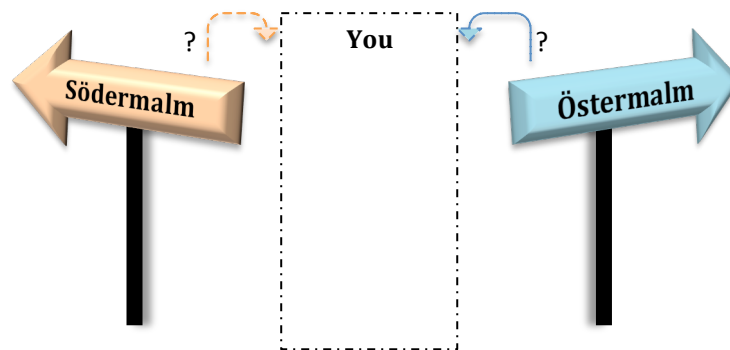


Bar Symbolism

- Do you know how your bar choice affects others' impressions of you?



ABSTRACT:

It is well known that our consumption, especially material such, influences our personal images. Less is known about how our service choices impact on others' impressions. Even less is known about what others think of us when one of our consumption choices is incongruent to the remaining, stereotypical choices. Despite knowing that places can possess communicative power, the consequences of a person's bar choice previously remained unstudied. The aim of this quantitative study was to outline if and how a person's bar choice influences the impression of the person. Six experiment groups were acquainted with an imaginary stranger choosing her clothing, beverage and holiday destination according to either the Södermalm or Östermalm stereotype. In two cases, no bar choice was added; in two cases a congruent bar and in the remaining two cases counter-stereotypical bar choices were added to the remaining consumption choices. The findings suggest that a person's bar choice has a medium impact on the observer's interest in her, attitude towards her as well as the intentions to speak more to her and to get to know her better. Along with the bar choice, the impressions of the consumer are also highly influenced by the similarity between the consumer and the respondent as perceived by the respondent. No direct place attitude transfer takes place. Moreover, the results indicate that the place has the power to, yet must not, significantly increase the interest in the stimulus person as well as the intention to speak more. While the Östermalm consumer groups differed significantly, no significant impression changes were found when studying the Södermalm consumer groups. This study contributes to the fields of incongruent communication, symbolic consumption, place identification as well as stereotype research. It is argued that our bar choice has a significant impact on others' impressions of us, which can, but does not automatically imply significant impression changes in line with bar preference changes. Implications and future research are suggested.

Key words: Self-Branding, Incongruent Consumption, Place, Bar, Stereotype, Congruence, Perception, Impression Formation, Södermalm, Östermalm, Stockholm, Service Choice Branding.

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APPENDIX: Surveys

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Sist men inte minst: Tack Handels!*

1. INTRODUCTION

"That gym outfit you're wearing -- one look at the distinctive swoosh on the side tells everyone who's got you branded [=Nike]. That coffee cup you're carrying -- ah, you're a Starbucks woman! Your T-shirt with the distinctive Champion "C" on the sleeve, the blue jeans with the prominent Levi's rivets, the watch with the "look-at-me-I-made-it" icon on the face, your fountain pen with the maker's symbol crafted into the end... You're branded, branded, branded, branded" (Peters, 1997).

1.1 Background

We all constantly shape our own, personal brands. Peters (1997) refers to ourselves as the CEOs of our own companies (Me Inc.) and head marketers for our own personal brands. Some people, or human brands, may be more well known than others (e.g. Madonna vs. myself), but regardless of the extent to which we are recognized, we all constantly work on influencing the impression we want others to have of ourselves. To our help we have our consumption. By consuming certain brands, the product brand's image may be transferred onto our person. Branding ourselves through consumption can be seen as a part of the consumer process; namely product usage. More marketing research focuses on purchase intentions and consumer motivations rather than the actual effects of consumption.

As I went to a bookstore looking for books on self-branding or impression formation caused by consumption, I recognized that the topic is not clear-cut. The marketing section would offer traditional branding strategy literature, mostly focusing on brands of a product or company. One such example was the concept of "brand personality" (e.g. Aaker, 1997), which should be recognized by any marketer. The psychology aisle, in contrast, provided information about impression formation, what makes us like or dislike other people and that others do in fact judge us based on our consumption. Also findings related to self-congruence, meaning that we consume in line with how we see ourselves, may be extracted from social psychology. Lastly, the management aisle suggested books on self-branding for recruiting purposes; how to "brand" ourselves in order to get a good job.

I was surprised about the complexity in research attached to what I had always thought of a main driver behind consumer choices; namely what the *usage* of a certain set of brands actually means to us and communicates to others.

1.2 Conceptual Framework & Problem Area

The field of "symbolic consumption" lets psychology and marketing meet. Scholars agree on that we express ourselves through consumption (e.g. Aaker, 1999; Belk et al. 1982; Dittmar, 1992; Kassarian, 1971; Sirgy, 1982;) and that our possessions serve as symbols for ourselves and

others in social contexts (e.g. Belk, 1988; Dolich, 1969; Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967; Kassarian 1971; Maehle & Shneor, 2010; Solomon, 1983). Studies have measured the impact on impressions caused by for example the consumption choices of cars, eyeglasses, alcoholic beverages, cosmetics, deodorants, food choices, clothing, style of residence, home furniture, decoration, leisure products, vacations, magazines, transportation, luggage, headache remedies, vitamins, mouthwash, chewing gum or sporting equipment (Belk et al., 1982; Evans, 1959; Foxall & Goldsmith, 1994; Christopher & Schlenker, 2000). The majority of studies have tested the effects caused by the usage of material possessions. Less studied is the field of impression formation due to service choices; and specifically: the effects of the consumption choice of a bar, which to my knowledge remains unstudied.

Very few studies (e.g. Christopher & Schlenker, 2000) have taken the fact into account that we do not only consume one brand at a time. Although exploring the communicative impact of wearing Gucci sunglasses compared to Nike sunglasses may be interesting, reality proposes a more multidimensional picture. In reality, instead of consuming only one brand or product (only sunglasses) at the time, we consume a set of products and services. Therefore, the need for studies taking this realistic point of view into account is high.

When receiving multiple cues from a stranger at the same time, our brain employs specific heuristics that help us to process and sort information. One such heuristic is stereotyping. Thus, if the person wearing Gucci sunglasses also wears for example a Lacoste shirt, a Louis Vuitton bag and Prada shoes (all brands are luxurious and match the observer's schemata), it could be expected that the categorization process and a stereotype judgment is facilitated.

At the same time, in the past years, scholars at Stockholm School of Economics have found that incongruent marketing strategies, challenging consistency, have amongst others resulted in higher consumer interest of the brand, improved purchase intentions as well as increased brand attitudes (Törn, 2009, p. 30). For example, Dahlén & Törn (2008) showed that placing ads in a medium which does not traditionally match to the ad (e.g. a cosmetics ad in a hiking magazine) could increase the ad attitude and increased ad processing, yet resulted in an unchanged brand attitude.

Combining the field of self-branding through consumption and stereotyping with incongruence resulted in the specific study area of this thesis: attitude, interest and intention formation due to (in)congruent consumption. Congruence in this context is defined as predictable, fitting into the observer's schemata and assumptions about a person based on an additional given set of stereotypical consumption choices. The consumption choice that will be added as either congruent or incongruent is the bar choice. To my help I use the two distinct, in Stockholm well

known stereotypes: the posh “Östermalm”-people and the alternative “Södermalm”-people (a more precise stereotype description is given in section 4).

1.3 Purpose

Besides an attempt to combine marketing knowledge with psychology research and thereby remind marketers of the general importance and meaning of social psychology for consumer research, the main purpose of this study is the following:

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects on 1) overall interest, 2) overall attitude and 3) future intentions towards a stimulus person preferring either no bar, a bar congruent to the remaining consumption cues given, and a bar incongruent to the remaining consumption cues given.

1.4 Delimitations

Due to a limited amount of time and workload available for this thesis, certain limitations needed to be made.

The first step was to identify two among the respondents commonly known stereotypes to be used. This study was conducted in Stockholm, thus, this thesis is limited to the two local and contradicting Stockholm-stereotypes: the “Östermalm”-person and the “Södermalm”-person. The stereotypical consumption choices included in this study concern clothing, choice of beverage, vacation choice and bar choice. Due to the localness of this study, the results are to be handled as a basis for further research rather than as general conclusions.

Secondly, I could only choose one consumption choice to be either congruent or incongruent. I decided to test the impression formed when including either no bar choice, a bar choice congruent to the other consumption choices, or an incongruent bar choice. One reason for this choice was that no previous study had explored the symbolic value of a bar. Further, a bar choice could have a strong impact on the impression of a person as usually a bar choice is made voluntarily. The other consumption choices were held internally congruent and stereotypical.

The third delimitation that was chosen was to focus only on the impressions of a female stimulus person. This decision was motivated by the fact that studying impressions formed towards both genders would have required more resources than available for this thesis. Studies within the field of clothing symbolism (e.g. Holman, 1980) have argued that impression studies shall focus on one of the genders as symbolic consumption differs significantly among the genders. It is unknown whether the same recommendation is applicable on a bar choice.

Lastly, different impressions of people (“human brands”) in varying contexts should be raised. It may be that people attempt to appear differently at work compared to when they are visiting the parents in law. By choosing the consumption choice of a bar as a field of study, assuming that the stimulus likes the bar, only other social context impression formation studies are relevant. This makes literature on for example how to impress at work less relevant and will be disregarded.

1.5 Expected Contributions to Science & Practice

As the reader may have recognized already, this study combines different research fields and therefore also potentially contributes to findings relevant for multiple stakeholders.

- **Bar choice (place) as a consumption choice & means of communication**

As mentioned, scholars have tested the impact on impressions of people based on clothing, luggage, food choice - the list is long. Thus a new consumption type (bar choice) is added to the list of symbolic choices tested. The results further contribute to place communication research.

- **Non-vacuum context of consumption choices**

On contrary to most studies which have only studied the consumption of a single product category and not a “natural” appearance consisting of multiple consumption choices, this thesis contributes to testing the *relative* impact of a bar choices.

- **Incongruent branding of consumers**

Adding on to the research on (in)congruent brand communication, now, incongruence theory is tested focusing on the actual consumer instead of the product or brand.

- **Adding on to the field of attraction theory**

As the tested impressions are closely linked to attraction theory, the results of this thesis could also be placed in the context of the role of bar (place) choices within attraction theory.

- **Extend businesses’ understanding of their end-consumers**

Further, this study may increase the knowledge of stakeholders of bars (e.g. bar owners, suppliers, partners) about their consumers as well as the bar’s impact. The interest in creating a certain bar image could increase or decrease depending on the results of this thesis.

- **The individual consumer**

The Stockholm consumer may note the possible effect on him/her caused by the bar choice.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section shall give the reader an understanding of previous findings relevant for this thesis. First, an introduction of the concept of stereotyping are given. Next, findings from the field of symbolic consumption and the symbolism of a place shall serve as a basis for place as a symbolic indicator. Lastly, previous findings from the field of incongruent communication add on to the understanding of this study.

2.1 Impression Formation & Stereotyping

2.1.1 Impression Formation

It is known that there are two steps when forming an impression about others (Hancock & Dunham, 2001). First, we register the “various forms of direct and indirect information available” (Hancock & Dunham, 2001, p. 325). What Hancock & Dunham refer to as “information” can be classified as physical appearance (Hancock & Dunham, 2001; Huston & Levinger, 1978), (a description of) the target person’s behavior (Hancock & Dunham, 2001; Huston & Levinger, 1978), information regarding personality traits, or speech and language (Hancock & Dunham, 2001). As will be shown later, also our consumption related to other than our physical appearance has proven to be an efficient means of communication.

The second step; as soon as we have perceived the information, is that inferential heuristics¹/categorization strategies are employed which initiate the impression formation process and help us process, assign a label to and judge a vast amount of information (Bitner, 1992; Hancock & Dunham, 2001; Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000). Based on memory and current experiences, our so-called schemata are activated. Schemata are standards in our brains that imply expectancies and help us with the categorization process (Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000; Severin & Tankard, 2001). Schemata can be thought of as analogical thinking. Gick and Holyoak (1983) refer to the essence of analogical thinking as “transfer of knowledge from one situation to another by a process of mapping - finding a set of one-to-one correspondences (often incomplete) between aspects of one body of information and aspects of another” (p. 2).

There are different notions for the heuristics employed during the categorization process. Person memory and schemata development (Hancock & Dunham, 2001) are two examples, mapping (Gick & Holyoak, 1983) is a third. However, what it all comes down to in the end is that they are all instruments to be utilized during the categorization process. Fiske & Neuberg (1990) argue that we do not only use one of these strategies when forming an impression of somebody, but several simultaneously. Regardless of what to call these standards (I will primarily refer to

¹ Heuristics are cognitive strategies which “reduce complex tasks of assessing probabilities and predicting values to simpler judgmental operations” (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974, p. 1224)

schemata), they are all used for structuring information about objects and groups. Categorizing a person into a group is referred to as stereotyping.

2.1.2 Stereotyping

Stereotyping helps us to oversimplify vast quantities of available information about a person by forming categories, concepts and generalizations (Taylor et al., 1978). According to Jussim et al. (1995), stereotyping means being placed in a group. Members of this group possess singular traits, are expected to have a specific physical appearance, behavior, occupations, preferences and values (Jussim et al., 1995). Carter (1962) argued that the homogeneity of an image over time (consistency) that suggests a stereotype. Despite the fact that stereotyping has been criticized for being bad and inaccurate (Jussim et al, 1995; Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000), social cognition research shows over and over again that it appears (Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000). For this thesis the important point is that stereotyping takes place. Therefore, the existence of ethical concerns regarding stereotyping research is noted, yet not discussed further.

In the absence of other information, persons who seem to fit a specific stereotypical group are evaluated as members of this group regardless of how different they may be (Jussim et al. 1995, p. 12). Macrae & Bodenhausen (2000) point out that our neocortical system, responsible for schemata, is highly resistant to modification or change due to a natural need of stability (p. 94). When information has been ambiguous or difficult to detect, studies have shown that observers rely on stereotypes rather than individuating information (Jussim et al., 1995, p. 13). Meanwhile, in the case of clearly contradicting information, it is likely that the deviating information influences the impression formation process more than the stereotype (Jussim et al., p. 13). Previous research claims that contradicting information is usually not ignored (Jussim et al., 1995). If both stereotypic and counter-stereotypic information is given about a person, Macrae & Bodenhausen, (2000) claim that the non-stereotypic information dominates when forming the impression (p. 103).

Consequently, for the bar to potentially have an impact on the impressions formed, previous findings recommend that the used bars should to be counter-stereotypic.

2.2 Attitude & Interest Formation

Once we have placed a person as belonging to a certain stereotype group, it is easier to form certain impressions about the person. Again, based on our schemata, current and previous experience, we create an attitude towards the person. "An attitude is generally understood to refer to a predisposition to respond in a consistent manner to a stimulus, i.e., a tendency to act or

behave in some predictable way” (Foxall & Goldsmith, 1994, p. 93). Attitudes are usually positive or negative, favorable or unfavorable. Attitudes are useful because they help us to acquire and gather useful information and efficiently direct our behavior. Also they make us adapt to our environment so that we may best live and survive, as well as help us to organize a variety of experiences and informational inputs (Foxall & Goldsmith, 1994).

Of high scholarly interest within the field of psychology has been to find out what makes us judge a stranger, and what contributes to us having positive or negative feelings towards a person (Huston & Levinger, 1978). As already explained, stereotyping may help us create our attitude. Yet there are more factors that can influence an attitude either positively or negatively.

- **Physical Attractiveness**

Good-looking people² signal traits such as talent, kindness, honesty and intelligence (Cialdini, 2001) and are more frequently helped than non-good-looking people (Cialdini 2001, Huston & Levinger, 1978). These findings do not differ among men and women (Byrne et al., 1968; Cialdini, 2001). Beautiful people are further seen as more responsible for good deeds and less responsible for bad ones (Huston & Levinger 1978). Also, their evaluations of others have a higher impact, their performances are upgraded, others are more socially responsive towards them as well as more willing to work hard for and please them (Huston & Levinger, 1978). Dion et al. (1972), found attractive individuals of both sexes to be rated as more sexually warm and responsive, interesting, sociable, strong, kind and outgoing. Also they were seen as more likely to attain more prestigious jobs, possessing higher marital competence, be happier socially, professionally and in life in general, as well as being more likely to get married.

- **Perceived Similarity**

We tend to like people who are similar to ourselves (Cialdini, 2001; Huston & Levinger, 1978). One possible parameter of similarity is clothing, others are similar backgrounds or interests (Cialdini, 2001; Huston & Levinger, 1978). Even similarity in names has proven to result in increased liking (Cialdini, 2001). The belief that more positive attitudes are caused by similarity has been challenged when studying group membership (stereotyping) theory. Biernat et al. (1999) emphasize that we, despite a tendency to favor our in-groups, do not generally judge individual members of our in-groups more positively. Instead, group membership information and individual traits contribute to the evaluation.

- **Compliments**

If we learn that somebody fancies us, we tend to like the person back. It has shown that it does not matter whether the flatter is true or false (Cialdini, 2001).

² Studies have defined attractiveness (e.g. depending on the eye distance as suggested in Söderlund (2003)), yet those studies are irrelevant in this thesis.

- **Contact & Cooperation (Familiarity)**

Repeated contact as well as cooperation facilitates liking. Cialdini (2001) gives the example of feelings that are formed among boys belonging to different teams at a boys' camp.

- **Wealth**

Christopher & Schlenker (2000) tested how indications of wealth influenced the perception of a person. 150 college students rated that the affluent person had greater personal abilities associated with success (intelligence, hard-working, organized, self-disciplined), however the person was clearly rated to be less nice than the less affluent counterpart.

When searching for reasons for perceived interest in a person, literature leads back to the topic of attitudes and physical attraction. The studied research did not reveal any information about what shapes our intentions towards other people. A correlation between attitude and intentions could be probable. Intentions will be measured in this study in order to facilitate the comparison of the results with previous incongruence studies. As will be shown in section 4, the abovementioned influencing factors will be taken into account in the experiment.

Marketing scholars are typically interested in consumer attitudes towards brands, products, companies, stores or ads (Foxall & Goldsmith, 1994). As I study the impressions of a person based on consumption choices, next, the communicative power of consumption is reviewed.

2.3. Symbolic Consumption

As earlier mentioned, impressions are based on various forms of direct and indirect information (Hancock & Dunham, 2001). In this context, our consumption is treated as such information.

2.3.1 Employing Symbolic Consumption

Scholars claim that we express and define ourselves through consumption (e.g. Aaker, 1999; Belk et al. 1982; Dittmar, 1992; Kassarian, 1971; Sirgy, 1982;) and that possessions are a part of our extended selves (Belk, 1988; Dittmar, 1992) which we use as symbols for ourselves and others in social contexts (Belk, 1988; Dolich, 1969; Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967; Kassarian 1971; Maehle & Shneor, 2010; Solomon, 1983). Scholars distinguish between our intrinsic motivation of consumption (self-congruence³), and the extrinsic drive for consumption: symbolic consumption (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967). Consumers employ symbolic consumption in order to

³“Self-congruence” means that we consume according to how we see our self (Dittmar, 1992; Foxall & Goldsmith, 1992; Govers & Schoormans, 2005; Malhotra, 1988; Plummer, 1984; Sirgy, 1982). Several “selves” have been identified: our real (how we are/see ourselves), ideal (how we want to be/see ourselves), social (how we are with others) or ideal social self (how we would like to be with others) (Dolich, 1969; Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy, 1985). Plenty of studies confirm that we prefer consuming brands that match with us (e.g. Birdwell, 1968; Beerli et al., 2007; Dolich, 1969; Govers & Schoormans, 2005; Jamal & Goode, 2001) in order to reduce internal dissonance (Foxall & Goldsmith, 1992; Sirgy, 1982).

define relations to others and social reality in general (Dittmar, 1992). Consumer goods are used to communicate a desirable image to others and to make personal characteristics visible (Dittmar, 1992). Material symbols provide meaning (Dittmar, 1992; Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967) and shape our identity (Dittmar, 1992). Our consumption symbolizes the social class⁴ we belong to as well as our social status⁵ (Dittmar, 1992; Solomon, 1983). One way to show advancement in social class and status is through product symbolism (Foxall & Goldsmith, 1994).

2.3.2 Perceiving Symbolic Consumption

In order for symbols to cause the desired reactions from others, others need to see and understand them (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967). People with similar backgrounds interpret symbols similarly (Solomon, 1983). Due to its high symbolism indicating group belongingness and class (Dittmar, 1994; Holman, 1980; Solomon in Holbrook, 1999), clothing is the most heavily researched cue when it comes to non-verbal communication about ourselves (Belk et al. 1982). Fennis & Pruyn (2006) for example showed two groups an almost identical picture of a man. Only the sweatshirt brand was varied in the pictures and the respondents judged the man's competence in line with the degree of competence of the brand he was wearing. Similar conclusions have been drawn from other studies (e.g. Harris et al., 1983; Holman, 1980), confirming Dittmar's claim that clothes serve as the "outer skin of our personality and identity".

Besides clothing, Belk et al. (1982) summarize that scholars have studied impression formation depending on housing, style of residence, home furniture, decoration, various leisure products, magazines we read, luggage or sporting equipment choice. Christopher & Schlenker (2000) name studies that have explored the impact on impressions caused by eyeglasses, alcoholic beverages, cosmetics, deodorants or food choices. Another heavily studied cue is cars (e.g. Evans, 1959). Besides material usage, also the services we choose or actions we make contribute to shaping an impression (Miller et al., 1993). For example, studies have revealed that we are judged depending on retail store patronage, vacation and transportation choice, whether we smoke or not or activities/games choices (Belk et al., 1982; Christopher & Schlenker, 2000).

As I aim to add on to the previous range of studies with my study on the symbolism of a bar preference, the next section will discuss previous findings related to places serving as symbols. I am not aware of any previous study focusing on a bar, which requires a broad definition of place.

⁴ Refers to "a division of society based on objective economic criteria" (Foxall & Goldsmith, p. 209).

⁵ Also called social honor (Solomon in Holbrook, 1999) & refers to "the relative honor or prestige that society accords the occupants of a certain social position" (Foxall & Goldsmith, 1994, p. 209). Status reflects economic factors but it does not coincide with class (Foxall & Goldsmith, 1994).

2.4 The Symbolism of Place

The symbolic power of a place can be approached in two ways: findings from environmental psychology differ from what is known from retail research. However, both scientific areas display that a place indeed has the power to communicate something.

Environmental Psychological Perspective

Studying the literature concerning “place”, one quickly realizes that the term has been poorly defined, most often not at all. However the context reveals that it is either equalized with “home” (e.g. Stedman, 2002; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996), a certain spot (e.g. Korpela, 1989), or it is referred to as a tourist destination in terms of a city, country or region (e.g. Freire, 2009).

How or why places become salient for the self-concept has not been studied very extensively (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). This, despite the fact that geographers and environmental psychologists claim that questions of “who we are” often are intimately related to questions of “where we are” (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000). Stedman (2002) agrees, arguing that places may become crucial to self-definition and a “place-person merger” can take place. According to Freire (2009), a general agreement about places (as in tourist destinations) having brands just as consumer goods and services has evolved among practitioners in the last years.

Retail Perspective

On the retail side of place research, Belk (1975) argued that the situation determines consumer preferences more than general product popularity. Kotler agreed in 1973 that a place, specifically the atmosphere of a place, can be more influential than the product itself in a purchase decision, and that the place should be treated as a marketing tool. Kotler (1973) further suggested that the place becomes more efficient as a marketing tool the more competitive outlets are present, the smaller price differences are in the industry and if the product is aimed at consumers belonging to a specific social class or having a distinct lifestyle. Place is today one of Kotler’s famous four elements of the marketing mix (Kotler et al., 2005). Kotler’s hypothesis has been confirmed by amongst others Baker et al. (1994) and Auty (1992). Auty (1992) found that consumers indeed choose restaurants depending on the style and atmosphere of the place once the occasion for eating out is determined. In contrary to what the consumers thought to be the most frequently chosen criteria (food type and quality), Auty found evidence to claim that “The locally-owned pizza-café and the national pizza chain serve the same type and quality of food at a similar price. The style and atmosphere are, however, very different” (Auty, 1992, p. 336). So, what is it that retail researchers imply with a “place”?

“Physical surroundings” in retail language include “geographical and institutional location, décor, sounds, lighting, weather, aromas, signs, and visible configurations of merchandise, displays or other materials surrounding the stimulus object” (Foxall & Goldsmith, 1994, p. 174).

Retail place related studies have shown an influence on consumer behavior when manipulating any of these factors. Leander-Olsson & Wenehed (2010), for instance found increased unplanned shampoo sales when utilizing a lemon scent in a retail store. Yalch & Spangenberg (2000) summarize that studies have examined the effect on shopping behavior and satisfaction due to colors, crowding, music or scent. In their own study, Yalch & Spangenberg (2000) found that consumers shop longer when exposed to unfamiliar music. Also, it is no secret that fast food restaurants use hard surface chairs as people leave within a predictable period of time because they are uncomfortable (Bitner, 1992) and thereby increase sales.

2.4.1 Place symbolizing Group Belongingness

A psychology related concept is “place identification”. Place identification implies belongingness of a social category and refers to a person’s expressed identification with a place⁶, e.g. a “Londoner” (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). The construct of “place-identity” can be thought of as applying self-congruence on a physical place instead of a consumer good. Korpela (1989) refers to place-identity as “a product of active environmental self-regulation influenced by the functional principles of self” (p. 241). In line with the general drivers of self-congruence, coherence with one’s self and self-esteem as well as maximizing the pleasure/pain balance⁷ are named as the drivers behind why 9-, 12- and 17-year old children like their favorite places (Korpela, 1989). Place-identity theory is primarily linked to our background, nationality or where we live (e.g. Dixon & Durrheim, 2000, Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996).

2.4.2 Perceived Personality Traits due to Place Layout

Christopher & Schlenker (2000) showed that a person living in an affluent setting and consuming primarily affluent goods was perceived as more intelligent yet less nice than a less affluent person consuming in a less affluent way. Shostack (1977) suggested in an example that a physician could be perceived differently if his office walls were painted in neon pink instead of white. Bitner (1992) exemplified that the office furniture and décor of (together with the apparel worn by) a lawyer may influence a potential client’s beliefs about whether the lawyer is successful or not; expensive or inexpensive as well as trustworthy or not trustworthy (p. 62). Morrow & McElroy (1981) showed in their study how desk placement, tidiness and diplomas on the wall signal varied degrees of busyness, faculty rank and confidence in dealing with others attributed to the occupant of the office.

Environmental psychological knowledge and findings from a retail point of view meet in the MTV dating show “Room Raiders”. The show is built around the concept of judging somebody based on the person’s room. One person gets to inspect three rooms and base his or her decision

⁶ Seen from an environmental perspective, which so far has not dealt with socializing places such as a bar.

⁷ maximizing the pleasure/pain balance = reducing dissonance

of whom out of the inhabitants in the three rooms to date by looking through the strangers' possessions. The decision maker does not get to see any photos of the three potential dates but bases his/her decision on impressions through the person's place and possessions only.

In the book "Blink", Gladwell (2005) describes studies conducted by Gosling, which would strengthen the credibility of "Room Raiders". Gosling found in his studies that the thought behind the seemingly unscientific TV program works. In one study, Gosling let a few students fill in a questionnaire about how they perceive themselves in terms of extraversion, degree of trustworthiness, how careful she/he person is, emotional stability as well as openness towards new experiences. After that, Gosling asked friends of a studied person to answer the same questions about him or her. When the same individuals were rated for the third time, utilizing the same questionnaires as before, complete strangers stated their impressions. The strangers based their impression on a 15-minute visit in the individuals' rooms. It turned out that the strangers had a more accurate impression of the studied people than the friends when it came to their carefulness, emotional stability as well as openness towards new experiences. Meanwhile the friends more accurately predicted the subjects' extraversion and trustworthiness. Also if not all five factors (but three) were predictable through the homes, the findings again demonstrate the communicative power of a place. Thus, a place cannot only communicate per se about a person, but actually a fairly accurate picture of him/her.

2.4.3 Perceived Corporate Brand Traits due to Place Layout

Bitner (1992) emphasized that the place of a service firm, the "servicescape", is of crucial importance for image formation of the company both towards customers and employees. She argues that the environment of a service firm functions similarly to a product's package (p. 67). Next to the high symbolic meaning of signs, Bitner (1992) emphasizes that other objects (e.g. plastic chairs=lower prices than tablecloths), may communicate about the norms and expectations for behavior in the place. In another study, Bitner (1990) found that a travel agent's office interior (organized or non-organized) influenced the customers' impression of the travel agency (e.g. how pleasant, professional, high quality the company would be).

2.4.4 Perceived Private Label Brand Traits due to Place Layout

Paul et al. (1996) found that a private label jelly was rated to be of lower quality in an aesthetically unattractive store than when the same jelly was rated by consumers in a store from the same chain in an aesthetically appealing branch.

In sum, studies so far have proven that the image of a place may be transferred onto a person. Yet no study has measured the image transfer of a bar, and also few experiments (Room Raiders is not exactly scientific) have measured the overall attitude and interest in a person caused by a place. With the aforementioned in mind, it could seem pre-determined to find that a bar image is transferred onto a consumer. Then again, a bar is not a place as individual as a home or office, which could weaken the impact on the person-impression. Besides the bar novelty, my research introduces another new aspect. Namely, when the place (bar choice) is incongruent to the rest of the information given. This now leads us to previous findings related to incongruent communication.

2.5 Incongruent Communication

Burner & Postman (1949) refer the phenomenon of incongruence⁸ as “An unexpected concatenation of events, a conspicuous mismatching, an unlikely pairing of cause and effect – all of these have in common a violation of normal expectancy” (p. 208, as cited in Törn, 2009, p. 11).

Congruence reduces dissonance (Foxall & Goldsmith, 1992; Sirgy, 1982) and stereotyping helps processing and categorizing information (Jussim et al. 1995). In order to not confuse the consumer, marketing scholars have traditionally used this knowledge by recommending congruent communication; for instance by choosing brand congruent communication channels and sponsorships (Törn, 2009). Numerous studies have proven positive communication effects of information congruence (Dahlén et al., 2005). Nevertheless, researchers from Stockholm School of Economics have challenged this belief by conducting product brand incongruence studies. They have found that incongruence can (but does not always) have a positive effect on the consumer’s perception. As Sjödin & Törn suggested in 2006, consumers’ reactions when brand communication is incongruent is still [also in 2011] not entirely straightforward (p. 54)

For instance, it has been found that using ads that are incongruent to the consumers’ schemata resulted in an increased positive *brand* attitude, yet a reduced *ad* attitude as opposed to when using congruent ads (Dahlén et al., 2005). Meanwhile, a different ad-brand incongruence study, where the ad was placed in a competitive setting (Dahlén & Törn, 2008) resulted in improved *ad* attitudes but unchanged *brand* attitudes. Further, ads incongruent to the brand have shown to be studied longer, have led to a more sophisticated processing of brand associations and to a better memory of having seen the ad and brand (Dahlén & Törn, 2008). Another study conducted by Dahlén & Törn (2008), found that placing ads (of either Gore-Tex or L’Oreal) in a

⁸ scholars have throughout the years used (in)congruity and (in)congruence interchangeably. Throughout this thesis I will use the ending *-ence*.

medium (magazine) thematically incongruent (and unexpected) to the brand schemata resulted in a higher ad processing time, a significantly higher ad attitude (yet not a more positive attitude) and to a wide extent also in more strongly perceived brand associations. Recently, Törn (forthcoming) found that using celebrity endorsers incongruent to the brand resulted in a longer ad viewing time, higher brand attitudes, more positive word-of-mouth effects as well as a higher brand interest. Meanwhile, the level of ad attitude was not significantly higher when using an incongruent celebrity. In this study (Törn, forthcoming), more and less well known brands were studied separately. Higher purchase intentions were only supported for second-tier brands and not leading brands, which could suggest that the attitude towards well known brands are harder to influence through incongruence. Applying the analogy of consumers' brand schemata onto stereotypes, this could suggest that the more well known the stereotype, the harder it could be to change the impression towards it.

Despite the mixed results as summarized above, overall, Törn (2009) argues that incongruence causes more positive than negative communication effects. Törn (2009) summarizes his findings from Stockholm School of Economics related to brand incongruence as follows: "In all empirical studies, employing incongruent communication is found to be more effective than employing congruent communications. We find that incongruent communications are more processed, better remembered, more liked, and that they improve brand attitudes, purchase intentions, and consumer interest in brands" (p. 30).

As mentioned, my upcoming study will analyze the impact that incongruent as well as congruent consumption has on the perception of the consumer in a context where consumption is treated as communication. Based on the reviewed literature, it is unclear which findings to expect, but when following the thoughts of Törn (2009), positive effects shall be found.

Supporters of Peters (1997), who agree that persons are nothing but human brands, could expect the human brand to be similarly impacted by incongruent consumption as product brands through incongruent communication – overall in a positive way (Törn, 2009). On the other hand, a psychologist, referring to stereotypical research, which after all has developed over many years, can stress that stereotypical schemata are highly resistant to change (Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000, p. 94) but at the same time that counter-stereotypical, individual information also should reduce stereotypical impressions (Jussim et al., 1995; Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000). It is difficult to predict whether a deviating bar choice is a strong enough indicator to change a stereotypical impression. Viewing ourselves as human brands and our consumption as communication, it is now time to find out more about the impression effects of no, a congruent or an incongruent bar preference.

3. GENERATION OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this section based linked to previous section, the research questions are derived and presented.

Summarized, the theoretical framework revealed the following insights: due to schemata existing in our brain, we link consumptions together with group belongingness and personality traits of the consumer. A consumption-categorization link has been proven through multiple studies, however not when studying the choice of a bar. Meanwhile, the symbolic power of a place has been shown in other contexts, and thus the likelihood of a bar possessing communicative power seems high also if this has not been tested before. Mixed results have been found in incongruent brand studies. Brand incongruence studies have, however, resulted in more positive than negative effects. Stereotyping research claims that on the one hand stereotypical information automatically makes us judge a person as belonging to the specific group. On the other hand, counter-stereotypical information is not disregarded. How a counter-stereotypical bar impacts on an impression is unknown.

No research studying how an impression of a person is formed due to his/her bar or nightclub choice was found. The study which has the most in common (Christopher & Schlenker, 2000) with my study let respondents rate an affluent or not so affluent stimulus person's personality traits based on his home and possessions. Christopher & Schlenker (2000) yet only measured the perceived personality traits; and no attitudes towards the person, interest towards him, or intentions. Therefore the relevance of the Christopher & Schlenker (2000) study is limited. Also, all consumption choices were congruent which is not the case in all my study groups.

Based on the puzzle pieces of information generated from previous research, the first two fundamental questions (which will later be translated into concrete research questions) that I aim to answer are:

- Is the impression of a person changing depending on a person's favorite bar?
- If yes, how? Is there a difference when the bar is congruent compared to incongruent to the remaining cues given?

Earlier findings have supported a higher interest in the ad or brand (which is here compared to the human instead) caused by incongruence, yet it is hard to predict the effects on a person caused by incongruent consumption. Therefore directing hypotheses is difficult. Previous findings, which could direct the expected answers, are limited and focus on either brands (marketing approach) or purely on people (social psychology). My study measures the impression of a consumer, and thus let psychology and marketing meet. By combining the two fields, hypothesis generation is impeded. I have therefore instead chosen a research question approach.

As mentioned, there are multiple factors (extraneous variables) influencing the attitude towards a person: physical attractiveness, familiarity, wealth and similarity. This study should be used in order to demonstrate the explanatory power of the place in comparison to other factors that determine the impression. As the experiment will not contain any pictures, physical attractiveness may be excluded as an extraneous variable. Since the measured attitude concerns an imaginary stranger, familiarity can also be excluded. Despite keeping in mind that wealthy people may be perceived as less nice (Christopher & Schlenker, 2000), perceived wealth will not be controlled for. One reason therefore is that wealth is relative and difficult to measure. Therefore, it could be sensitive to ask the respondent how wealthy the stimulus is perceived to be. Further, as the results will be compared within their basic (Östermalm type consumers amongst each other and Södermalm type consumers amongst each other) groups, the importance of wealth is decreased if yet not eliminated in the study. Lastly, it is not known how the impression of wealth is related to the fact that Jussim et al. (1995) found that the more information available about an individual, the less the observer relies on the stereotype. This should be taken into account, yet is due to time and resource restrictions out of the scope of this thesis. The possible influence on the results caused by wealth will be kept in mind when interpreting and discussing the results.

Meanwhile, the possible influence on the results caused by the similarity between the respondent and the stimulus person should and will be taken into account. Further, a possible image transfer from the bar onto the stimulus person could take place. Therefore both perceived similarity and the observer's attitude towards the bar are taken into account.

At the same time, increasingly, scholars enhance the importance to not only check for a significant impact on a variable (p-value) but to find out the scope of the impact is and thereby utilizing effect size as an indicator (Söderlund, 2010, p. 195). This results in the last fundamental question to be answered:

- To what extent ("how much") can the impression be explained by the bar, while taking other influential factors (perceived similarity, attitude towards place) into account?

The "impression" as referred to above, is subdivided into the three dependent variables: interest in the person, attitude towards the person and future intentions related to the person. These dependent variables were chosen in order to facilitate the comparison with previous brand incongruence studies that typically have studied attitude, interest and (purchasing) intentions. As this is a rather psychologically oriented study, it is also important to devote a fair deal of attention to the standards of social psychological research. The first two questions as stated

above are answered by research questions of type a, while the third question as addressed above will be explored by answering questions of type b.

3.1 Impact on Interest

First, the influence on interest is explored. The perceived interest is subdivided into whether the stimulus is perceived as interesting, fun, exciting and memorable.

Research Question 1a: If, how, is the overall interest towards a stimulus person influenced by the stimulus person's favorite bar when taking a given set of consumption choices into account?

Research Question 1b: To what extent does the favorite bar of a stimulus person influence the overall interest in this person, taking other factors that may influence the perceived interest in the person into account?

3.2 Impact on Overall Attitude

The same types of questions are asked, exploring the dependent variable overall attitude. Overall attitude is defined by whether the respondent likes the stimulus or not, has a positive, good, negative or bad impression of the stimulus.

Research Question 2a: If, how, is the overall attitude towards a stimulus person influenced by the stimulus person's favorite bar when taking a given set of consumption choices into account?

Research Question 2b: To what extent does the favorite bar of a stimulus person influence the overall attitude in this person, taking other factors that may influence the overall attitude towards the person into account?

3.3 Impact on Future Intentions

The last impressions that are measured are statements related to future intentions with the person, namely the degree as to which one would like to talk to further to the stimulus, get to know her better or would like to meet her again.

Research Question 3a: If, how, are the future intentions related to a stimulus person influenced by the stimulus person's favorite bar when taking a given set of consumption choices into account?

Research Question 3b: To what extent does the favorite bar of a stimulus person influence the future intentions related to this person, taking other factors that may influence the future intentions towards the person into account?

4. METHODOLOGY

Below, the methodology of the experimental study will be motivated and discussed.

4.1 Study Approach

The research questions have been derived based on existing theory, which determines a *deductive* method. The opposite, an *inductive* approach, would have implied suggesting theory from empirical data (Malhotra & Birks, 2007).

Malhotra & Birks (2007) distinguish between two research designs; the *exploratory* technique and the *conclusive* approach. Exploratory research aims to provide insights into and understanding of marketing phenomena and cannot be measured in quantitative manners. It is further characterized by a flexible and evolving approach. Conclusive research, on contrary, aims to describe specific phenomena, test specific hypotheses and examine relationships. This requires that the information is clearly specified (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). Conclusive research designs are amongst others recommended when the aim is to describe characteristics of relevant groups, to determine the perceptions of product or service characteristics or to determine the degree to which marketing variables are associated (Malhotra & Birks, 2007, p. 72). Thus I chose a conclusive research design.

There are two types of conclusive research designs: the *descriptive*, intending to describe something, such as market characteristics or functions (p. 73), or the *causal* research, which is used to obtain evidence of cause-and-effect relationships (Kotler et al., 2005, p. 345; Malhotra & Birks, 2007, p. 79). As I intend to study the effect on perceptions caused by a place preference, I selected a causal approach.

Primary data can be collected through either *qualitative* research or *quantitative* research (Malhotra & Birks, 2007, p. 152). While qualitative data is applicable for primarily exploratory designs based on small samples and intends to provide insight and understanding, quantitative research seeks to quantify data and apply some form of statistical analysis. As there is a parallel between conclusive and quantitative research (p. 152), I chose a quantitative research approach.

4.2 Experimental Design

Experimentation is commonly used for testing causal relationships (Malhotra & Birks, 2007, p. 302). The experiment consisted of six experimental treatments distributed to six random groups (see chart 4.1) of in total 191 test units. The questions and dependent variables were held constant throughout all the surveys. Only one question, measuring the attitude towards the place, was used in four out of six surveys as only four surveys included information about a bar.

The tested dependent variables were overall interest, overall attitude and future intentions. In this study, as shown in the figure below, the independent variable, which is the manipulated variable (Malhotra, 2007, p. 306), was the consumption choice of the favored bar. There were two basic sets of information given; either Östermalm-stereotypical consumption or Södermalm-stereotypical consumption choices⁹. These consumption sets were combined with no, a congruent or an incongruent bar choice. This resulted in six surveys: in total four congruent combinations of consumption and two incongruent. A factorial design was chosen, as this is useful to measure the effects of two or more independent variables at various levels (Malhotra & Birks, 2007, p. 321). The names of the test groups, which will be used from now on, are indicated in the boxes below and consist of either one or two letters. The first letter stands for the given set of consistent consumption choices. In the cases where there is a second letter, the second letter symbolizes the bar which was added to the consumption choices.

	No bar	Södermalm bar	Östermalm bar
Södermalm set	Group "S"	Group "SS"	Group "SÖ"
Östermalm set	Group "Ö"	Group "ÖS"	Group "ÖÖ"

Chart 4.1: Model of tested combinations.

4.2.1 Choice of Stereotypical Groups

In order to judge (consciously or unconsciously) whether consumption patterns are in line with the schemata in peoples' minds, two in Stockholm well known stereotype groups whose consumption patterns are familiar were needed. In this case, it was important to choose groups depending on the respondents, and the area where the experiment would be conducted. As the place for the research was Stockholm, based on my own knowledge, confirmations through Internet searches and of my supervisor, I chose to test whether the groups of "Södermalmare" and "Östermalmare" were applicable. Östermalm is a wealthy area located in the northeastern part of Stockholm. Södermalm, the southern part of inner-Stockholm, is commonly viewed as the cultural opposite of Östermalm; less wealthy but not unwealthy. Stereotyping based on these two geographic areas is locally well known (e.g. Rudberg, 2009; Zatz.com, 2005). Pre-Study 1 further confirmed that Stockholm citizens have strong associations to the consumption patterns of group members of both groups.

4.2.2 Choice of Stereotypical Consumption Cues

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, an endless amount of studies have tested the impact on impressions caused by consumption or product/brand preference. However, only few relevant studies were found using a combination of consumption choices contributing to

⁹ The sets of consumption included: beverage, clothing and vacation destination. The sets were always internally congruent.

impression formation. In the most relevant experiment by Christopher & Schlenker (2000), all cues were congruent with the respondents' schemata (all consumption symbolized either being rich or poor). After personal correspondence with one of the authors of that study (A. N. Christopher, 2010) it was clear that more than one cue (e.g. the bar only) would need to be included. With too much focus on the bar the respondent could have thought the stimulus person is an alcoholic. My supervisor and I discussed cues drawn from theory and concluded to use the symbolic cues of clothing and beverage (as these contribute to a first impression), as well as the rather high-involvement, more strongly socially categorizing choices of leisure activity and vacation choice. The leisure activity was later dismissed again in order to not make the bar choice "drown" in all the information. In chart 4.1 the final choices included are referred to the "set" of consumption, or the first letter of the group name.

4.2.3 Choice of Bars

Pre-study 2 was used in order to identify suitable bars for the main study. Answers given in pre-study 1 combined with Internet research and knowledge of the author resulted in eight bars, 4 of each category. The mean values found through pre-study 2 determined the two bars chosen.

4.3 Construct and Results of Pre-Studies

In the following, the findings from the pre-studies will be shown. These findings were needed in order to be able to design the main study.

4.3.1 Pre-study 1: Identifying Stereotypes and their Consumption

For pre-study 1 I chose a qualitative approach for data collection. The aim of the first pre-study was to identify perceptions of members of the two stereotype groups. Eight persons (with a mean age of 23.75 years, from different parts of Stockholm: outside the inner city of Stockholm (3), Vasastan (3), Östermalm (1), Södermalm (1)) were separately first asked to in an open-ended way describe a Södermalm as well as an Östermalm person. After the first spontaneous description, respondents were asked about the stereotypical person's personality traits and consumption patterns concerning beverage, clothing, leisure activity and where and how they go on holidays. As a last question, respondents got to answer where & in which bar in Stockholm the members of the groups of people are to be found. The most frequently mentioned findings are summarized below.

ÖSTERMALM - STEREOTYPE	SÖDERMALM - STEREOTYPE
Posh ("snobbig"), haughty ("dryg"), defiant ("trotsig"), luxurious ("lyxig"), nice ("trevlig"), trend conscious ("trendmedveten").	Alternative ("alternative"), aesthetic ("estetisk"), sticking out ("utstickande"), bohemian ("bohemisk"), nice ("trevlig"), trend conscious ("trendmedveten"), creative ("kreativ").

Chart 4.2: Stereotypical personality traits derived from Pre-Study 1

Some descriptors were mentioned both for the Södermalm and Östermalm stereotype (e.g. trend conscious, nice) and were thus dismissed. Further, “dressed up” was left out, as the clothing was described implicitly. The remaining, most frequently mentioned consumption choices are summarized below:

	ÖSTERMALM-STEREOTYPE	SÖDERMALM-STEREOTYPE
Beverage	Champagne, Rosé, Gin Tonic.	Beer, Cava.
Clothing	High quality, expensive, Gucci, pique-t-shirt , classic, Gant, Lacoste, colored pants for guys, Canada Goose jacket, Louis Vuitton handbag, dressed up, big glasses, high heels, backslip, pink shirt.	Cheap Monday, darker, trend conscious clothes, artistic, Second Hand , colorful, alternative , bohemian hat, red Converse, suspenders.
Vacation	Only together in groups, Gotland, sailing in the archipelago , St. Tropez , France, sailing in Croatia.	Festivals , Borlänge , Turkey, France but to the countryside, Berlin, Eastern Europe, Camping, Malmö, Prague, Croatia.
Leisure activity	Being on Stureplan, sailing , golfing , hunting , going to a bar with similar people, “vaska skumpa”, shopping, eating out, tennis, polo.	Concerts , parks, music , drinking beer , art, being creative, smoking, wine.
Is found at/on	Stureplan , Obaren, White Room, Sturecompagniet, Josefina , Utecompagniet , the most expensive restaurants in town, V.	Only on Södermalm, Strand, Marie Leveau, Debaser , Trädgården, Medborgarplatsen, Snaps, Södra Teatern, Mosebacke , in a park on Södermalm, Underbara bar, Götgatan, Ljunggrens.

Chart 4.3: Stereotypical Consumption derived from Pre-Study 1

4.3.2 Pre-study 2: Choice of Suitable Bar

The second pre-study was conducted in order to identify applicable places for this study. Eighteen new respondents rated different aspects of 8 different bars on a Likert scale from 1-7.

MEAN VALUES (1=disagree, 7=fully agree)	ÖSTERMALM PLACES				SÖDERMALM PLACES			
	Josefina	Ute- compagniet	Sture- compagniet	O-baren	Debaser Slussen	Kvarnen	Marie Leveau	Mose- backe
exciting¹⁰	3.78	3.00	3.18	3.76	3.76	3.56	4.19	4.71
luxurious	5.17	4.24	4.00	3.29	2.18	2.47	3.31	3.06
cozy	4.78	3.06	2.41	3.53	2.94	3.18	4.06	5.41
surprising	3.06	2.41	2.18	3.47	3.59	3.18	3.38	3.76
fun	5.06	3.65	3.82	4.18	4.06	3.76	4.19	5.06
nice	5.44	3.88	3.71	4.12	3.94	3.76	4.13	5.59
posh	5.50	5.65	5.47	3.35	2.18	2.29	3.38	2.71
alternative	2.17	1.71	1.65	2.76	4.76	3.65	4.06	3.53
relaxed	3.89	2.53	2.35	4.12	4.47	4.29	4.31	5.41
well known	5.83	5.65	6.35	5.29	6.06	5.41	4.56	6.24
attractive	5.33	4.06	4.65	4.41	3.71	2.88	4.06	5.18
Östermalmish	5.33	6.00	6.12	4.71	2.24	1.88	2.81	2.71
Södermalmish	2.06	1.47	1.59	3.18	5.35	5.06	4.50	5.47
<i>No of responses</i>	18	17	17	17	17	17	16	17

Chart 4.4: Mean Values of Place Ratings derived from Pre-Study 2

¹⁰ Original attributes as asked in Swedish: spännande, lyxig, mysig, överraskande, kul, trevlig, snobbigt alternativ, avslappnat, välkänt bland Stockholmare, attraktiv, Östermalmig, Södermalmig.

Out of the respondents, 65% were female. 18% lived on Östermalm, 24% on Södermalm and 59% on neither of the two islands. The average age was 23.6 years.

First, the two bars of each category scoring the lowest on being stereotypical were dismissed. The remaining two Östermalm-places were Utecompagniet and Sturecompagniet, while the Södermalm-places were Debaser Slussen and Mosebacke. My supervisor was consulted and we concluded that it was important that the two places chosen would be comparable. We decided that Utecompagniet and Debaser Slussen are both popular summer places, partly outside; and both scored high on two crucial aspects for Södermalm (alternative) and Östermalm (posh). A short description of the bar was included in the surveys to assure that the respondent could relate to the bar also if the respondent should be unacquainted with it (see appendix).

4.4 Main Study

4.4.1 Construct of Surveys

Six different surveys were created with the help of the online survey program Qualtrics. The difference between the surveys was the bar (if) given in the introduction text describing a situation when the respondent meets a stranger whose consumption is described (see appendix). The scales used were a 7 point Likert scale indicating intervals between 1=do not agree at all and 7=fully agree as well as bipolar seven-point semantic differential scales (Malhotra & Birks, p. 347). When indexes were used, Cronbach's Alpha (α) was above 0.7 (the lowest α used was 0.847), as recommended by amongst others Pallant (2007). The dependent variables were overall attitude, overall interest and three different future intentions. The survey was conducted in the respondents' primary language, Swedish and can be found in the appendix. Next to the parts discussed below, the respondents were questioned about their age and gender.

Introduction text

The reader was told to imagine a hypothetical situation of where he was out on a Saturday night meeting a stranger: Sara. Her set of consumption choices was described. In four of the surveys, her favorite bar was given, and a short piece of information about what kind of bar it is and what type of people that usually go there.

Overall Interest

For the measurement of perceived interest, in question 1, the respondents rated the stimulus on a Likert scale from 1-7 on the dimensions (here translated): interesting, fun, exciting and memorable ($\alpha = 0.847$). Despite the reliability analysis showed that the scale may be used as an index, ANOVAs were also conducted on each attribute separately.

Manipulation Check

In order to confirm the schemata activation of the Östermalm or Södermalm stereotype in the respondent's mind, question 2 was asked. In question 2, the stereotypical personality traits of the stereotype groups as found in pre-study 1 were listed and the stimulus was rated on both Östermalm- and Södermalm like traits. The answers of question 2 overall confirmed the findings from pre-study 1 as the stimulus was rated to be less stereotypical when favoring an incongruent bar, which indicated that the manipulation worked. Further I attempted to control for the perceived congruence. Thus a second manipulation check was made through question 5, where the perceived congruence of the stimulus' consumption choices was measured from three bipolar questions (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.885$). The mean values of the indexed as measured by the three question 5 are charted below. It was very important that the manipulation worked. Noting that it did, this question was disregarded for further analysis.

	No bar	Södermalm bar	Östermalm bar
Södermalm set	$\bar{x} = 5.22$	$\bar{x} = 5.46$	$\bar{x} = 3.09$
Östermalm set	$\bar{x} = 5.62$	$\bar{x} = 3.12$	$\bar{x} = 5.54$

Chart 4.5: Mean Values, Perceived Congruence (the higher the value the more congruent)

Overall Attitude

Motivated by the attempt to estimate the reliability in the responses, I chose to ask multiple questions measuring the one variable. As the reliability was satisfactory, I introduced an index in the cases of overall attitude, perceived similarity, future intentions and attitude towards place. Perceived overall attitude was measured using three bipolar scales (question 3) being I do not like her – like her, I have a negative impression – positive impression, I have a good impression – bad impression. The answers were indexed in with a Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.939$.

Perceived Similarity

Question 6 aimed to measure the perceived similarity between the stimulus and the respondent. Again, 7 point Likert scaled questions were utilized to ask to what extent the respondent perceived themselves as similar to the stimulus, having common interests and a similar style. The indexed scale similarity had a Cronbach's α of 0.910 and was used for covariate purposes.

Future Intentions

In question 7 the respondents got to rate the intentions: whether they wanted to speak more to the stimulus, get to know her better as well as whether they would like to meet her again.

Attitude towards Place

Lastly, question 9 aimed to measure the attitude towards the place in the four surveys in which a bar was given. On a Likert scale from 1-7 the respondents rated two indicators of their attitude ("nice place" and "I like the place"), which was then indexed with a Cronbach's $\alpha=0.948$.

4.4.2 Extraneous Variables & Covariates

Extraneous variables are variables that may affect the response of the test units (Malhotra & Birks, 2007, p. 308). In the theoretical framework, the possible influence of looks, compliments, familiarity and wealth on how a person is perceived was pointed out. As explained on page 17 as well as on the p. 24, perceived similarity as well as place attitude are measured and controlled for. No compliments are given and no picture is included in the study in order to avoid the influence of physical appearance.

As discussed, wealth could influence the results. Östermalm people are generally perceived as wealthier than Södermalm people. Previous findings would thus predict that Östermalm people are also seen as less nice which influences the overall attitude. At the same time, it seems that there is an interest in the rich (for support for this argument, check any magazine aisle, reporting about royals and celebrities around the world). This could also influence the overall attitude, interest and intentions. In sum, this problem is something I consider when analyzing the results. Due to the lack of other well known stereotypes, it was a trade-off to include the Östermalm stereotype. A less wealthy stereotype might not have been as well known. As previously explained on p. 17, comparisons will not be made across the basic set of Östermalm and Södermalm consumption anyway, which reduces the role of wealth.

Lastly, the reader could argue that the respondent's overall attitude; interest in or intentions related to the specific stereotype could influence the responses. I agree. Therefore the samples of respondents contained both inhabitants from Östermalm and Södermalm.

As the experiment was based on a hypothetical description of a situation, history effects should have been avoided (Malhotra & Birks, 2007, p. 308). Maturation is unlikely to have occurred, as the surveys were filled out within a few weeks of time simultaneously. Instrumentation, referring to the changes in the measuring instrument, (Malhotra & Birks, 2007) shall not have influenced the results either as only the four surveys where a place was given deviated from the no place-surveys. In these, as a last question, the potential extraneous variable "place attitude" was measured.

4.4.3 Pre-test of Surveys

Before the main study was conducted, the surveys were tested on 17 people. Minor formulation changes were made in line with the feedback given from the test-respondents.

4.4.4 Execution & Sample of Respondents

The surveys were distributed via the online tool Qualtrics. Mainly during August 2010, 191 responses were collected; 190 were useful. The test units were first and second tier contacts. People were alphabetically ordered randomly assigned one of the surveys. Before sending out a

link individually, I controlled for the groups to be mixed of both stereotype people. The average age of the respondents was 24.39 years (ranging from 18-34 years) and 52.9 % were women.

4.5 Reliability & Validity

I chose to measure reliability in terms of internal consistency, which implies the extent to which the items making up a scale measure the same attribute (Pallant, 2007). In order to avoid misunderstandings due to formulations, indexes with Cronbach's coefficient alpha above 0.7 were used, which is recommended (e.g. Pallant, 2007).

Validity implies whether the intended measurement is what is actually measured (Söderlund, 2005). In order to assure validity, I chose to use the design of previously well-established study questions and types of measurement scales which can be considered as standards (Törn, forthcoming, for interest; Törn, forthcoming & Dahlén et al., 2005 for attitudes; Senko & Fyffe, 2010 for intentions).

4.6 Analytical Tool & Statistical Techniques

The analysis was facilitated by using the PASW 18 software. In order to answer type a questions, one-way-ANOVAs were completed comparing the variances of the mean scores between the different groups. This is recommended when there are more than two groups and metric data¹¹ (Pallant, 2007). Analysis of variance is further recommended when analyzing experimental data from causal designs (Malhotra & Birks, 2007, p. 491). The p-value of this analysis indicated whether there was a significant difference among the groups. A significance level of 10% was applied, as the samples were ca. 30 people per group. If there was a significant difference, the Post Hoc test was used in order to detect where the values differed significantly. Scheffe's test was chosen due to unequal group sizes. Only significant results within the same "set" group were relevant for the analysis (e.g. S, SS and SÖ). Increasingly, researchers complement the analysis of p-values with effect size measures (Söderlund, 2010, p. 195), as one "should not rely too heavily on statistical significance – many other factors need to be considered" (Pallant, 2007, p. 247). Therefore, for type b questions, Covariate-analyses (ANCOVA) were conducted, where the indexed scales of perceived similarity ($\alpha=0.910$) as well as the place attitude ($\alpha=0.948$) were treated as background variables influencing the dependent variable besides the bar choice (group). When controlled for, a correlation was found between similarity & place attitude ($r=0.324$), yet it was judged to be low enough in order to test the variables at the same time.

¹¹ when interval or ratio scales are used (Malhotra & Birks, 2007, p. 493).

5. RESULTS

In this section, the statistical results of the study are presented in the chronological order of the research questions as asked in section 3.

5.1 Effects on Interest (Research Question 1)

First, the influence of the bar choice was studied on the scales measuring interest. The dimensions (a) interesting, (b) fun, (c) exciting and (d) memorable were indexed into one scale: “overall interest” (Cronbach’s $\alpha=0.847$). When looking at the mean values only, it becomes apparent that most of the mean scores increase as the bar choice is incongruent (SÖ and ÖS¹²) compared to when all consumption choices are congruent. The mean values are to be compared within the same color range, i.e. S, SS & SÖ vs. Ö, ÖÖ & ÖS.

Mean Values ($\bar{x}$)	Congruent, no bar		Congruent bar		Incongruent bar	
Group	S	Ö	SS	ÖÖ	SÖ	ÖS
OVERALL INTEREST (index)	4,20	3,56	4,45	3,71	4,62	4,71
(a) Interesting	4,23	3,29	4,62	3,51	4,71	5,00
(b) Fun	4,40	3,52	4,72	3,91	4,78	4,42
(c) Exciting	3,90	3,42	4,04	3,43	4,45	4,55
(d) Memorable	3,97	4,03	4,47	3,97	4,39	4,90

Chart 5.1: Mean Values; overall interest, interesting, fun, exciting & memorable.

5.1.1 Research Question 1a

The significance level used for all analyses was 10%. A one-way-ANOVA was conducted in order to find out whether the differences between the mean results among the groups were significant. After that, the Post Hoc test (Scheffe tests were chosen throughout all questions due to the unequal sizes of the groups) answered, if, where the significant differences were to be found. The first ANOVA and Post Hoc test were conducted on the indexed variable overall interest.

One-way-ANOVA significance (10%): 0,000. $F=5.268$. Variance = 1.607.				
OVERALL INTEREST	Mean Values	Mean Diff (+/-)	Sig (p)	Sig. Diff? (10%)
S ↔ SS	4,20 (n=31) ↔ 4,54 (n=30)	0,348	0,936	No
S ↔ SÖ	4,20 (n=31) ↔ 4,62 (n=31)	0,434	0,854	No
SS ↔ SÖ	4,54 (n=30) ↔ 4,62 (n=31)	0,076	1,000	No
Ö ↔ ÖÖ	3,56 (n=31) ↔ 3,71 (n=35)	0,143	0,999	No
Ö ↔ ÖS	3,29 (n=31) ↔ 4,71 (n=31)	1,143	0,018	Yes
ÖÖ ↔ ÖS	3,71 (n=35) ↔ 4,71 (n=31)	1,000	0,049	Yes

Chart 5.2: One-way-ANOVA & Post Hoc (Scheffe) results, Index: Overall Interest,

¹² as previously explained, the first letter of the groups stands for the set of consumption choices, while the second letter explains the bar added. Thus SÖ stands for the Södermalm consumer choosing the Östermalm bar.

The results show that the incongruent Östermalm consumer scores significantly higher values than both versions (with and without bar) of the congruent Östermalm consumer. No significant differences were found when comparing the mean results of the Södermalm consumer.

Due to the mixed nature of the results, each of the four dimensions (a) – (d) was further tested separately. This showed that the Scheffe test was too strict in order to detect any significant differences when analyzing (b) fun and (d) memorable.

(a) Interesting

One-way-ANOVA significance (10%): 0,000. $F=6,945$; Variance=2,510.				
interesting	Mean Values	Mean Diff (+/-)	Sig (p)	Sig. Diff? (10%)
S ↔ SS	4,23 (n=30) ↔ 4,62 (n=29)	0,387	0,960	No
S ↔ SÖ	4,23 (n=30) ↔ 4,71 (n=31)	0,476	0,901	No
SS ↔ SÖ	4,62 (n=29) ↔ 4,71 (n=31)	0,089	1,000	No
Ö ↔ ÖÖ	3,29 (n=31) ↔ 3,51 (n=35)	0,224	0,996	No
Ö ↔ ÖS	3,29 (n=31) ↔ 5,00 (n=31)	1,710	0,001	Yes
ÖÖ ↔ ÖS	3,51 (n=35) ↔ 5,00 (n=31)	1,486	0,006	Yes

Chart 5.3: One-way-ANOVA & Post Hoc (Scheffe) results: interesting.

As demonstrated in the chart above, the Östermalm consumer preferring a Södermalm bar (ÖS) is perceived as significantly more interesting than the congruent Östermalm consumer (Ö and ÖÖ). Despite the fact that the absolute mean values demonstrate that the Södermalm consumer preferring an incongruent bar (SÖ) is perceived as the most interesting one out of the Södermalm consumers, the analysis of the variance of the groups showed no significant differences in the stimuli being perceived as interesting between the groups.

(b) Fun

One-way-ANOVA significance (10%): 0,001.	
fun	The significant differences among the groups were found only between the Södermalm and Östermalm person (e.g. Ö ↔ SS) and will therefore not be taken into account. Thus, no <i>relevant</i> significant results were found.

Chart 5.4: One-way-ANOVA & Post Hoc (Scheffe) result, fun.

(c) Exciting

One-way-ANOVA significance (10%): 0,005. $F= 3,535$; Variance=2,264.				
exciting	Mean Values	Mean Diff (+/-)	Sig (p)	Sig. Diff? (10%)
S ↔ SS	3,90 (n=29) ↔ 4,04 (n=28)	0,139	1,000	No
S ↔ SÖ	3,90 (n=29) ↔ 4,45 (n=31)	0,555	0,823	No
SS ↔ SÖ	4,04 (n=28) ↔ 4,45 (n=31)	0,416	0,944	No
Ö ↔ ÖÖ	3,42 (n= 31) ↔ 3,43 (n=35)	0,009	1,000	No
Ö ↔ ÖS	3,42 (n= 31) ↔ 4,55 (n=31)	1,129	0,103	No
ÖÖ ↔ ÖS	3,43 (n=35) ↔ 4,55 (n=31)	1,120	0,089	Yes

Chart 5.5: One-way-ANOVA & Post Hoc (Scheffe) results, exciting.

While the Östermalm consumer preferring an incongruent bar is perceived as significantly more exciting than the ÖÖ consumer, the null hypothesis was close to be, yet on a 10% significance level not rejected in the case of the Ö consumer (Ö ↔ ÖS: $p=10.3\%$). Again, it should be noted that just as in the case of "interesting", the absolute mean values of the incongruent combinations are higher than the ones of the congruent combinations, also in the case of the Södermalm consumer. Yet again, the post hoc test found no significant differences among the groups describing the Södermalm type of consumer.

(d) Memorable

One-way-ANOVA significance (10%): 0,116.	
memorable	Since the one-way-ANOVA with a 10% significance level showed no significant differences between the groups, no Post Hoc test was conducted.

Chart 5.6: One-way-ANOVA result, memorable.

Based on the results above, the answer of research question 1a) is formulated as follows.

Research Question 1a: If, how, is the overall interest towards a stimulus person influenced by the stimulus person's favorite bar when taking a given set of consumption choices into account?

Answer: The incongruent Östermalm consumer (ÖS) is perceived as significantly more overall interesting than the congruent Östermalm consumer (Ö and ÖÖ). Further, the incongruent Östermalm consumer (ÖS) is perceived as significantly more exciting than one of the Östermalm consumers (ÖÖ), yet not both of them (Ö). The incongruent Södermalm consumer (SÖ) is seen as more interesting and exciting than the congruent Södermalm consumer (S and SS), however the differences are not significant on a 10% significance level. Noting the increased values yet insignificant change of the perception of the incongruent Södermalm consumer, **it may be concluded that a person with an incongruent bar choice is perceived as significantly more overall interesting in the case of the Östermalm consumer, yet not in the case of the Södermalm consumer.** No significant differences were found between the groups when testing fun or memorable.

5.1.2 Research Question 1b

In order to explore the extent as to which the place influences the interest in the stimulus, a between-groups analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA-) analysis was conducted. The partial Eta Squared effect size¹³ derived from the ANCOVA "indicates the proportion of variance of the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variable" (Pallant, 2007, p. 208). The independent variables studied were the similarity between the stimulus person and the respondent as perceived by the respondent (similarity, $\alpha=0.910$), the respondent's attitude

¹³effect size is a term used to refer to the strength of a relationship or a magnitude of a difference between variables" (Peterson et. al, 1985)

towards the place mentioned (place attitude, $\alpha=0.948$) as well as the group and thus the manipulation, which was the place chosen. As a favored place was only given in four out of six surveys/groups, the answers of all type b) questions are based on results drawn from the groups SS, SÖ, ÖS and ÖÖ only. Similarity and place attitude were treated as background variables as they were not manipulated, but could influence the dependent variable. The results are throughout all type b) questions interpreted in line with Cohen's (1998, as cited in Pallant, 2007, p. 208) recommendations, defining an effect size of $6\% \leq$ as small, $6\% \geq$ as medium and $13.8\% \geq$ as large. Previous studies have found that similarity has a high impact on the attitude towards a person, yet the effects on perceived interest (RQ 1b) and future intentions (RQ 3b) are unknown. Also to what extent the respondent's place attitude is transferred onto the interest in the stimulus preferring the place is unexplored (all type b) RQs). As the manipulation between the groups is the place, the effect size of the group is the effect size of the place manipulation.

Dependent Variable: <i>OVERALL INTEREST (index)</i>			
Source: (Covariate/ Independent variable)	Sig.	Significant, 10% level Yes/No?	Effect size (Partial Eta Squared)
(Index) Similarity	0,000	Yes	0,166
(Index) Place Attitude	0,835	No	0,000
Group (implying place)	0,009	Yes	0,093
Adjusted R Squared: 0,223.			

Chart 5.7: ANCOVA analysis results, Index: overall interest.

The effect sizes charted above demonstrate that the overall interest in the stimulus is, not entirely surprising, to a large extent (16.6%) determined by the respondent's perceived similarity between the respondent and the stimulus. The place attitude shows to have no significant impact on the overall interest. Meanwhile, the bar choice does have a significant impact on the overall interest in the person, and had a medium effect size of 9.3%. The adjusted R Squared demonstrates that the three covariates together explain the overall interest by 22.3%.

As the ANOVA results from question 1a) were illustrated through both the indexed scale overall interest and also by each scale separately, this is also the case when answering question 1b).

(a) Interesting

Dependent Variable: <i>interesting</i>			
Source: (Covariate/ Independent variable)	Sig.	Significant, 10% level Yes/No?	Effect size (Partial Eta Squared)
(Index) Similarity	0,000	Yes	0,247
(Index) Place Attitude	0,680	No	0,001
Group (implying place)	0,001	Yes	0,137
Adjusted R Squared: 0,342			

Chart 5.8: ANCOVA analysis results, interesting.

The respondent's perceived similarity between the respondent and the stimulus determines to a large extent (24.7%) how interesting the stimulus is perceived to be. In this case also the bar choice showed to have a large effect (13.7%) on the dimension interesting. The place attitude had no significant effect on how interesting the person was perceived to be. Altogether the independent variables explain 34.2% of the variance of results.

(b) Fun

Dependent Variable: <i>fun</i>			
Source: (Covariate/ Independent variable)	Sig.	Significant, 10% level Yes/No?	Effect size (Partial Eta Squared)
(Index) Similarity	0,000	Yes	0,138
(Index) Place Attitude	0,587	No	0,003
Group (implying place)	0,017	Yes	0,083
Adjusted R Squared: 0,192			

Chart 5.9: ANCOVA analysis results, fun.

The dependent variable fun is explained by the respondent's perceived similarity by 13.8% (large effect), while the place choice influenced how fun the stimulus was seen by 8.3% (medium effect). Again, the place attitude has no significant impact on the dependent variable.

(c) Exciting

Dependent Variable: <i>exciting</i>			
Source: (Covariate/ Independent variable)	Sig.	Significant, 10% level Yes/No?	Effect size (Partial Eta Squared)
(Index) Similarity	0,000	Yes	0,187
(Index) Place Attitude	0,649	No	0,002
Group (implying place)	0,048	Yes	0,066
Adjusted R Squared: 0,228			

Chart 5.10: ANCOVA analysis results, exciting.

How exciting the stimulus was perceived to be was significantly largely (18.7%) influenced by the perceived similarity, while the bar seems to have a medium sized effect (6.6%) on the dependent variable. Also on the dimension exciting place attitude had no significant impact.

(d) Memorable

Dependent Variable: <i>memorable</i>			
Source: (Covariate/ Independent variable)	Sig.	Significant, 10% level Yes/No?	Effect size (Partial Eta Squared)
(Index) Similarity	0,000	Yes	0,037
(Index) Place Attitude	0,465	No	0,005
Group (implying place)	0,360	No	0,027
Adjusted R Squared: 0,028			

Chart 5.11: ANCOVA analysis results, memorable.

It seems as if other than the suggested covariates determine whether the stimulus is remembered or not. The suggested independent variable could only explain 2.8% out of the variance of the results. Out of the suggested independent variables, only similarity could significantly explain the variances of the results at all. And even that impact was classified as small.

Research Question 1b: To what extent does the favorite bar of a stimulus person influence the overall interest in this person, taking other factors that may influence the perceived interest in the person into account?

Answer: The group and thus the bar choice has a medium sized (9.3%) influence on the overall interest in the stimulus. Only when measuring how (a) interesting the stimulus is perceived, the place choice has a high impact. The place choice meanwhile influences how (b) fun and (c) exciting the stimulus seems to a medium extent, and how (d) memorable she was found to be caused to no significant extent. In conclusion, **the favorite bar of a person seems to have a medium influence on the overall interest in this person.** Considering previous findings related to similarity, it might not be entirely surprising that similarity has a large effect (16.6%) on the overall interest. The respondent's attitude towards the place has no significant influence on the overall interest.

5.2 Effects on Overall Attitude (Research Question 2)

The mean values measuring the attitude reveal that again, the attitude becomes more positive in as incongruence is added, when comparing the values within the specific group (e.g. Ö, ÖS and ÖÖ). While the difference is minor in the cases of the Södermalm person (S, SS and SÖ), the incongruent Östermalm consumer (ÖS) scores clearly higher than the congruent Östermalm consumer (Ö) and (ÖÖ). The interested reader may at this point note, despite I do not normally compare the stimulus outside the own group (S, SS and SÖ are compared amongst each other and not S with Ö, for instance), that the respondents have an overall more positive attitude towards the Södermalm consumer than the Östermalm consumer. This could be expected considering that previously, wealthier people have been judged to be less nice (see p.17).

Mean Values ($\bar{x}$)	Congruent no bar		Congruent bar		Incongruent bar	
Group	S	Ö	SS	ÖÖ	SÖ	ÖS
OVERALL ATTITUDE (index)	4,65	3,94	4,49	3,80	4,69	4,58
(a) Do not like her – like her	4,58	4,06	4,70	3,94	4,69	4,71
(b) Negative impression – pos. impr.	4,58	3,90	4,47	3,66	4,66	4,45
(c) Bad impression – good impr.	4,77	3,84	4,30	3,80	4,72	4,58

Chart 5.12: Mean Values, overall attitude, liking & impression.

5.2.1 Research Question 2a

The one-way-ANOVA showed that there are significant differences ($p=0.015$) between the groups when studying the results of the indexed value overall attitude (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.939$). The post hoc test, however, located no significant differences between the groups.

<i>One-way-ANOVA significance: 0,015. $F=2,923$. Variance = 1,761.</i>				
OVERALL ATTITUDE	Mean Values	Mean Diff (+/-)	Sig (p)	Sig. Diff? (10%)
S ↔ SS	4,65 (n=31) ↔ 4,49 (n=30)	0,156	0,999	No
S ↔ SÖ	4,65 (n=31) ↔ 4,69 (n=32)	0,043	1,000	No
SS ↔ SÖ	4,49 (n=30) ↔ 4,69 (n=32)	0,199	0,996	No
Ö ↔ ÖÖ	3,94 (n=31) ↔ 3,80 (n=35)	0,135	0,999	No
Ö ↔ ÖS	3,94 (n=31) ↔ 4,58 (n=31)	0,645	0,572	No
ÖÖ ↔ ÖS	3,80 (n=35) ↔ 4,58 (n=31)	0,781	0,313	No

Chart 5.13: One-way-ANOVA & Post Hoc (Scheffe) results, Index: overall attitude.

When testing the three scales which together formed the indexed scale overall attitude separately the same results were found. The ANOVA suggested that there are significant differences between the groups (do not like her – like her: $p=0.059$; negative impression – positive impression: $p=0.017$ and bad impression – good impression: $p=0.009$), yet the Post Hoc test was too strict to identify these differences.

Research Question 2a: If, how, is the overall attitude towards a stimulus person influenced by the stimulus person's favorite bar when taking a given set of consumption choices into account?

Answer: Despite in some cases identifying fairly big absolute differences between the mean values of the groups, the Scheffe test showed no significant changes in overall attitude depending on the favorite bar of the stimulus person. By looking at the mean values only, one may conclude that the respondents have a higher overall attitude towards the stimulus favoring an incongruent bar choice (4.69 vs. 4.65 & 4.49//4.58 vs. 3.80 & 3.94). Thus, **the overall attitude towards a person is increased through an incongruent bar, yet no significant attitude changes are motivated by the person's favorite bar (no matter if congruent or incongruent), given an added set of consumption choices.**

5.2.2 Research Question 2b

In order to identify the effect size of the Covariates, an ANCOVA-analysis was conducted.

<i>Dependent Variable: OVERALL ATTITUDE (index)</i>			
Source: (Covariate/ Independent variable)	Sig.	Significant, 10% level Yes/No?	Effect size (Partial Eta Squared)
(Index) Similarity	0,000	Yes	0,222
(Index) Place Attitude	0,393	No	0,006
Group (implying place)	0,026	Yes	0,075

Adjusted R Squared: 0,285

Chart 5.14: ANCOVA analysis results, Index, overall attitude.

Again, the results were interpreted in line with Cohen's recommendations (Pallant, 2007).

Research Question 2b: To what extent does the favorite bar of a stimulus person influence the overall attitude towards this person, taking other factors that may influence the overall attitude into account?

Answer: In line with what previous study results predict, the perceived similarity has a large (22.2%) significant impact on the overall attitude towards the stimulus. At the same time, **the variance of the mean results of overall attitude may to a medium extent (7.5%) be explained by the preferred place**, while the respondent's place attitude has no significant impact on the overall attitude towards the stimulus. This finding indicates that it is no direct place-person-attitude-transfer takes place and strengthens the evidence for incongruence playing an important role.

5.3 Effects on Future Intentions (Research Question 3)

The intentions measured were (a) would like to talk more to, (b) would like to get to know better and (c) would like to meet again. Despite the fact that the three measures had a Cronbach's α reliability of 0.917, I chose not to index them but to analyze each dependent variable separately when answering question 3. The reason for that is that I assume that wanting to speak more to somebody implies less effort than wanting to meet again, for example.

Mean Values ($\bar{x}$)	Congruent no bar		Congruent bar		Incongruent bar	
Group	S	Ö	SS	ÖÖ	SÖ	ÖS
(a) would like to talk more	4,55	4,48	4,62	3,91	4,91	5,16
(b) would like to get to know better	4,26	4,26	4,45	3,74	4,66	4,81
(c) would like to meet again	4,10	3,93	4,24	3,80	4,44	4,61

Chart 5.15: Mean Values, future intentions.

As shown above, regardless of the intention, the incongruent consumer in absolute terms scored higher than the congruent versions of the consumer (comparing S, SS & SÖ, and comparing Ö, ÖÖ, & ÖS). The answer of RQ 3a) clarifies if these differences were significant and in case, where.

5.3.1 Research Question 3a

(a) Would like to talk more

One-way-ANOVA significance: 0,030 . $F=2,531$; Variance = 2,445.				
would like to talk more	Mean Values	Mean Diff (+/-)	Sig (p)	Sig. Diff? (10%)
S ↔ SS	4,55 (n=31) ↔ 4,62 (n=29)	0,072	1,000	No
S ↔ SÖ	4,55 (n=31) ↔ 4,91 (n=32)	0,358	0,973	No
SS ↔ SÖ	4,62 (n=29) ↔ 4,91 (n=32)	0,286	0,991	No
Ö ↔ ÖÖ	4,48 (n=31) ↔ 3,91 (n=35)	0,570	0,378	No
Ö ↔ ÖS	4,48 (n=31) ↔ 5,16 (n=31)	0,677	0,696	No
ÖÖ ↔ ÖS	3,91 (n=35) ↔ 5,16 (n=31)	1,247	0,059	Yes

Chart 5.16: One-way-ANOVA & Post Hoc (Scheffe) results, would like to talk more.

In absolute terms, it is obvious that the incongruent combinations scored the highest mean values when looking at the intention to talk more. However, only one comparison was significant in the Post Hoc test, stating that the willingness of the respondents imagining to meet the incongruent Östermalm consumer (ÖS) to talk more to her was significantly higher than the same intention of the respondents who imagined meeting the ÖÖ version of Sara.

(b) Would like to get to know better

One-way-ANOVA significance (10%): 0,082. $F=1,991$; Variance=2,388.	
would like to get to know her better	Despite a p-value below 10 %, the Scheffe test did not show any significant differences.

Chart 5.17: One-way-ANOVA & Post Hoc result, would like to get to know her better.

(c) Would like to meet again

One-way-ANOVA significance (10%): 0,254. $F=1,328$; Variance= 2,299.	
would like to meet her again	Since the one-way-ANOVA showed no significant differences on a 10% significance level, a Post Hoc test was not relevant.

Chart 5.18: One-way-ANOVA result, would like to get to meet her again.

Research Question 3a: If, how, are the **future intentions** related to a stimulus person influenced by the stimulus person's favorite bar when taking a given set of consumption choices into account?

Answer: A change in the person's favorite bar does in most cases not significantly change the observer's future intentions related to the stimulus. **Neither the intention of getting to know the stimulus better nor the willingness to meet her again are significantly influenced as the favored bar of the stimulus changes. The only significant result found is that the respondents significantly want to speak more with the ÖS consumer compared to the ÖÖ consumer.** It should be noted that both in the case of the Östermalm and the Södermalm consumer, in all cases of intentions measured, it is the incongruent consumer who receives the highest absolute result within its consumer group. Adding the information about a congruent bar showed in the case of the Östermalm consumer (Ö versus ÖÖ) decreased scores, but in the case of the Södermalm consumer also a congruent bar (S versus SS) increased the mean scores.

5.3.2 Research Question 3b

The separate ANCOVA-analyses showed the following.

(a) Would like to talk more

Dependent Variable: would like to talk more			
Source: (Covariate/ Independent variable)	Sig.	Significant, 10% level Yes/No?	Effect size (Partial Eta Squared)
(Index) Similarity	0,000	Yes	0,260
(Index) Place Attitude	0,276	No	0,010
Group (implying place)	0,024	Yes	0,078
Adjusted R Squared: 0,337			

Chart 5.19: ANCOVA analysis results, would like to talk more.

While the perceived similarity had a large effect size accounting for 26% of the variance of the mean results measuring wanting to talk more, the place choice had a medium impact with 7.8%. The place attitude had no significant impact on the respondent's intention to talk more.

(b) Would like to get to know better

Dependent Variable: would like to get to know better			
Source: (Covariate/ Independent variable)	Sig.	Significant, 10% level Yes/No?	Effect size (Partial Eta Squared)
(Index) Similarity	0,000	Yes	0,292
(Index) Place Attitude	0,055	Yes	0,031
Group (implying place)	0,014	Yes	0,086
Adjusted R Squared: 0,393			

Chart 5.20: ANCOVA analysis results, would like to get to know better.

The results above indicate that similarity has a large impact also on whether the respondent would like to get to know the stimulus better. The place attitude has a significant yet small influence on the dependent variable while the place choice also this time explains the variance of the dependent variable to a medium extent.

(c) Would like to get to meet again

Dependent Variable: would like to get to meet again			
Source: (Covariate/ Independent variable)	Sig.	Significant, 10% level Yes/No?	Effect size (Partial Eta Squared)
(Index) Similarity	0,000	Yes	0,340
(Index) Place Attitude	0,114	No	0,021
Group (implying place)	0,322	No	0,029
Adjusted R Squared: 0,401			

Chart 5.21: ANCOVA analysis results, would like to talk more.

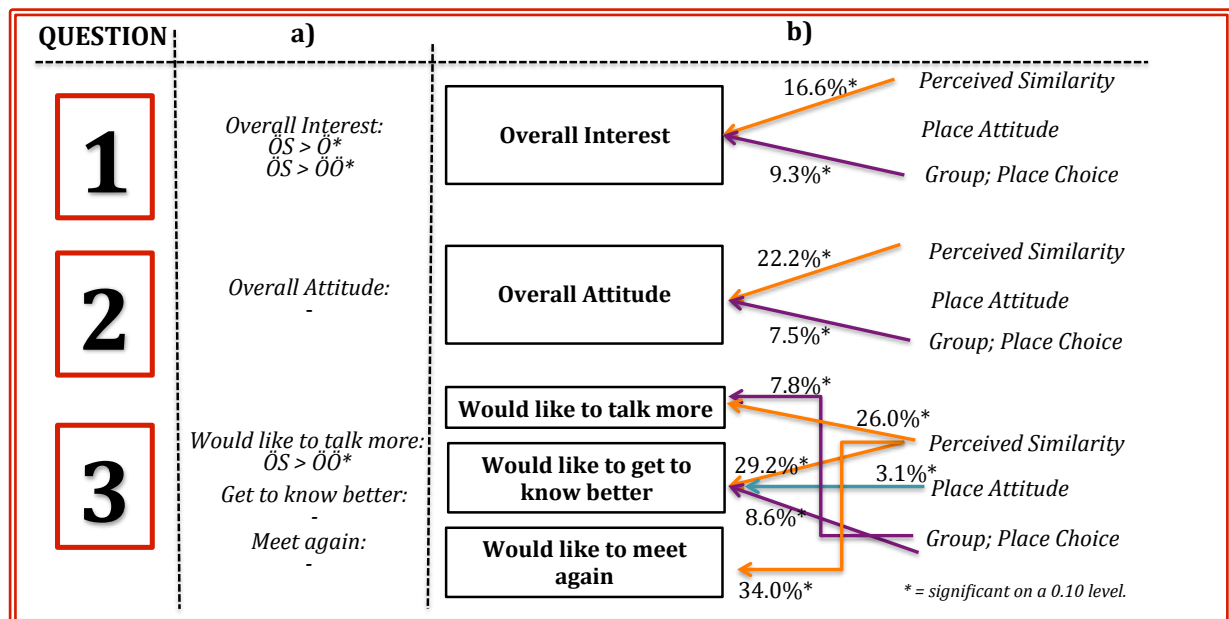
Neither the place attitude nor the place (group) per se significantly explain whether the respondent wants to meet again. Similarity, on the other hand, significantly explains the variance of the results related to this intention to 34%.

Research Question 3b: To what extent does the favorite bar of a stimulus person influence the **future intentions** towards this person, taking other factors that may influence the future intentions towards the person into account?

Answer: The bar choice of the stimulus has a significant medium impact on the measured intentions would like to talk more (7.8%) and would like to get to know better (8.6%). Meanwhile the preferred bar had no significant effect on the respondent's willingness to meet again ($p=0.322$). All three intentions may to a large extent be explained by similarity. The respondent's attitude towards the mentioned place had a significant impact only on the intention of wanting to get to know the person further and then explained the variance of the results by 3.1%.

5.4 Summarizing Visualization of the Significant Results

The visualization below displays only the results found which were significant on a 10% significance level. The percentages demonstrated on the right hand side are describing the partial eta squared effect sizes in the cases where the effect showed to be significant. The purpose of the visualization is simply for the reader to capture the results in one overview; no new information is added.



Visualization 5.22: Summary of the results that were significant on a 10% level.

6. DISCUSSION

In this last section the results will be discussed and possible implications will be suggested. The study is further critically reviewed and inspiration for future research is given.

6.1 Analysis

6.1.1 "Significance" and Effect Size on a General Level

Based on the results as accounted for above, the first pattern to comment on is the few significant differences found when comparing the variance of the mean values across the groups (ANOVA), while the ANCOVA results showed that the bar choice indeed has a mostly medium sized effect on the dependent variables.

It is now important to note the growing criticism towards the p-value/significance analyses. Multiple researchers have pointed out that a rejection of the null hypothesis is directly linked and dependent on the sample size, where the chance of finding significant results increases along with the amount of respondents in the group (Söderlund, 2010, p. 189). Some researchers have even claimed that all results would be significant if the sample size is big enough (e.g. Bakan, 1966). Rosnow & Rosenthal (1989) conclude after having found statistically significant results ($p < 0.0001$) yet an effect size of only 3.4% that "a result that is statistically significant is not necessarily practically significant as judged by the magnitude of the effect" (p. 1279).

The p-value is (besides the variance) a function of the sample size. Knowing that, it might not be a big surprise that not too many significant differences between the groups were found; since the groups consisted of only about 30 (quite few) respondents. Yet again, despite the low amount of respondents, significant differences *were* found in the ANOVAs. The ANOVA-results are by no means irrelevant, however they only demonstrate the relative differences between the groups and not the general influence of a certain dependent variable.

The second part of the procedure in order to answer the questions of type a) was the Post Hoc test. Since the groups were of unequal sizes, the Scheffe test was chosen. The Scheffe test is known as the most cautious Post Hoc test there is, and it is less likely to detect differences between groups when using this approach (Pallant, 2007, p. 208). Consequently, in some cases, no significant differences were found despite the ANOVA indicating that they existed (see overall attitude (RQ2a) & would like to get to know better (RQ3a)). Due to the ANCOVA (type b) results, interesting results could yet be found. The best example of this is when looking at the results measuring "overall attitude". First, the ANOVA showed significant differences among the groups ($p = 0.015$), however the Scheffe test was too strict to detect these differences. The researcher focusing only on significant mean differences would stop here and conclude that the place probably has no significant impact on the attitude towards a person since no significant

differences between the groups were found. But, when checking for the effect size, it turns out that this conclusion would have been wrong – as the ANCOVA test shows that the bar choice has a medium sized effect (7.5% in the case of overall attitude) on the variance of the mean results! Therefore, despite noting the significant differences found in the results of type a) questions, I place more emphasis on the effect size results answering type b) questions.

6.1.2 Covariates & Effect Sizes

In connection to the discussion above, the effect sizes will be discussed first.

- ***Perceived Similarity***

Literature predicted that similarity has a high impact on attitude formation. The theoretical framework in section 2.2 shaped the suspicion that similarity could have a high effect on the dependent variables. Yet the effects on interest and intentions were previously unknown. The results showed that the similarity as perceived by the respondent has a high effect on the overall interest, overall attitude as well as the three intentions. Thus, affection researchers can add similarity as a predictor for more than overall attitude.

- ***Place Attitude***

Based on the speculations of a possible place brand personality or image transfer, I tested the extent to which the attitude towards the specific place is aligned with the impression formed. Interestingly enough, the place attitude showed to have no significant effect, except for in one case, where very little of the variance of the mean results was significantly explained by the respondent's attitude towards the place (would like to get to know better, $p=0.055$; partial eta squared=0.031). Thus it seems as if the significant differences found in the Post Hoc tests are not caused by the respondent's given attitude towards the bar per se, but rather the combination of the bar choice and the remaining consumption choices. This suggests that it might be the non-vacuum setting and thus the incongruence that caused the effects rather than the place per se.

- ***Place (group)***

Despite the place attitude being in most cases of no explanatory value, the group and thus the place was. The significant effect sizes showed that the group, manipulated through the preferred bar given, influenced overall interest, overall attitude as well as the intention to get to talk more and to know better to a medium extent. It is worth highlighting that although the bar choice in most cases might not have had the power to significantly *change* the impression (ANOVA), a significant medium sized effect on most of the dependent variables was proven (ANCOVA). I would also like to emphasize that only four out of six surveys (the ones including a bar) were part of the effect size analysis, which gives the medium sized partial eta squared even more credibility. For being previously unexplored, the finding that a stranger's bar choice has a medium sized effect on the impression of the stranger is certainly satisfactory.

6.1.3 Analysis of the Findings related to Interest, Attitude & Intentions

- **Overall Interest**

The absolute mean values point towards a higher interest in the incongruent consumer; both in the case of the Södermalm and the Östermalm consumer. Yet only the interest in the Östermalm consumer is significantly increased ($\ddot{O} \leftrightarrow \ddot{O}S$ and $\ddot{O}\ddot{O} \leftrightarrow \ddot{O}S$). No significant change is found when a congruent bar is added ($S \leftrightarrow SS$ and $\ddot{O} \leftrightarrow \ddot{O}\ddot{O}$).

It is interesting that only the incongruent Östermalm consumer is perceived as significantly more interesting and not the incongruent Södermalm consumer. There are a few possible explanations for this finding. The first and foremost possible explanation is partly based upon Törn's (forthcoming) finding that higher intentions were found in the case of incongruence when studying second tier brands, yet not leading brands. Looking at the absolute results, the Östermalm consumer is overall less interesting than the Södermalm consumer. It could be that it might be easier for a brand which is perceived as less interesting "from start" (Östermalm) to receive increased values than rather interesting a brand (Södermalm). Thus, following Törn's (forthcoming) argument that non-top-brands are easier to significantly change through incongruence could explain the finding if viewing Östermalm as a less interesting and less strong brand than Södermalm. Another likely possible reason for the findings is that the Södermalm stereotype might be seen as slightly more unpredictable, and deviating actions (choosing an incongruent bar) are less surprising (and have a less strong effect) than if it is the Östermalm consumer who is incongruent. This argument can be supported by that the Södermalm consumer in pre-study 1 was seen as slightly more individualistic. A third, already discussed, possible explanation is the low amount of respondents, implying that it is harder to detect significant differences. Fourthly, one could try to search for the explanation by studying the results of pre-study 2 to see whether Debaser Slussen has a "stronger" impact than Utecompagniet. Yet here no feasible explanation can be found as 1) no direct bar image transfer took place, and 2) Despite the fact that Debaser Slussen is seen as more Östermalmish ($\bar{x}=2.24$) than Utecompagniet as Södermalmish ($\bar{x}=1.47$), the argument weakens when recognizing that Utecompagniet has a stronger Östermalm image ($\bar{x}=6.00$) than Debaser Slussen is Södermalmish ($\bar{x}=5.35$).

Leaving the ANOVA results behind and instead looking at the effect sizes, the results point towards a significant contribution to science. The bar choice explained the variance in the results found to a medium (in the case of "interesting", even large) extent. Only when the bar added was *incongruent*, significant changes were identified, in one out of two cases. The bar choice of the stimulus person determined the overall interest to 9.3%. This medium sized effect is certainly a satisfactory finding, considering all the new aspects of this study.

- **Overall Attitude**

Both in the case of the Östermalm as well as the Södermalm consumer, the stimulus person perceived most positively was the incongruent consumer. The more congruent (predictable) information added, the more negative the overall attitude. Yet, no significant differences were found. One possible explanation for that (besides the p-value correlation with the amount of respondents, as discussed) could be that the respondents already have strong overall attitudes towards the stereotypes. That the respondent's stereotype attitude could be harder to change through a bar alone could be supported as the effect size of the bar influencing the interest (9.3%) was higher than the effect measured influencing the overall attitude (7.5%).

Again, however, the effect on overall attitude, denoted that the preferred bar does significantly contribute to the attitude towards a person, also in the presence of other consumption choices and while controlling for other background variables. The perceived similarity had in the case of overall attitude a higher impact (22.2%) than in the case of overall interest (16.6%). Thus the high influence of similarity on overall attitude, as found in previous studies, is confirmed.

Prior studies related to incongruent brand-ad communication have shown mixed results. While the brand attitude has been increased or remained unchanged through incongruence (Dahlén et al., 2005; Dahlén & Törn, 2008), the attitude towards the ad has both become more negative (Dahlén et al., 2005) and more positive (Dahlén & Törn 2008). The results of this study suggest that the consumer can be seen rather as a "brand" (where attitudes have increased or remained unchanged) rather than an "ad", since the overall attitude did increase, if yet not significantly, as incongruence was introduced. This idea would support the thinking that a whole package of consumption choices contributes to building a new, human brand (image).

Lastly, it was earlier stated that wealth might significantly impact on the attitude towards a person in a negative way (while the effects on interest and intentions are unknown). This should not be disregarded. As wealth was not controlled for while the Östermalm consumer is seen as wealthier than the Södermalm consumer, there was a risk for the Södermalm-bar implying a more positive effect on the Östermalm consumer than the other way around. It can now be noted that this did not turn out to be an issue as no significant differences were found in the ANOVA despite these concerns. The reader may yet want to take this into consideration when judging the absolute overall attitude mean values of the different groups (as well as the interest).

- **Future Intentions**

The mean results derived from all three intentions clearly state that the groups means are higher towards the incongruent consumer (SÖ and ÖS). Yet only once was a difference significant. Thus a certain degree of unpredictability seems to help when presenting oneself; if yet not enough to establish a new relationship. The biggest absolute difference and only significant difference found was between the ÖS and ÖÖ consumer (intention to talk more). Thus

the typical Östermalm consumers reading this should consider going to Södermalm in the search for new friends or a partner; or at least say that they prefer a Södermalm bar.

No significance related to the place manipulation was found when studying the intention of wanting to meet again. This might not be a too big surprise considering the high degree of involvement it must take in order to want to meet an imaginary (!) stranger again. Looking further at the high importance of similarity in this context, it does not seem as if incongruence and thereby unpredictability is the best way to go when scheduling meetings.

As for the other two intentions (talk more and get to know better), the bar choice showed to have a mediocre effect. Since the bar only had an effect on the two intentions related to the specific moment, a bar choice seems to impact the intentions related to the certain moment when we meet a stranger, yet it is not strong enough to predict future developments. Two potential explanations therefore are the degree of involvement and the imaginary setting of the experiment. There is also a chance that the results could have differed if more information about the stranger had been given. This way the respondent had had a more profound foundation to base his/her decision upon. The introduction text was kept short in order not to lose out on time-pressured respondents. Maybe an American, culturally counting as among the most talkative and open minded, would have responded differently than a Swede.

6.2 Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects on 1) overall interest, 2) overall attitude and 3) future intentions towards a stimulus person preferring either no bar, a bar congruent to the remaining consumption cues given, or a bar incongruent to the remaining consumption cues given. First, therefore, the dependent variable specific conclusions are summarized. The first three points below can be considered as contributions to attraction theory.

- 1. EFFECTS ON INTEREST:** A stimulus person *can* be perceived as significantly more interesting when preferring an incongruent bar and the bar choice determines the interest in the stimulus person to a medium extent.
- 2. EFFECTS ON ATTITUDE:** The bar choice does not have the power to significantly change the overall attitude towards the consumer, however, a stranger's overall attitude towards a consumer is to a medium extent determined by the person's bar choice.
- 3. EFFECTS ON INTENTIONS:** Our bar choice does not significantly determine whether we want to meet a stranger again. It *can* significantly increase the wish to talk more to the

stimulus person, yet not the wish to get to know her better. The bar choice explains the variance in the results of the both the aforementioned intentions to a medium extent.

On a more general level, the impact of a bar as a means of symbolic consumption was studied, and what happens when this piece of communication is incongruent to the rest of the (internally congruent) information and thus the observer's stereotype schemata. It is now time to look back at the attempted contributions as defined before the study was conducted (section 1.5). Some of the points have already been commented upon. Below, the more general conclusions are summarized:

- 4. BAR CHOICE AS A MEANS OF SYMBOLIC COMMUNICATION:** Based on the results of this study I argue that a bar choice should be added to the list of consumption choices having the power to be counted as a symbolic consumption choice, as it, similar to homes and retail layout as suggested in previous studies, impacts on others' impressions.
- 5. PLACE IDENTITY -> PLACE IDENTIFICATION -> PLACE SYMBOLISM:** Specifically following up on the concept of place identity¹⁴ as introduced in section 2.4.1, it seems as if a bar can signal place identification (=group belongingness) to outsiders. Placing this identification value in the context of symbolic consumption where the place is only one choice out of multiple consumption choices, the expression "place symbolism" could be introduced as a place-related research term.
- 6. NON-VACUUM CONTEXT OF CONSUMPTION & COMMUNICATION:** First, scholars should not be afraid of testing multiple consumption choices simultaneously. Secondly, it might even have been just the coexistence with other choices that caused the significant results. The close to nonexistent impact of the covariate place attitude shows that it is not the attitude towards the place that is transferred and determines the impression. Before having tested all other possible covariates (which were not included) it cannot be concluded that it is the *combination* of consumption choices causing the impressions formed. However, considering that it is not the attitude towards the bar, and the bar was the only information manipulated, that affected the results, this hypothesis gains some support. Multiple consumption choices were in this setting a prerequisite for incongruence to be able to take place.

¹⁴ Feeling congruent with a place (Korpela, 1989). Place identity is assumed throughout this study since a bar is a social place which the stimulus person actually prefers this one out of all possible bars, and she could thus be expected to identify with.

- 7. HUMAN BRAND INCONGRUENCE:** At the end of the theoretical framework (section 2.5), previous findings related to stereotypical judgments and incongruent communication were presented which highlighted that a prediction of the results was hard to make. It could be expected, and is now confirmed, that an incongruent consumer shall be categorized as somewhere in-between an incongruent brand and a stereotypical person. No general conclusion can be drawn based on the results, but this study points into the direction that consumption incongruence has some effects similar to the ones of brand incongruence. It could be argued that the consumer can be treated as a brand. At the same time, since only few significant results were obtained; also previous findings from the field of social cognition are confirmed. Namely, it is hard to fully change stereotypical perceptions through a counter-stereotypical bar (supporting the analysis of Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000), but at the same time also, as Jussim et al. (1995) indicated, deviating information is not disregarded. This becomes evident when looking at the generally increased mean values as the incongruence element was introduced.

6.3 Implications

There are multiple stakeholders who could turn the results obtained from this study into something constructive.

On a managerial level, bar owners can use the information in their marketing strategy. Except for knowing that the bar has an impact on the consumer, bar owners shall note that apparently there is link between the bar image and the bar visitor. This link is *not* that the bar image is immediately transferred onto the consumer (see covariate place attitude results). Yet, the impact that the consumer has on the bar remains unstudied. Pre-study 2 confirmed that also bars have brand personalities (using the terminology of Aaker, 1997). This brand personality can especially in combination with incongruence be of high symbolism. By choosing certain suppliers, assortments, or *guests*, for instance, this personality can be influenced.

Bar suppliers, (e.g. Diageo or Pernod Ricard) gain information about their on-trade channels and their end consumers. Combining the bar owners' knowledge about the visitor with the attempted beverage image with the effects of incongruence, alcohol supplying marketers now can even more carefully select their sales channels and form creative marketing strategies.

The individual consumer, maybe especially the Stockholm single, is now increasingly aware of how (main study) and what (main study & pre-study 2) a bar choice can communicate as well as the effects on others (main study) and can choose a suitable bar depending on the attempted communication goals.

Place identification researchers can now extend their portfolio of place-meaning related research, and categorize this study as a new puzzle piece of knowledge about the communication through social places.

Practitioners interested in the field of any type of communication may note the communicative role of a bar. Taking this to the next level could suggest to shift the role of a certain bar for communicative campaigns from a hygiene factor to a means of communication in order to get the attempted message across.

Attraction theorists can be assured that similarity has again been proven to be an efficient predictor for impressions formed also in the cases of interest and intentions. They could further note that similarity is despite controlling for other potential covariates a strong predictor, while no direct bar image transfer takes place.

Readers and scholars interpreting the results from an incongruence point of view are maybe the biggest winners, recognizing that possibly human brands can also be used for marketing purposes, showing similar brand incongruent communication effects as brand-ad incongruence studies.

6.4 Critical Review

Nobody, and thus no study, is perfect, and it is important to also highlight the weaknesses or potential areas for improvement of a thesis like this. The first and possibly most obvious point to critically review is the sample size. As mentioned in the analysis, the results are highly dependent on the amount of respondents. More respondents could have given a more accurate picture. Related to the amount of respondents is also the fact that the reader should again be reminded of that only four out of six surveys were taken into account for the analysis of type b) questions, as only four surveys involved a bar at all. From an incongruent consumption point of view it would have been interesting to study the effect sizes of the covariates separately, depending on when the information given was incongruent or congruent. I judged the amount of data not to be sufficient in order to draw any such conclusions.

Also, the generalizability of this thesis should again be stressed. In section 1, I pointed out that this study is not only conducted with the help of Swedish respondents, but also involves two Stockholm stereotypes and two Stockholm specific bars. Therefore the results should be used as a possible basis for future studies rather than suggesting that any bar in this world would have the same effect.

Next, a critical point that a curious respondent pointed out and should be raised concerns the housing distribution of the respondents (Södermalm versus Östermalm), which was observed in the pre-study yet not in the main study. As previously mentioned, each randomly assigned group was checked before sending out the link to the survey so that the respondents consisted of

mixed residents. Doubting whether the place of residence would have been an accurate indicator for the general attitude towards the stereotype used, I believe measuring this underlying attitude (and using it as a covariate) would have been more efficient. In order not to destroy the effects of the manipulation, this was however not possible.

The last point that I would like to stress is the fact that this thesis is much of a psychology thesis and yet a marketing thesis. While I would like to point out the important role of previous psychological research for this study, at the same time, I would also like to emphasize that what this study in essence is looking at is communication through consumption – product/service usage. Knowing that one of the most important consumer motivations is symbolism; the meaning of this thesis in this marketing context should be easy to recognize.

6.5 Future Research

Motivated by the suggested criticism, the first suggestion for future research is to extend the scope of the experiment, involving a larger sample in order to facilitate more specific analyses (and according to some researchers increasing the likelihood of finding significant results). It would also be interesting to place the bar choice into a new setting of information and compare the results depending on other consumption choices. For example, how would the car that the person drives influence the impressions?

Looking back at this study, I have been thinking about how great it would have been to conduct the experiment with the help of an actor or videotape, questioning real observers.

Another thought extracted from the discussion concerning the results of the intentions is the potential role of cultural differences. The localness of the study could be changed or extended.

The overall conclusion is that our favored bar *can* have a significant impact on others' impressions of us. It should be noted that a bar is a highly social place; and a *favored* bar also a self-chosen place. I can only speculate about weaker results if the place had been up to the respondent to imagine (which does not mean that the stimulus person necessarily loves it), or a more neutral place such as e.g. the person's workplace location. As shown in the theoretical background, place identity research could and should be extended, suggesting a similar study but with another type of place. For increased comparison possibilities, the interested scholar could dig deeper into impression formation through involving multiple incongruent places.

Lastly, I am happy to claim that I have opened a new door for consumption/human brand incongruence. Seeing everything we do and consume as a case of personal PR, incongruent human communication could be explored on all levels. From the LinkedIn profile to our Facebook page, to the sunglasses brand we use and what we eat – individual brands (e.g. celebrities, mayors, sportsmen) shaping an image as well as marketers in companies (e.g. through salespeople or celebrities) should recognize the effects of incongruent human branding.

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APPENDIX: Surveys

1. Tänk dig att du en lördagskväll är på en bar i Stockholm. Du har slagit dig ned invid en vän och dennes kompis som du aldrig sett tidigare, Sara. Ni tre har knappt hunnit börja konversera innan er gemensamma vän ursäktar sig för att gå på toaletten. Situationen ger sig så att Sara och du börjar tala.

- **Group S:**

Sara har Cheap Monday byxor på sig och ett alternativt linne, kanske Second Hand. Hon dricker en Storstark. I sommar har Sara varit på festival i Borlänge. Mer än så hinner ni inte tala om innan er konversation avbryts.

- **Group Ö:**

Sara har en paljettklänning på sig som ser dyr ut, hennes Louis Vuitton-väska ligger på bordet framför er. Sara dricker ett glas Rosé och berättar att hon i sommar har rest till St. Tropez. Mer än så hinner ni inte tala om innan er konversation avbryts.

- **Group ÖS:**

Sara har en paljettklänning på sig som ser dyr ut, hennes Louis Vuitton-väska ligger på bordet framför er. Sara dricker ett glas Rosé och berättar att hennes absoluta favoritställe i Stockholm är Debaser Slussen. Debaser Slussen brukar vara värd för diverse konserter men är annars även en rock- och indiepop-bar dit framförallt personer bosatta på Södermalm går. I sommar har hon rest till St. Tropez. Mer än så hinner ni inte tala om innan er konversation avbryts.

- **Group SS:**

Sara har Cheap Monday byxor på sig och ett alternativt linne, kanske Second Hand. Hon dricker en Storstark. Hon berättar att hennes absoluta favoritställe i Stockholm är Debaser Slussen. Debaser Slussen brukar vara värd för diverse konserter men är annars även en rock- och indiepop-bar dit framförallt personer bosatta på Södermalm går. I sommar har Sara varit på festival i Borlänge. Mer än så hinner ni inte tala om innan er konversation avbryts.

- **Group ÖÖ:**

Sara har en paljettklänning på sig som ser dyr ut, hennes Louis Vuitton-väska ligger på bordet framför er. Sara dricker ett glas Rosé och berättar att hennes favoritställe i Stockholm är Utecompagniet på Stureplan. Utecompagniet är en bar som endast är öppen på sommaren; dit framförallt människor bosatta på Östermalm går. I sommar har hon rest till St. Tropez. Mer än så hinner ni inte tala om innan er konversation avbryts.

- **Group SÖ:**

Sara har Cheap Monday byxor på sig och ett alternativt linne, kanske Second Hand. Hon dricker en Storstark. Hon berättar att hennes absoluta favoritställe i Stockholm är Utecompagniet på Stureplan. Utecompagniet är en bar som endast är öppen på sommaren; dit framförallt människor bosatta på Östermalm går. I sommar har hon varit på festival i Borlänge. Mer än så hinner ni inte tala om innan er konversation avbryts.

Vad är ditt första intryck av Sara?

Sara verkar vara...

	Instämmer inte alls (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Instämmer helt och hållet (7)
Intressant	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Kul	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Spännande	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Någon som man kommer ihåg	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Sara verkar vara...

	Instämmer inte alls (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Instämmer helt och hållet (7)
Snobbig	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lyxig	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bohemisk	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Alternativ	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Dryg	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Stå upp för sina åsikter	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Sammanfattande så...

gillar jag henne inte	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	gillar henne
har jag ett negativt intryck	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Positivt intryck
är intrycket dåligt	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	bra

4. Jag skulle...

	Instämmer inte alls (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Instämmer helt och hållet (7)
Vilja tala mer med Sara	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Vilja lära känna Sara bättre	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Vilja träffa Sara igen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. Saras konsumtionsvanor...

Verkar inte alls hänga ihop	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Verkar hänga ihop
Verkar inte alls förutsägbare	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Verkar väldigt förutsägbare
Verkar inte alls stereotypiska	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Verkar väldigt stereotypiska

6. Din ålder?

7. Kön?

☐ Man

☐ Kvinna

8. Bortsett från könet om du är kille, hur lika tycker du att du och Sara verkar vara?

	Instämmer inte alls (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Instämmer helt och hållet (7)
Vi är lika	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Vi har gemensamma intressen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Vi har liknande stil	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. Sist: Vad tycker du om

Utecompagniet på Stureplan // Debaser Slussen?***

	Instämmer inte alls (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Instämmer helt och hållet (7)
Trevligt ställe	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Jag gillar det	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

*** (the bar tested was the one mentioned in the beginning. Only 4 out of 6 surveys contained this question).