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Experiencing the Starbucks Experience

a Cultural Analysis of the Effects of Glocalization

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Abstract

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The Malmo Central Station Starbucks opened in 2012 as one of the first Starbucks shops in Sweden. The shop works as a transient location, skillfully designed around its train station location and historical aesthetic. It here functions as one of Starbucks's first forays into coffee- and *fika*-minded Sweden, where it must balance appealing to Swedish customers who are new to the brand and international customers already acquainted with it. The shop shows the result of a global brand having undergone glocalization to suit the needs of a new culture.

This thesis offers a cultural analysis of this Starbucks location based on data acquired over a three-month long research project. The research was primarily done using semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and a large collection of netnography. The data is then interpreted through such theories as a modified concept of *habitus*, Ray Oldenburg's third place, experiencescapes in the experience economy, and interpretations of sensory ethnography to answer the question of what material and social factors influence the way the Malmö Central Station Starbucks is experienced and perceived, and what the shop can tell us about the role Starbucks plays in the lives of its Swedish customers.

Keywords: Starbucks; experiencescapes; habitus; ethnography; coffee shop; third place; glocalization; Sweden; experience economy; cultural analysis; MACA; atmosphere

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Introduction to an Analysis

Starbucks is a massive corporation with tens of thousands of stores circling the globe from its first store in Seattle, Washington, in 1971 all the way to a shop in the historic Forbidden City in Beijing, China. On February 22, 2012, one of these stores opened in a train station in the southwestern Swedish city of Malmö (SSP Sweden, 2012). What role does this store play in the lives of its customers? How is it perceived and experienced by the locals and internationals who visit it?

Starbucks opened the doors to its first store in Seattle, Washington in 1971. While successful, this first shop originally only sold prepackaged coffee beans with no opportunity for customers to sit and enjoy a cup of coffee in a public setting. In 1984, at the direction of Howard Schultz, the brand expanded into opening coffee shops modeled after cafés in Italy. This proved successful and from there the company spread across the US, changing the way Americans drank coffee almost singlehandedly. Its first store outside North America opened in Japan in 1996, and the company quickly moved into dozens of other countries and expanded to over 16,000 locations over the next decade and a half (Starbucks Coffee Company, 2011). Starbucks currently professes to have 24,000 stores with eighteen of those being in Sweden, where it opened its first store in 2010 (Starbucks Coffee Company – Sweden). The Malmö shop came two years later, in 2012, following the same model that made Starbucks successful to begin with: good coffee, friendly staff, and reliable facilities.

This thesis will offer a partial ethnography of the Malmö location. It will examine the spatial and material aspects of the shop, as well as the more intangible experiences of those who visit it. To do this, face-to-face interviews were given, extensive observations of the shop were conducted, and many findings were discovered through a thorough examination of the resources on the Internet. Along with this will be an exploration into the application of relevant themes, such as the experience economy and experiencescapes, Starbucks as a third place, a redefined *habitus*, and what Starbucks means for its Malmö customers. This will also be complemented by a comparison between the Swedish shop and one located in the United States to showcase the glocalization of the brand.

Research Question

What material and social factors influence the way the Malmö Central Station Starbucks is experienced and perceived, and what can the shop tell us about the role Starbucks plays in the lives of its Swedish customers?

Aim of the Research Journey

Research began for this thesis in January, 2016 in a Starbucks shop in Orlando, Florida. The purpose was to study Starbucks using ethnographic methods and a cultural analytic perspective to offer a comparison between this Orlando shop and one in the Malmö, Sweden, central train station. Soon the focus shifted primarily to this Malmö Starbucks. It became increasingly clear that the interesting story rested in the curious question as to what coming to Sweden – the second highest coffee-drinking country in the world (Almqvist, Hruzova, & Olsson, 2007) – means for the American coffee giant Starbucks and for its Swedish and international customers.

The reason why I chose to study Starbucks is a simple one. It is fascinating to explore how different cultures experience similar things, especially how a culture will appropriate a foreign phenomenon and make it part of the everyday fabric of life. What is the process that happens here and how much is the original changed over the course of it? This is the process of exploring what it means for a brand that is so rooted in a certain culture to expand into a different one. Starbucks is the perfect medium for measuring and analyzing this, especially as the world becomes more and more globalized and this becomes a more and more common occurrence. It has stores all over the world and I myself have visited Starbucks shops in multiple countries across three continents. Starbucks differs between places and plays a different role in each place. Sweden is an ideal place to study this localization process, as it got its first Starbucks shop as recently as 2010 (The Local Sweden, 2013). It is still finding its place in the Swedish market. This global brand that functions as a fundamental part of modern American life for decades has now entered a country that values authenticity and very black coffee.

To study this glocalization process, over the course of three months, an ethnography of the Malmö Central Station Starbucks was conducted. It sought to explain the social and material factors that influence how the shop is experienced and perceived. This involved having interviews with both Swedes and Americans about their experiences with the shop and other Starbucks shops in general. The shop itself was also observed often over this time period, at both its physical and online locations, with special attention paid to its sensory and experiential aspects. This research tumbled into research about Starbucks and its international crusades, and further into the sociological, anthropological, and cultural analytical reasons to explain these.

By the end of the paper, it is my intention that the reader will have had the opportunity to engage with the question of the experience and perception of the Starbucks in Malmö. This should be in contrast to the role of Starbucks outside of Sweden, and contribute to the body of ethnographic literature on Starbucks and literature on glocalization, atmosphere, the experience economy, and third places in the early 21st century. The findings may also prove useful for those looking into expanding their business into Sweden, as they show a partial analysis of Swedish culture and the process of adaptation that happens when a brand moves into a different cultural setting. That is, they show the act of glocalization.

Structure of the Paper

As for what to expect in this thesis, it will begin with a chapter describing the current research surrounding Starbucks and other coffee shops. It will provide an overview of the literature relating to ethnographies of coffee shops and cafés, especially those affected or created by the globalization of the world.

The chapter following this will show the structure of the research conducted to provide data for this thesis. It will explain the secondary sources as well as the semi-structured interviews and on-site observations conducted – the two sources of primary data – with brief explanations as to the reasons behind these research decisions. Attention will also be paid to the extensive netnography conducted on the subject.

The third chapter will look at the sociological, anthropological, and ultimately cultural analytic frameworks and theories that can be used to better explain and understand the data collected through the methods outlined in the second chapter. These include a modified concept

of Bourdieu's *habitus*, Ray Oldenburg's concept of the third place, Sarah Pink's approach to sensory ethnography, and the semi-recent emergence of the study of experiencescapes in what has been called the experience economy by Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore.

In the fourth chapter, there will be a look into the space of the Malmö Starbucks. This will be an in-depth exploration of the space, as well as a comparison between it and another Starbucks location in Orlando, Florida. This contrast is designed to highlight the different roles Starbucks plays in different countries as well as to show the ways in which they are similar.

The fifth chapter will provide the most thorough examination of the findings of the research. It will answer the research question by looking at the materiality in Starbucks, how the location is experienced in Sweden, and the Swedish attitude towards the space. This will be supported by data collected from both the primary and secondary sources.

Following this will be a final conclusion, broken down into an explanation of final insights from the data and later a section on its practical applications. After this will be a list of references and a log of the interviews conducted.

For a more specific outline of the content included in this work, please look back at the Table of Contents provided on page III.

Surrounding Literature on Starbucks

Unsurprisingly, much research has been done on Starbucks. With over 24,000 stores worldwide (Starbucks Coffee International), just the sheer pervasiveness of Starbucks makes it something worthy of study. A quick Google search of the coffee giant will result in a slew of articles, books, and blog posts written from all kinds of perspectives and schools of thought. This massive amount of information can be divided into several categories of works that are useful to the understanding of this thesis. These categories show where the research done for this thesis fits into the overall knowledge of Starbucks and where it's situated among research on Starbucks and other coffee shop ethnographies. These categories are referred to here as Starbucks Pop Lit, Starbucks Glocalization Pieces, and lastly Coffee Shop Ethnographies.

Starbucks Pop Lit

Being the hugely influential cultural player and business innovator that it is, Starbucks has been the subject of countless works outlining its success written for the average layperson. These I refer to as Starbucks Popular Literature, or Starbucks Pop Lit. These easy-to-consume books concern the rise (and, according to some, current decline) of Starbucks, its significance for everyday life, and lessons that can be derived from Starbucks's practices and history. The non-academic sphere of literature relating to Starbucks is composed of these pop lit books. They provide a solid backdrop for the more academic work of the other previous research categories of Coffee Shop Ethnographies and Starbucks Glocalization Pieces.

Not wanting to be left out of the action, several Starbucks Pop Lit books were even written by longtime Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz (Schultz & Gordon, 2011; Schultz & Yang, 1997). A significant number were published in 2007 (Michelli, 2007; Behar & Goldstein, 2007; Gill, 2007), during what could be referred to as Starbucks's height, when consumers and businesspeople alike were most curious about what made the coffee chain so successful.

The most relevant of these works of Starbucks Pop Lit for understanding this thesis is a 2009 book written by American historian Bryant Simon titled *Everything but the Coffee: Learning about America from Starbucks*. Simon offers a sometimes critical, sometimes admiring view of

the coffee chain that began for the purpose of answering the question, “What did it mean that our public spaces were corporately controlled and conceived?” (Simon, 2009, p. 242). He claims that Starbucks promises to fulfill desires and breaks these desires down to chapters focusing on Starbucks’s coffee, its claims of providing individuality, the space as Oldenburg’s third place, buying lattes as a form of self-giving, playing music for a sense of discovery, Starbucks’s place as an ecofriendly company, and its role in our globalized world. Simon does not buy into the positive corporate lines that Starbucks routinely gives, but instead reads between them to eventually come to see the company in a far more negative light.

While *Everything but the Coffee* may be primarily focused on what Starbucks says about the American consumption of coffee in coffee shops, its findings also mirror and support much of the data collected from Malmö’s Starbucks. To use an example, both Simon and I encountered something of a progression of teens who first began drinking Frappuccinos, which are light in coffee, to becoming adults drinking cappuccinos or other more mature drinks (p. 51). This is then perhaps a more universal and less USA-centric phenomenon.

Simon goes on further and addresses different theories of space and the use of space (p. 87, 135). He discusses choice (p. 63) and authenticity (p. 55). He brings up the concept of “emotional value” (p. 65) and the many ways to use Starbucks to cultivate identity (p. 9, 80, 113, 127, 149). All of these are insights that explain Starbucks as a success in the US as a place that promises to fulfill desires. An example of this can be seen later in this thesis in figure 6 when the Orlando Starbucks is discussed.

Especially relevant is when *Everything but the Coffee* analyzes the design of a Starbucks shop. Simon consults an architect, a shopping scientist, and a designer in order to understand the deliberate design choices made in the shop to cultivate a desired mood or synthesize a desired experience (p. 134-138). Each color chosen and placement of chairs is deliberate. “All of this is, of course, intentional,” Simon writes (p. 136). This brief section of Simon’s book touches on the space a Starbucks shop comprises as a thing that creates an experience. If sitting at a round table makes single customers feel less self-conscious, then having round tables in a shop will result in more single customers. This creates an experience; it creates a mood. The findings of my research later in this thesis will work with this concept more thoroughly.

Starbucks Glocalization Pieces

There is some research done and much said on the expansion of Starbucks into global (non-US) markets (Thompson & Arsel, 2004; Flanagan, 2014). This research is, however, not often cultural analytic in nature and is primarily interested in the way Starbucks is received and modified to succeed in Asian countries such as Taiwan (Su, Chiou, & Change, 2006; Lin, 2012) and India (Rajasekaran, 2015). There are some articles online discussing how Starbucks fares in Europe (Alderman, 2012), but very little academic research on the subject, and almost none that focuses specifically on Sweden. There was, however, a study conducted on the advent of McDonald's in Sweden and how this relates to glocalization (Brembeck, 2005).

One exception to this lack of research is a 2007 bachelor's thesis written by Almqvist, Hruzova, and Olsson of Halmstad University titled "Changes in the Coffee Culture – Opportunities for Multinationals Coffee Shops?", which analyzes the then current cultural and social receptiveness of Sweden to foreign-based and local coffee shops. This was completed several years before Starbucks would open its first Swedish location in Stockholm, but offers some still-relevant information about Swedish attitudes towards and habits relating to coffee culture.

Almqvist, Hruzova, and Olsson's thesis acquired the data it used to describe pre-Starbucks Sweden through qualitative methods, not dissimilar to the ones used in my research about Starbucks in Malmö. Several interviews were conducted with baristas and owners of various chain coffee shops throughout different regions in Sweden, including Wayne's Coffee, Robert's Coffee, Kaffe Paus, and Coffehouse by George. Unfortunately, there were no interviewees from Espresso House or Barista, two currently very popular Swedish coffee shop chains. Perhaps these shops were overlooked due to this thesis being written nine years ago under a different Swedish coffee shop climate. The thesis does comment on the possibility of a foreign chain entering the Swedish market, even specifically naming Starbucks as potentially being that chain. It also predicts Sweden as having a good climate for these potential shops, due to factors such as Swedes' increased tendency to drink coffee in shops instead of the home and the shifting trend amongst coffee drinkers to think more about the origin of the coffee consumed. One barista interviewed by the authors of the thesis compares drinking coffee to drinking wine (p. 36). Where consumers of wine have in the past come to value and gain knowledge about the processes, ingredients, and locations

involved in wine making, coffee drinkers are now beginning to do the same. This, they argue, will create a new demand for the expertise of baristas in Sweden.

The thesis itself, however, suffers from being from 2007, a full three years before Starbucks would open in Stockholm, and nine before my research was conducted. Coffee culture in a country can greatly change in this time, which is part of the gap of knowledge my analysis of Malmö's Starbucks fills. My research also differs from that conducted by Almqvist, Hruzova, and Olsson as I focus on the role of Starbucks as a shop and as an experience, as opposed to how well Starbucks as a company succeeds in Sweden. My research did benefit from the thesis by gaining a better understanding of the general setting and climate of coffee culture in the early 21st century Sweden.

Coffee Shop Ethnographies

True sensory ethnographies of coffee shops are hard to come by. For this reason, most articles and books under this heading are ethnographies that deal less in the senses and more with non-sensory research methods such as interviews and observations only concerned with sight. There does exist a subset of research done on Starbucks shops (Venkatraman & Nelson, 2008; Gavin, 2013) and other coffee shops and chains (Chen, 2011; Waxman, 2004; Perriam 2013; Manzo, 2015), as well as some which deals with both (Woldoff, Lozzi, & Dilks, 2013; Gupta, 2004). As this category is for research on specific coffee shop locations, it is the one that my research on Malmö's Starbucks would fall into. Thus these articles are more similar to my research. Also worthy of note is that many people have unintentionally created ethnographies of coffee shops. What I mean by this is that they can often be found on personal blogs or other websites written by those with no formal education in conducting ethnographies, and they are not written for academic purposes. These accidental ethnographies are not included in this section.

The article that I would like to highlight here does not perform an ethnography on a coffee shop, however, but instead a British café. In June 2001, Laurier, Whyte, and Buckner published an article in the *Journal of Mundane Behavior* titled "An Ethnography of a Neighbourhood Café", which expertly analyzed the codes of conduct at a café called the Flaming Cup. The purpose of the research was to determine "whether 'informal public places' (like cafés and bars) were less codified rule-bound and institutionalized than workplaces" (p. 203). The usefulness of this research to my research on Starbucks was not in looking at the end goal of the research, but instead

on focusing on the methods that got them to this end goal. The methods are sensory, involving sight, smell, sound, and taste in the café.

As described in the article, the researchers frequently visited the shop to conduct observations. They even went further than being mere visitors. “Most important of all we learnt a great deal about the life of our café by becoming regulars, thereby following the ordinary paths through which a person becomes a regular and finding ourselves with the particular rights and obligations that go along with this mundane identity” (p. 203). By becoming ordinary regulars and part of the actors in the shop, they were better able to analyze these codes and other taken-for-granted rules. An excellent example of this occurs when the researchers analyze a sign on the door informing customers that they should queue for food and drinks before taking a seat during times when the shop is especially busy (p. 205). This leads to an analysis of what queuing is and what role it plays, as well as looking at what it means for a shop to have a handwritten sign on its door. The article discusses the message a sign like this sends, and what it means when this rule is broken. It also discusses the interplay between rules such as these and rules that are more fundamental that take precedence over them. For example, the sign states that a customer should not choose a seat before ordering. However, it is a common custom in other cafes as well, for people to leave a bag or coat on a chair creating what Goffman would describe as “possessional territory” (p. 206). This idea of possessional territory overrides a handwritten note on the door; it is a more fundamental code of conduct. What is meant by this is that if a patron of the café leaves a bag on a chair before ordering, she is breaking the code outlined on the sign. However, this is not an invitation for someone to remove the bag, as removing the bag violates the more fundamental code of possessional territory.

The reason I explain this example from Laurier, Whyte, and Buckner is to showcase a way that ethnographic research has been used in the context of analyzing cafes and coffee shops as the public spaces that they are. The article also goes on to discuss other parallels to my research into Malmö’s Starbucks such as the significance of tables at the Flaming Cup and their placements (p. 208), what actually happens at tables (p. 211), the sounds of the shop and surrounding areas (p. 220), and (remembering that this was 2001, before the widespread use of cellphones and laptops) the tables being used as places to read and write (p. 215). The article also briefly discusses how moods can be made in a café (p. 200), a concept that Starbucks of course deals heavily in (Simon 2009, p. 136).

Looking at Methods of Research

Before an analysis of the shop could begin, data had to be collected. Naturally, all methods used in this research process are ethnographical and in agreement with a cultural analytical approach. To uphold this standard, this project mostly relied on qualitative research. Qualitative research was chosen over quantitative for this project due to constraints of time, a preference for a more open-ended research style, a lack of authority in the company to allow for a comprehensive quantitative approach, and the general consensus that qualitative research is superior when dealing with phenomena in a culturally analytic way.

Now allow me to be more specific about the particular qualitative methods used in this chapter. I used what I refer to as primary and secondary methods. The primary methods were semi-structured one-on-one interviews and observations done on location in two Starbucks shops. Secondary methods include extensive netnography and online research into Starbucks and recollections of my own previous experiences at Starbucks shops around the world.

These varieties of methods coalesced to result in the data discussed in this thesis. The purpose of combining research methods was to offer something new to the field of coffee shop ethnographies. Sensory or atmospheric coffee shop ethnographies are not common, and this research may help to supplement some of what is lacking in this area. It was also my intention for these methods to discover differing personal experiences at Starbucks, that is, my own experience as well as the experience of my interviewees and sources found online.

Semi-structured Interviews

In conjunction with observations, semi-structured one-on-one interviews provided the bulk of the data collected. A total of six interviews were conducted, all on location at the Starbucks in the Malmö Central Station in Malmö, Sweden. The actual interview length ranged from twenty-five minutes to forty-five minutes, although the total time spent in the Starbucks with each interviewee was generally much longer. This was due to the goal being to give the interviewee time to become acclimated to the shop and to develop their own opinions on the location and services. Each interviewee was also observed as they navigated the layout and chose and ordered

a beverage or snack. Only one declined to order anything. Attention was also paid to the side of the shop each favored, as well as the ultimate seating choice.

Of the six interviewees, five were Swedish and one American. Also five were women and one a man. All interviewees were in their mid-twenties and either currently bachelor or master's students at Lund University or recent graduates. These interviewees have been renamed, as is tradition, to protect their anonymity. What follows will be a brief overview of each. An interview log can be found at the end of the thesis.

Lauren is an American master's student at Lund University. She has been in Sweden about half a year. Maria is a Swedish master's student who spent the majority of her childhood in Mexico, where her father is from. Elsa is a recent graduate of the university, while Lisa and Johan are current bachelor students. Lisa spent her childhood in the UK. Emma is another Swedish master's student.

Each interviewee being a personal acquaintance of mine, the time spent at Starbucks was not solely professional. I believe that knowing me first allowed each interviewee to feel more comfortable in expressing themselves and their opinions without judgment, although one did mention feeling nervous about being interviewed. Because I chatted with each of them in the typical way that two friends do when having fika, then it could be that they were more open with me later. However, this is of course speculation and only a time machine could prove the assertion that putting the interviewee at ease resulted in a more truthful interview. It could just as easily be argued that our familiarity would mean that the interviewee did not feel any particular consequences from not sharing all their opinions and thus did not try as hard to be helpful.

A potential bias that might have occurred with my interviewees is the fact that I am American and Starbucks is American. This felt especially relevant to a Swedish interviewee who told me to take "no offense" before speaking negatively about coffee in the US. It seems that it could be possible that other interviewees did not speak entirely candidly for whatever reason due to my nationality. In the case of the American I interviewed, my background was helpful in finding common ground and in understanding references, which of course can help build rapport.

In addition to semi-structured in-person interviews, an interview over Facebook was also done. This was with an American man in his forties whom I do not know personally and who has never visited the Starbucks in Malmo. His interview results were used in a more supplementary fashion in this thesis.

On-site Observations

Observational research was conducted in the Starbucks at Malmö Central Station from January to April 2016. The total number of hours spent at the shop can be roughly estimated to be 25, although not all of this time was spent in observation. A portion was spent observing the shop at various times of day and at different days throughout the week. Attention was paid to the customers and baristas who interacted inside the shop and on the terrace, as well as the physical space that was being navigated and interacted with. This also involved taking note of the design choices and the placement of physical objects in the space. Photographs and sound recordings were also taken of the space. These were used for reference and memory refreshing when analysis was being done.

Included in these observations are my experiences as more than just a researcher. On each occasion I visited the shop, I took on the role of a customer. I selected food or drinks, interacted with the baristas, made decisions regarding seating choices, and followed the general rules of etiquette required of a Starbucks customer. This enabled me to gain an understand of a customer's experience firsthand.

These observations in the Malmö Central Station Starbucks shop were also contrasted and compared with my previous experiences at other Starbucks shops. Before beginning this research, I had been to dozens of Starbucks shops mostly in the US, but also in many places in Western Europe and East Asia. I believe these previous visits to many Starbucks shops complemented the fieldwork done in Malmö as they provide a context within which to place the Malmö shop. It was a case of "auto-ethnography", which is "a method that allows ethnographers to use their own experiences as a route through which to produce academic knowledge" (Pink, 2009, p. 64). Much of the findings of this thesis were gained and interpreted in a very subjective sense with a basis in the five senses, as the study of how something is experienced must be. There is no objectivity to an experience, only subjectivity. This is why the auto-ethnographical observations of this thesis are supplemented by the secondary methods and interviews with others.



Figure 1. Indoor entrance to the Malmö Starbucks from the food court interior

Additionally, before visiting the Malmö Starbucks to perform observations, observation was also done at a Starbucks shop near a university in Orlando, Florida in the US. This was a much shorter and less in-depth look and took place on a Sunday morning in January 2016 for the purpose of providing a comparison between what a Starbucks looks and acts like in its native USA, and how it works in Sweden, a country it is newly arrived in. This observation was not nearly as comprehensive as that done in Malmö.

Secondary Methods

In addition to the primary methods of research, data was also gathered in on the Internet in a supplementary fashion. This is called netnography, and is a “secondary” method because its influence and significance on the concluded results and findings is not as strong as that of the primary methods. It also comes from a more secondary source, as I as an interviewer and observer was not present in the shop for this, but instead gathered material from the Internet.

Hundreds of websites were visited and analyzed over the course of doing this netnography, with these perspectives contributing to and complementing the interviews and observations. Examples of this include everything from YouTube videos by Starbucks founders discussing their vision to reviews of Starbucks by internationals and Swedes alike on sites like TripAdvisor and Google. There are also many blogs and comments on social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram. Additionally, many news and business sites which were perused give a timeline of Starbucks's expansion into the world and into Sweden specifically. There is also information charting the growth of the store and a large body of material comparing various Starbucks locations.

This netnography focused both on the Malmö Starbucks location and Starbucks as a whole. There are many perspectives in the data, some looking into Starbucks in Scandinavia versus abroad, while others discuss what Starbucks as a company means for coffee. Google provides a massive amount of data that was analyzed, as the site collects information on a grand scale. There are charts tracking the average number of visitors to the Malmö location at every hour throughout the week, collections of reviews not only from Google but also Facebook and the Swedish review site Gula Sidorna, and photos and maps of the location.

What the findings from the netnography supplied is a comparative framework through which to view the interviews and observations. The practice allows for showing the current climate of opinions on the shop and Starbucks in general. The more qualitative research can then be viewed in relation to this. Also notable are my previous experiences at Starbucks shops around the world, which in combination with netnography make up the secondary research methods.

Theory in Starbucks

Cultural analysis utilizes sociological, anthropological, and other theories to explain phenomena. For the purpose of placing the Malmö Starbucks in the field of such discourse, this chapter will examine four theoretical approaches that form a solid foundation for my research in the shop. These analytic concepts are *habitus*, the third place, sensory ethnography, and the study of experiencescapes in the experience economy. The Malmö Starbucks and Starbucks as a company have dynamic relationships with where they are in their placement in the cultural analytic nexus. This chapter will shed some light on some of these relationships, but a more thorough analysis of the theories in relation to the Malmö Starbucks will come in later chapters.

Exploring Habitus

Although *habitus* as an idea has been around as early as Aristotle, it is classically defined by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in his 1977 book *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. *Habitus* is, to Bourdieu, “[s]ystems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor” (p. 72).

What this means is that, according to Bourdieu’s *habitus*, our dispositions are formed very early on in life by the way we are socialized. This early socialization results in a particular *habitus* for each individual that governs and determines the practices and dispositions of the individual. *Habitus* is therefore responsible for much of a person’s behaviors.

Here the theory works best when used in a more exploratory way to address the particular issues involved in this research. For the sake of this exploration, let us imagine a “Starbucks *habitus*”, or a set of dispositions, behaviors, and tastes a person forms over the course of learning to experience and use a particular thing or phenomenon. This Starbucks *habitus* would be formed but not necessarily solidified early on in life, as Bourdieu’s *habitus* must, but would change and

develop over time with each new experience. In addition to the initial formation, there would be secondary socialization processes at work. These would remake the *habitus* and cause it to differ from what it was originally.

What this would mean for a Starbucks opening outside its home country of the US is that non-American customers would presumably have a different Starbucks *habitus* to the those of Starbucks's original American customers. This could result in different preferences in services or experiences or flavors of coffee. Of course, this *habitus* could be more individual than national. When a Swedish interviewee of mine, Emma, expressed her dislike of Starbucks, she emphasized her dislike of American coffee in a way that reflected her particular Starbucks *habitus*. She said, "I am a big coffee person and Starbucks is very American. America doesn't have the same coffee as we do." Emma's coffee tastes were formed by her *habitus*. Her natural inclination to dislike Starbucks came from her preexisting feelings about American coffee which were formed by her previous experiences drinking it. Fowler describes a similar thing in her 1997 book on Bourdieu, although she addresses it from the perspective of his more traditional understanding of *habitus*. "The main source of these tastes or needs is the habitus, a set of attitudes engrained in agents so early that they acquire an unconscious compulsive force. As one such instance, Bourdieu reports that working-class men dislike fish because it conflicts with the rules of vigorous masculinity, the bones necessitating a more delicate operation than the hearty mouthfuls felt to be proper for a manly man" (p. 45). This example is more extreme and more fully researched, but still can explain how a person's *habitus* could influence how they experience and interact with Starbucks. Emma dislikes the US and has negative associations with American tastes, which results in her disliking Starbucks coffee.

Another way this invented Starbucks *habitus* works is by looking at how Starbucks is used and navigated by its customers. Is it easier for those with an American Starbucks *habitus* to order drinks and decide where to sit? Are those with a Swedish Starbucks *habitus* at a loss in the store, without the culmination of many past Starbucks experiences? How does it benefit Starbucks as a business to make its special culture accessible or inaccessible to those with differing Starbucks *habitus*? Bourdieu discusses how the *habitus* as a set of dispositions can help us know how to behave in a given context. "The habitus, as the system of dispositions to a certain practice, is an objective basis for regular modes of behavior, and thus for the regularity of modes of practice, and if practices can be predicted.... [T]his is because the effect of the habitus is that agents who are

equipped with it will behave in a certain way in certain circumstances” (1990, p. 77). As an example of this, another interviewee of mine, Maria, took pleasure in knowing she had learned the correct way to behave in Starbucks. In reference to the unique names of drink sizes at Starbucks, she said, “I showed that I knew Starbucks by saying the right name, instead of saying a large cup.” Maria had developed the right dispositions for navigating Starbucks. She knew the language. Having also grown up familiar with Starbucks, I too had no trouble placing an order and chatting with the American barista in a Swedish Starbucks, as I was familiar with what was expected of me in the store. Both Maria and I knew what the appropriate practices were for this situation, and we knew them inherently, from the way we developed our Starbucks *habitus*.

Although it would be convenient to be able to generalize, my research findings cannot account for a nationwide *habitus* in relation to Starbucks; that is too grand a thing for the limitations of my data and does not necessarily exist. Instead it is more beneficial to understand this *habitus* as being very individualized. My Starbucks *habitus* may not necessarily be the same as Lauren’s Starbucks *habitus*, despite our both being raised in the US. However, DiMaggio and Powell (1991) discuss, as Karen Cerulo states in *Culture in Mind*, that *habitus* could serve as the “analytic link that connects individual behavior and social structure” (2002, p. 49). There is an interplay between the social structure at Starbucks and the behavior of each individual customer. In the coming chapters, there will be more of an exploration of this connection.

A Great Good Third Place

In studies centered on coffee shops, it is not uncommon for Ray Oldenburg and his analytic concept of the “third place” to pop up (Waxman, 2006; Woldoff, Lozzi, & Dicks, 2013; Venkatraman & Nelson, 2008). The term “third place” is itself displayed on Starbucks’s website, which states that CEO Howard Schultz wanted Starbucks to be a “place for conversation and a sense of community. A third place between work and home” (Starbucks Company Information). In an interview, Schultz phrased the concept in nearly the same wording. “We’re in the business of human connection and humanity, creating communities in a third place between home and work” (Pelley, 2006). Even Forbes.com references third places in conjunction with Starbucks, though remaining skeptical as to Starbucks fulfilling the role (Mourdoukoutas, 2014).

This raises the question: what is the role of a third place?

In 1989 Ray Oldenburg wrote a book titled *The Great Good Place*, which laments the loss of frequented public spaces in suburban America (p. 13). For Oldenburg, these public spaces beyond the first place (home) and the second place (work) are essential for the well-being of people in a society. The third place is a café or beauty parlor or community center that can be visited and where the company of others can be enjoyed. It is something of an oasis away from the rest of life where friendships can be fostered and people can associate.

Oldenburg lists the characteristics of third places in his second chapter, which differentiates third places from other kinds of spaces. According to Oldenburg, the third place would be in a space that is on “neutral ground” (p. 22) where no one plays host, and it would also act as a “leveler” (p. 23) that shuns hierarchies. He insists that the primary activity which takes place is conversation (p. 26). The space should be accessible (p. 32) and plain (p. 36). It would be obvious that the atmosphere of the space is “playful” (p. 37), and he also admits to similarities between a third place and the home (p. 38). These characteristics can easily be said to describe certain coffee shops. *Welcome to the Experience Economy* describes a café that sells neither food nor drinks, but instead offers a space just for socializing. “Manager Nir Caspi told a reporter that people come to cafés to be seen and to meet people, not for the food” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998, p. 101). A place such as this feels in the spirit of a third place, where socializing is the prime objective. As for Oldenburg, his examples of such places in possession of these characteristics include the German *biergarten* and the French bistro (1989, p. 10). An analysis of the role of the Malmö Starbucks as a third place is present in later chapters.

Experiencescapes in the Experience Economy

According to the influential 1998 article by Pine and Gilmore titled “Welcome to the Experience Economy”, we are now living in the age of the experience economy. Experiences are what are being created and sold. According to Pine and Gilmore, the experience economy provides more than what the previous economies – agrarian, industrial, and service – offered. But what does it mean for Starbucks to be part of this experience economy? And what even is an experience?

The term “experience economy” was a buzzword in marketing circles for over a decade. Naturally, this resulted in a lot of push and pull, a lot of analysis and critique of the concept. I explain this analytic concept for the purpose of showing how Starbucks fits into or reacts against

it in a sensory and physical sense. Starbucks and the idea of the experience economy were both significant concepts at the same time and discussed by similar people. So how does it help to understand the experiences of Swedes at the Malmö Starbucks?

Before that is addressed, let us understand what the experience economy is and how it works. Pine and Gilmore refer to the “progression of economic value”, which they argue went from the agrarian economy to the experience economy (p. 97). If what the agrarian economy provided as a precursor to what Starbucks does now, it would be coffee beans themselves, which would then have to be prepared by the consumer. In the industrial economy, these coffee beans are packaged, ready to be made at home. The service economy then appeared and brewed the coffee for the consumer. Pine and Gilmore would describe Starbucks as being part of the fourth stage, offering an experience in addition to coffee. It is possible to see the progression of economic value below.

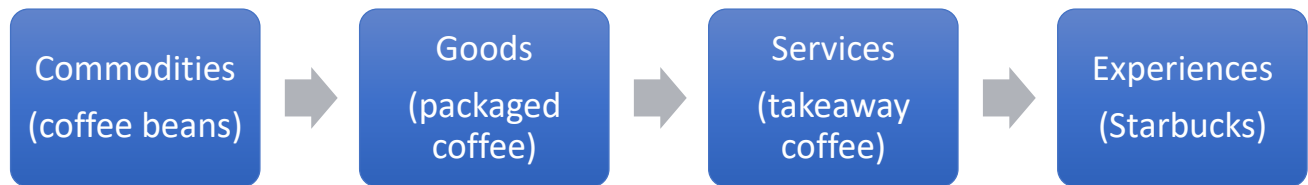


Figure 2. Progression of Economic Value with coffee as an example

Pine and Gilmore describe this phenomenon of experiences and the experience economy. “An experience occurs when a company intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event” (p. 98). This experience is composed of goods and services, although it reaches beyond them to create experiences that are all unique to each customer, in a way that commodities, goods, and services are not. Although Pine and Gilmore may have created a descriptive term for this idea that what is being sold is an experience supported by goods and services, this concept is not necessarily new. In the most basic sense, any sale of goods and services results in an experience. The sale is literally experienced by the customer in the way that every interaction and event is experienced by a person. What has changed is that the experience of the sale is crafted to be pleasant and interesting and memorable, with everything centered around a theme and goal.

Out of the experience economy came the notion of “experiencescapes”. A portmanteau of “experience” and “landscape”, experiencescapes refer to the “landscapes of experiences...that are not only organized by producers...but are also actively sought after by consumers” (O’Dell & Billing, 2005, p. 16). Experiencescapes are the necessary result of the experience economy; they are where companies cater to the consumer’s desire for what is beyond mere goods and services. They are also “generated through the manipulation of the material culture around us” (p. 15). These experiencescapes can be constructed from any number of differing things. Frequently, tourist attractions are described as experiencescapes. The goal of the tourist is often to experience the local culture and food or to experience a certain kind of thrill or lifestyle. This is the foundation of the success of things such as Disneyland or the ice hotels of northern Sweden.

This idea may also be applied to the Malmö Starbucks. In what way could the material aspects of the shop contribute to its role as an experiencescape? If an experiencescape is formed from the material and spatial part of a place, then the Malmö shop must be constructed with this in mind. Further in the paper will be an analysis on the customers’ reactions to the space and materiality.

Sensory Starbucks

The atmosphere of the shop is essential according to interviewees. As Lauren stated, “For me, the atmosphere is definitely a big factor, how hip the physical space is. What I’ve noticed is more or less the coffee is always the same.” Coffee is something that can be produced in the home at a much less expensive price, so what a coffee shop can provide is an unusual coffee variety and a pleasant physical space to enjoy it in. This emphasis on the sensory and atmospheric by interviewees and observations is a large part of the research findings. So what is atmosphere in this context and how can it be studied?

The edge that sensory ethnography has over a more traditional ethnography is that it deals with things that are much more immediate. The senses are the things used most instantly in experiencing. The analysis and the fitting of experiences into categories come much later. John Bishop and Naomi Bishop advocate for using film to best relay the sensory (Bishop & Bishop, 2013, p. 132). Film, photography, and other visual mediums are often used in the creation of sensory ethnography. Even Harvard University has a Sensory Ethnography Lab dedicated to the

purpose. Aside from photographs, this sort of visual presentation is not possible here, but that does not mean there cannot be a look into sensory aspects through written text. This would explore what anthropologists naturally talk about when discussing their work, which is “the field experience: the heat, the smell, the press of people, the subtlety of a gesture, the bleakness of the landscape, the quiet in the garden, or the hallucinatory overload of a festival” (p. 132). It is possible and common to find analyses of things like the symbolism and context of coffee shops and customers’ experiences, but these do not explain what it is like actually being there, which is the first way of understanding a space and an important factor for coffee shop customers.

Sarah Pink outlines sensory research in her 2009 book *Doing Sensory Ethnography*. She states that coming “closer to understanding how those other people experience, remember, and imagine” is a step in the work of an anthropologist (p. 23). To understand how Swedes experience the Malmö Starbucks, it can be useful to look at how the researcher experiences it.

Pink discusses the concept of embodiment in research, which is where “the researcher learns and knows through her or his whole body” (p. 25). In placing yourself in the midst of the research site, you take on the role of a customer. You are no longer viewing the location from outside, but instead must navigate the space. For example, online reviews of the Malmö Starbucks often describe it as “spacious”, but there is a vast difference between hearing this word and sitting in a place and feeling its spaciousness around you. This is also true of the other senses. The warmth of the coffee cup in your hands, the taste as you sip from it, the laughter from your friend across the table, these are all part of embodiment. Amanda Coffey describes embodiment in her book *The Ethnographic Self*. “Our bodies and the bodies of others are central to the practical accomplishment of fieldwork. We locate our physical being alongside those of others as we negotiate the spatial context of the field. We concern ourselves with the positioning, visibility, and performance of our own embodied self as we undertake participant observation” (1999, p. 59).

The way the body experiences senses contributes to how the person experiences atmosphere, which is heavily tied to physical space. The atmosphere a space has can be described as the general feeling that comes from the culmination of all the experiences of the senses. Later chapters will look into what specific things contribute to the creation of atmosphere in the Malmö Starbucks.

Starbucks as a Personal Sensory Experience

Any space can be examined in a sensory fashion. Inspired by theories of sensory ethnography and its emphasis on the role of space in conjunction with it, this chapter will provide a basic descriptive overview of the spatial and material culture that is Malmö's Starbucks. Primarily drawing from the extensive observational portion of my research collection, this chapter will be highly personalized. To begin the chapter, the research site will be outlined and described to give a setting for the analysis to come. The senses will be understood in this chapter as sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell, as is traditional in Western understanding (Pink, 2009, p. 51).

Later in this chapter there will be two free-flowing pieces of text. The first was written while on one of many occasions spent sitting in the Malmö Central Station Starbucks, the second is a similar but comparative text written in a Starbucks in Orlando, Florida. The purpose of these two instances of somewhat stream-of-consciousness writing is to give the reader the truest experiential account of these two shops as possible. Both were written while present in the respective shops while physically *experiencing* them. The first also delves into the role of coffee in Starbucks and in people's lives. Following this there will be a section detailing similarities and differences between the two shops, for the sake of contrast. A less personal and more general analysis of the shops will come in the chapter following this one.

Research Site

The main site of research was the Starbucks shop located directly in the Malmö Central Train Station. This shop was opened in February of 2012 in the cafeteria area of the station. It took over the location of what was previously a sports bar, and is situated between an exit from the station and another coffee shop, the Swedish chain Espresso House. See the figure from Google Maps below for a more precise location (Google Maps, 2016). Starbucks is located in the bottom left of the image.

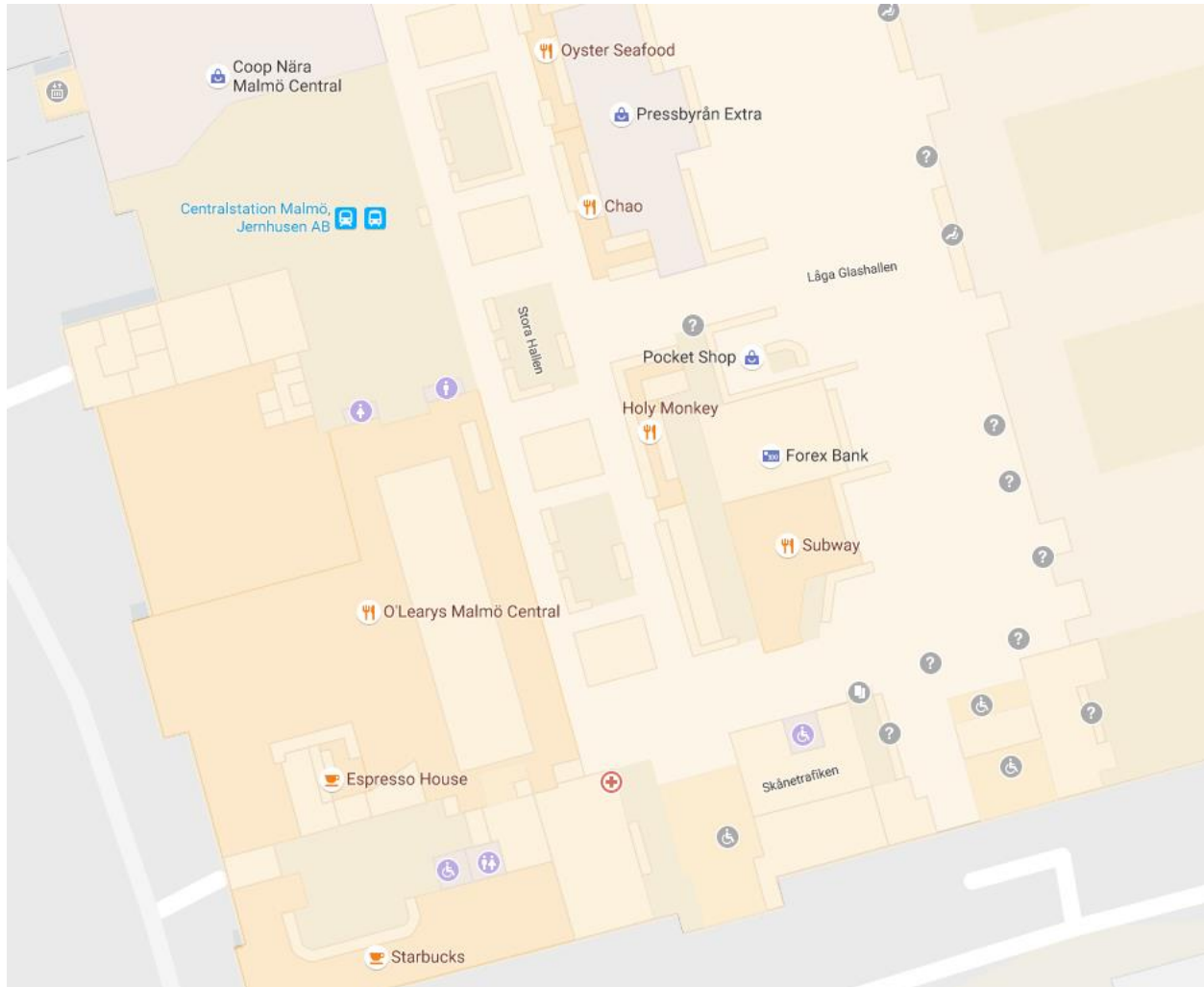


Figure 3. Google Maps view of the layout of the Malmö Central Station

As the shop is located in a train station, it is not surprising that it has decorations that go along with this theme of train stations and travel. Near both entrances to the shop – one leading outside to a major bus hub and the other inside to the train station’s food court – there are several stacks of old-fashioned decorative suitcases reaching nearly the height of an average person. Near the suitcases are baskets holding coffee beans, each with a little sign making clear from which country the beans were harvested and what particular flavor of coffee each creates. This Starbucks is playing up its location in a venue that naturally reminds a customer of travel and adventure, two things which have long contributed to Starbucks’s image. And the design choices were very intentional. The “theme must drive all the design elements and staged events of the experience toward a unified story line that wholly captivates the customer” (Pine and Gilmore, p. 103). All

aspects of the shop point to Starbucks being an intellectual, well-traveled place for intellectual well-traveled people. This shop also has the customary collector's mugs, these sporting "Malmö" in large yellow letters accompanied by traditional images from Sweden such as the Dala Horse.

Reviews of the shop are generally positive, comparing it favorably to other Starbucks shops (Malmö Starbucks Reviews). The space is considered "cozy", "spacious", and "comfy". One reviewer even described it as "functioning as a shelter near the station" although another downplayed its appeal by stating, "It's a Starbucks" (Malmö Starbucks Reviews).

As for specifics, the indoor part of the shop has a total of 85 seats, 43 on one side and 42 on the other. There are various kinds of tables by the chairs, but two armchairs have no table at all. Some seats are brown leather couches with an accompanying coffee table. Some are armchairs, some wooden café chairs. On one side there's a long, beautiful rugged-looking wooden table with eight seats. Seldom are the majority of these seats filled. There are four stools by the bar in Starbucks green. They remain largely unused in every visit I've made to the shop, except on occasion by the staff. There are also a number of white round tables, some alone with space for two customers, others put alongside another white round table to make space for four. There are also tall wooden square tables with high stools, unsurprisingly in Starbucks green.

The ceilings are high, and white as the walls with their wood paneling until about halfway up the wall. The walls are decorated with old clocks and large pictures featuring coffee in its various stages beans to drinks. Light comes from sconces that decorate the walls every so often, although it is the large floor-to-ceiling windows that demand most of the attention. They look out onto the bus stop or the sidewalks with pedestrians going about their business or the shop's terrace near the front entrance, holding another dozen seats. The floor of the shop is tiled a light green and cream marbled pattern. There's a large red rug under the large wooden table and a few others spread throughout the shop. All the tones in the shop are rich and natural, all beiges and greens and browns.

Drawing the eye is the bar in the center, between the two rooms that make up the shop. This is where the baristas take orders and make drinks, and where customers often form a line. The bar is made of dark wood and, as interviewee Lisa stated, looks like something that would be more at home offering alcoholic beverages than cups of coffee.



Figure 4. Interior of the Malmö Central Station Starbucks

A Malmö, Sweden Experience

Although Starbucks advertises itself as a venue whose purpose is providing coffee, I am not wholly convinced that is what I'm seeing here. In an obvious sense, of course Starbucks sells coffee, but sitting here in the shop and looking around at the customers, it is almost as though the coffee does not exist. One man on a laptop near me has no beverage or food at all, having finished it an hour ago. Another three people dressed in business attire ignore the half-emptied cups in front of them until the man borrows a straw from one of the women. Those on laptops almost outnumber those not on laptops. There are customers with suitcases, on phones, alone, in groups, and speaking all kinds of different languages. The barista seems to hail from the US, and when asked if she speaks Swedish answers, "I speak Starbucks Swedish." Age and gender do not influence who is a patron of the shop, with a variety of genders and ages represented. Interestingly, this Starbucks seems to attract a more diverse ethnic customership than do most other coffee shops in Sweden that I have been to.

The sounds that are heard are music, conversations, and the buses outside. The vibe is pleasant but not particularly inviting. There are forty available seats on this side of the shop,

although I have never seen more than half of those filled. The sofas always fill up first, and I often find myself seated at the high table in the corner with the high stool, looking over the whole of the room. But what does it mean to *be* here, to exist in the shop and experience it? The music now makes me wistful and I resist looking out the window at the people waiting for the bus to take them somewhere else that's not here. If you come with friends, you focus on them. The scenery doesn't matter as much. Here for an interview or a meeting with clients, you're nervous, hyperaware of the layout of the place.

In this way this shop is like anywhere and anything. I influence the space and it influences me, the push and pull of actor and space. Things become what you make them, and you become what they make you. For me now, this place is too bright, I am too exposed perched on this high stool, wondering if the barista who just cleared my table can tell I am writing my impressions of a place she spends so much time to earn her living. She recognizes me, I think, from how often I come here and from how often I chat with her when I place my order, North American style, just making conversation. The couple with their laptops on the far sofa is eating takeaway food from the restaurant next door, wrapped around each other. They have been here awhile. I would guess students studying. The businessman in the armchair asked me to watch his things when he went to buy something. He is still young and it took him repeating himself in two languages before I knew what he was asking.

I am looking at what coffee does here. It is an excuse to meet some friends for conversation. It buys you an hour to talk business with your associates or Wi-Fi to finish your university assignment. In Orlando, a Starbucks coffee gives you energy for the morning. Showing up at work with one every day lets your coworkers buy you little keychains that say "Don't talk to me before I've had my coffee" for Christmas gift exchanges. It buys you space to read novels or meet dates. In both places, coffee helps you form your identity. My interviewees tended to think drinking it makes you an adult. It can be a rite of passage. Imagine seventeen-year-old me, holding my nose closed and drinking down my caramel macchiato to cement my place as a someone who chose to study literature in college, an intellectual.

Many Swedes have been drinking coffee far longer than I have. One of my interviewees, Emma, claims she started at ten years old, the only child having a cup at afterschool programs sitting at a tableful of adults. Johan began at twelve, sipping from mugs as he and his father read side by side from separate books. Lisa never got the hang of it, calls it too adult, and only drinks

it only for *fika* as a new university tradition with friends. So what does Starbucks want its coffee to be in Sweden? I personally suspect I will always prefer chai lattes from Starbucks, skipping anything with coffee altogether. Because Starbucks is beyond coffee now, and I would guess it knows it. CEO Howard Schultz may have visited Italian cafes a few decades ago and sought to bring their charm back to Seattle, but he was right to focus more on the shop than the beans it had always sold separately. I would argue that coffee is the ideal that Starbucks advertises because it is that intellectual, adult, energy-giving thing we want to think we can reach. And maybe we can in a way, while we are letting our cappuccino cool on the coffee table beside us as we passionately discuss our lives with our friends, or work to finish our paper before its deadline, or get lost in reading our novels. Of course, some patrons do focus on the coffee, and especially in Orlando even order them to-go. Maria comes to Starbucks to buy drinks she knows she can find here; she is familiar enough with the menu.

It is just a place, just a tool that can be used or not used, utilized or ignored. Starbucks is a collection of chairs and tables and foods and drinks, and it is up to the individual to come in and maneuver the space and sip the drinks and make it come alive. If the customers are the agents giving the place character, then what is Starbucks? Is it the coffee? Or is it the people, whose voices are the loudest thing you hear, drowning out the music from the speakers? Starbucks is an infinite number of Starbucks. It can have slow hours and fast ones and different clientele in different seasons, but it is never the same from one moment to the next. And that change and personalization is just as much a part of it as anything else.

An Orlando, Florida Experience

The first thing I notice is the sunlight coming in from the large windows. The shop has a really high ceiling that gives it that sort of warehouse-feel. It is all painted one color, an off-white, and it shows you the bones of this place. When I came in, I noticed all the parking spaces outside are full and there is a line to the drive-through. There is a constant line to order and to pick up food. This Starbucks has a friendly barista, though I had a hard time hearing her over the sound of things scraping about in the kitchen area, which isn't enclosed at all. Interestingly, the baristas do not call out the person's name when they finish a drink, despite Starbucks being famous for asking for names with orders. They mostly call out what the drink is. The barista spelled my name

“Clarrisa” on my cup, which is less correct than it is usually written at Starbucks. The baristas wear the Starbucks gear: all black with black aprons with the logo on them and visors or beanies. They have headsets.

Inside not all the seats are full, but most. There is one table sort of hidden that fits about six people, with two people using it, both on their laptops and who do not know each other. They are young, I would guess college students. Then there is another six-person table nearer the center and near a window. There are three laptop users on this one who don’t seem to know each other. Again, I would guess university students, given how close this shop is to a university. There are two girls next to me chatting about the program that they are taking in counseling or psychology. They are speaking loud enough that I can follow their conversation without thinking about it.

There are some people here who do not appear to be students. They primarily sit in the armchairs just inside the main entrance. The sounds I can hear are the staff laughing and customers talking. Two strangers waiting for drinks are chatting about where they are from. Now it is three strangers, three men.

I am sitting at a two-person table that is annoyingly in the middle of the room and by the checkout area of the shop. There are some armchairs behind me near the main entrance. Another entrance is in front of me between the two six-person tables. Some people use this to leave, but none to enter. There are some tables and chairs outside, but it’s around 40 degrees Fahrenheit today and no Floridian wants to sit out in the cold. The décor of this place is all natural colors, things like brown woods and Starbucks greens and gray tiles and dark granite countertops. The tables are all either wood or some kind of metal. There’s also a little cart at the other exit with condiments to put in your coffee. There’s milk and sugar and napkins and a trash can nearby. Most people here aren’t chatting. There are also a lot of windows. They cover about half of two walls. There are about six or eight four-person metal tables outside.

The people at the six-person tables seem to be totally comfortable sitting right next to strangers. They look as though they own the space. A girl sits “Indian-style” on her chair, even turned near the guy next to her. He has his bag on the chair on the other side of him, a clear sign that no one should try to sit there. Most are on laptops, but one girl fiddles with her phone. They largely ignore their drinks. I am guessing the drinks are a pretense for being here, like they are for me. One girl just left her stuff unattended to go to the bathroom. There is a sense of safety here.



Figure 5. Interior of the Orlando, Florida Starbucks observed in this thesis

People all seem to follow the same pattern when they enter the Starbucks space. They come in through the main entrance where directly in front of them is the counter to order. They wait in line and think about what they want. Then they order and walk to where they wait on the other side for their order, which is called out once by a barista. They maybe say something to someone standing next to them, maybe a boyfriend or a stranger or remain quiet, then they take their stuff and find a seat or leave through either of the exits. There isn't always a line. When they come in the main entrance, there are bathrooms to the right and some food to buy is in front.

This shop itself is pretty clean, but the bathroom is not the best. There is awkward space waiting for it, too close to the entrance and not enough room. Men's and women's restrooms are separate, and there is only one for each. There are newspapers by the door and a lot of healthy options here and a lot of what comes across to me as pretentious coffee paraphernalia, from different kinds of roasts to mugs.

As for hearing, most of the sound comes from the baristas. They are fiddling with stuff in their kiosk. They scoop ice and clank metal together. I hear metal and plastic and voices and ice and equipment being washed. I hear refrigerator doors opening and closing.

I just watched an unusual exchange. Two guys met up in here and one sold the other a synthesizer for making music. He brought it in in a box and set it at the table next to mine and these two guys looked it over together. The guy selling was really into his art and both were pretty hipster. The other guy bought it and left. I think they met here for the first time. There are lots of guys here. Even more middle aged men than women.

The parking lot is less full now. Those on laptops still have not budged. People go on phones as much as on computers. There is even a guy with a book near me. Again I notice that everyone seems to ignore their drinks. I feel very comfortable here, like I fit in with the clientele. Not out of place at all.



Figure 6. Sign in the Orlando, Florida Starbucks, showcasing the importance Starbucks places on customer satisfaction

Some Comparisons

There are a few comparisons that can be made between the Malmö Starbucks and one in Orlando, Florida. As far as design goes, the two Starbucks shops are outfitted in the classic Starbucks style. The colors remain similar in greens and browns and creams and blacks. Both also have similar variation in their seating. Sofas, long tables, tables for one, and outdoor seating can

be found at either shop. High ceilings were present in both the shops as well, and large windows. However, the actual architecture of each shop was very different. The Malmö shop is very central and spacious, situated directly in a train station. The small, more cramped Orlando shop stands on its own in the parking lot near a strip mall. It is primarily accessed by those who have driven their cars there, whether to purchase a coffee by way of the drive-through or to sit inside and sip from their cup. On the other hand, the Malmö shop is essentially impossible to access by car and is instead approached by train, bus, or on foot. This difference gives the Orlando shop more of a feel of intentionality for the customers. To visit it, a customer would have to go more out of their way than a customer of the Malmö shop. Visiting the Malmö shop can be more accidental. It is far more central, it is connected to a food court, and it is reachable by numerous means.

What is happening with these differences is that the Malmö Starbucks is adapting itself to deal with what is known as “glocalization” – a portmanteau of “local” and “globalization”. “Globalization” itself is a term created by sociologist Roland Robertson in 1979. The term was first used in writing in 1982. “[M]y definition of globalization is twofold: increasing connectivity on the one hand, increasingly reflexive global consciousness on the other” (Robertson, 2014, p. 450). He then went on to coin “glocalization” and define it as a way “to capture the contemporary interplay of the universal and the particular within globalization processes” and to insist that it is important to see “glocalization in relation to ‘real world’ endeavors to recontextualize global phenomena or macroscopic processes with respect to local cultures” (Guilianotti & Robertson, 2012, p. 1). To put it more simply, glocalization deals with what must happen when a foreign or global thing – in this case Starbucks – is confronted with a local culture. Naturally, this involves the combination of the local and the global, implying a change on both sides. Let us continue to examine the differences and similarities in this light.

Interestingly, both shops have friendly American baristas, though the Malmö shop also has additional baristas from other countries. English is also used on many signs in both shops, as well as Starbucks’s borrowed Italianesque words for things related to coffee. The difference is that the Malmö Starbucks pairs these English and “Italian” words with occasional Swedish descriptions, though the Swedish is by no means everywhere. The customers in the Orlando Starbucks spend more time chatting with the baristas and other customers while they wait than those in the Malmö shop. In both places strangers would meet to discuss business or negotiate a transaction. The shops were seen as neutral ground.

The actual food and drink offerings in the two shops were different, but not hugely. All of the classic Starbucks drinks were offered at both, and similar-style cups and coffee bean roasts were available. The Malmö shop offered some traditional Swedish baked foods, such as *chokladbullar* and cinnamon rolls. One interesting difference are the “American pancakes” sold at the Malmö Starbucks, which of course would have been named differently had they been sold at the Orlando shop. Also strange to American customers would be the knife and fork given when a bagel was purchased in the Swedish shop, utensils seen as unnecessary when eating bagels.

Both shops shared an insistence on customer satisfaction when it came to the food, perhaps due to the company’s origins in the US which greatly emphasizes the phrase, “the customer is always right”. In the Orlando shop, there is a sign that reads, “Love your beverage or let us know. We’ll always make it right” (see figure 6). In the Malmö shop, I experienced the American barista offering to make me a different drink at no extra charge, were I to dislike the new seasonal one I was trying.

In conclusion, the two shops share the essentials of Starbucks: music, power outlets, Wi-Fi, bathrooms, coffee, and good service. Both shops seek to offer a haven or a third place with their neutral ground, amenities, and friendly staff. They vary slightly in their offerings of these things in ways that reflect what is desirable or commonplace in the culture that the shop is placed in. These include, for example, the drive-through in the Florida shop or the required bathroom code in the Malmö one. However, as my interviewee Lauren said about visiting a Starbucks abroad, “Starbucks is really great because you know it’s reliable...it’s predictable for the most part. You know you’re going to get similar setup.” And that is what Starbucks offers in these two shops – an experience of something familiar, reliable, and in line with the goal of the brand.

Lessons from the Data

Following the collection of data and the exploration of theories, an analysis of the findings should be presented. This chapter will begin to look at the meaning of the research and show some insight into how the Malmö Starbucks works, that is, what it does and does not do in connection with the earlier redefinition of *habitus* and the shop as an experiencescape in the experience economy.

It will also examine the unique role of coffee in Sweden, the Swedish need for coziness, the feeling of atmosphere, Starbucks as an attempt at a third place, and a discussion of a man whose mission it is to visit every Starbucks on the globe.

Raw Findings

Some research findings into the Malmö Central Station Starbucks are interesting at a basic level. For example, the research indicates that Starbucks capitalizes on its image as a familiar, reliable place. Elsa, Lauren, Johan, and Maria all express positive feelings towards Starbucks being familiar in the sense of it being Western, being American, having reliable and constant facilities, or being a place you always know you can buy drinks you like. Online reviews and blogs also praised this. On finding Starbucks in Japan, my Swedish interviewee Johan said, “Okay, this I can relate to. It's not great really, but it's more Western than the other things here.” This sense of familiarity and almost a feeling of being at home are central to Starbucks’s brand. In this way, Starbucks almost plays the role of a third place, where each shop is a familiar space, even if that particular location has not previously been visited. This contributes to the proportionately large number of international customers who visit the Malmö Starbucks.

There were further findings taken from the interviews conducted. When questioned about the basic elements of the physical space such as lighting, layout, sound, and décor, my interviewees were sometimes in agreement and sometimes not. They each experienced the space very subjectively, and often in disagreement with my own impressions and preferences. The space affected each interviewee differently. What does this mean? It could speak to the subjectivity of human experiences and the strong individual nature of preference. It indicates that each person’s

Starbucks *habitus* resulted in them having different expectations and different past experiences to compare this shop against, whether favorably or unfavorably. Certainly, it was partially influenced by environmental fluctuations in the date or time the shop was visited.

One thing of note regarding the physical space is my interviewee's use of the word *mys*. *Mys* is a trait that is very important to Swedes. Commonly translated from Swedish as "coziness", this word is often used in reference to things like warm blankets or rooms with Christmas lights and fireplaces, although it also can describe anything from moods to people to accents. It was mentioned by nearly all my interviewees, Swedish and American alike, though some used "cozy" instead of "*mys*". Agreed upon by all my interviewees is the necessity of *mys* in a coffee shop, though they again did not agree on whether Malmö's Starbucks was *mysig*. Many online reviewers of the shop, however, described the location as very cozy (Starbucks, Malmö - Eniro.se). For Starbucks to succeed in Sweden with Swedish customers, Starbucks would benefit from paying closer attention to the aspects of the interior design that make a place feel cozy. Interviewees stressed things such as the presence of candles, sofas, and curtains, and the necessity of a more enclosed space than the shop currently has. They did, however, generally view the décor favorably, as was supported by online reviews.

The Reason for the Coffee

Research into Starbucks's role in Sweden seems to regularly come back to one question. What role does Starbucks play in the everyday lives of Swedes, if any? This research can begin to answer this question.

Findings from my interviewees and my observations show variety in the reasons to visit Starbucks. There is not a single shared motive all Starbucks customers have in common. Some people go solely for the coffee, while others go to study, await a train, find a plug to charge a phone, have a rest from hectic everyday life, buy a coffee to have access to a restroom, catch up with a friend or two, meet a date, relax alone with a book, write on computers or in journals, people watch, and the list goes on. The space is versatile and neutral. There are unspoken rules governing behavior in any sort of public space, but within the confines of those rules Starbucks allows for many possibilities.

Some of these reasons for visiting Starbucks are unique to Sweden. My interviewees frequently mentioned visiting coffee shops for the purpose of having a *fika*. Brones and Kindvall describe the Swedish notion of *fika* in their book *Fika: The Art of the Swedish Coffee Break*. “Functioning as both a verb and a noun, the concept of *fika* is simple. It is the moment that you take a break, often with a cup of coffee, but alternatively with tea, and find a baked good to pair with it. You can do it alone, you can do it with friends. You can do it at home, in a park or at work. But the essential thing is that you do it, that you make time to take a break: that's what *fika* is all about” (2015). This phenomenon of having a *fika* reflects the overarching Swedish culture that values taking time to relax and enjoy life, especially in a space that shuns hierarchies and promotes togetherness. Interviewees Emma and Johan also both emphasized the notion of *fika* being a break. Is Starbucks compatible with this Swedish coffee drinking culture? In a sense, this is what Starbucks promotes – a coming togetherness over a cup of coffee. Starbucks dreams of being a third place, neutral space, a part of the community. *Fika* would fit right in with that were it not for another of my research findings – Swedes have a healthy distrust of chain coffee shops.

Starbucks as a chain was described by my interviewees in terms of “not having heart”, “not being genuine”, being “impersonal”, or being the “lazy choice”. An interviewee described herself as feeling “reluctant to all kinds of chains when it comes to coffee”. There is a perceived authenticity to independent shops that Starbucks has not been able to replicate. This distrust extended to other coffee chains in Sweden and most interviewees did not express a preference for one over the other when it came to chains. This would seem to be a potential hurdle for Starbucks hoping to expand into Sweden if there was not already evidence that other coffee chains have managed to have a large presence in the country. Espresso House, a competitor of Starbucks, claims to have 220 shop locations in Scandinavia (Espresso House – Om Oss) compared to the 18 locations Starbucks has in Sweden (Starbucks.se – Om Oss). Therefore, chains do succeed in Sweden, despite my interviewee’s opinions on them. Also interesting is that, among the interviewees most likely to describe themselves as being coffee enthusiasts, the idea of chains seems to become less appealing. This shows that the more interested a person is in coffee even to the point of considering it a hobby, the less favorably they will view chains.

What this means is that chains such as Wayne’s Coffee and Espresso House are absolutely places where *fika* – this essential element in Swedish coffee culture – can happen. As Starbucks grows and expands in Sweden, it too will become a common place for Swedes to *fika*. A barrier to

this currently is that many of the Starbucks shops in Sweden are present only in airports and train stations (Starbucks.se – Om Oss), where international visitors are frequent, and not in more common everyday locations, and certainly not in every town. Several of my interviewees reside in Lund, a nearby town to Malmö. Most of these did not have particularly strong feelings about Starbucks, but stressed that visiting the location was not worth the commute, especially with equivalent coffee shops much closer to home. *Fika* is such a part of everyday life that it is not practical to travel far for it.

Again we return to the question of what role Starbucks plays in Malmö. To answer this, it may be useful to look in reverse and find the things that are not done at Malmö's Starbucks. Loud music and videos are not played on instruments or screens. People are not barefoot or dressed similarly casually. Gatherings larger than five people are rare. There is no culture of literature discussions or political agendas, as was historically common in European coffee shops (Habermas, 1989, p. 32). The space is not officially used for meetings or classes. The shop cannot be rented out for events. Dining tables, sofas, and coffee tables are used, but customers' possessions are not strewn all over the shop. These possessions are never left unattended if the customer leaves the store. Whole meals are seldom consumed. There is no drinking alcohol or smoking. Customers do not sit beside strangers for the purpose of conversation. Children do not play games, shriek, or run around the tables. The baristas do not have unusual hairstyles or tattoos.

But what does this say about the role of Starbucks? The Malmö Starbucks may be solidly on neutral ground, but it is not a private venue. It is not a home. It advertises itself as a third place but the content of the shop is not "edgy" or shaped much by the clientele. Instead it is conventional, safe. It is not affiliated with any controversial groups, but it is quick to announce passion for "safe" things such as new music artists and eco-friendly coffee-growing. This results in an exclusion of customers who cannot follow these unwritten rules above. For those who can, however, the shop offers a haven to *fika*, to await a train. It is familiarity for international customers setting foot in Sweden for the first time. It is glocalization, an American novelty, seen in all the films but not fully accepted. It is where to go when the line for Espresso House is too long. It's just another coffee chain.

Every Starbucks in the World

In 1997, an American man whose full legal name is Winter began a quest to visit every Starbucks shop in the world (Alexander, 2014). According to his website as of September 12th, 2016, Winter has now been to 13,205 different company-owned Starbucks shops on multiple continents and has no plans to stop anytime soon (Starbuckseverywhere.net). When interviewed by me, he explained that what connects all Starbucks shops is their “dedication to customer service”, and his understanding of the biggest difference across countries is that the food offerings are “tailored to local tastes”. Winter did not elaborate much on these answers. He knew that I, like many people, was familiar with Starbucks and had visited a few dozen stores myself. I already had a formed Starbucks *habitus*. If Starbucks is composed of both material objects and intangible perceptions, then Winter’s experience could shed light on the physical and material aspects of different shops.

Just as Winter seeks to set foot in every Starbucks shop in the world, my interviewees also had multiple previous Starbucks experiences. That is, the Malmö Starbucks shop was not the first Starbucks shop visited by a single one of them, and not a single online source found in the netnography described the shop as their first Starbucks experience. Each had previously been to Starbucks, and of those previous shops, the majority of them were abroad. Naturally, they had already heard the stereotypes about Starbucks customers, were familiar with the hype surrounding pumpkin spice lattes, and had opinions about Starbucks first expanding into Sweden. When brought into the Malmö store for a drink and an interview, not one interviewee was a blank slate when it came to Starbucks. Each had already formed a *habitus* about the company. An interviewee even explained that the Malmö location “doesn’t feel like a Starbucks”, which is something that can only be said when a person has a fully developed concept of a thing.

No fewer than two reviews on Tripadvisor.se use the sentence “Starbucks is Starbucks” to describe their experience in the Malmö location (*TripAdvisor*). Many others, in agreement with my interviewees, describe the shop in terms of “knowing what to expect” and the coffee being the same quality and taste across Starbucks shops. Most reviewers in some way stress that they have experience visiting Starbucks shops in different places around the world. It therefore seems that the natural urge when speaking about the Malmö Starbucks is to speak about other Starbucks

shops, other coffee shops. The shop does not exist in isolation, but as part of a larger phenomenon that is the brand.

Interestingly, what is occurring here is the fact that people are not initially inclined try to separate the Malmö Central Station Starbucks location from every other experience they have had with Starbucks. It is not the natural reaction to place them in separate categories. Instead, they run together in a continuous flow of comparison and contrast. This inclination toward connection is not bad news for Starbucks. According to the mere-exposure effect as described by *Psychology Today*, what research shows “is that people develop a liking towards stimuli that are familiar” (Raghunathan, 2012). The more exposure Starbucks has in Sweden, the better it will be received. Of course, there are exceptions to this due to external factors. But all other things the same, psychologically a familiar thing will be more liked than an unfamiliar thing.

But can the Malmö location only evoke opinions related to Starbucks the company, Starbucks the intangible? Let us examine where shop-specific things are referenced. The online reviewers commonly compliment the atmosphere of the space compared to that of other Starbucks shops. They use words such as “private”, “spacious”, and “secluded”. The size of the shop was said to be “three times larger than a US Starbucks”. Additionally, they praise the shop for being relaxing, cozy, and warm. The staff are described as friendly and speaking both Swedish and English fluently and easily. Interestingly, the negative reviews almost never mention something specific to the Malmö shop, but are instead critiques of Starbucks as a whole. These lament the price of drinks and the blandness of chain coffee shops, although one review criticized the shop for not being especially environmentally friendly. However, reviews are predominantly positive.

Far and away the most commented on facet of the shop that is unique to it is its architecture and décor. Reviewers praise its authenticity in keeping the feel of an old railway station with its walls of wood paneling and use of old luggage as decorations. One review even compared the space inside the train station to New York’s Grand Central Station (*TripAdvisor*). My interviewees also almost universally drew attention to these design choices, mostly in a positive light. They lend a sincerer feel to a chain coffee shop in a country that, as explained earlier, very much claims to dislike chains. This sort of positive uniqueness is valuable when it stacks on top of the traditionally great customer service, Wi-Fi, and coffee that Starbucks is known for. Gothenburg, Sweden’s central station Starbucks also benefits from an unusual design with its two stories and warm lighting. These central shops offer positive experiences and cozy experiences to deal with

the typical Starbucks, which my interviewee Lauren described as “reliable” but an online reviewer called “nothing to get excited about”.



Figure 7. Exterior of the Gothenburg Central Station Starbucks

In conclusion, the Malmö Starbucks is in the position of providing an experience to customers who arrive with preconceptions and a predetermined Starbucks *habitus*. The experiencescape of the shop must be designed around either living up to these expectations or surpassing them. The shop has succeeded in its nostalgic train station design, spaciousness, and fantastic customer service, which are the ways it is unique compared to other Starbucks shops. The shop is still Starbucks at its core, and will continue to exist as both the material experiencescape that is the location and as the Starbucks *habitus* that each of its customers has. From this point of view, it is connected to every other Starbucks in the world, and even if Winter has yet to visit it, in a way he already has.

Experiencing the Space

We have thus far been operating under the assumption that the Malmö Starbucks is taking advantage of the experience economy by offering an experiencescape. Is this the case? Let us examine it here.

It may seem strange to think of Starbucks as offering an experience, because, after all, isn't everything an experience? What would make Starbucks special in this way? Starbucks is not an entertainment company, and does not overtly market itself as such. It is not Disneyland with its foods and rollercoasters and princesses in costumes. In the same spirit as Disneyland, however, Starbucks does offer experiences that engage the consumer, that appeal to the consumer's five senses. The Malmö Starbucks provides coffee, but, as my interviewees insist and my observations support, that is almost never the sole reason to go there. At face value, Starbucks appears to sell Frappuccinos and muffins. Those are the things, after all, that customers pay for. After digging a little deeper, Starbucks may also be seen to be selling table space, power outlets, and bathroom use as bonuses along with the foods and drinks. These are the physical things that can be experienced through the senses after purchasing anything from the menu, but there is more to it than that.

Of course, no two experiences are alike. No two people will come away from a film with the same impressions, and neither will any two people have the same experience at a Starbucks shop, yet an experience is what is being created and sold. "Experiences are highly personal, subjectively perceived, intangible, ever fleeting and continuously on-going. Nonetheless, as commodities they are more than randomly occurring phenomena located entirely in the minds of individuals. The commodification of and search for experiences has a material base that is itself anchored in space" (O'Dell & Billing, 2005, p.15). The physical space of the shop is essential for customers' experiences; the space influences the experience.

In *Everything But the Coffee*, Bryant Simon goes into the cultural capital that is acquired by frequenting Starbucks, and this does contribute to the experience of going to Starbucks. Among a certain kind of people, there is cultural capital in being well-traveled (p. 151). Starbucks was most commonly visited outside Sweden by my Swedish interviewees and those posting reviews online. I also frequently heard languages other than Swedish being spoken in the Malmö location. In contrast to the Starbucks in Orlando and in many other Starbucks in the US, the Malmö shop is

very international. A visit to the shop for a Swede provides a reminder of travel experiences. Also, as interviewee Johan described, Starbucks was appealing to his peers when it first arrived, because it was a thing that was previously only known in entertainment, media, and time spent abroad. The Malmö shop can contribute to its image as a source of cultural capital by manipulating the material space.

It is this creation of cultural capital that helps work with experiencescapes to combine to create an atmosphere, an ambience. Despite this, the material space will not always evoke the same reactions and feelings in every person who experiences it, especially for people who differ widely in their social and cultural backgrounds (Heelas, 1996). However, enough is often shared between the customers for Starbucks to be considerate in its design choices. Customers in the Malmö shop typically share some things in common, in spite of differences in age and nationality. From the observations it is clear that most are educated, middle class, and not members of fringe subcultures. The majority are also Western and share Western values and aspirations. The physical space and material aspects of the shop have been constructed to elicit specific experiences for these customers by way of creating these experiencescapes.

All design choices in Starbucks shops are chosen with great care (Simon, 2009, p. 136). Each chair, mug, and picture on the wall contributes to the general theme of the shop and its image. For example, the Malmö Central Station Starbucks shop has decorated its outdoor entrance with several stacks of burlap sacks piled one on top of the other in a deliberately haphazard way. The sacks are full and are stamped in faded black text indicating that what they contain is coffee beans. The text is printed in both English and Spanish and describes the origin of the beans, which are said to be from Guyana. Of course, the sack is merely a prop and there are no beans within.

The sacks are complemented by nearby wicker baskets filled with prepackaged bags of coffee beans. These are resting on what looks like recycled shredded paper with signs attached explaining that the beans hail from Kenya, a country that feels very far away, both in distance and in culture. The signs display images of elephants and tropical leaves. There is also a basket advertising the “Coffee of the Week” stating that it is from 1971, the year Starbucks was originally founded in Seattle. A forty-five-year-old coffee tradition can offer much more cultural capital than a newer one.

The signs over the beans are written in either Swedish or English, with no translation for either language. It is taken for granted that the customer is worldly enough to understand the

complicated English text on the signs and the simpler Spanish text on the bags. The names of the drinks are also often written in Italian. The shop blends the languages seamlessly, never using more than necessary. The English and Italian names of drinks and foods are not given Swedish translations, and offers are often only displayed in Swedish. There is an assumption here that customers can speak the lingo of the brand. Starbucks can thereby give their customers another form of cultural capital. The shop allows the customer to feel international and well-traveled by surrounding them with international languages in addition to international food. It also works to exclude those who do not fit into Starbucks's standard customers. Less-traveled and poorer Swedes may feel as intimidated by the prevalence of foreign languages as they do the high prices of the drinks. Relevant to this is also that some English signs are hand-written. This creates an informal and welcoming feel, distancing the shop from the fact that it is part of a chain and corporation.

Also in eye's reach are stacks of vintage-looking suitcases, all in neutral tones. This material culture – especially in conjunction with the shop's train station locale – contributes to the experiencescape. The suitcase decorations also match up with the suitcases pulled into the shop by customers waiting to board a train. In this way the decorations do not come across as inauthentic. They complement the space and expand upon it; they enhance the cultural capital acquired. The suitcases brought in by customers are often in a new design meant for convenience, while those in the shop are for pure aesthetics. They are impractical and without wheels, but with a kind of antique charm that the newer suitcases do not have. They are an ideal material image. When doing nothing but sitting in the shop sipping a latte, the customer is also part of this grand international image. The customer can feel a connection to coffee growers in Kenya and the prestige of owning well-traveled expensive suitcases. There is the implication of nostalgia and hard work, while little is asked of the customer beyond handing over a fee of 35 Swedish crowns for a drink.

Additionally, coffee itself contributes to the experiencescape in the shop. Coffee and *fika* are part of everyday life in Sweden, but coffee is also a material object and a part of the space. It is a prop. As Emma said in an interview, "It is very sophisticated to drink coffee. And if you don't drink coffee then you're not as grownup as other people, you're not as sophisticated as a coffee drinker." Again another aspect of the space harkens to a kind of sophistication. Traveling is sophisticated; coffee is also sophisticated. Customers in the Malmö shop often sat with coffee mugs on the table long after finishing their drink. Purchasing the coffee may have been something of an "entrance fee" for getting to use the space, but it also creates an image of the person who

drank it. Interviewees frequently expressed shame when admitting to drinking coffee that did not meet their idea of what coffee should be. Maria described Frappuccinos as “like ice cream” as opposed to coffee and expressed feelings of guilt when wanting to add too much milk and sugar to coffee as that “ruins it”, although she prefers the taste that way. Lauren also called the Frappuccinos she used to love “horrible concoctions” and now drinks black coffee. Coffee works as a prop to add to the experience of the space.

What Starbucks has done through these design choices is focus “upon the creation of pecuniary value through the commodification of the ephemeral” (O’Dell & Billing, 2005, p. 20). These experiencescapes create something intangible and personal for the customer, but result in real money for Starbucks. An experience has been commodified. An experiencescape has been constructed in the material culture; it is just one that is subtler than Disneyland’s pizzazz.

Perhaps a criticism of experiencescapes and the experience economy is that they do not necessarily show anything new in this context. It is a given that every store and brand will present itself in a certain way to elicit certain reactions from their customers or consumers, whether this is in an experiential context or others. Starbucks is no different. The usefulness of looking at experiencescapes and the experience economy here is to show specifically what material things are being used in the space to gain these reactions. In conjunction with a person’s *habitus*, experiencescapes work toward providing a specific sort of feeling or situation. Seeing the result of the combination of the two is essential to the experience of the Malmö Starbucks.

A Great Good Third Place Revisited

The Malmö Starbucks may work as an experiencescape that plays off of the Starbucks *habitus* of its customers, but a further analysis of its role as a third place is necessary. Ray Oldenburg’s third places were introduced in the theoretic chapter, but now let us return to them more analytically. Does Starbucks possess the characteristics of a third place that Howard Schultz insists it does?

Starbucks – specifically Starbucks in the Malmö Central Station – checks several of these boxes. It is on neutral ground and is very accessible. Its free seating opportunities do not allow for a hierarchy. It is a place away from home and work, given that you are not one of the workers in the shop.

However, does it possess enough of these traits to be deemed a third place? Often in my observations I have noted that a large percentage of the customers are alone, eyes on their phones and tablets. This is not the conversation mecca that Oldenburg envisioned. He even describes “electronic gadgetry” as “ruinous to a third place” (Oldenburg, 1989, p. 30), although in Woldoff, Lozzi, and Dicks’s study, they found that these sorts of things along with “free Wi-Fi, multiple power outlets, seating arrangements aimed at productivity, and media resources for local and national news” had little effect on sociability (Woldoff, Lozzi, & Dicks, 2013, p. 215).

Also essential is that these third places are venues with “regulars”. “The third place is just so much space unless the right people are there to make it come alive, and they are the regulars” (Oldenburg, 1989, p. 33). The Malmö Starbucks resides in a train station, a venue so firmly rooted in transience that customers often roll suitcases behind them when they enter the store. Many of them are only there for the purpose of wasting a little time before their train departs to take them home to some distant place. Tourists do not make the best regulars. That aside, there is still occasionally interaction between the customers and people they don’t know, for example the staff, although this was more common in the Starbucks in Orlando.

Another possible barrier to the Malmö Starbucks acting as a third place has to do with the notions of language and national identity. Starbucks may have to become a more common part of Swedish everyday life to be accepted as a third place, as has happened with other American food chains such as McDonald’s. In the case of Starbucks, many of the baristas at the shop are even not Swedish and not fluent in the language, which is part of the very core of communication and leveled ground needed for third places. The shop is also in the center of a medium-size city. In my time spent at the shop, the only familiar faces were those of the staff. The customers in the store flowed in and out, in all of their languages.

Oldenburg’s third place desired by Schulz is an ideal. It is nostalgia that longs for a simple life; it wants to be a 1950s American diner on black and white television where half the town stops in daily to say a hello to the shopkeeper. So can an American chain coffee shop situated in a transient train station with foreign baristas be this “great good place” that Ray Oldenburg spoke of? Is it the place of “human connection and humanity” that Howard Schulz wishes it to be? As Oldenburg himself states, “[t]hird places that render the best and fullest service are those to which one may go alone at almost any time of the day or evening with assurance that acquaintances will be there” (1989, p. 32). At present, my research did not support this aspect of third places as being

the case with Malmö's Starbucks, although the shop does fit the requirements in another way. The shop is a perfect example of a space on "neutral ground". There are customers from all walks of life using the space for all manner of things. People have dates in the shop or business meetings. They study or they wait for their train. They leave their belongings and go to the bathroom or order another drink. They claim a certain sofa and occupy it for an entire afternoon. The space equally belongs to each customer, and this is not an unimportant feature of third places.

So is the shop ultimately a third place? In some aspects it is, and in some it is not. Holding it to the checklist of what comprises a third place is not the purpose of this. Perhaps Oldenburg's third place concept is flawed, especially in that it deals with such large and arguably unanswerable questions such as what people in a society need to be happy. Instead, what this theory can do is show how Starbucks engages and interacts with this concept of third places. It offers a neutral space for those who wish to play by its rules. It gives strangers an opportunity to interact, whether or not they take advantage of this. If Howard Schultz wants the space to be a true third place, however, then he should consider that in a culture like Sweden's, socializing with strangers is generally discouraged.

Concluding Words

Final Thoughts

Let us return to the research question, which asked, *what material and social factors influence the way the Malmö Central Station Starbucks is experienced and perceived, and what can the shop tell us about the role Starbucks plays in the lives of its Swedish customers?* This study and subsequent analysis has now offered a theory as to the function and significance of the Malmö Starbucks shop. These final thoughts will examine and explain how the shop works as a Starbucks and as a coffee shop in the southern Swedish city of Malmö.

The shop is in the position of constantly balancing in this role of being a Starbucks shop and just a coffee shop that appeals to a Swedish customership. There are certain attributes that are typical of Starbucks shops around the world. These things are the décor, service, and drink options. However, Starbucks in the US often have, for example, drive-through windows where drinks can be ordered without the customer leaving the car. Something like this is not practical nor likely to be successful in a city like Malmö where a majority of the people take public transportation and do not drive their own cars. Then there is also the shop utilizing the design of its old train station past. Are these the sorts of things that compromise what it means to be Starbucks, or do they merely offer an alternative version of the shop with its same core characteristics? The shop, as an instantiation of the massive entity that is Starbucks, will always have a push and pull relationship with the larger whole. However, the shop seems to find balance as it reaches out to its international and Swedish customers with food and drinks both Swedish and American.

Swedes themselves are very much a coffee drinking people, a fact that Starbucks is having to deal with in its crusade into Sweden. A 2012 blog post by Maria Verbaite highlights this fact (mverbaite.wordpress.com). Verbaite's post agrees with the results of my research which underline the significance of the already widespread coffee culture in Sweden that is *fika*. *Fika* is incredibly pervasive, with many Swedes drinking several cups of a coffee a day while enjoying the practice. Starbucks, with its high prices and location neither at work or home, does seem it would fall short of providing the necessary elements of a *fika*. Nevertheless, the company has tailored its coffee to better suit Swedish tastes and not all *fika* has always been taken at work or in the home. Proof of

the potential for Starbucks in Sweden is the prevalence of similar coffee shops such as Espresso House and Wayne's Coffee. Both these shops and others have followed much of the a very similar model to Starbucks, which of course has been the forerunner of coffee shops as we know them today. Espresso House and Wayne's Coffee sell similar drinks and foods, have similar designs, and even have begun offering seasonal drinks in the way Starbucks does, much to the chagrin of my interviewee Emma. So if these alternative coffee shops have succeeded so well in Sweden, then why does Starbucks only have a dozen or so locations in the country?

Starbucks could have initially opened many stores throughout Sweden; the company definitely has the capita for such an endeavor. Research was not done for this thesis to determine why exactly Starbucks is moving so slowly into the country, although theories may be extrapolated. Perhaps Starbucks wants to slowly ease its stores in without having to actively persuade Swedes to become its core customers. The majority of the Starbucks shops in Sweden are located in train stations and airports, venues which have far more internationals than other locations (Starbucks Coffee Company – Sweden). Swedish Starbucks locations can now be heavily supported by international customers, while the company gains a foot in the door. Other American companies in Sweden like McDonald's can be so widespread as they have had many years to develop a following in Sweden. Interviewee Emma even said McDonald's was different from Starbucks, as the fast food chain had been in Sweden her whole life. It is possible that Starbucks too will come to leave this impression on Swedes in a matter of years. However, the data is insufficient to conclusively argue this and the research was not primarily concerned with this line of inquiry.

While the shop may benefit from its train station location in the company's slow move into Sweden, there are both possibilities and constraints to having the shop in this atypical locale. The shop is not able to cater to customers who would wish to drive to the shop for their coffee. However, customers such as these are not the majority in Sweden. The location allows the shop to be accessible by customers who have traveled by either bus or train, as it is situated between the two of them. This also permits more international customers to visit who have traveled to Malmö by train. The shop also competes with the other coffee shops in the surrounding area. An Espresso House is located next door to the shop and many other shops are located within very close walking distance. The Malmö Central Station is, as its name suggests, in the center of Malmö, and this results in a large number of potential customers. Dinstation.se estimates that 50,000 people use the

train station every day (Malmö Centralstation). This is definitely beneficial to the shop, which rarely completely fills its seats, but it certainly never empty.

The Malmö shop may make itself more appealing to Swedish customers by continuing to do several things. As *fika* plays such a large role in Swedish coffee drinking culture, the shop could support this by offering the kind of drinks and pastries that Swedes typically consume at this time. Espresso House, for example, offers special classic Swedish cinnamon buns on Kanelbullens Dag (translated as “Cinnamon Bun Day”), which is October 4th each year (Kanelbullens Dag). Also important to Swedes according to my findings is a cozy environment, as Swedes greatly value their concept of *mys*. The shop does well in its design and décor, as well as providing the expected facilities and friendly and helpful staff.

To reiterate, the research findings showed Starbucks as a company to have an image as a place of conformity with a lack of authenticity that still manages to be a reliable and convenient location for having a *fika* or grabbing a coffee. While Starbucks can be a Western oasis when in a foreign setting, it can still be something that is resisted when it is in the person’s home country of Sweden. It showed that a person’s experience at Starbucks extends far beyond the actual physical senses of the Starbucks visit. That is, a visit to Starbucks is never just a visit to a location, but a collection of past experiences and impressions. This is the merging of experiencescapes and *habitus* in how Starbucks is interacted with, in addition to the combination of the senses resulting in atmosphere. *Habitus* is concerned with the learned behavior a person uses when handling a situation, and each person would have a different *habitus* relating to Starbucks. Some people would not have developed their Starbucks *habitus* enough to know to order a “tall” instead of what is commonly called a “small” drink outside of Starbucks. Glocalization can help bridge this gap between those who have a Starbucks *habitus* which they developed in, for example, the US, and those who are just now forming a *habitus* from their experiences with the Malmö Starbucks. The shop can do this by compromising in some ways to the local culture. The menu can be given in Swedish where the English would be confusing. The wooden interior can be better suited to Swedish tastes than the typical Starbucks designs. Coffee can be made stronger to cater to the preferences of Swedes. These are ways the shop has been glocalized to better appeal to Swedish customers.

However, some things remain the same. As most customers have visited multiple other Starbucks shops, the Malmö Starbucks can then enforce the Starbucks *habitus* these people have

already developed. For example, the Malmö shop follows the same ordering pattern as most other Starbucks shops. The customers form a line from the counter where they order. Once they have ordered, they will typically know to pick up their drink or pastry from the far end of the bar. This is the standard structure of Starbucks shops. Someone new to the shop could need to be told this in specific terms, thus beginning the development of their Starbucks *habitus*. A new customer may also not know that it is possible to fully customize a drink order or that the Malmö shop requires a code to unlock the bathroom. I often witnessed customers forming a line to wait for the bathroom to become free, when no one was inside to begin with; the door only needed the correct code to unlock. These are related to the *habitus* that can be formed with exposure and interaction with the shop and its staff and customers, its rituals and idiosyncrasies.

The Malmö shop does well in its creation of atmosphere. Interviewees may have been divided, but most found the location to feel cozy and expressed positive feelings toward the spaciousness and the candles, rugs, and sofas in the space. According to the results of the netnography, reviewers and blogs even more appreciated the space than those interviewed, often expressing this with high praise. The shop has large windows and high ceilings, which are felt positively by customers. The shop also is decorated in neutral but pleasant colors, the space primarily dominated by creams and browns and greens and reds. The antique-looking decorations also contribute to this feeling of comfort and sophistication. Also relevant is how familiar the sounds and sights are. Customers are familiar with hearing the sound of buses driving right outside, the chatter of other customers, the hum of the coffee makers. These are not shocking things. Seeing the familiar Starbucks logo and the iconic cups also go a long way in making the customer feel safe and comfortable. Again, the Malmö shop goes beyond this with its extensive use of wood and open space which offer a different but positive experience from other more typical Starbucks shops.

Essential is Starbucks constantly trying to create a pleasant experiencescape by way of things like having cozy authentic locations and professing to offer Fairtrade coffee. The Malmö shop does this by using antique suitcases and original paneling in its décor, which work to evoke feelings of travel and nostalgia. It gives a kind of sophistication and worldliness to its customers. Playing off its role as one of the first stops for travelers entering Sweden by train from Denmark, the Malmö location can be a haven in a sea of otherwise unfamiliar shops and sites for those not previously acquainted with the culture. Thus, the Malmö Starbucks is in a situation of dual

impressions: first where it must appeal to discerning Swedes, and secondly where it must maintain the standard expected by Swedes and international customers already familiar with the brand. The Malmö shop manages this by merging Swedish with English in its menu, offering stronger coffee choices than in the US, having a more spacious location that remains true to its old train station atmosphere, and seeking to establish a cozy environment with candles and rugs. Unfortunately, the location is too central in a train station to easily establish itself as a third place with regular customers.

In conclusion, the Malmö Starbucks works as a transient location, skillfully designed around its train station location and aesthetic. It functions as one of Starbucks's first forays into coffee- and *fika*-minded Sweden. It balances between coming across as corporate and insincere, and just being so incredibly convenient. And yet, as my interviewees pointed out, to Swedes with their Espresso House and Wayne's Coffee on every corner, it is just another coffee shop.

Practical Applications

As a final note, let us examine the practical applications of this research and these findings. This thesis fills a gap in the knowledge of Starbucks and coffee shops in Sweden, a field that has been given little attention in anthropological research. It offers a review of what Swedes value in their coffee shops. I have shown that Swedes are a coffee-drinking people who appreciate spaces being cozy, as *mys* is a very important concept for Swedes. I have also explained the practice of *fika*, which is the cornerstone of most Swedish coffee drinking. Starbucks and other coffee shops in the country must seek to accommodate this practice.

The thesis results may also be useful for those aspiring to expand a successful business from its home country to a foreign culture, whether this be in the case of a company such as Starbucks or a radically different one. An understanding of the process of glocalization is essential to the success of all goods, services, and experiences abroad. A brand cannot succeed unless it considers the particular needs of the culture it wishes to enter. I have found that Starbucks would not have had the reaction it does in Sweden without modifying its coffee options to suit the tastes of Swedes. It also would not have experienced many positive reactions to including, for example, a drive-through window, a staple in American Starbucks shops that works very well but would not have in Malmö, Sweden.

Additionally, the research could also be useful as a contribution to the general field of Starbucks research. Research on Starbucks does not seem to be growing at the same rate it was back in 2007. The results also provide in-depth looks into two Starbucks shops in different countries. Ethnographies of Starbucks are not common, and comparisons such as the one done here between an Orlando Starbucks and one in Sweden are even less so.

Finally, the study's results shown in this thesis could prove of use to the Malmö Starbucks. The research findings are primarily centered on the space of the shop and the reactions of its customers. The shop could benefit from a study such as this which is concerned with the impressions and experiences of those who visit it. It could use these results to better tailor the design and offerings of the store to serve their needs and wants, while not sacrificing the core of what makes up Starbucks's appeal. I have found in this study that the Malmö Starbucks works very well with its train station locale, and offers a unique and pleasant experience from a brand which almost singlehandedly invented coffee shops as we know them.



Figure 8. Sign on the external exit of the Malmö Starbucks

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Interview Log

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Level of Studies	Interview Length	Nationality	Interview Date
Lauren	female	23	Master's student	30:48	American	March 15 th , 2016
Maria	female	25	Master's student	35:27	Swedish/Mexican	March 18 th , 2016
Elsa	female	23	Recent graduate from bachelor's program	25:07	Swedish	March 18 th , 2016
Lisa	female	21	Bachelor's student	25:59	Swedish (raised in the UK)	March 22 nd , 2016
Johan	male	24	Bachelor's student	35:32	Swedish	March 31 st , 2016
Emma	female	28	Master's student	45:27	Swedish	April 4 th , 2016
Winter (actual name)	male	44	Not applicable	Facebook Message Interview	American	March 31 st , 2016