identified by the use of the code. Within this research, the data was coded using a colour coding system in which reoccurring codes were highlighted with different colours.

3. **Searching for themes:** within this stage, matching codes are grouped together to form a potential theme. The goal of this step is to identify reoccurring patterns out of the coded data. Then the coded data will be reviewed and analysed on reoccurrence of patterns or themes in which case they will be combined to form a single theme. The process of former themes requires the researcher to go over the data multiple times in order to ensure that all themes and codes are covered and truly reflect the data. Within this research, both data-driven themes as well as theory-driven themes were used in order to find an answer to the research question. The decision to use both these methods was made in order to achieve a richer and more comprehensive understanding of the collected data, as well as being able to be open to new findings from the interviews while at the same time having that theoretical point of view to which to connect the findings. Brown and Clarke (2006) describe both methods of data and theory driven themes. With data-driven themes, the process described above from the theme formation is applied. Within this research, the data-driven themes were derived from the interview transcripts, which were composed of both repetitive codes and remarkable codes (codes that stood out from the crowd). With theory-driven themes, the themes are generated from an inductive process, which requires prior knowledge and existing theories, that correspond to the research question. Within this research, the theory-driven themes were derived from previous literature on feeding the Self through consumption, the forming of identity through consumption and motives of consumers to purchase secondhand items.
4. **Reviewing themes:** within this stage, the themes are reviewed and finetuned when necessary, by either combining them or separating them. This step is included to make sure that the themes reflect the collected data. Moreover, it is in this stage where overarching themes are created that capture the core of the material. The aim of this stage is to find themes that give a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the data that summarizes the most important findings of the research. Within this research, the previously found themes (from step 3) were reviewed and made into overarching themes that captured the essence of the findings.
5. **Defining and naming themes:** within this stage, the themes are named in such a way that it does not get taken out of context and thus gives a clear indication of the context

of the theme. By naming the themes, the researcher is able to make the categorization and organization process of the data easier, which then makes it more convenient to analyse and interpret the data. Within this research, the overarching themes were named clearly that provided a clear description behind the representation of each theme.

6. **Producing an interim thematic map:** within this stage, the themes their connections are displayed in a clear and comprehensible visual matter, such as a chart, table or a graph. In this way, the themes are conceptualized in an organized and useful way. Within this research, an excel sheet was used to provide an overview of the codes with their themes and their respective overarching themes.
7. **Reviewing the thematic map:** within this stage, the thematic map is reviewed, and changes are made accordingly to ensure that the themes and their respective relationships are an accurate representation of the data. With this step, the credibility and accuracy of the findings are ensured, since the themes are being re-examined and reflected upon. The final map should thus represent the correct and complete overview of the collected data with the respective codes, themes and overarching themes, in which the data is clearly understandable and interpretable. Within this research, this was ensured by reviewing the excel sheet and making sure that the themes were an accurate representation of the data, which was then all finalized by making the final version of the excel sheet. From here, interesting data that emerged from the excel sheet was selected from the themes or their respective overarching themes, and processed into the result section by giving a brief overview of the findings in their respective context, within a logical, coherent and non-repetitive frame.

Table 1. Overview of themes and corresponding codes.

| <b>Sellers</b>   |   |
|--|---|
| Theme  | Code  |
| Source of furniture                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Secondhand stores</li> <li>- Secondhand online platforms</li> <li>- Flea markets</li> </ul>                            |
| Points of attention when looking for furniture           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Popularity</li> <li>- High quality</li> </ul>  |
| Motivations to produce flipped furniture                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expression of hobby</li> <li>- Financial incentive</li> <li>- Expressing creativity</li> <li>- independence</li> </ul> |
| Sellers on why buyers want to purchase flipped furniture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- owning a unique item</li> <li>- sustainability/durability</li> <li>- ability to customize</li> </ul>                   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Why buyers their own furniture flipped by sellers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Restoring heritage piece</li> <li>- Modernize heritage piece</li> </ul>                                 |
| Self-expression through furniture flipping         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expression of creativity</li> </ul>   |
| Furniture flipping process                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collecting the furniture</li> <li>- Upgrading the furniture</li> <li>- Selling the furniture</li> </ul> |
| Identity in furniture flipping                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expressing interests</li> <li>- Expressing hobby</li> <li>- Expressing creativity</li> </ul>            |

### **Buyers**

| Theme   | Code   |
|---|--|
| Reasons to purchase flipped furniture         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Uniqueness</li> <li>- Sustainability</li> <li>- Durability/high quality</li> <li>- Customizability</li> <li>- Support small business</li> <li>- Low price compared to new furniture</li> <li>- History</li> </ul> |
| Reasons to let seller flip furniture for them | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preservation of heirloom piece</li> </ul>   |
| Reasons to not flip furniture themselves      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Time restraints</li> <li>- Too much effort</li> <li>- Lack of skill</li> </ul>  |
| Identity                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personal style reflects personality</li> <li>- Personal style reflects identity to others</li> </ul>  |
| Price of secondhand stores                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More expensive</li> <li>- Low quality</li> </ul>  |
| Home environment as extension of the self     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Homes are connected to the self</li> <li>- Furniture as eye catcher</li> </ul>  |
| Furniture Flipping as a sentimental piece     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flipped item as a reminder of the past</li> </ul>   |

### **3. 4 Response Rate**

In total 13 furniture flipper sellers were approached through email, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, telephone and/or Instagram messaging. The message that was send out included information about the duration of the interview, the topic of the interview as well as a request for contacting their buyers to participate in a separate interview. Of these 13 contacted sellers, there were 5 sellers that responded and wanted to participate in the interviews. Of these 5 participants, there were 4 participants able to participate within a certain time frame. Due to privacy reasons, most sellers could not provide or contact their buyers to message them about a possible participation in my interviews. In the end, I was only able to contact and interviews 2 participants through the personal connections of the sellers. Therefore, it was necessary to privately contact possible

participants through the open profiles of the furniture flipper accounts on Facebook and Instagram. Most of the communication was through Instagram, since finding furniture flipper accounts on Facebook were less present compared to Instagram. Through the public accounts of the furniture flippers, I went through customer feedback “stories” as well as searching through comments of posts to be able to locate buyers. From there, I send these personal accounts messages through Instagram messaging. When the Instagram messaging yielded no response, I tried looking up that same person on various social media accounts and tried to send follow up messages there. There were in total 52 furniture flipper buyers approached through Instagram messaging, WhatsApp, email, telephone, LinkedIn and Facebook messenger.

### **3.5 Positionality**

The setting in which the interviews were conducted and any potential biases that might have affected the participants responses should also be considered, according to the article by Brown and Clarke (2006). The use of the thematic analysis approach as well as the incorporation of a critical perspective can assure accurate results that truly reflect the motives, experiences and viewpoints by furniture flipping buyers as well as sellers. This chapter outlines the critical perspective on my own personal prejudices. As well as my personal viewpoints on the matter.

I make an effort to be conscious of my prejudices throughout the research process, by avoiding and being aware of biases that may occur as well as acknowledging how my prejudices may affect my research. Before this research started, I already did some pre-research on the topic on whether the topic has been researched before, as well as video’s explaining the practice of furniture flipping. With this, I obtained pre-knowledge on the topic of furniture flipping that could have influenced my personal viewpoint and might have contributed to prejudices, which could have influenced me during this research. I have never personally flipped furniture, but I did observe its popularity outlying itself on social media. I have purchased used goods for personal use, but never for commercial ends. This background information effects my personal viewpoints on the topic of furniture flipping. Even though I wanted to approach this research with an open mind, I am aware that my personal experiences and beliefs may have affected how I interpret certain phenomenon, situations, phrases etc. Throughout this process, I obtained opinions on the topic mainly about the implications and the effects of furniture flipping on society. I personally believe flipping furniture itself is not problematic and I see it as rather sustainable. Especially since secondhand items are being repurposed and upgraded which uses less materials and carbon emissions than purchasing new items. Furthermore, I understand the



need for a more cost-effective option to purchase higher quality items (especially due to the rising Dutch inflation rates), or even just items that fulfil basic furniture needs, and I think flipped furniture is a good solution for that. The upcoming movement of furniture flipping is, in my opinion, not an issue in itself, but rather problematic when this process of flipping furniture becomes commercialized. I often see many bloggers or TikTok accounts sharing the amount of profit they made with flipping furniture, which does not sit right with me, since the commercialized practice of hunting down good quality furniture in thrift stores disables low-socio economic groups to find higher quality items, for which thrift stores were initially intended. In this sense I see commercialized furniture flipping as problematic on a societal level. Even though I possess these specific viewpoints and prejudices, I tried to minimize the effects of them on my research. Especially when conducting my semi-structured interviews, I did not try to focus on how I feel about that particular answer. I tried to focus on their answer and on their story, by asking them to elaborate on their viewpoints and by not interrupting them when explaining their answers. Furthermore, I often reminded myself during the interviews that I am aware that different viewpoints through which certain topics are perceived exists and that those viewpoints are also valid.

The most common biases that are prone to occur within this research are the confirmation bias and the observer bias. In order to deal with the confirmation bias, which involves to purposely select pieces of information, interpret and remember information that confirms my pre-existing beliefs, I actively try to seek out alternative perspectives as opposed to my personal perspective on the topic. Furthermore, I repeatedly questioned my own assumptions and checked whether they were limited in their potential. Lastly, I kept an open mind during the interviews in order to prevent falling into the confirming spiral. Next to the confirmation bias, the observer bias is also prone to exist within this research. With the observer bias, the researcher is influenced when interpreting the data by their personal beliefs, experiences and attitudes. I tried to limit this by being aware of my own personal biases and how they could influence my observations, try to stay aware of my own prejudices and how they could affect the research during the interviews to avoid steering the interview in a certain direction and by continually reflecting on my own research process and questioning my personal interpretations.

## 4. Results

The following chapter contains an analysis on the collected data to answer the main research question: Why do sellers purchase or produce flipped furniture and how does this play a role in gentrification.

The results are split into two different sections: mainly that of the sellers and the buyers to avoid confusion. First of all, I will begin by listing the results from the sellers by listing their motivations to flip furniture, how their process of flipping furniture looks like and the links to gentrification of consumption. Next to this, I will list the buyers' results and describing their reasons to purchase flipped furniture and how it could be seen as an expression of their identity.

### 4.1 Sellers

#### 4.1.1 Furniture flipping process

What does the process of a furniture flipper look like? The sellers all described the furniture flipping process, which could be divided into 3 main phases: collecting the furniture, upgrading the furniture and selling the furniture. The first phase consists of the processes involved to collect the furniture, the attention points when looking for furniture and the source of the furniture.

The first phase of the furniture flipping process consist mainly of activities that are related to collecting the furniture, hence why this phase will be referred to as the "collection of furniture stage". When collecting the furniture, the sellers had certain points of attention to look for before they would purchase it. This included assessment based on the current state of the furniture, (such as the absence of damage, the absence of woodworm and whether the functionalities of the furniture piece still work accordingly), as well as a first impression of the furniture piece. The first impression of the furniture items were something that first caught the attention of the sellers when looking for furniture to flip:

*"I had to fall in love with a piece of furniture, so it had to have a certain appearance. And yes, what is that? I think that's a certain taste and that is different for everyone."* (seller 2)

This quote describes how seller 2 chooses a furniture piece when she gets the feeling that she falls in love with it. She describes that it is not 1 specific thing that she falls in love with, but

rather that the likability is based on her personal preferences towards furniture. She explains that she needs to fall in love with certain characteristics based on her personal style before considering taking it home with her. Next to the first impression of the furniture pieces, all sellers mentioned that they had certain personal requirements towards the furniture before deciding whether or not that furniture piece was suited to flip. Participant 3 shares her thinking process before considering purchasing furniture pieces:

*“I make sure that doors and drawers open and close properly. Because I can fix things to a certain extent, But I’m not much of a cabinetmaker so there are definitely limits to that, so I pay attention if cabinets are still in a bit of a pretty good condition so that I still can refurbish it. I also pay attention to, if I can make something out of it that is also popular, so to speak.”*  
(seller 3)

In the quote above, seller 3 mentions that she looks for certain quality cues when assessing the suitability of the furniture for flipping. She describes that the furniture needs to function well, because she is not able to fix certain damages herself. Two other sellers also mentioned that a reason for them to not purchase damaged furniture was because they lacked the skills to fix it or they were not willing to lower their profit margin in order to let someone else fix it for them. Furthermore, seller 3 also describes in the quote above, that the furniture piece needs to have the potential to make it into something that is popular and easy to sell. Almost all of the sellers mentioned that they came up with some sort of visualization of the end product when encountering a furniture piece suited for flipping:

*“Because I see it [the furniture piece] and I instantly know how it is going to turn out. Not the exact colour and such, but I do know that I want to turn a clock into a bathroom cabinet and add something to it or put in doors or make shelves in.”* (seller 1)

The quote above mentions the thought process of seller 1, in which she visualizes what elements she will add to the product during the upgrading (flipping) process. Something that was also considered by most of the sellers before purchasing the furniture items were practical considerations, such as transportability and the price of the furniture piece.

The main sources for the sellers to obtain furniture pieces included secondhand online platforms, secondhand stores and garage sales. Half of the sellers mentioned that their main source of furniture was from online secondhand platforms:

*“So there was a lot of supply and I sold very easily through Marktplaats and now after corona I notice that in terms of purchasing it is still mostly through Marktplaats and Facebook Marketplace. And this is mainly because thrift shops charge a lot of money for stuff, or they just don't have nice stuff anymore because the traders have picked it out. Those thrift stores often have contact with traders and they simply have the first choice and then pick out all the nice stuff. What remains is just very dated furniture. So yes, I notice that I buy most of it through Marktplaats,” (seller 3)*

In this quote seller 3 mentions that she mainly collects her furniture pieces from online secondhand platforms, such as “Marktplaats” and “Facebook Marketplace”. She mentions that she does not like to purchase from secondhand stores, due to the low quality items that remain after traders picked out all the good quality furniture items first, as well as the high prices that these stores ask for their inventory. Participant 4 also mentions that he searches in both online secondhand platforms, as well as secondhand stores:

*“Yes I did, I did do it [go to secondhand store]. But visiting a secondhand store also takes up a lot of time and it is much more efficient to find these items on my phone at Marktplaats, isn't it? And it is also just looking for a gem in such an app and that is a lot of fun.” (seller 4)*

What stands out is that seller 4 prefers online secondhand stores since they are more efficient and require less time to find suitable furniture. Furthermore, he mentions that the process of finding a gem on these secondhand apps is a source of excitement and fun. Another seller that also specifically searches for gems when looking for furniture is seller 1:

*“CHURCH flea markets yes. So those are all people from the church and yes there are all treasures there. Look, a grandpa or grandma just passed away, well, that's where the treasures will come from, yes.” (seller 4)*

In this quote, seller 1 mentions that she also seeks for gems when looking for furniture, and that the place to find these gems are in garage sales, since old furniture from deceased family members are often sold in these sales.

The second phase of the furniture flipping process consist mainly of activities that are related to upgrading the furniture, hence why this phase will be referred to as the “upgrading of furniture stage”. All the sellers mentioned that they did something to prep the furniture piece before starting to upgrade it. The most common occurrence in prepping the furniture was to clean the furniture piece and sanding the piece down:

*“Yes, well, after buying it you start to degrease it, so degrease it well with a cleaning agent, then sand, remove the glass, possibly before sanding. If there were still glass doors in it, then just get the delicate things out. Then you were indeed going to disassemble the furniture if the pieces allowed it. Like leaving doors out, you name it.” [...] “Then you start sanding and then you have to let it sit and get used to its surroundings” (seller 2)*

In the quote above, seller 2 mentions that after purchasing the furniture, she begins to prep the furniture by de-greasing it. She then removes glass and other (fragile) elements and disassembles the piece to make it easier to handle. After this, she sanded the piece down and then she lets the piece rest. Seller 3 also mentions that she lets her furniture pieces rest, but she mentions that she does this in the very beginning, to mainly get rid of unpleasant smells:

*“Yes, first, I usually leave it for a while with the doors open because antique cabinets often have a little smell, then I clean it properly. [...] Then sand it down and then possibly repair where necessary, so for example filling holes, things like that if they have small holes in them, then that was once woodworm and then I treat that too just to be sure, but usually they are already gone. And then painting.” (seller 3)*

Seller 3 mentions in the quote above that, if necessary, she lets the furniture piece air out to get rid of unwanted smells. She also mentions that she often does treatments to the furniture to get rid of pests or old layers of paint or wax. Furthermore, she also adds that she fixes broken elements of the furniture piece. After this, she brings up that she then moves on to the next phase: the painting phase. All seller mentioned that after their prepping, they started to add paint or lacquering to the furniture piece alongside with other element to upgrade the furniture:

*“And then painting and the good thing is that the furniture paint that I use. Yes, you don't have to use primer or anything, usually two coats are enough at the end, I'll put another button on it if necessary. And sometimes I also put wallpaper in drawers, so that kind of thing, yes.”*  
(seller 3)

In the quote above, Seller 3 mentions that she adds additional elements to the furniture, such as different doorhandles as well as wallpaper inside of the drawers. Seller 2 mentions that the final thing she does after painting or lacquering is to reassemble the furniture piece, before she returns or sells it.

Half of the sellers indicated that they consulted with their clients to decide on the colour, finishes and other elements that are added onto the furniture piece. This was done with sellers that upgraded the customer's furniture on request, as well as sellers that directly sold their flipped furniture through their (online)platforms:

*“We always let the customer come back after we sanded the piece down and put the first layer of treatment or paint on it. Then we always invite the customer back to see if it is to their liking.”* (seller 2)

In the quote above, seller 2 mentions that she consulted with customers right before finishing the final layer of paint, to see if the furniture is corresponding with their wishes. In the case of seller 2, the consulting with clients is done since the furniture has been flipped for them on request. The sellers that sold their flipped furniture through their online platforms also sometimes consulted with their (possible) clients to decide on colour use.

The third and last phase of the furniture flipping process consist mainly of activities that are related to selling the furniture, hence why this phase will be referred to as the “selling of the furniture stage”. When the sellers decided to list their furniture in their online store or place it in their physical store, they had to present the flipped furniture piece neatly so that it looked attractive to consumers to purchase it. Furthermore, seller 3 mentioned that she took clear photographs of the imperfections of the flipped furniture pieces:

*“I took good pictures of how they really look. I always try to take realistic pictures. The photos must be true to the cabinet really. That you don't think, oh, he really looks very different in the picture than in real life. And I actually took pictures of the damage.” (seller 3)*

In the quotes above, seller 3 mentions she photographs the realistic condition of the furniture on her online platform, to communicate the state of the furniture piece to the potential buyers.

#### **4.1.2 Motivations of sellers to flip furniture**

From the data it became clear that there are multiple reasons for people to flip furniture. The sellers gave several reasons for starting their furniture flipping business, as well as maintaining their furniture flipping business.

Each seller had different motivations for starting their furniture flipping journey, such as inspiration from online furniture flipper communities, preserving family heirlooms, excess of time, personal enjoyment and satisfaction, the ability to work more practical and a personal interest in entrepreneurship. One of the main reasons for the sellers to start flipping furniture was due to it being an enjoyable hobby:

*“Yeah, I think it is really due to it being a hobby.” [...] “So because you earn money, you make customers happy and it is a hobby” (seller 4)*

In this quote, seller 4 mentions that his main drive to flip furniture was to be able to execute his hobby while making an additional income. One of the biggest motives to flip furniture was based on financial incentives. 3 out of 4 sellers mentioned that one of their main reasons, if not their main reason, was to flip furniture due to the extra financial rewards that came along with it:

*“So to be completely honest with you, it is not necessarily the drive of “I am an idealist who thinks that old furniture should not be discarded since there is already a lot of waste.” But yeah I am, if I am being really honest, then the extra financial income is what has been the real drive behind the flipping.” (seller 3)*

In the above displayed quote, seller 3 mentions that her main driver to flip furniture was due to the financial advantage that flipping furniture had on top of her income. Another reason to flip furniture was related to work related benefits such as flexibility, less stress compared to regular jobs, social interactions with others and the ability to work more practical. Participant 3 mentioned that she experiences stress and pressure on her regular job on a continuous basis and that she actively searches for alternative jobs to alleviate stress:

*“It is also because I really like that I have found something that..., because I have been considering this for a long time because in the education system, yeah you know, there is a lot of workload and lots of stress and a lot of hassle each time... So I have been considering for a while to try different things, because I am also a yoga teacher and those kind of things so. But I am someone who likes to do something that really belongs to you and to do something that you can do in your own time.” (seller 3)*

This quote describes the need for seller 3 to have more freedom and control over her work and therefore experience less stress. She mentions that she found these aspirations with her furniture flipping business. The interest in independence and flexibility often associated with entrepreneurship was also mentioned by seller 2 as a reason to flip furniture:

*“Entrepreneurship has always been a part of me since childhood. My father used to be a baker and had a store and always visited markets, so from a young age I have always been exposed to entrepreneurship. [...] But starting a business by myself was always something that I felt like I could do and I was like: “one day, I want to start my own business”.” (seller 2)*

Participant 2 mentions in the quote above that her interests in entrepreneurship resulted from the exposure to it since her early childhood. She mentioned that she always wanted to work for herself one day and that she therefore started her furniture flipping business.

Next to the above mentioned reasons, environmental consciousness was also a theme that was mentioned by 2 out of 4 sellers. Furniture flippers felt motivated to flip furniture in order to reduce waste and to contribute to a conscious stream of consumerism:

*“I don’t think that it is a good development that a lot of furniture gets thrown out. [...] Nowadays, the current society is more of a consumer society. [...] So that awareness, that has*



*grown over time. There are so many beautiful older things that can still last for a very long time.” (seller 3)*

In the quote mentioned by seller 3, she talks about how she perceives the current society to become more of a consumer society, in which things get thrown out even when they are still good and functional. She mentions that she sees the value in older items and suggests that these older items are still worth reusing when she explains her reasons for flipping furniture. Another reason why sellers produce flipped furniture is self-expression. In the interviews, multiple sellers mentioned that they mostly, if not always, wanted to flip furniture to express their creativity;

*“Yes I can express myself better and I can make it [the furniture] just the way I like. I want to just mess around with it. That’s what I enjoy the most.” (seller 1)*

The quote above mentions how seller 1 enjoys the freedom where she is able to express her creativity through using her personal style and preferences when flipping furniture. Moreover, seller 3 also mentioned that she wanted to express her creativity through the furniture flipping process, but that she also identified as a creative person:

*“I also really like that I can express my creative abilities when flipping furniture and I really like the process of it and I am a creative person, so I like that I can do that.” (seller 3)*

Seller 3 mentions in the quote above how she can express her creative self when flipping furniture. She identifies herself as a creative person which is a reason why she likes to produce flipped furniture.

#### **4.1.3 Motivations for Buyers to purchase flipped furniture, according to Sellers.**

What makes flipped furniture special for customers according to furniture flippers? The most mentioned motivation, according to 3 out of the 4 sellers, for consumers to purchase flipped furniture is the possibility to obtain a unique furniture item:

*“Something that I often hear is that people just enjoy it to have some older and unique furniture in their interior instead of the standardized IKEA furniture, so to speak.” (seller 3)*

*“Because it is quite a different segment, because what I offer is often something that is no longer produced, which makes it interesting for people. It was also the case that I sometimes had a different colour that people really liked. But first and foremost it was the uniqueness that something is no longer made.” (seller 4)*

According to the above quote from seller 4, uniqueness lies in the importance of having non-conventional furniture in the consumer’s home and interior. According to seller 3, uniqueness can be related to owning other pieces of furniture in a style or design that are not available in large furniture stores. Furthermore, she adds that customers purchase her flipped furniture, because they like the aesthetics of older furniture pieces. Respondent 4 also adds that consumers like old furniture, because the piece of furniture in the old style is no longer produced and is therefore unique. Furthermore, he also adds that his personal additions to the furniture item, in his case the paint, make it a one of a kind item, which is unique. In addition, seller 1 also mentions that the addition of her funny additional elements add a uniqueness that is not found in mass sold furniture stores and is just different than conventional furniture:

*“Yes uniqueness, yes. I think that that is the reason, that is often the case. I also pay attention to those things when collecting the furniture. But I am not going to buy a cabinet at a furniture boulevard because there are many furniture items like that. When I buy furniture pieces I always adjust certain things and do something different with it. I put on different doorknobs and I let a [fake] stuffed mouse run out of it [the cabinet]. Because I don’t like that it is just wood. Just fun, something special, something you can’t get everywhere. That appeals to people.” (seller 1)*

Furthermore, seller 4 mentions that the combination of a unique item for a relatively cheap price compared to other unique items is a big reason for consumers to purchase flipped furniture pieces.

*“And so these people are on their turn looking for a gem, which they want to have for the lowest price possible.” (seller 4)*

The quote above mentions that the seller (seller 4) notices that people are looking for unique furniture items (a so called “gem), for a low price. This is apparently something the potential buyers value when looking for a flipped furniture piece, according to the sellers.

In addition to preferring old furniture items due to their uniqueness, seller 1 also mentions that consumers like to purchase old furniture items, because they are more durable:

*“Love, yes something beautiful, something lasting. The people who buy it are happy with it and I’m happy that I was able to make it. But also that something is old, and the style is different and made of wood. Nowadays that is no longer the case, it is all pressed wood and no longer solid.” (seller 1)*

In the quote above, seller 1 mentions that older furniture is composed of a more durable and higher quality massive wood, as compared to recently made furniture items that consist of lower quality compressed wood. With this, she suggests that the durable and higher quality of older furniture items is a reason for her customers to purchase her flipped furniture pieces. What is striking is the resemblance between the sellers description of what adds value to flipped furniture and what they describe as reasons why customers purchase their flipped furniture (as perceived by the sellers). For example, uniqueness (owning a unique item and having something different than conventional furniture) as well as high quality were mentioned as an added value to flipped furniture as well as a reason why people would purchase flipped furniture. Furthermore, another reason why consumers wish to purchase flipped furniture, according to the sellers, is the ability to make the (flipped) furniture items customizable:

*“What also happens often is that I post pictures of the secondhand furniture I have on Instagram and just say: “well if you are interested, let me know and then you can choose a colour.”, so I do it like that, and it also happens that people message me if they can choose their own colour and I think they like that.” (seller 3)*

In this quote, seller 3 describes how she offers the option for potential buyers to customize her secondhand furniture pieces by letting them choose their preferred colours. Next to this, she indicates that this is an aspect that the buyers like when buying from her store. Other reasons for customers to purchase flipped furniture included sustainability reasons, as old furniture is re-used:

*“Gosh, that’s a good one. Yes. I think the re-use of materials from stuff and that it is not broken or taken to the old waste.” [...] Yes, I think that that is what people find attractive in it, those who buy it, that it has been re-used, yes.” (seller 2)*

This quote by seller 2 suggests that her customers want to purchase flipped furniture, due to the furniture being re-used and not thrown away and destroyed.

Multiple sellers mentioned in the interviews that they were often asked by customers if they would revamp furniture that the customer already owned. In this process, the furniture pieces were then revamped or modified according to the preferences of the client. The sellers mentioned that there were multiple reasons for customers to have their furniture flipped on request. The main reason for this as given by 3 out of 4 sellers, was to re-use a family heirloom furniture piece.

*“Yes and very often it is an heirloom piece. Usually when people ask that, then it is indeed that they got it from their grandmother or their mother or and then they say “it is so outdated or it just doesn’t look nice anymore”. and then they ask me “look, I can’t get rid of it”, they say. “But I am not using it now” and then I will paint it or refurbish it.” (seller 3)*

This quote mentions that the most common furniture piece that people wanted to get revamped were often older heirloom pieces passed down from family members. It is also mentioned that family members decide to flip the furniture piece because they do not want to get rid of it, due to the emotional attachment that the family members have towards it. Moreover, the quotes suggest that the sellers indicated that the customers wanted to revamp their furniture, because it no longer looked nice or suited their current personal taste in interior. Moreover, seller 2 also mentions that customers wanted to flip their own furniture because the furniture was still in good quality, in a good condition and already complied with their personal style and that they simply were looking to refresh their living space:

*“That was mainly the generation that is now 50/60 years old. You know because that generation already has all the furniture and they didn’t need new furniture because their furniture was fine.” [...]. “So and then they did it that way and then it was still cheap for them.”[...] “then they had nice new furniture for their house for a relatively cheap price.”*

[...] *“Because then they still have the feeling that there is something new in their room but for a lower cost compared to new, because when we were out of the recession and that things were starting to get better, you noticed that people bought new furniture much faster again.”*

*(seller 2)*

The quote above suggests that furniture that is flipped in as a commission is an in-between solution to new furniture or no new furniture, due to the new and refreshing look that a flipped piece of furniture gives in combination with a lower price compared to new furniture items. Furthermore, seller 2 suggests that people have other spending habits depending on the economic status:

*“The only thing I think plays a role in this is if people have money, they buy new stuff. When people don't have money, they get creative with how they spend their money. And then they start to look around for “how cheap can I buy things again or have them refurbished”. and refurbishing that is mainly what we did. In recent years, many people brought their own stuff to us. Because that [the stuff brought] was still in good quality.” (seller 2).*

In this quote she mentioned that in bad economic times, she saw that her customers were more inclined to re-use their already owned furniture instead of buying new things, because flipping furniture was cheaper than buying new furniture. The quote suggests that the economic status of buyers influences whether they purchase new furniture, or let their own furniture be flipped. Next to this, 2 sellers specifically mentioned that buyers want to flip their own furniture on request, since they are then able to tailor made to their own personal likings:

*“And yes, well, then at a certain point you get the question: do you change that too, do you make it to the customer's own taste? Yeah, I think you'll try that too. Yes, why not? And then one came, another came, so at a certain point we were no longer refurbishing our own furniture, but from others.” (seller 2).*

The quote above mentions that a reason for the buyers to let their furniture be flipped by a seller, was because it was possible to customize the furniture pieces. Next to this, the sellers also addressed what furniture is popular and sells more easily:

*“Biedemeier cabinets are cabinets that have, they are about 1 meter high, 1 meter wide and they have very beautiful ornate legs. They have very graceful shapes, so to speak. That style sells very well, but painted, they don't sell unpainted, but they do sell painted. And really a bit of the Art Nouveau dressers that sells well too. Yes, and especially the 70s, 60s, 70s vintage cabinets they also sell really well. Yes, if I have something like that, I know that I will get rid of it in two days. Yes.” (seller 3)*

This quote suggests that antique, vintage and design furniture items were highly desirable and sold quickly, especially when antique furniture items were painted.

#### **4.1.4 Furniture Flipping as a gentrified practice**

How could furniture flipping be seen as a gentrified practice? In the interviews, the sellers were asked about their experiences of product prices within a secondhand stores, online secondhand platforms or other places where one can obtain secondhand furniture items. 2 out of 4 sellers mentioned an increase in price in secondhand stores over the past couple of years:

*“Yes, of course, the prices have all shot up in the past year, that is just. You can see that in everything on Marktplaats”[...] “The only thing I think that plays a role in this is when people have money they buy new stuff. When people don't have money, they get creative with the money. And then start thinking about “How cheap can I buy things again or have them refurbished”, and refurbishing that is mainly what we did.” (seller 2)*

In the quote above, seller 2 mentioned that the increase in prices in secondhand stores were due to inflation. Next to this, seller 2 later on adds that the inflation made people more creative when it comes to spending their money. She observed that when people had less money, they were more intended to find cheaper ways to upgrade their furniture, or purchase more furniture secondhand due to lower costs compared to newly bought furniture. Next to inflation, seller 3 also mentions the increase in prices in secondhand stores:

*“Now, after corona, I notice that in terms of purchasing, it is still usually through Marktplaats and Facebook in that marketplace area. And this is mainly because thrift shops charge a lot of money for stuff, or they just don't have nice stuff anymore because the traders have picked it out. Those thrift stores often have contact with traders and they simply have the first choice*

*and then pick out all the nice stuff. What remains is just very dated furniture. So yes, I buy most of it via Marktplaats, I notice.” (seller 3)*

In the quote above, seller 3 does not specifically specify her argumentations of why she thinks stores have increased their prices. It is simply mentioned that the overall prices of secondhand stores have increased. Next to this, seller 3 mentions that the the availability of quality furniture items of secondhand stores have decreased as a result of the increase of resellers that cherry pick the good furniture items before it even reaches the shelves. The cherry picking of good quality items by resellers was also mentioned by other sellers.

## **4.2 Buyers**

### **4.2.1 What is the motivation for buyers to purchase flipped furniture?**

In the interviews I asked the buyers about their motivations and reasons to purchase flipped furniture. In total, there were 45 different reasons for buyers to purchase flipped furniture. These 45 reasons could be summarized in the following overarching themes: uniqueness, quality, environmental, economical, aesthetic and inability. Almost all buyers mentioned that the most common reason to purchase flipped furniture was related to **uniqueness**:

*“It's quite original. It's not average, [...] There are not several pieces of it. [...] You really have something special.” [...] “I think the details [what is special about the furniture], [...] So and they [sellers of flipped furniture] often do that [adding special details], and it is exactly those details, like putting wallpaper in the inside of the drawers and cute fox doorhandles. [...] it makes no sense, but those are exactly the details that I like.” (buyer 4)*

In the quote above, buyer 4 mentions that she purchased flipped furniture, because she sees it as a unique furniture piece compared to regular furniture, and therefore different than conventional furniture. Furthermore, she adds on that it is unique, since it was custom made and therefore one of a kind. Moreover, she perceived flipped furniture as unique, due to the add-ons that cannot be found in regular furniture items, such as the additional wallpaper in drawers and nonconventional hardware items. Buyer 6 also mentions this, but adds that the unique details provided by the furniture flipper made the furniture piece into an eye catcher in her home, which she can show off to guests. Next to these reasons, buyer 5 mentions uniqueness in a slightly different context:

*“A product becomes more interesting if it has a story to it or an experience to it. If you buy a new product in the store, you have to build that, then you have to make it, and then that layer is not there. So that might be a very big difference that you buy. An extra piece of layering that you don't buy when you buy the new thing in the store.” [...] “The chairs you were referring to? Those are two chairs that once stood in a cinema foyer in Antwerp or Brussels.” [...] “But that story and in that situation. Yes, that's what it's all about.” (buyer 5)*

For buyer 5, uniqueness in a flipped furniture item is due to the history behind the furniture, as well as the story that is associated with the furniture piece. He explains in the quote above that purchasing a flipped furniture item, is practically purchasing the story that goes along with it, which makes the flipped piece valuable in his eyes that cannot be recreated by purchasing new furniture. The quote then also implies that this buyer values the history of furniture pieces, by mentioning that he values furniture pieces with a certain (hi)story or experience attached to it. Lastly, another reason for uniqueness in flipped furniture items was given in the context of not wanting to join the mass consumption patterns:

*“I think especially nowadays after Covid-19, that I also like to support the small one man businesses instead of the shops that already earned enough.” (buyer 1)*

*“yeah a personal connection might be a big word, but I would like to support someone in making more sales, as compared to a big player. So that might play a role.” (buyer 4)*

Buyer 1 mentions that she purposely purchases flipped furniture items to support them instead of large corporations. Next to this, buyer 4 mentions that she does not feel a strong bond with the owner, but does feel a small connection with them by stating that they would rather give the sale to a smaller business than a bigger business in order to support them. The reasoning for intentionally supporting smaller businesses as opposed to large corporations, indicates that buyers see flipping furniture as a way of going against mass consumption.

Next to uniqueness, another reason mentioned by 5 out of 8 buyers to purchase flipped furniture were related to **quality**:



*“Well, no, it occurs less then it used to [solid wood]. And if you do see it, then it's all made of chipboard stuff or you know veneer or something.”[...] it is also important and it is often more robust and simply better quality furniture. The fact that something is already 50 years old and actually still looks the same. Yes, I don't know if you buy an Ikea cabinet now and move it 3 times, if it will still look like this in 50 years.” (buyer 4)*

Buyer 4 mentions that there is a low supply of high-quality furniture on the current furniture market. Furthermore, she says that older furniture was more often made of higher quality. Next to this, high quality is also mentioned in the context of the flipped end product:

*“I also tried to flip an old dressing table from my grandmother, so I just painted it with chalk paint. Yes, that is not really comparable to the quality of how those bedside tables are made.” (buyer 4)*

In this quote given by buyer 4, it is mentioned that a reason for purchasing flipped furniture, is due to the high-quality end product, which is a task that she herself could not recreate.

Next to quality, almost all buyers mentioned that they purchased flipped furniture due to **environmental** motives. The main motive that was mentioned by almost all buyers, was that purchasing furniture made out of previously owned secondhand furniture, helped to reduce the amount of furniture going to waste:

*“It is also quite sustainable that instead of a cabinet ending up in the landfill, someone else gives it a second life.” (buyer 8)*

In the quote above, buyer 8 mentions that she purchased flipped furniture for sustainability reasons, by preventing the furniture of going to waste and re-using it instead. Next to this, buyer 5 highlights the waste stream that the current consumer society promotes:

*“Limit purchasing new items, yes that is kind of the goal.”[...]”Yes and it is especially the whole throw-away society we are living in now. Those things [furniture] are still in good shape, they work just fine. It is a waste to get rid of it. So yes, the. I am like “oh I’ll take it, I’ll find somewhere to put it.” (buyer 5)*

In the quote above, buyer 5 expresses how the current consumer culture promotes a society in which goods are thrown away, even when they are still usable. He also mentions how he purposely limits his consumption and tries to purchase secondhand to reduce waste.

Next to environmental motivations, another reason to purchase flipped furniture is for **economic reasons**:

*“That is really the price, because for a new Danish piece of design furniture you are really talking about a couple of 100 euros difference. Yes, it is, because the pimped furniture pieces are cheaper because they [the sellers] can often buy them for less. But a real Danish designer cabinet. Yes, you really pay a few € 1,000 for new ones. However, I am talking about 3 to € 4,000. And you can buy it flipped for less than € 1,000, so that is a really big difference.”*  
(buyer 3)

In the quote above, buyer 3 mentions that purchasing flipped furniture is cheaper compared to new furniture due to lower acquisition costs, especially when it comes to designer furniture. The lower price of flipped furniture compared to regular new furniture was mentioned by 4 other buyers when recalling a reason to purchase flipped furniture. Furthermore, buyer 4 mentions how unique furniture pieces are often very expensive:

*“Or it really has to be a boutique-like store where they sell unique like things and furniture, where the costs is then like €8000. That could be possible, I don’t know but you will never see these type [flipped furniture] of furniture pieces in regular stores.”* (buyer 4)

In the quote above, buyer 4 mentions how regular furniture stores do not have unique furniture items. She then mentions that she thinks she could obtain unique furniture items from boutique like stores, but hints that the high prices asked by the boutique stores are out of her budget.

Next to economical reasons, it was mentioned by all buyers that a reason to purchase flipped furniture was due to **aesthetics**:

*“Because she, she had several advertisements that also looked good and the cart had a kind of wow factor that we were looking for and was adapted in such a way that it also fits well in our interior.”* (buyer 8)

Buyer 8 mentions in this quote that the furniture flipper adjusted the flipped item to their personal likings and aesthetics. Thereby customizing the flipped furniture piece to their personal interior. In the interviews, most aesthetic related reasons for purchasing flipped furniture were also due to the buyers liking the older furniture pieces that furniture flippers often offered:

*“Often old furniture, it just has something.” [...] “It has a certain character to it, so often a graceful leg or a yes the handles are very graceful. Yes, that is actually just the characteristic features of the furniture itself. And often in combination with the painting technique and the buttons that come on it, for example, will it become even more beautiful than it already was?”*  
(buyer 6)

In the quote above, buyer 6 mentions that old furniture items have certain characteristics that she finds attractive, and that the combination of using the old furniture with a creative process provided by the furniture flipper makes it more aesthetic for her. Other reasons for liking older furniture in flipped furniture pieces were simply a nice appearance, the nice combination of old and new styles and a preference for secondhand older pieces. Lastly, the **inability** to flip furniture was also given as a reason to purchase flipped furniture:

*“It’s not quite up to date anymore, but you have to be able to look through it. And those who those flippers are able to do that.”*(buyer 4)

It was mentioned by buyer 4 that furniture flippers possess certain skills and a certain vision that enables them to produce flipped furniture. A great sum of buyers mentioned that they lacked this creativity or skills to produce flipped furniture on their own, which for them was a reason to purchase flipped furniture from somebody else.

Next to the reasons that the buyers listed to purchase flipped furniture, there were also a few buyers that gave their reasons to let their own furniture items be flipped by a furniture flipper. The buyers either have experience with letting someone flip their own furniture pieces or showed intentions of letting someone flip their own furniture pieces in the future. The main reason for the buyers (and as given by the sellers) to get their own furniture flipped was to preserve a family heritage piece:

*“I had that with my grandmother's dressing table. I mean she died and then that was the dressing table I used to sit at getting ready with my grandma and then I thought yes, I want to keep that and then I thought well, I do want to flip it up a bit indeed, so to give it a fresh colour, because it was just oak brown.” [...] “I also tried to flip an old dressing table from my grandmother, so just painted it with chalk paint. Yes, that cannot really be compared to the quality of how those bedside tables are made.” [...] “I didn't really know then about the whole market of flipped furniture. But if I had known, I probably would have.” (buyer 4)*

In the quote above, buyer 4 mentions that she wanted to flip an old furniture piece since it belonged to her grandmother and she associates treasured memories with that furniture piece. She then specifies her reasons to let someone else flip her own personal furniture in the future by mentioning that she tried to flip her own furniture by painting it herself, but while doing this she did not get the same quality outcome as when she would have had when it would have been professionally flipped. She also mentioned that at the time, she was not aware that furniture flippers and their services existed and that with her current knowledge, she might consider letting her own furniture be flipped by someone else in the future. Other reasons to let someone flip their furniture by someone else was to refresh or modernize their older furniture.

When asking the buyers why they would not flip their own furniture, most of the buyers mentioned that they felt like they did not encompass the skillset needed to flip furniture:

*“So I'd rather let someone else do that and then it also gets done properly. You have to know what you are doing. And if you ruin it then it is such a shame” (buyer 3)*

In the quote above buyer 3 mentions that she would not consider flipping her own furniture, because she feels like she would not do a good job flipping it herself. Furthermore, she also mentions that she does not want to ruin a designer piece, because she considers that to be a shame. Next to this, she mentions that flipping a designer piece requires knowledge on how to flip it, a skill which she does not possess. Therefore, she would rather let it be flipped by someone that does possess these skills. Lastly, another reoccurring reason for buyer to not flip their own furniture were for practical reasons:

*“So it's mainly the time that goes into it and also the amount of work, so for example that sanding and that painting? Yeah, I just don't see myself doing that. I don't enjoy that. I just don't like that at all” (buyer 3)*

In the quote above, buyer 3 mentions that she would not flip her own furniture, since it costs her a lot of time and effort. Furthermore, she does not find the flipping process an enjoyable process and therefore she would rather let someone else flip her furniture for her.

#### **4.2.1 How can Furniture Flipping be seen as an expression of one's identity?**

From the interviews it became clear that identity is often mentioned when talking about the buyers' home interior and style. More than half of the buyers mentioned to have personal characteristics and/or personalities that are in line with their home interior and style. More specifically, buyer 3 clearly speaks of a connection between her personality and her home interior:

*“Yes that is me. When people come into our home then they see a part of me, I invite them into a part of me. And not just as a person, but also as a home.” (buyer 3)*

In the quote above, buyer 3 describes that when visitors enter her home, they see her reflected in her interior style. Furthermore, she suggests that she compares her personality directly with her identity that is reflected through her interior style. More than half of the buyer indicated that they feel a personal connection between themselves and the furniture that they own. A small sum of buyers even mention that they intentionally communicate their personality to others through their home interior:

*“Well, I hope when people come in that they see that we are cozy people, not so static [...] That it is just lighthearted and not so stiff. And yes those red walls and the green kitchen they suggest that it is homy and cosy, and that we love a touch of colour and cheerfulness. I then I hope that a little... or yes I think that reflects us in that way.” (buyer 1)*

In the quote above, buyer 1 mentions that she hopes that her guests can see her personality through her home interior, by describing how her interior's cheerful colours reflect her open and cheerful personality traits. It was even the case that a small number of buyers felt disappointed when it was hypothesized that their interior style would suddenly become trendy:

*"I wouldn't like it, but yeah. Because I don't like being a dime in a dozen, to have standardized furniture and to be standard. Because I think it is a shame if.. It's like people don't have their own opinion. It could be that many people like the same thing, but I think it's a shame if you don't let your own identity shine through in what you wear or what your home is."* (buyer 7)

In the quote above, buyer 7 mentions that she would become disappointed when her interior style would become trendy. For her, this was because she wants to express her uniqueness through her personal interior as well as wanting to embody the unique interior as a reflection of herself. She also perceives a home interior to be a way to get to know the essence of someone's identity and thereby expects people to have their own unique interior style.

What also came forward, was that the buyers purchased flipped furniture in line with their existing home interior and personal styles. Next to this, almost all of the buyers mentioned that their home interior changed over the years:

*"Because we moved. In our old house when we just got out of our student rooms, our interior was a random mess with things thrown together with things we still had from our student rooms. Besides that we didn't really have the budget to go buy all new furniture." [...] "When we knew we bought a house, then we also started looking in furniture stores and got inspiration by also watching TV programs. And so it slowly becomes coherent."* (buyer 8)

In the quote above, buyer 8 mentions that her interior changed over the years. She describes the phase in her life in which she did not have a lot of financial freedom, and therefore could not afford newly bought furniture. Next to this, the buyer describes a change in furniture style when she and her partner moved into her new home. She explains that she changed her home interior based on influences from television programs. Next to influence from trends, and an increase in income, another reason to change home interior was due to entering a different life phase:

*"My husband bought this house on his own when I was still studying, so it was his furnishings. Well, pretty manly boring furnishings and then you move in together and then well, then you don't like something or you need more storage space because you have kids, so furniture has to have a function then, but it also has to be beautiful. It it, it's connected." (buyer 7)*

In the quote above, buyer 7 describes that she changed her interior over the past years, due to her moving in with her boyfriend and managing their personal needs and expectations in terms of furniture, as well as the arrival of children that influenced the functionality of the corresponding furniture. This quote shows that a change in lifestyle due to a different life phase (e.g. moving in with partner, having children) influences the needs one person has for furniture alongside with a change in home interior. For buyer 7, the arrival of her children caused for a change in her lifestyle, and she sees a practical interpretation of her lifestyle by purchasing corresponding (practical) furniture pieces. On the other hand, this buyer generally likes to consume (among other things) furniture pieces for her identity, because she has a desire for uniqueness:

*"For example, I have tattoos, so I do like to stand out from other people in a way. I also find it very unfortunate that if someone like if a certain clothing item comes in fashion. What I was wearing before that, then I can get upset about that. Yes, because I don't like being one in a dozen. In fact, I hate it when. Then then it's like you don't have your own opinion. Of course it could be that a lot of people like the same thing, you know, but I just think it's a shame if you don't let your own identity shine more in what you wear or what your home is." (buyer 7)*

With this quote, buyer 7 speaks of her desire to separate herself from the mass, through consuming things or participating in certain actions that make her unique. She mentions that she values expressing her own identity through her home interior. The term “uniqueness” is the most mentioned and valued reason when asking buyers about their reasons for purchasing flipped furniture. Buyer 7 in the quote above again mentions the desire for uniqueness to contribute to or enhance her identity, by consuming unique styles, products or services.

#### **4.2.3 The role of gentrification of consumption in furniture flipping**

So how does furniture flipping play a role in gentrification of consumption? To capture this, the interview obtained questions of the buyer’s observations of possible changes in secondhand

stores, with regards to quality, supply of goods and price. What primarily stood out from the data was that a few buyers noticed that purchasing goods secondhand is trendy at the moment, mainly due to online platforms:

*“I think that nowadays we also uhm pass on stuff with more ease as compared to a few years ago. And the ease with which you can put things online is becoming increasingly accessible. So it is also more visible yes, what everyone has to offer.” (buyer 8)*

In the quote above, buyer 8 mentions that the increase in interest in secondhand items is more trendy due to the easiness in which people can display, sell and buy their secondhand items online. Furthermore, buyer 2 discusses the increase in furniture flippers:

*“It's suddenly very popular, isn't it, so that price will also go up again, I think, yes. All those extras, such as a reliving well, there was no such thing 5 years ago. So it's all those people who do all those courses just like you and they see a gap in the market and they think “here we go”. So this [flipping furniture] is all a trend.” (buyer 2)*

In the quote above, buyer 2 mentions that she noticed an increase in furniture flippers in the past 5 years. She argues that the increase is due to a market gap, in which these flippers can make a profit from flipping furniture. She also mentions that she noticed a price increase in secondhand furniture items. This was, according to buyer 2, due to the increase in furniture flippers in her area as well as the increasing demand for secondhand furniture. There are multiple buyers that also mention the increase in furniture flippers. A possible reason for this was provided by buyer 6, who mentions that the demand for flipped furniture has increased:

*“I think it's only gotten more common. Yes, look furniture, you could always buy it at Marktplaats, but now there are really many more people who actually do something with it.” [...] “Well, I think it is. Yes I, I actually don't really know why it occurs, but I think there's just a lot more demand for it. And that people just like to fix up furniture.” (buyer 6)*

In the quote above, buyer 6 mentions that she also observed an increase in furniture flippers who obtain and sell their furniture from secondhand online platforms. She then mentions that she thinks that the increase in furniture flippers is due to more demand from consumers.



When asking about possible changes in price, 7 out of 8 buyers indicated that secondhand stores became more expensive, for which they gave multiple reasons. Half of the buyers mentioned that secondhand stores became more expensive due to the increase in demand:

*“I have to say, it very much depends on what kind of thrift store, because if I look here in Arnhem, for example, there are thrift stores, there you really just have cheap things. And there are also thrift stores that are now asking the highest price for their inventory, because they know that there will be people who buy it so I find it very dependable on the location and the situation.” (buyer 6)*

In the quote above, buyer 6 mentions that certain secondhand stores increase their prices, because they know that the items will sell anyways. However, she also mentions that the prices of secondhand items are not consistent among secondhand stores, and therefore differ per branche. Moreover, it was mentioned that the increase in demand for secondhand furniture is due to it being sustainable. Next to this, another reason for the increase in secondhand stores that was mentioned was inflation:

*“The energy price has risen very much, so that all goes along. And perhaps the prices are also higher because there is more demand for secondhand items. Because now with inflation, more people are struggling, and more people may have more of a need to buy secondhand stuff. And the materials with which people flip the furniture pieces are also becoming more expensive, so the furniture is also becoming more expensive.” (buyer 8)*

In the quote above buyer 8 mentions that the inflation caused secondhand stores to be more expensive. According to her, this is due to increasing energy prices as well as an increasing amount of people needing to resort to secondhand options due to a decrease in purchasing power. Next to inflation, it was mentioned by several buyers that the trendiness of flipping furniture contributed to the increase in secondhand furniture purchases:

*“But some people really play into the hype by adding a detailed description of the items specifications of like: “this item has flipping potential” or something like that and then they ask €50 for it. But at the same time there are also people that sell the exact nightstand for €10 a few advertisement posts further from someone that does not play into the whole hype thing. So to speak then.” (buyer 4)*

In the quote above, buyer 4 describes that sellers of secondhand furniture are more aware of the increase in trendiness of secondhand items and furniture flipping trends and therefore ask a higher price for their furniture pieces. This quote suggests that the trendiness of furniture flipping takes a part in the increase in demand for secondhand furniture goods. Alongside furniture flippers, it was also mentioned that re-sellers have a role in driving up secondhand prices:

*“you also see that at flea markets. They will arrive at 6 o’clock in the morning. Those are the resellers. They are always the first ones there. And then they purchase a lot of things for a very cheap price. But the ones that actually want to purchase these items have to pay a lot of money when they have to purchase it from re-sellers.” (buyer 3)*

In the quote above, buyer 3 mentions that re-sellers have commercial incentives when purchasing goods secondhand and that with their practices they obtain these cheaper secondhand items before consumers can purchase them. Then she describes that the re-sellers sell their cheaply bought furniture for a higher price to consumers and thereby make a profit. Buyer 4 also briefly mentioned that she noticed a pre-selection happening, but this time in the context of a secondhand store:

*“the last time we were walking outside and we saw new furniture being delivered at the back entrance and saw that people were already waiting there. Then I thought, hey, wait a minute, I want to see that too.” (buyer 4)*

In the quote above, buyer 4 mentions that she witnessed a delivery truck of secondhand items unloading in the back of the secondhand store. Moreover, she saw people waiting in line for the delivery who got to get a first pick of the new items, before it even hit the store shelves. The quote suggests that the unpopular secondhand products remain after resellers and other customers picked out the good items before they even enter the secondhand store. The low quality of items in secondhand stores was later also suggested by buyer 4:

*“Because I think there are many people with a tight budget who are able to score a cabinet there for a very cheap price. But those cabinets are not really something I would consider worthy to purchase and flip at home myself.” (buyer 4)*

In the quote above, buyer 4 mentions that she did not perceive the furniture in the secondhand store to be of significant quality or appearance for her to take home and possibly flip herself. However, she could imagine how lower income families would purchase these lower quality furniture items, due to the low prices.

## **5. Discussion and Conclusion**

This study aimed to get a rounded picture from the perspective of both sellers and buyers on the motivations of either purchasing or producing flipped furniture. Overall, the research contextualizes the process of flipping furniture by looking at the implications of the furniture flipping processes on gentrification of consumption. In this discussion and conclusion chapter, an answer to the main research question will be provided, by answered the sub-questions.

### **5.1 Findings in relation to motivations for buyers and sellers in combination with consumption, identity and lifestyles.**

The next subchapter provides an answer to the sub-research question of “What is the motivation for both Buyers and Sellers to purchase/produce flipped furniture” and “How can furniture flipping be seen as an expression of one’s identity” by giving an overview of the findings and linking it to the literature review.

#### **5.1.1. Buyers**

The results showed that the reasons to purchase flipped furniture for buyers were associated with uniqueness, sustainability and economical reasons. The next chapter focusses on these 3 reasons and links them to the theory of consumption, identity and lifestyles by Belk (1988) and Giddens (1991), while also highlighting new findings and linking them to new literature.

It was mentioned in the results that the main reason for buyers to purchase flipped furniture was due to its uniqueness, which corresponds to the existing literature that discusses the reasons to purchase from secondhand stores (Guiot and Roux, 2010). Flipped furniture items were considered to be unique, since the flipped furniture items were often described by the buyers as one of a kind. Thereby indicating that the adjustments made by the sellers made the flipped furniture piece unique. Next to this, flipped furniture items were often made from furniture pieces that were no longer produced, thereby contributing to the buyers’ perceived rarity and uniqueness of the flipped furniture pieces. This finding agrees with the existing literature on motivations to purchase form secondhand stores, in which consumers are drawn to secondhand stores due to the unique experiences these stores offer (Guiot and Roux, 2010). However, it is important to make a distinction between the general unique experience the literature binds to secondhand stores, and the specific unique characteristics in relation to the flipped furniture pieces mentioned in the results. The results mentioned how the flipped furniture items obtained

specific characteristics (one of a kind, added details, (hi)story behind a furniture piece) that gave them a certain distinctiveness from conventional furniture and therefore marked them as unique in the eyes of the buyer. Whereas the literature puts more emphasis on the overall hedonic aspects associated with thrift stores that makes the experience unique (excitement, seeking for treasures etc.). On the other hand, it is still important to keep in mind that the overall hedonic and unique experience as described in the literature, may still play a role in the shaping of the buyers' perceptions with regards to the uniqueness of a flipped furniture item. The aspects associated with thrift stores (excitement, seeking for bargains or treasures etc.) could still play an active role in the perception towards uniqueness surrounding the flipped furniture items. The results also hint towards the influence of the buyers perception on uniqueness, by addressing how the (hi)story behind a flipped furniture item could influence the perception of the overall unique experience of a flipped furniture item. The unique experience in the process of finding a flipped furniture item could be of influence on the perceived uniqueness of a furniture item, and in turn the actual unique characteristics of a flipped furniture items may enhance the overall experience of uniqueness of that furniture item. Therefore, the unique experience as described in the literature and the perceived uniqueness from the results could go hand in hand. The theory by Giddens (1991) could provide an explanation why buyers value uniqueness when purchasing flipped furniture. According to Giddens (1991), the desire to seek for authenticity originates from the need to build one's identity in modern society. Through participating in certain actions in which an individual separates themselves from the mass, the concept of an authentic self is being build. In the example of furniture flipping, buyers mentioned how they wanted to actively separate themselves from the mass by purchasing flipped furniture items that they perceived as unique. The desire of the buyers to go against the mass was also mentioned in the results, when buyers expressed their interests in purchasing from small businesses to support them, rather than purchasing from larger corporations. The act of supporting small businesses, rather than larger corporations, could indicate that the buyers wanted to go against mass consumption patterns by consciously consuming products from smaller businesses. The act of going against mass consumption patterns is a way of separating oneself from the mass, which makes purchasing from smaller businesses a unique act. However, the results also mentioned that the buyers wanted to purchase from smaller businesses, because the products they sold were perceived by the buyers to be more unique (due to them being partially handmade), as compared to large businesses. The theory by Belk (1988) also mentions how handmade products are seen as a more valuable and significant possession as compared to mass produced items, and therefore become more closely tied to

identity. He also mentions how possessions reflect our identity and over time become part of who we are and how we want others to see us. The act of purchasing unique handmade items (from small businesses) might be seen as a more valuable possession and can therefore have a more prominent role in how the buyers shape their identity. Having a handmade unique flipped furniture item could therefore be seen as a more valued possession, and therefore possibly be more closely tied to one's identity. Furthermore, the sellers of flipped furniture also often offered customization services, in which the buyers were able to fully customize the secondhand furniture piece to their own personal taste, therefore making the flipped furniture piece one of a kind and unique. The buyers indicated that they weren't able to flip furniture themselves, so the customization services offered by the sellers still provided the buyers with an opportunity to fully make a secondhand furniture piece to their own personal likings. The buyers mentioned that the customization was a unique feature that the sellers offered and was not a common service offered elsewhere, especially in combination with secondhand furniture. The ability to order flipped furniture based on their own personal likings, was then also one of the reasons why buyers wanted to purchase flipped furniture. The preference of buyers to obtain a flipped furniture piece according to their own personal taste can be explained by the theory of Belk (1988). The theory by Belk (1988) mentions how possessions are valued more when we have more control over it and therefore it is more likely that these possessions are seen as part of one's identity. The customization services offered by the sellers allows buyers to have more control over the flipped furniture piece, therefore making it more likely that the product (customized flipped furniture piece) holds a closer connection to one's identity (authentic self). The actions of going against the mass, by either purchasing from smaller businesses to avoid mass consumption streams or purchasing unique customized or handmade items from these smaller businesses, could be seen as a way in which buyers are trying to build their authentic identity. This then links back to the theory of Giddens (1991) in the sense that buyers actively search for unique ways in which they can build their authentic self (identity), by rejecting inauthentic aspects (engaging in mass consumption). He then mentions how lifestyles are containers for identities, and therefore the practices of purchasing unique flipped furniture items by buyers could be used to express one's unique identity and signal their authenticity to others. The buyers' interests in signaling their authenticity to others could be seen in the results, in which buyers wanted to show their authentic lifestyle to others by constructing their home interior in a way that reflected their personal interests and values. Through purchasing unique flipped furniture items that were in line with their home interior, which was an extension of the buyers' personal interests, taste and values, they could have signaled to themselves and to

visitors of their home that if their home interior was unique, then they were unique. This was also mentioned by the article of Zukin (1990), in which secondhand clothing items could be seen as an extension of the identity of the gentrifier, where if the bought items were unique then they were also considered unique. When going back to the theory of Giddens (1991) on the desire for an authentic lifestyle, it could be said that purchasing flipped furniture on its own, is not in line with his definition on lifestyles. According to Giddens (1991), lifestyles are a *set* of practices that an individual embraces to express their self-identity and vice versa. Furthermore, he also mentions in the “Reflexive project of the Self” how individuals continuously reflect their desired self to their current self, through every day behaviour associated with a certain lifestyle. Based on this definition of lifestyles by Giddens (1991), it could be argued that purchasing a flipped furniture item in the amounts purchased by the buyers (1-4 times in total), was not sufficient to be considered a *set* of practices on a daily basis. Therefore, it is doubtful to assume that based on purchasing unique flipped furniture items alone, the buyer is able to express their authentic lifestyle to others. However, on the other hand, the results mentioned how the buyers displayed most of their flipped furniture items in a prominent area in their home, where the unique flipped furniture items could have been seen or interacted with on a daily basis. In this sense, the daily observation and/or interactions with the unique flipped furniture piece in a prominent space, could be seen as a repeated set of practices in which the buyer expresses their authenticity to themselves and visitors each time they interact with the unique flipped furniture piece. This is also slightly mentioned by Belk (1988) who says that rare (unique) items that are displayed in a prominent area in a home, can be used as an extension of someone’s identity by showcasing the possession to others. Therefore, the purchase and display of even one unique flipped furniture item, could already be sufficient to provide a narrative of an authentic self-identity to oneself and others.

Next to this, the results mentioned that buyers had the possibility to let their own (older) furniture be flipped by a seller. The primary reasons for this were that these furniture items were often heirloom pieces that the buyers wanted to preserve or modernize, and they did not want to ruin it by painting or restoring it themselves. This finding displays how heirloom pieces can have certain emotional connections, such as nostalgia and sentimentality, and could therefore be more valued. The theory by Belk (1988) mentions how it is often the heirloom possessions that we value most and are therefore closer to us and hold more importance for our identity over time and life phases. He mentions how heirloom pieces hold sentimental value and that the emotions and memories associates with the sentimental values are connected to

the person's identity. The closer value and connections to identity associated with heirloom pieces, due to the emotional connections, could explain why buyers would want to let their heirloom pieces be flipped by sellers. The fear of buyers messing up their heirloom piece could be explained by the theory of Belk (1988) that mentions that when closely valued possessions are lost or stolen, it can lead people to feel as if a part of their identity is stolen. Therefore, it might be the case that the fear of the buyers of messing up their heirloom piece with the loss or damaging of that heirloom piece as a result, could be explained that it would feel as if they would lose a sense of their identity.

Next to uniqueness, another reason that was widely mentioned in the results by the buyers as a motive to purchase flipped furniture was sustainability. The results indicated that the buyers put emphasis on giving secondhand furniture a second life and preventing it from ending up in the waste stream. Next to this, it was also mentioned that flipped furniture items were perceived as more durable, since the secondhand furniture that is used to flip furniture is often old, which is perceived by the buyers as being high quality. The buyers also expressed their dissatisfaction with current furniture items, as they are often made from lower-quality materials and therefore they are perceived as less durable. These results are consistent with the literature, in which the article by Borusiak et al. (2020) mentions how consumers perceive purchasing secondhand items to be more sustainable, due to the decrease in overproduction and reduce in excess waste. These results can also be linked to the theory of Giddens (1991). The theory by Giddens describes that consumers want to signal their lifestyles, with its corresponding beliefs and values, by participating in an integrated set of practices that expresses these values and beliefs to oneself and others. The buyer's consideration of sustainability to purchase flipped furniture, could be seen as a conscious act of purposely purchasing items that minimize excess waste. This conscious act of signaling their sustainability values through the purchase of sustainable flipped furniture items, could be seen as a way of expressing their lifestyles of an environmentally conscious consumer. However, when looking at the explanation of lifestyles by Giddens (1991), it can be said that a consumer must participate in a *set* of practices on a daily basis to achieve a certain lifestyle. Since the buyers in this research did not purchase flipped furniture on a daily basis or even on a weekly basis, it can't be said with certainty that purchasing solely flipped furniture creates a lifestyle of a conscious consumer. It can be said that purchasing flipped furniture could be seen as a part of the set of practices required to adhere the lifestyle of a conscious consumer. Nevertheless, the bigger picture of the other sustainable



practices outside of purchasing flipped furniture that contribute to a sustainable lifestyle are simply not known.

Next to environmental motives, economic motives were also considered to be a reason to purchase flipped furniture. The results indicated that flipped furniture items were perceived as more affordable (due to low acquisition costs of secondhand furniture) as compared to new furniture from conventional stores. This finding partially allies with the previous research of Guiot and Roux (2010), who suggest that purchasing secondhand items are more affordable as compared to new items and therefore have economic benefits to consumers who purchase it. However, even though flipped furniture items consist of secondhand furniture, flipped furniture items still have higher prices as secondhand furniture pieces due to the additional material costs and labor hours needed to flip the furniture pieces. Therefore, the flipped furniture items cannot be directly compared with secondhand furniture on that manner. Next to this, the results indicated that the relatively low and affordable prices of the flipped furniture pieces also allowed buyers to practice sustainability within their budget. This aligns with the theory by Guiot and Roux (2010) who mention that consumers purchase from secondhand stores to be able to purchase sustainable items within a certain budget. However, it must be mentioned how the prices of flipped furniture items often have higher prices as compared to secondhand furniture from thrift stores, due to the added material costs and the labor hours.

Furthermore, the buyers mentioned that purchasing flipped furniture pieces were a way of obtaining unique furniture items for a relatively low and affordable price. The results mentioned how buyers had difficulty finding unique furniture pieces in conventional stores, and that such items were only uncommonly found in boutique stores, where the prices were immensely high. In this context, the low price of a unique flipped furniture piece as compared to other alternatives, could have been a way for the buyers to express their authenticity and build their authentic self within their budget.

Lastly, the buyers did not express that the lower costs of flipped furniture items were the main reason to purchase flipped furniture items. The buyers rather expressed how they mainly purchased flipped furniture because of its perceived uniqueness, not necessarily because they had a low budget. Therefore, it is not probable that the consumption of flipped furniture is a way of expressing the buyers viewpoints on financial responsibility, but rather a bonus on top of uniqueness and possibly sustainability.

In conclusion, the main reason for buyers to purchase flipped furniture was because they considered flipped furniture to be unique. This was due to the distinctive characteristics of these flipped furniture items (one of a kind, perceived rarity and (hi)story behind the furniture item) that could not be found in furniture from conventional furniture stores. Next to this, the buyers purchased from smaller businesses to avoid mass consumption streams or because they had the opportunity to purchase unique customized or handmade items from these smaller businesses. This could then be seen as a way in which buyers are trying to build their authentic identity by going against the mass. The interests of buyers to signal their authenticity to themselves and others could be seen in their home interior, in which their home interior was a reflection of their personal interests. It is debatable whether purchasing flipped furniture can be seen as a way to build one's authentic self (lifestyle), since it is not a daily repeated practice or purchase. However, since flipped furniture is prominently placed inside of homes, it could contribute to the expression of one's identity to themselves and others on a daily basis. Next to this, buyers wanted to flip their heirloom pieces by sellers, to avoid damaging or ruining it by doing it themselves, and therefore preserve the nostalgic memories associated with the heirloom furniture piece. Besides this, the buyers purchased flipped furniture because they perceived it to be sustainable, by not letting secondhand furniture go to waste and giving it a second life. Next to this, they considered that the older secondhand furniture used to flip furniture was often more durable and made of a higher quality than conventional furniture, therefore making it more sustainable. The sustainability motivation of buyers to purchase flipped furniture, could be seen as a way of expressing the buyers' identity of an environmentally conscious consumer and signaling their values and lifestyle of making more sustainable choices. Lastly, the buyers purchased flipped furniture because they considered it to be cheaper as compared to new furniture items and it provided an opportunity to purchase a unique furniture piece for a relatively low price.

### **5.1.2 Sellers**

The data from the interviews also gave insight into the motivations for sellers to produce flipped furniture. The results indicated that the main reasons for sellers to produce flipped furniture was to be able to express their creativity through this hobby, gaining extra financial income, as well as the desire to pursue a flexible schedule and autonomy over one's actions. The article of Byers and Slack (2001) supports these findings, by mentioning that small business owners often start with professionally pursuing their hobby as a way to gain more income. With this, they provide support for the explanation on why sellers mentioned "hobby"

as an important reason for them to produce flipped furniture. The results mentioned that they wanted to flip furniture to express their creativity, by giving the secondhand furniture piece a personal and creative twist. Furthermore, it was also mentioned in the results how the sellers often identified themselves as a creative person, thereby indicating that creativity can be seen as a part of their identity as Giddens (1991) describes it. Furthermore, the theory by Giddens (1991) mentioned how lifestyles are expressed to oneself and others, by participating in certain practices that signal a certain lifestyle. When linking this to the results, it could be the case that the sellers actively contribute in practices (flipping furniture) in which they can express their creativity and signal to others (for instance, the buyers) that they are creative (identity). Next to this, the article of Byers and Slack (2001) also supports the finding of the seller's desire to be flexible and have autonomy when having their own business, by explaining that the ambition for small business owners to be independent and to be their own boss is often the main reason to start their own business, alongside with financial aspirations. The sellers desire to be an entrepreneur and practices that the sellers perform on a daily basis can be linked to the theory of Giddens (1991) on lifestyles and identity. The theory of Giddens describes that lifestyles are signalled to other by participating in a set of practices that are associated with that lifestyle (on a regular basis). The regular engagement of sellers in activities and habits that are associated with an entrepreneurial lifestyle (such as networking, innovation and the desire for autonomy and independence) then could signal their lifestyle of an entrepreneur to others.

In conclusion, sellers want to produce flipped furniture because they see it as a way to professionally pursue their hobby and thereby express their creativity and creative identity. Next to this, the production of flipped furniture allowed sellers to be their own boss while generating more income. The reason for the sellers to produce flipped furniture because it was seen as a professional way of pursuing a hobby, in which the seller could express their creativity. Next to this, the sellers interests in entrepreneurship expresses their desire to be autonomous and not tied to a traditional way of working.

## **5.2 Findings in relation to the furniture flipping process and its relation to gentrification of consumption.**

The next chapter provides an answer to the sub-research question of “What does the process of flipping furniture look like” and “How do furniture flipping practices play a role in gentrification of consumption” by giving an overview of the findings and linking it to the literature review.

### **5.2.1 The furniture flipping process**

From the results it became clear that the sellers followed a 3-phase process in order to flip furniture: the collection stage, the upgrading stage and the selling stage. The first stage, the collection stage, consisted of collecting secondhand furniture items and assessing whether or not they were suitable to flip. In this stage, the sellers mentioned that they often got secondhand furniture from secondhand stores or secondhand online platforms. Furthermore, the results indicated that in this stage, the sellers assessed the secondhand furniture pieces based on quality, market demands/trends and price. The second stage was the upgrading stage, which consisted of all the actions required to flip the furniture piece. First the furniture had to be prepped by cleaning it, treatments (against woodworms and bad odour) and removing old layers of paint and/or wax. After this, the furniture piece was painted/waxed/varnished and additional elements (doorknobs/wallpapers) were added according to the likings of the buyer (if they had potential buyers). The third and last stage of the furniture flipping process, was the selling stage. In the selling stage, the furniture pieces were photographed and/or staged to make it appealing in the eyes of future buyers, alongside with a detailed description about the characteristics of the flipped piece.

### **5.2.2 gentrification of consumption**

One aim of this thesis was to research whether gentrification of consumption played a role in the furniture flipping process. To recall, the definition of gentrification of consumption from the theoretical framework was defined as: *“The process in which secondhand consumer goods that used to be available to lower income groups, become increasingly exclusive and therefore no longer accessible due to increased demands from higher income groups”*.

The results did not explicitly mention that furniture flippers contribute to gentrification processes. However, there were suggestive indications in the results that hint towards an underlying connection between the furniture flipping process and the concept of gentrification. More specifically, the results mentioned that the sellers mainly purchased their secondhand furniture items from secondhand stores or secondhand online platforms in the collection stage of the furniture flipping process. The results mentioned how, in the collection stage, sellers purposely look for high quality and popular furniture items when searching for suitable secondhand furniture that they can flip. Even though the buyers observed higher prices and lower quality secondhand furniture items in secondhand stores and online platforms, they did

not specifically mention that sellers of flipped furniture were the root cause of this. However, the literature by Ronobir (2020) does mention how the increase in resellers in secondhand stores caused for a price rise of secondhand items due to the increase in demand. Next to this, the article also mentions how resellers actively look for high quality items that they can re-sell for a profit, and as a result the low-quality secondhand items remain. Even though sellers cannot be fully compared with resellers, they do share similarities in the sense that they also actively search for high quality and popular secondhand items for commercial reasons. Therefore, sellers might also contribute to an increase in prices in secondhand stores and online platforms, thereby increasingly excluding lower income families that rely on high quality and affordable items from these markets. As a result, the exclusion of lower income households from affordable secondhand stores could contribute to an increase in inequality between socio economic groups. On the other hand, it could be argued that sellers operate on a small scale. Therefore, they might not be the primary cause for the observed lower quality and increase in prices of secondhand furniture items as mentioned in the results. On the other hand, when the collective impact of all these smaller businesses together is considered, they could still potentially affect the market dynamics of secondhand stores or platforms. This could then exclude lower income households on a larger scale, thereby contributing to gentrified practices. However, to be able to get a more comprehensive understanding of the possible gentrified practices in thrift stores as a result of furniture flipping, there has to be more research done on the experiences of lower income households when purchasing secondhand furniture items.

Next to the sellers, it is noteworthy to recognize the buyers' role in the role of gentrification of consumption in relation to furniture flipping, since they create the demand for it. As for the sellers, the results of the buyers did not explicitly mention that the buyers contribute to gentrification processes. However, the results may hint towards a more underlying connection between purchasing flipped furniture and gentrification. The results indicated that uniqueness was the main reason for the buyers to purchase flipped furniture. The buyers perceived flipped furniture as unique and they may have seen unique flipped furniture items as a way to possibly express their unique identity and desire to separate themselves from the mass. The literature also mentioned this desire for uniqueness in consumers by explaining how gentrifiers constantly seek new ways in which they can be authentic and signal their "authenticness" to others, by separating oneself from the mass (Zukin, 1990). Through the buyers desire to actively seek out new and unique ways to express their authenticity through purchasing flipped furniture, they may incentivise the sellers to actively seek out unique or high quality

secondhand furniture items. The sellers desire to actively purchase high quality secondhand furniture, as mentioned in the results, then could leave the lower income households with less high-quality secondhand furniture to choose from. The exclusion of the lower households from secondhand stores due less available affordable and high-quality options can be seen as ironic, since thrift stores were originally intended for lower income households (Roy, 2019).

Within this research, the main emphasis has been on the perspective on gentrification on furniture flipping. This approach tends to give furniture flipping a somewhat more loaded and potentially negative connotation. However, it must be acknowledged that furniture flipping is much more complex and extensive than solely the perspective of gentrification. For example, the furniture flipping process can also be approached from a sustainability perspective, in which furniture flipping poses as a partial solution for a societal problem of excessive waste production and the current consumer culture. Therefore, this research does not aim to criticize furniture flipping under the pretext of gentrification, but rather to shed light on multiple (societally relevant) perspectives of this growing concept, which happened to be gentrification. Overall, approaching furniture flipping from multiple perspectives allows for a more comprehensive understanding of its impacts on the social, environmental and economical level.

In conclusion, the furniture flipping process consisted of three stages: the collection stage, the upgrading stage and the selling stage. Furthermore, there were no specific results that directly linked the furniture flipping stages (collection stage, upgrading stage and the selling stage) to gentrification of consumption. However, it was hinted that the sellers could contribute to gentrification practices within thrift stores and online platforms, due to their selective purchases of high-quality secondhand furniture, which could exclude low-income households from purchasing affordable and high-quality secondhand furniture goods. The exclusion of lower income households could contribute to an increase in inequality between socio economic groups. Next to this, the buyers role in relation to gentrification of consumption was also not specifically mentioned in the results. However, the buyers demand for unique flipped furniture did incentivise the sellers to look out for unique and high-quality secondhand furniture items and therefore the buyers also have a role in the depletion of high quality and affordable secondhand furniture items in secondhand stores. Lastly, it was mentioned that this thesis tried to approach the flipping process from a perspective of gentrification, which does not necessarily make flipped furniture good or bad, but rather showed the complex nature of approaching concepts from a certain perspective.

## **Strengths and limitations**

In this chapter I will reflect upon the trustworthiness of this research, using the criteria mentioned by Anney (2014). It is important to assess the research upon trustworthiness to ensure its quality. In this research, I used multiple qualitative methods. Therefore, I looked into the qualitative trustworthiness criteria by Anney (2014), who based the trustworthiness of a research on the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of a research.

### **5.1.2 Credibility**

The article by Anney (2014) discusses several strategies to check whether a research was executed in a trustworthy way. The first strategy named was credibility, in which the presented findings are questioned to be a representative, plausible and an accurate representation of the initially collected data.

The article by Anney (2014) proposes that the researcher needs to immerse themselves into the world of the participant, in order to understand the context of the study as well as minimize misinterpretations of the data. As mentioned in my positionality statement, I have emerged myself into the practice of furniture flipping through social media platforms before starting this thesis. The pre-knowledge I obtained from watching multiple video's and reading multiple blogposts on furniture flipping enabled me to get a better understanding of the concept and practices of furniture flipping. Throughout the interviews, this pre-knowledge helped me to resonate with the answers of the participants. I believe this pre-knowledge minimized misinterpretations of the data. However, I do recognize that the pre-knowledge also could have tributed in a more negative way, in the sense that my expectations of what furniture flipping is supposed to look like was already predetermined in my mind, due to the various images on this topic that I consumed beforehand. I think that therefore, I could have been unintentionally less open minded towards other viewpoints or experiences of participants towards furniture flipping. The article by Anney (2014) also addresses that emerging yourself into the world of the participant creates a sense of trust. When I talked to the buyers, I indeed think I created a sense of trust, by explaining that I was familiar with the basic principles of flipping furniture, but that I wanted to get to know the reasoning behind certain purchasing decisions in relation to furniture flipping. When looking at the sellers, I deliberately explained that I knew a few basic principles of flipping furniture, but that I wasn't aware of the entire process. I mentioned this, because I wanted the sellers to give me the exact details and steps required to flip furniture,

while creating a comfortable and non-intimidating environment for the sellers to express their experiences and thereby avoid the desirability bias.

Next to this, Anney (2014) also mentions that, in order to increase the credibility of one's research, one must seek out support from professionals who are willing to provide scholarly guidance. In this research, I used peer debriefing by receiving advice, guidance and critical notes from my supervisor which improved the quality of my findings.

Another point to consider is data triangulation, in which the research used a variety of methods, sources, techniques and theories to gather supportive evidence for the findings, in order to reduce systematic bias and checks the integrity of the collected data. Anney (2014) speaks of four main triangulation techniques: investigator triangulation, data triangulation, informants triangulation and methodological triangulation. In this research the criteria of investor triangulation, informants triangulation and methodological triangulation were met. Thereby meeting the required 2 forms of triangulation needed for a research to be considered credible, according to the paper by Anney (2014).

For investor triangulation, the research must use a variety of researchers when conducting the research. This criteria was partially met, due to the regular involvement of my supervisor, who regularly checked my methods, theories, findings and outcomes in relation to the topic of furniture flipping. Furthermore, two different post university graduates reviewed my research and gave feedback on my theory, methods, findings and conclusion, which strengthen the integrity of this research's findings. Furthermore, this study also met the requirements of the informants triangulation, in which various informants with the purpose of getting higher quality data due to obtaining information from various sources. To get a well-rounded picture of the process of furniture flipping, I interviewed both sellers as well as buyers of flipped furniture. The information on the process and motivations for furniture flipping coming from various sources resulted in a wider viewpoint through which furniture flipping is perceived. Next to this, the requirements for methodological triangulation were also met, which requires the research to use different research methods. This research used both a literature review, in which theories from various sociologists and studies were addressed, as well as conducting interviews. One of the final possible criterias for triangulation was data triangulation, in which various sources of data or research instruments are used. In this research, only interviews were used as a research instrument, thereby not meeting the criteria of data triangulation.



Furthermore, Anney (2014) also names member checks in order to increase the quality of qualitative data. In this strategy, the analyzed and interpreted data should be send back to the participants so they can check if there were any misinterpretations. Unfortunately, due to time limitations, I was not able to conform to this strategy. I understand that this has negative consequences for the trustworthiness of my interpreted data, since my personal interpretations as a researcher could differ from the accurate representation of the initially collected data.

Lastly, it must be mentioned that in this research, I tried to explore multiple concepts that were related to various topics (gentrification, consumer behaviour, mapping out processes). I am aware that because of this, there might have been some concepts that I could not research in further detail, due to the time limitations that occurred as a result of exploring multiple concepts. Because of this, the credibility of my research could have been compromised, as I couldn't go fully in depth in the interviews about certain concepts (such as the underlying reason for the buyers' motivations to purchase flipped furniture).

### **5.1.3 Transferability**

Another strategy to check whether a research is executed in a trustworthy way is the transferability of a research. With transferability, there is looked at how well a research can be generalized into different contexts or a different selection of participants (Anney, 2014). When assessing the transferability of a research, one of the criteria to check for is the thick description. In a thick description, the details surrounding the methodology and context should be detailed and extensive. This is done in order to be able to indicate how the research can be generalized into different contexts. In this research, I wrote an extensive methodology which included a detailed step by step analysis plan based on the article of Brown and Clarke (2006). This was especially important, since this study follows an exploratory approach in which there was no pre-existing scientific literature on the topic of furniture flipping. Next to this, I explained how the process of retrieving the participants looked like and what additional steps I would take when the initial strategy proved to be more difficult. Furthermore, I added a positionality section to explain my personal viewpoints on the topic.

Next to providing thick description, the use of theoretical/purposive sampling is used to check the transferability of a research. Purpose sampling is described as selecting participants with specific characteristics or purposes that are needed in order to answer the research question to

maximize the insightful and valuable information retrieved from participants. In my research, I used purposeful sampling with both the sellers as well as the buyers from flipped furniture. The participants were selected based on a few criteria. The sellers had to have experience with commercially selling flipped furniture. The buyers had to have experience with purchasing at least one furniture item from a furniture flipper (seller). In a more ideal situation, I would have had buyers that purchased more than 3 flipped items from a seller, to purposely target buyers that specifically purchased flipped furniture and rule out any accidental occasions in which they happened to purchase a flipped furniture item. Next to this, by selecting buyers that bought flipped furniture multiple times, I would have been able to reflect how this could further link to their lifestyles, as a lifestyle is formed by a repeated set of (purchasing) actions. Furthermore, it would have been more beneficial to the results of this research if the sample size was bigger for both the sellers and the buyers. However, due to time restrictions, it was not possible to find and interview more respondents. To add to this, it was difficult to find buyers for the interviews, due to the privacy regulations the sellers had to adhere to. Because of the Dutch regulation on personal data, sellers were no longer allowed to contact their customers for any other matters related to their business. Therefore, I was not able to contact customers of sellers, which made my search for participants (the buyers) extremely difficult and cost me a lot of time.

#### **5.1.4 Dependability**

Next to Credibility and Transferability, dependability is another way to check the research for its level of trustworthiness. According to Anney (2006), Dependability is referring to the stability of your findings over time. When assessing the dependability of a research, one of the criteria to check is to have an audit trial. In an audit trial, the research process and outcomes are fully examined by another researcher. The research documents of the interview transcriptions, interview recordings as well as observational notes and documents from the interviews are then cross-examined and checked for any unexplainable changes. Within this thesis, the collected transcripts, notes, and documents were all examined by both evaluators. However, for privacy reasons, the collected transcripts, notes, and documents could not be attached to the appendix and were only shared with the examiners of this thesis.

Next to the audit trial, the stepwise replication is used to increase the dependability of this research. With a stepwise replication, the data is evaluated and compared by two separate researchers to see if there are any irregularities (Anney, 2014). In my study, I did not use an independent researcher that also evaluated and compared my data. However, I did receive

weekly counselling from my supervisor, in which she also read my documents and delivered critical comments on my research process, method and findings. Even though this is not quite the same as having an independent researcher checking every aspect of my collected data and processing methods, I do think this supervision forced me to think critically about my data and my analyzing process.

Another strategy to consider is the code-recode strategy, in which the data is coded twice while having a 2 week break between the two coding sessions, after which the two coding sessions are compared with one another. The idea is that the two-week waiting period helps to provide a deeper understanding of the patterns of the data as well as the participants narrations (Anney, 2014). In this thesis, I did not code the same data twice. The main reason for this was because I simply did not have the time to code all of my data a second time. However, I did take a second look at the codes when addressing the result section. When I started to select suitable quotes for the result section, I sometimes found a quote to be more or also fitting of a different theme, thereby also briefly going over my codes again.

Lastly, another strategy to increase the dependability of the research is to use peer examination/peer debriefing. With peer examination or peer debriefing, the research process and findings are discussed with other peers that are familiar with qualitative research (Anney, 2014). In this research, I did not officially ask two peer-colleagues to review my research. However, I did ask two post-graduates to examine and review my thesis and give critical feedback. Their critical feedback comments, alongside with the critical notes of my supervisor, have helped me to see my research through a critical lens and therefore helped my research to be more dependable.

### **5.1.5 Confirmability**

The last strategy to check the research for trustworthiness is to explain the confirmability of this research. Confirmability refers to the degree to which other researchers can validate the results of a research. It checks whether the outcomes of the research are not based on (mis)interpretations of the researcher, but rather a one-on-one observation from the raw data (Anney, 2014). Furthermore, a reflexive journal is used as a strategy to increase the confirmability of a research. In a reflexive journal, there are a collection of reflexive documents that are held by the researcher to eventually cross check the data and the final study report. In

my thesis, I did not actively keep up with a reflexive journal due to time limitations. This decision could have influenced the confirmability of this research, as I was not able to cross-reference my data in my final study report.

Next to the reflexive journal, the research can be assessed for its integrity in order to increase its confirmability. When assessing a research for its integrity, the researcher must be aware of false information by adopting a critical attitude towards information that might be false. In this research, I tried to limit false information by creating an environment of trust in which the participants felt safe to explain their opinions and through processes. I tried to do this by avoiding judgmental comments, having an open body language, sharing my confidentiality statement and often nodding in understanding when the participants answered my questions. I think that making the participants comfortable was needed to create a space for them to safely open up about their experiences and thereby obtaining trustworthy answers. Next to this, I also think that my open body language and sympathy nodding stopped them from merely giving answers based on what I wanted to hear, instead of sharing their own experiences. When conducting the interviews, I did not get the feeling that the participants responded untruthfully on my questions. However, I did sometimes observe that they were prone to subconsciously fall for their own cognitive bias when they contradicted their own answers a few questions later. I did not get the idea that this was intentional, but rather subconsciously. I did not know most of my participants, therefore it could be a possibility that they did not tell the full experience or story to me, as I was a stranger to them. So even though I did my best to make them comfortable, it could still be of influence that they withheld information because they did not know me.

### **5.1.6 Recommendations for further research**

Based on the findings of this research, there are a few recommendations that can be made for future research on furniture flipping.

First of all, the limitations of this research indicated that it was not possible to go more in depth into the underlying reasons for the motivations of buyers to purchase flipped furniture, due to time restrictions. Future research could therefore focus on the underlying motivations of buyers to purchase flipped furniture, by using the laddering technique in in-depth interviews. With the laddering technique, the researcher is able to go more in depth and get a more comprehensive

understanding of the drivers of consumer decision making (Reynolds & Phillips, 2010). Understanding the underlying motivations of buyers to purchase flipped furniture, can provide a more comprehensive understanding of its relation to lifestyle and identity. Furthermore, it was also addressed in the limitations how the small scale of this research could have impacted the transferability of this research. Considering this, future research could therefore use a bigger group of participants to perform qualitative interviews using the laddering technique to increase the transferability as well as getting more consistent results on the underlying motivations for buyers to purchase flipped furniture.

Furthermore, future research could go into the influence of social media on gentrified practices of consumption. The results indicated that almost all of the buyers of flipped furniture stumbled upon sellers of flipped furniture due to social media exposure. Therefore, the exposure of new and different concepts to potential consumers due to social media could contribute to the way in which gentrifiers are able to seek for distinctive and unique concepts to engage in. Through using a large scale quantitative survey, it would be possible to obtain information on how media usage, use of platforms and exposure to new concepts could contribute to the ease in which gentrifiers can search for new and unique experiences.

Next to this, the discussion section mentioned how more research can be done on the experiences of lower income households when purchasing secondhand furniture items. As of right now, there were no concrete conclusions on whether gentrification takes place in secondhand stores or online secondhand platforms as a result of furniture flipping. Therefore, with future research and in-depth interviews, it would be possible to get a more comprehensive understanding of the possible gentrified practices in thrift stores as a result of furniture flipping.

Finally, the discussion mentioned how this current research approached the furniture flipping process from a perspective of gentrification, and that approaching the furniture flipping process from a different perspective (economical, environmental), could shed more light on the overall societal implications of furniture flipping. Therefore, future research could focus on viewing the furniture flipping process from a more economical or environmental perspective, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of this growing concept on a social, environmental or economical level.

## References

- Anney, V. N. (2014). Ensuring the quality of the findings of qualitative research: looking at trustworthiness criteria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies (JETERAPS)*, 5, 272-281.
- Barker, A. (2021). Ultimate Guide to Flipping Furniture for Beginners. *Logical Dollar*. <https://logicaldollar.com/flipping-furniture/>
- Belk, R. W. (1988). Possessions and the Extended Self. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15(2), 139. doi:10.1086/209154
- Borusiak, B., Szymkowiak, A., Horska, E., Raszka, N., & Żelichowska, E. (2020). Towards Building Sustainable Consumption: A Study of Second-Hand Buying Intentions. *Sustainability*, 12(3), 875. doi:10.3390/su12030875
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp063oa
- Bridge, G., & Dowling, R. (2001). Microgeographies of Retailing and Gentrification. *Australian Geographer*, 32(1), 93–107. doi:10.1080/0004918002003625
- Byers, T., & Slack, T. (2001). Strategic Decision-Making in Small Businesses Within The Leisure Industry. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 33(2), 121–136. doi:10.1080/00222216.2001.1194
- Chapple, K. & Loukaitou-Sideris, A. (2019). Transit-Oriented Displacement or Community Dividends? Understanding the Effects of Smarter Growth on Communities. *Cambridge: The MIT Press*.
- Create and Find (2022). The Best Secrets to Flipping Furniture For Profit. Retrieved from: <https://www.createandfind.com/flipping-furniture/>

Cunningham, R. (2022). The complete guide to flipping furniture. *That Sweet Tea Life*. Retrieved from: <https://www.thatsteetealife.com/flipping-furniture/>

Douglas, M. & Isherwood, B. C., (1979). *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption*. Allen Lane.

Finio, N. (2021). Measurement and definition of gentrification in urban studies and planning. *Sage Journals*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08854122211051603>

Forrest (2022). Complete Guide To Flipping Furniture [June 2022]. *Don't work another day.com*. Retrieved from: <https://www.dontworkanotherday.com/guide-to-flipping-furniture>

Serman, Z. & Sims, J. (2020). How social media influencers affect consumers purchase habit?. *UK Academy for Information Systems*. Retrieved from: <https://aisel.aisnet.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1009&context=ukais2020>

Guiot, D. & Roux, D. (2010). A Secondhand Shoppers' Motivation Scale: Antecedents, Consequences, and Implications for retailers. *Journal of retailing* 86 (4) 355-371.

Hearn, A. (2008). “‘Meat, Mask, Burden’: Probing the Contours of the Branded ‘Self’.” *Journal of Consumer Culture* 8(2): 197–217.

Ilkucan, A. & Sandikci, Ö., (2005). Gentrification and consumption: An exploratory study. Retrieved from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/307606247\\_Gentrification\\_and\\_Consumption\\_An\\_Exploratory\\_Study](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/307606247_Gentrification_and_Consumption_An_Exploratory_Study)

Jackson, P. & Thrift, N. (1995) ‘Geographies of consumption’, in Miller, D. (ed.) *Acknowledging consumption*, Routledge, London, pp. 204–37

Jansen, E. (n.d.). Generatie X, Y of toch een Xennial? *SamenSlim*. Retrieved from: <https://www.driessen.nl/samenslim/generatie-x-y-of-een-xennial/>

Ley, D. (1996) *The new middle class and the remaking of the inner city*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Ma, C. & Riggio, G. (2021). An Examination of the Effects on Low-Income Communities by the “Takeover” of Thrift Store Clothing by Resellers. *Journal of Student Research*. Volume 10, Issue 2. Retrieved from: <https://www.jsr.org/hs/index.php/path/article/view/1784/781>

Mills, C. (1988) '“Life on the upslope”': the postmodern landscape of gentrification', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 6, pp. 169–89.

Park, H., Kwon, T. A., Zaman, Md M & Song, S. Y., (2020). Thrift shopping for clothes: To treat self or others? *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, 11:1, 56-70, DOI: 10.1080/20932685.2019.1684831. Retrieved from: <https://logicaldollar.com/flipping-furniture/#:~:text=Flipping%20furniture%20refers%20to%20taking,the%20road%20that%20nobody%20wants>

Reynolds, T. J., & Phillips, J. M. (2010). A Review and Comparative Analysis of Laddering Research Methods. *Review of Marketing Research*, 130–174. doi:10.1108/s1548-6435(2008)0000005010

Ronobir, JK R., Barry, M., Curran, R., Kaushal, A. & Yazdani, R. (2020). *The socioeconomic causes and effects of the gentrified thrifting experience*. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3983108>

Roy, A. (2019). Rise of Thrifting: Solution to Fast Fashion or Stealing from the Poor? *Berkeley Economic Review*. Retrieved from: <https://econreview.berkeley.edu/rise-of-thrifting-solution-to-fast-fashion-or-stealing-from-the-poor/>

Staley, W. (2018). When ‘Gentrification’ Isn’t About Housing. *The New York Times Magazine*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/23/magazine/when-gentrification-isnt-about-housing.html>



Williams, C. C., & Paddock, C. (2003). The meanings of informal and second-hand retail channels: some evidence from Leicester. *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, 13(3), 317–336. doi:10.1080/0959396032000101372

Zukin, S. (1990) 'Socio-spatial prototypes of a new organization of consumption: the role of real cultural capital', *Sociology* 24, pp. 37–56.

Zukin, S. (2004). *Point of Purchase: How Shopping Changed American Culture*. New York: Routledge.

# Appendix

## Interview guide – Sellers Dutch

Hallo! Even om te checken, mag ik dit interview opnemen voor mijzelf, zodat ik het achteraf makkelijker kan analyseren en uittypen? Bedankt dat je mee wilt doen aan dit interview! In mijn interview ga ik voornamelijk vragen stellen over je persoonlijke ervaringen met het pimpen van meubels. Met pimpen bedoel ik bestaande meubels die zijn opgeknapt door bijvoorbeeld ze te verven, restaureren of elementen eraan toe te voegen (denk bij elementen aan bijvoorbeeld andere hendels, behang oid). Ik weet zelf alleen de basis van pimpen, en wil echt met deze interviews meer te weten komen over het pimpen van meubels en waar de interesses van mensen hierin liggen.

### I: Persoonlijke ervaringen met het pimpen van meubels

1. Hoelang pimp je al meubels?
  - a. Waarom ben je meubels gaan pimpen?
  - b. Heb je deze meubels ook altijd commercieel verkocht?
  - c. Wanneer ging je het commercieel verkopen?
  - d. Waarom knap je meubels op voor de verkoop?
  - e. Waar komt deze drive vandaan?
  - f. Waarom vind je meubels pimpen leuk en wat vind je het allerleukste aan dit vak?
  - g. Is dit je hoofdzaak? Of doe je dit naast je werk?
2. Hoe vaak heb je meubels gepimt?
  1. Hoeveel meubels heb je dan gepimt?
  2. Hoe ben je op het idee gekomen om meubelstukken te pimpen?
  3. Heb je al eens iets zo mooi gepimt dat je dat meubelstuk voor jezelf hebt gehouden?

### II: Herkomst van Meubelstukken

4. Waar ga je zoeken naar deze meubels? Is dat online of fysiek of via iets anders?
  - a. Wat heeft voor jou de voorkeur?
  - b. Duurt het lang voordat je een meubelstuk hebt gevonden? Hoelang duurt dat ongeveer?
5. Heb je ooit in tweedehands winkels gezocht naar meubelstukken om te pimpen?
  - a. Waarom?
  - b. Merk je een verandering van de prijs van meubelstukken in de afgelopen jaren?
  - c. Waardoor komt dit denk je?

### III: het proces van meubels pimpen

6. Waar let je dan op wanneer je gaat zoeken naar een meubelstuk om te pimpen?
  - a. Ga je dan op zoek naar iets heel specifiek?
  - b. Heb je dan een bepaalde uitkomst voor ogen/ wat is je doel?
  - c. Zitten er bepaalde eisen aan wanneer je op zoek bent naar een meubelstuk?
7. Kun je het proces van het pimpen van meubels beschrijven en hoe dit proces bijdraagt aan het eindresultaat/ welke stappen doorloop je om een meubelstuk te pimpen?
8. Pimp je voornamelijk in je eigen persoonlijke interieur stijl?

- a. Hoe zou je je interieur stijl omschrijven
  - b. Op welke manier past dit bij jouw wanneer je meubels pimpt?
9. Ben je altijd tevreden met het eindresultaat?
10. Ben u uitdagingen tegengekomen wanneer u meubels ging pimpen en zo ja, welke uitdagingen waren dit en hoe heeft u deze aangepakt?
11. Zijn er meubelstukken die lastiger verkopen dan andere? Zo ja, welke?
- a. Waardoor komt dit denk je?
  - b. Welke gepimpte artikelen worden het meest verkocht?
12. Werk je weleens in opdracht? Dus dat mensen van tevoren met een meubelstuk aan komen zetten en dat jij dat in opdracht moet pimpen?
13. Wanneer is een project in jouw ogen voltooid?
14. Voel je je voldaan na het voltooiën van een project?

#### **IV: Marktwerking**

15. Waarom denk jij dat mensen gepimpte meubels willen kopen?
- a. Waar zit de aantrekkingskracht van gepimpte meubels?
16. Hoe onderscheid je je ten opzichte van andere verkopers van tweedehands gepimpte meubels?
17. Merk je dat de hoeveelheid vraag naar je artikelen in de laatste jaren is veranderd?
- a. Wat zijn deze veranderingen?
  - b. Hoe komt dit? Waarom?

## **Interview guide – Sellers English**

Just to check, can I record this interview for myself, so that I can analyse and type it out more easily afterwards? Thank you for participating in this interview. In my interview I will mainly ask questions about your personal experiences with producing flipped furniture. With flipped furniture is meant that existing furniture has been refurbished by, for example, painting it, restoring it or adding elements to it. I only know the basic principles of furniture flipping and I want to know more about its processes and why people want to produce it. Shall we begin?

### **I. Personal experiences with flipping furniture**

1. For how long have you been flipping furniture?
2. Why did you start flipping furniture?
3. Was it always your intention to sell your flipped furniture?
4. When did you start commercially selling the flipped furniture pieces you made?
5. Why do you flip furniture?
6. Where does this drive come from?
7. Why do you like to flip furniture and what is the thing you like the most about this profession?
8. Is this your main job, or do you do this alongside work?
9. How many furniture pieces have you flipped?
10. How did you come up with the idea of furniture flipping?
11. Have you ever flipped something so amazing that you wanted to keep it yourself?

### **ii. Origin of furniture**

1. Where do you search for secondhand furniture?
2. What has your preference?
3. How long will it take before you have found a suitable secondhand furniture piece?
4. Have you ever visited secondhand stores to purchase furniture pieces for furniture flipping?
  - i. Why?
  - ii. Do you notice a difference in price of secondhand furniture items compared to a few years ago?
  - iii. Why do you think this is the case?

### **iii. The process of flipping furniture**

1. What are your points of attention when looking for a secondhand furniture piece?
2. Do you pay attention to specific things?
3. Do you have a certain outcome in mind?
4. Are there certain requirements when you are looking for a piece of furniture?
5. Can you describe the process you go through when flipping furniture?
6. Do you mainly flip in your own personal style?
  - i. How would you describe your interior style?
  - ii. Does this reflect you in some sort of way?
7. Are you always satisfied with the end result?
8. Have you encountered challenges when flipping furniture and if so, what were the challenges and how did you tackle them?
9. Are there pieces of furniture that are harder to sell than others?
  - i. Why do you think this could be the case?

- ii. What kind of flipped furniture items sell well?
10. Do you ever work on assignment for customers?
  11. When is a flipping project completed in your eyes?
  12. Do you feel accomplished after completing a project?

**iv. Market forces**

1. Why do you think that people want to buy flipped furniture?
2. What makes flipped furniture appealing?
3. How do you distinguish yourself from other sellers that sell secondhand furniture?
4. Have you noticed a change in demand for flipped furniture items over the past few years?
  - i. If so, why?

## **Interview guide – Buyers Dutch**

Hallo! Even om te checken, mag ik dit interview opnemen voor mijzelf, zodat ik het achteraf makkelijker kan analyseren en uittypen? Bedankt dat je mee wilt doen aan dit interview! In mijn interview ga ik voornamelijk vragen stellen over je persoonlijke ervaringen met het kopen van gepimpte meubels. Met pimpen bedoel ik bestaande meubels die zijn opgeknapt door bijvoorbeeld ze te verven, restaureren of elementen eraan toe te voegen (denk bij elementen aan bijvoorbeeld andere hendels, behang oid). Ik weet zelf alleen de basis van pimpen, en wil echt met deze interviews meer te weten komen over het pimpen van meubels en waar de interesses van mensen hierin liggen.

### **I: Persoonlijke ervaringen met het kopen van gepimpte meubels**

1. Hoe vaak heb je gepimpte meubels gekocht?
  - a. Hoeveel gepimpte meubels heb je dan gekocht?
  - b. Hoe ben je op het idee gekomen om gepimpte meubelstukken te kopen?
2. Waar let je dan op wanneer je gaat zoeken naar een (gepimpt) meubelstuk?
  - a. Ga je dan op zoek naar iets heel specifiek?
  - b. Heb je dan een bepaalde uitkomst voor ogen/ wat is je doel?
  - c. Zitten er bepaalde eisen aan wanneer je op zoek bent naar een meubelstuk?
3. Waar ga je zoeken naar deze meubels? Is dat online of fysiek of via iets anders?
  - a. Wat heeft voor jou de voorkeur?
  - b. Duurt het lang voordat je
4. Kun je de vorige keer dat je een gepimpt meubelstuk hebt gekocht nog herinneren?
  - a. Wat voor een meubelstuk was dit? Kun je hem omschrijven?
  - b. Weet je nog waar je hem hebt gekocht?
  - c. Waarom heb je dit gepimpte meubelstuk in die winkel gekocht?
5. Wat zijn voor jou de redenen om gepimpte meubelstukken te kopen?
  - a. [Doorvragen met vragen zoals, is dit belangrijk voor je/waarom?/kun je dat wellicht uitleggen/ Identificeer je jezelf hiermee?]
6. Wanneer we het hebben over een gepimpt meubelstuk, welke elementen aan dit meubelstuk vind je vaak aantrekkelijk.
  - a. Waarom?
7. Wat is voor jou de afweging tussen het kopen van nieuwe meubelstukken of van gepimpte meubelstukken?
8. Wanneer je de keuze zou hebben tussen een geflipte kast of diezelfde kast nieuw, waar zou je dan voor kiezen (ervan uitgaand dat de prijzen gelijk zijn)?
  - a. Waarom?
9. Denk je dat de markt voor gepimpte meubels in de afgelopen tijd is geëvolueerd?
  - a. Welke trends zie je vooral opkomen?
  - b. Vind je dat leuk om mee te gaan met deze trends?
  - c. Wat vind je er van wanneer jouw persoonlijke stijl ineens weer trendy wordt onder consumenten?
10. Zijn volgens jou gepimpte meubelstukken goedkoper?

### **II: Interieur en identiteit**

11. Zijn de gepimpte meubels die je koopt samenhangend met de meubels die bij jou al in huis staan?
  - a. Vind je het belangrijk dat je meubels passen binnen je bestaande interieur?
  - b. Hoe zou je je interieur stijl omschrijven?
    - i. Waarom heb je voor deze stijl gekozen?
    - ii. Was dit altijd al je persoonlijke stijl?

1. Zoek je gericht meubels die bij je persoonlijke stijl aansluiten?
2. Hoe belangrijk is het voor jou dat meubels aansluiten bij je persoonlijke stijl
- iii. Hou zou je jezelf omschrijven?
- iv. Weerspiegelt het interieur je persoonlijkheid of je interesses?
- v. Denk je dat door het kopen van gepimpte meubels dit dan bijdraagt aan je interieur?
- vi. Zegt zo'n meubelstuk dan ook iets over jou als persoon?
- vii. Vind je dat zo'n meubelstuk dan weerspiegelt wie je bent of welke interesses je hebt?
- viii. Is dit belangrijk voor je?
- c. Wissel je ooit wel eens van interieur stijl? Of heb je ooit van interieur stijl gewisseld?
  - i. Koop je dan andere meubels? Zijn deze dan gepimt?
- d. Is het moeilijk om jouw interieur stijl te vinden onder gepimpte meubels?
  - i. Waarom denk je dat?

### **III Marktwerking**

12. Merk je een verschil in prijs in tweedehands spullen en meubels in de laatste jaren?
  - a. Waardoor komt dit verschil in prijs denk je?
13. Wat vind je ervan dat meubel pimpers goedkoop meubels kopen en dan met winst verkopen?

### **IV: Do it yourself**

14. Zou je zelf meubels pimpen?
  - a. Waarom wel/niet
  - b. Wat zijn de redenen waarom je zelf geen meubels pimt?

## **Interview guide – Buyers English**

Just to check, can I record this interview for myself, so that I can analyse and type it out more easily afterwards? Thank you for participating in this interview. In my interview I will mainly ask questions about your personal experiences with purchasing flipped furniture. With flipped furniture is meant that existing furniture has been refurbished by, for example, painting it, restoring it or adding elements to it. I only know the basic principles of furniture flipping and I want to know more about its processes and why people want to produce it. Shall we begin?

### **I. Personal experiences with purchasing flipped furniture**

1. How many times have you purchased flipped furniture?
  - i. How many pieces of flipped furniture did you buy?
  - ii. How did you get the idea to purchase flipped furniture?
2. What are your points of attention when you start to look for a flipped furniture piece?
  - i. Are you looking for something very specific?
  - ii. Do you have a certain goal in mind?
  - iii. Do you have certain requirements when you are looking for flipped furniture?
3. Where do you find flipped furniture?
  - i. What do you prefer?
  - ii. Does it take you long to find a suitable flipped furniture piece?
4. Can you remember the last time you bought a flipped furniture piece?
  - i. What kind of flipped furniture item was this?
  - ii. Do you remember where you bought it?
  - iii. Why did you buy this flipped furniture piece from that seller?
5. What are the reasons for you to purchase flipped furniture?
  - i. Why is this important to you?
6. What do you find attractive about flipped furniture pieces?
7. Why would you purchase flipped furniture instead of new furniture?
8. If one were to assume that the prices of new furniture and flipped furniture were the same, which one would you pick and why?
9. Do you notice a change in market demand for flipped furniture in the recent years?
  - i. Do you see certain trends emerging?
  - ii. Do you like to participate in trends?
  - iii. How would you feel when your personal style would suddenly become popular?
10. Do you perceive flipped furniture to be cheaper than new furniture? Why?

### **II. Interior and Identity**

- I. Is the flipped furniture you buy consistent with the furniture you already have at home?
- II. How important is it for you that your flipped furniture fits in with the rest of your interior?
- III. How would you describe your interior style?
  - i. Why did you choose this style?
  - ii. Has this always been your personal style?
- IV. Do you purposely look for furniture that matches your personal style?
  - i. Is this important to you?
  - ii. How would you describe yourself?
  - iii. Does your interior reflect your personality or your interests?
  - iv. Do you think that purchasing flipped furniture contributes to your interior?
  - v. What does a furniture piece say about you as a person?



- vi. Do you think that a furniture item could reflect who you are and what your interests are? How?
- vii. Is this important to you?
- v. Do you ever change your interior style?
  - i. Does this affect your purchase intentions for flipped furniture?
  - ii. Is it difficult to find your interior style among flipped furniture items?
  - iii. Why do you think this is the case?

### **III. Market forces**

- II. Do you notice a difference in price in secondhand items and furniture in recent years?
- III. Did you notice anything about the price?
  - ii. How do you feel about furniture flippers buying secondhand furniture items and selling them for a profit?

### **IV. Do it Yourself**

- I. Would you flip your own furniture?
  - iii. Why?/ why not?
  - iv. What are the reasons why you don't flip furniture yourself?