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SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW

Up for dinner with strangers?

*A case study of AirDine focusing on the consumer's
creation of social capital in the sharing economy*

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Abstract

The objective of this thesis is to *describe and analyze* the consumer's creation of social capital in the sharing economy. This will be addressed through answering the following research questions:

*What forms of social capital are created by consumers in the sharing economy?
How are these created?*

The research is based on a qualitative method focusing on ethnography through covert participant observations in AirDine events, a sharing economy service. The empirical data is analyzed through a theoretical framework consisting of consumer tribalism, consumer culture, sharing economy and social capital. Through covert participant observations, our research supplies a consumer perspective and fills the current research gap where the social dimensions of value creation in the sharing economy is debated.

Through participation in sharing economy phenomena, consumers are creating bridging social capital, which is the most valuable from a societal perspective, as it is enhancing integration. Other forms of social capital identified as created by consumers are networking with leisurely and professional focus, which is created through bonding social capital. The process of how social capital is created varies, as we have identified the formation of a temporary consumer community which regards AirDine as a concept, but also identified signs of consumer tribalism where networking appears to be more intense for a specific clique within the community.

Key words

sharing economy, consumer culture, consumer tribes, tribalism, social capital, social media, digitalization, integration, creating shared value

Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Problem Background.....	1
1.2 Background of the research subject.....	4
1.3 Objective and research question.....	6
1.4 Glossary.....	7
2. Theoretical framework.....	8
2.1 Previous research.....	8
2.2 Social capital.....	8
2.3 The sharing economy.....	9
2.4 Tribalism in sociology.....	10
2.5 Tribalism in consumer culture theory.....	11
2.6 Application of theoretical framework.....	12
3. Methodology.....	14
3.1 Overview.....	14
3.2 Qualitative research.....	14
3.3 Inductive reasoning.....	14
3.4 Sampling.....	15
3.5 Ethnography.....	15
3.6 Introspection.....	19
3.7 Data management.....	19
3.8 Reflections.....	20
3.9 Credibility of our research.....	21
4. The tale of AirDine.....	22
4.1 Meeting Gothenburgians through a mobile application.....	22
4.2 When creation of culture enters the living room.....	26
4.3 Is AirDine a tribe? Well, it's complicated!.....	28
4.4 The formation of a clique.....	31
4.5 Digitalization is a major sharing economy drive, but how digital are we really?.....	33
5. Conclusion.....	36
6. Discussion.....	37
7. References.....	41
Appendix A.....	45

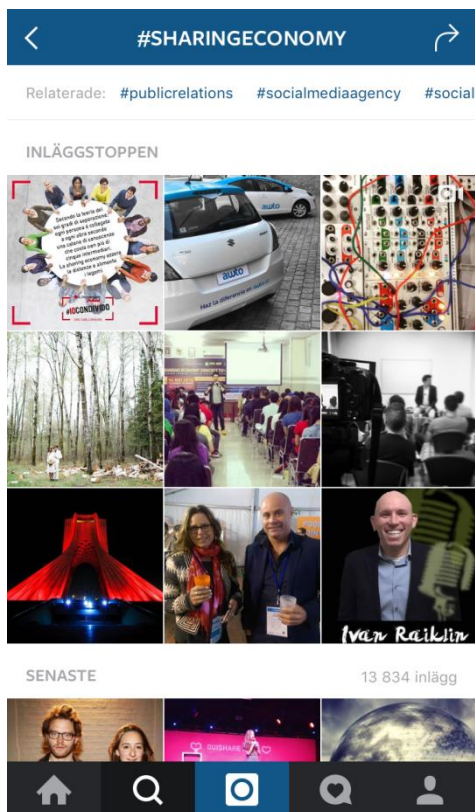
1. Introduction

This chapter will present the background of sharing economy, leading into the identified problem, and a presentation of our focal research object, AirDine. Thereafter, our research objective is presented and summarized in a research question. Lastly, a glossary is presented with definitions of key vocabulary that is used throughout the thesis.

1.1 Problem Background

“Sharing Economy - Systems that facilitate the sharing of underused assets (...be it space, skills or stuff) or services, for free or for a fee, directly between individuals or organizations.” (Botsman 2015)

Sharing Economy is a buzzword that has received tremendous attention in academia (Botsman 2015; Clifford 2016; Elliott 2016; Hamari, Sjöklint & Ukkonen 2015; Katz 2015; Martin 2016), media (DI 2015; Harvard Business Review 2015; TED Talks 2012; The Economist 2013; TT 2016) and social media (Instagram 2016; Twitter 2016) lately. When googling the phenomenon, debaters use headlines such as “The sharing economy is more than a buzzword. It’s changing how we live”, implying that the significance is greater than only being a trend (Clifford 2016).



The most popular posts with the hashtag #sharingeconomy (Instagram 2016)



The most popular posts with the hashtag #sharingeconMN (Twitter 2016)

In 2015 the global sharing economy was worth USD 26 billion and is predicted to increase drastically by 2025 when the sharing economy is estimated to be worth USD 335 billion

(Felländer, Ingram & Teigland 2015). Geron (2013) writes in Forbes that “the revenue flowing through the share economy directly into people’s wallets will surpass \$3.5 billion this year, with growth exceeding 25%”. Investors refer to the sharing economy as a mega-trend and are investing intensely in different start-ups relating to the sharing economy (Hamari et al. 2015). Recent surveys have shown that approximately 25 percent of the UK population, respectively 19 percent of the US population, have participated in the sharing economy in the past year (Felländer, Ingram & Teigland 2015; Pwc 2015).

Two of the most well known global sharing economy companies are AirBnb and Uber, these companies serve as good examples to grasp the size and potential of the sharing economy. AirBnb is a house sharing service which allows for peers to rent houses, apartments or rooms from each other (Felländer, Ingram & Teigland 2015). AirBnb provides a place to stay for an average of 425 000 guests per night, which in relation to the hotel industry, is almost 22% more than Hilton Worldwide during 2014 (Pwc 2015). Uber is a car ride sharing service that allows for peers to offer rides to each other. To understand the size of Uber, one can compare with cab services. In New York City there are nearly 14 100 Uber cars operating in comparison to nearly 13 600 yellow cabs (Felländer, Ingram & Teigland 2015).

In a report by Forum of Commercial Policy¹, the sharing economy is defined as a phenomenon where underused resources, both tangible and intangible, are used in peer-to-peer (people to people) exchange (Felländer, Ingram & Teigland 2015). A driving force identified in the emergence of the sharing economy is digitalization, which contributes to the explanation of why sharing economy is a phenomenon in both global and local contexts. Interestingly they mean that the sharing economy in itself presently is a drive for increasing digitalization further, through the dependence of Internet and mobile devices (Felländer, Ingram & Teigland 2015). Media reports positively on the increase in innovation due to the sharing economy, but also accredits social aspects and sustainability as factors behind the sharing economy trend (IT 2016). In the same article, Rebecca Filis from the Swedish Tax Agency forecast continuing growth for these services. In the report from Forum of Commercial Policy, potential economic implications of the sharing economy phenomena are discussed, for example declining inflation, lower marginal costs, increased competition and labor market transitions are highlighted as possible effects (Felländer, Ingram & Teigland 2015).

Sharing is an action incorporated in a consumption system called collaborative consumption where traditional market behaviors are redefined (Botsman 2015). Although the distinction between sharing and collaborative exchange is debated (Belk 2013), for the purposes of this thesis, we treat sharing and sharing economy as part of collaborative consumption (Botsman 2015).

Rachel Botsman, collaborative economy global expert and author of the book *What’s mine is yours: How collaborative consumption is changing the way we live*, means that perhaps the concept of sharing economy currently is too big, trying to simplify and categorize all concepts involving matchmaking of people’s ‘wants and haves’ through the Internet (Botsman 2015). What she means is problematic with the concept is the wide range of economic activity this umbrella term

¹ Authors of thesis translation of ‘Näringspolitiskt forum

involves. Botsman (2015) means that the prerequisite for a concept to be included in the term sharing economy is whether an underused asset's (space, skill or stuff) value is unleashed and whether the consumer behavior includes sharing in some form.

While Botsman (2015) emphasizes the importance of the act of sharing in consumer behavior, Eckhardt and Bardhi (2015) represents the other end of the spectra, meaning that there cannot be talk of any sharing at all when there is a company involved. They instead mean that this should be labeled as accessing. They argue that there is no social value in what consumers demand, solely utilitarian value and that consumers have no demand for social relationships when consuming. The utilitarian values the consumers pursue are factors such as lower prices and avoiding the burdening consequences of ownership (Eckhardt & Bardhi 2015).

The discussions incorporate a social dimension of sharing economy consumption, which we identify in the terminology used above when speaking of social value. When discussing social value, Porter & Kramer (2011) introduces the concept of 'Creating shared value' - an idea where businesses explore the connections between economic and societal value creation, an idea on how contemporary capitalism can unite the two. They mean that traditionally, businesses have treated societal problems secondarily and the discourse have not discussed the social dimensions as value created in the same manner as economic value which has created the split (Porter & Kramer 2011).

Clearly, as seen in the discussion above, there are different views on the act of sharing in contemporary consumer behavior. The problematic aspect identified in the discussion above is that there are different perceptions in the current discourse on the social dimensions of sharing, and if there is any social value created at all or merely utilitarian. Incorporating the concept of Creating shared value (Porter & Kramer 2011), the discussion is agreed on the economic value creation in the sharing economy, but disagreed on the social aspect. As social value is defined as social benefits relative to costs (Porter & Kramer 2011), we build our research on the assumption that the creation of social value requires the existence of social capital in accordance with how economic value is created. Although there exist discussions and methods of measuring social value orientation, which is defined as the magnitude of concern for others (Murphy, Ackermann & Handgraaf 2011), our intentions are not to measure the social value created as we currently do not possess the estimated time required to address such research question. We therefore limit our study to focusing on the creation of social capital, and see this as potential for the creation of social value, and would therefore highlight the distinction between these two concepts before continuing reading this study.

The discussion above is problematic as lack of insights of the consumer's perception of the value created through sharing, one cannot create powerful marketing strategies, anchored in demand of the consumer and adjusted to actual consumer behavior. The problematic aspect from a research perspective is how digitalization has allowed for a new type of companies to emerge, causing a shift in the economics discourse, but one does not have a uniform perception of how this has affected consumer culture.

1.2 Background of the research subject

“AirDine is a service that invites people to dine in homes. We want to make it possible for people, who otherwise would never meet, to get together and have a good time over food.”

AirDine transforms every home into a little restaurant. As a host you make money and meet new people. As a guest you socialise and get to enjoy good meals.”

(AirDine 2015)

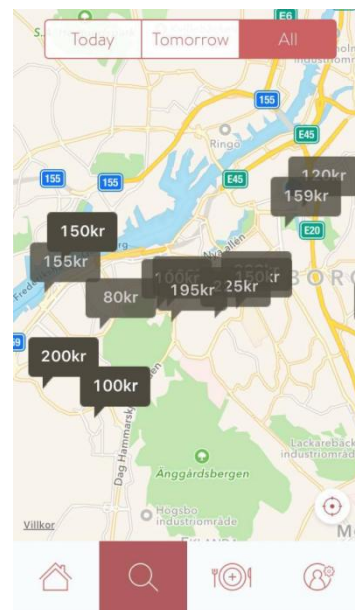


(AirDine 2015)

Social interactions and an interest for food and dining experiences. These are the main themes identified in AirDine’s business concept above. Through supplying a mobile application, AirDine’s business concept is to create a social context for people to get together, whom otherwise would not have met, in the home environment of the host (AirDine 2015). AirDine is pointed out in media as a business concept included in the current sharing economy trend (Leijonhufvud 2016). The AirDine mobile application was launched in February 2016 with a vision to go global throughout the year (AirDine 2016). We identify AirDine as one of the examples on the Swedish market of local businesses that have emerged within the sharing economy, developing their own platforms for exchange (Felländer, Ingram & Teigland 2015).

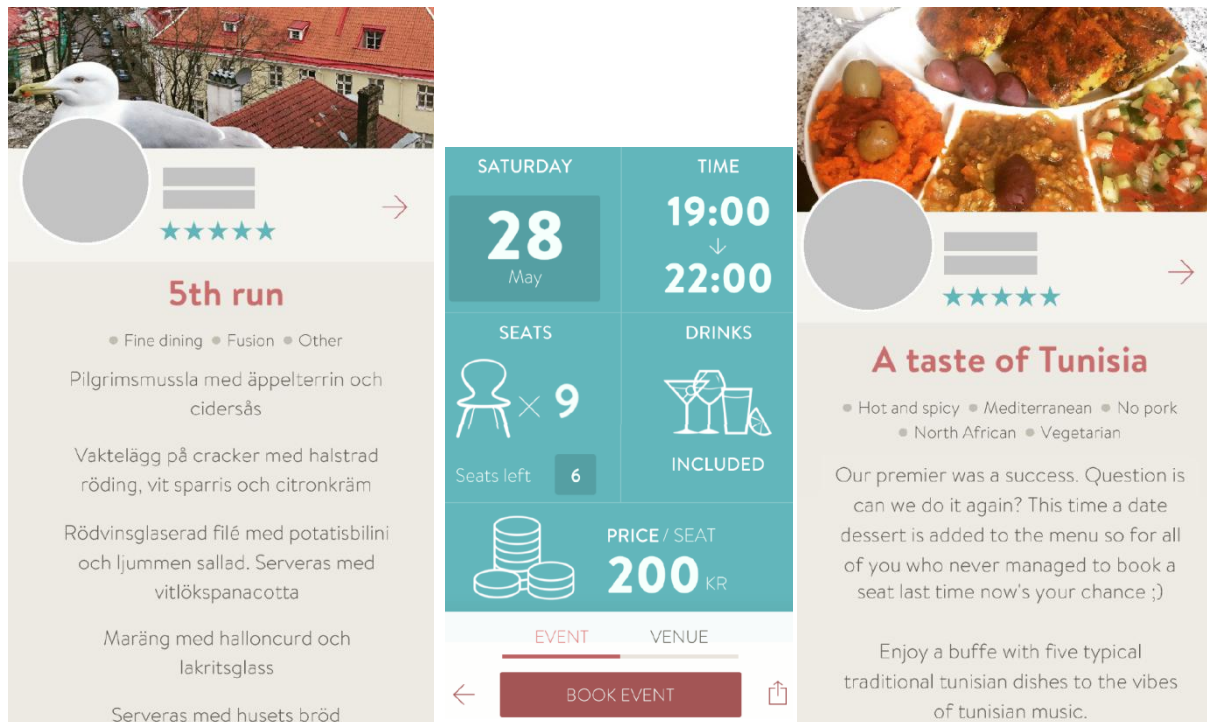


First page of the application (AirDine 2016)



Available events (AirDine 2016)

The host creates and describes the event through the company's mobile application. The advertisement for the event includes a price, with the purpose that all guests share the cost of the food. When published, the visitors announce their interest in the event. After reviewing the visitors' personal profiles, the host will either accept or decline the request. Planning and implementation of the menu is performed by the host whose home is the site of the event. The transaction of money occurs automatically through the mobile application once the event is realized. The profit of AirDine is generated as a percentage of the cost paid by the visitors to the host. (AirDine 2015)

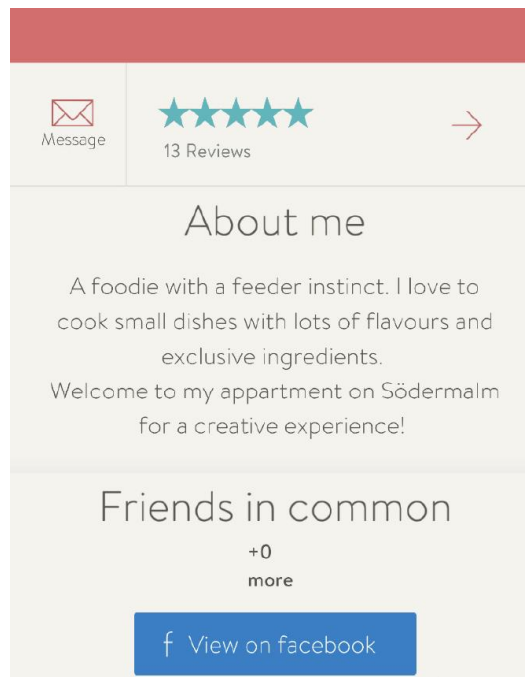


Event descriptions and details (AirDine 2016)

The message function in the application has certain limitations. It allows for guests who are interested in attending events to message the host. Once the host has decided and accepted the guests of the event, the host and guests can message each other. (AirDine 2015)

In the application there is a rating system where the host rates every individual guest and the guests rate the host by awarding each other one to five stars. The rating is mandatory as it is impossible to continue the use of the application without rating. It is possible, however not mandatory, to leave comments as well. The rating score and comments are clearly shown in one's profile in the application. (AirDine 2015)

When creating a profile in the application synchronize it to one's Facebook profile. For the user who chooses to do this, there is a link in the user's profile in the AirDine application which redirects the viewer to the user's Facebook profile. All users can view the profile of the hosts who have published events in the application, but as soon as the event has occurred this opportunity disappears. The host is able to view the profiles of all potential guests, however the guests who attend an event are not able to view each other's profiles at any point. (AirDine 2015)



A user's profile (AirDine 2016)

1.3 Objective and research question

The objective of this thesis is to *describe and analyze* the role of the consumer agent in AirDine events. Our research will supply valuable information about the social dimension of value creation on site in a sharing economy context, information that we argue is insufficient as we have shown above in the disagreements regarding consumers' participation in sharing economy services. This will be achieved through using AirDine as a research subject, exemplifying a sharing economy service, and focusing on different forms of social capital creation. The originality of our research is that our covert methodology through ethnographic research supplies a consumer perspective and therefore fills the current research gap. As we aim to supply insights in the social dimensions of value creation, the originality of our choice of method is that we participate in the creation ourselves. Our objective is that our conclusions will serve as valuable information which hopefully will be transmittable across different contexts. We propose that these insights are valuable for businesses in the sharing economy field, particularly from a marketing perspective in creating strategies anchored in contemporary consumer behavior. Additionally, these insights are valuable for research purposes in the sharing economy and consumer culture field. Our ambition is that our research will contribute to a continued debate regarding if the forms of social capital created possess potential for creating social value in the sharing economy or merely utilitarian from the consumer's perspective. Through identifying forms of social capital, one could potentially exploit these in unlocking social value.

We propose that these insights are achieved through the following research question:

*What forms of social capital are created by consumers in the sharing economy?
How are these created?*

The research question is important as it requires research from the consumer's perspective, focusing on the social dimensions, corresponding to our objective of the thesis. Answering this question requires analysis, as being the first focus of our objective. Discussions we have referred to in the problem background highlights that the grass root perspective is debatable, and our insights create value through supplying in-depth understanding for the contemporary consumer. Furthermore, the sub question is important as it complements our research with studying the process of the creation, adding an element of description which is our second focus of our objective.

1.4 Glossary

Event - Time and place for one, defined AirDine experience

Guest - Participating human agent, attending the event in someone else's home environment

Host - Participating human agent, performing the event in one's own home environment

Participant - All participating agents during the events, including host, co-host, guests, ourselves

Dining - The act of eating to socialize

Clique - A network of human agents who interact with each other more intensely compared to others in the same context (Salkind 2008)

2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, previous research along with theoretical framework is presented. It is to this research field this thesis aims to contribute, and through this theoretical framework the analysis is formed.

2.1 Previous research

Previous research on the social dimension of sharing economy is sparse. Schor (2014) identifies novelty, economic, environmental and social factors as motives for participating in the sharing economy. Schor (2014, p. 6) defines social value as consumers “desire to increase social connections” and means that many sharing economy businesses does not deliver sustainable social value. She also elaborates on the creation of social capital in the sharing economy and questions whether sharing economy creates networks, friendships and social trust. Previous studies points in different directions - some claim friendships are created through sharing services, others mean that sharing services only allows for casual, elusive and temporary relationships to form, that is if any relationships are formed at all (Schor 2014). Schor (2014, p. 8) identifies an interesting paradox: “the more reputational information the site provided about people, the less users formed strong bonds.” The mystique of interacting with strangers is something that is highly valued by some consumers in the sharing economy (Schor 2014).

Hamari et al. (2015) have studied whether the categories enjoyment, sustainability, economic benefits and reputation are essential predictors for consumers’ attitudes and behavioral intentions toward collaborative consumption. The study found that sustainability and enjoyment are essential predictors for consumers’ attitude toward collaborative consumption. Enjoyment and economic benefits are essential predictors for consumers’ behavioral intentions to participate in collaborative consumption. Reputation was found not to be a predictor for neither attitude nor behavioral intentions.

2.2 Social capital

Putnam (2007, p. 137) defines social capital as “social networks and the associated norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness”. He means that social networks have value both for the human agents in the network and for bystanders. For human agents in the network it can bring value in terms of i.e. job offers from others within the network. In terms of value for bystanders Putnam (2007) exemplifies using neighborhood networks. If one is living in an area where neighbors are networking, even if one is not participating, this network can deter crime in the neighborhood. Different networks have different effects on human agents and society, hence social capital comes in many forms (Putnam 2007). Social capital in different forms can have effects on e.g. democracy, integration, health etc. Putnam (2007) makes a distinction between bonding social capital, which is created in homogeneous networks, and bridging social capital, which is created in heterogeneous networks. Factors that determine whether a network is homogeneous or heterogeneous are e.g. gender, race and age. Putnam (2007) argues that bridging social capital is beneficial to individuals, communities, governments and societies.

2.3 The sharing economy

The relevance of using sharing as a metaphor in the economics discourse is defended by e.g. Prince (1975, p. 3), who argues that “sharing [...is...] the most universal form of human economic behaviour”. John (2013) describes how the metaphor of sharing in the business and economics discourse is a recent phenomenon, influenced by a wide use of sharing as a metaphor across various subjects. He clarifies that although the discourse about sharing economies is contemporary, the phenomena of sharing is not new, it is rather the integration of technological innovation for creating social links that is new in consumer behavior. The emergence of sharing economies are therefore closely related to the evolution of Internet (John 2013), something that also is argued by Belk (2013) who goes even further and means that the sharing economy is a direct consequence of the Internet. Belk (2009) means that sharing as an act of acquisition and distribution of resources previously has been neglected in research, and speculates whether this is possibly because it has been mistaken for gift giving and commodity exchange, its ubiquity or the act is associated with the home environment rather than the market.

Sharing is a concept with underlying implications including “equality, mutuality, honesty, openness, empathy and an ethic of care” - all of these values are considered by John (2013, p. 113) in his definition of the concept. When summarizing traditional definitions and the purposes of sharing, John (2013) states that sharing can be an act of *distribution* or an act of *communication*. Regarding sharing as an act of distribution, it can either be a zero-sum game if the sharing involves fragmentation of material items or a non zero-sum game if fragmentation is unnecessary or in the involvement of abstract items such as interests, fate, beliefs or culture (John 2013). Sharing as an act of communication regards sharing of feelings and emotions, a fundamental act in Western society when establishing and maintaining social relationships (John 2013). Accordingly, Belk (2009) points out how sharing is, if desired, a powerful act of bonding and this is how it is differentiated from market actions such as commodity exchange and gift exchange. Sharing can include material items or abstract items such as time (John 2013). However, he means that these categories, sharing as an act of distribution and communication, are insufficient for understanding all concepts of sharing. The concept of sharing economies is one of these phenomena which require broadening the perspective on sharing. To be able to understand what he calls the social logics of sharing, one needs to include technological and social aspects of sharing (John 2013).

The sharing economies can either be categorized as sharing economies of production or consumption and is also defined as a creative action incorporated in everyday activities (John 2013). Hamari et al. (2015, p. 5) mean that “the role of marketers is [...] reduced while the role of users is induced to be both a consumer and a producer. This is also important in many cases of CC [i.e. collaborative consumption] in which the participants can be consumers, providers, or both.” Additionally, sharing economies are phenomena where the role of money is significantly less important from a motivational perspective than assumed in traditional economic theory. Where money is perhaps an explicit incentive for sharing, John (2013) argues that there are implicit incentives and that sharing and collaboration are acts that lie in the nature of the human agent.

2.4 Tribalism in sociology

In sociology, the concept of tribes is a postmodern metaphor used for how the postmodern human agent form networks, which traditionally in modernism has been defined as groups (Maffesoli 1996). According to Bauman (1991), an accurate definition of postmodernity is a social condition of an era defined by specific characteristics. He derives the origin of postmodernity to the affluent countries of Europe and countries with European heritage in the 20th century, and matured to its current shape during the later part of the century. The social condition was sprung from modernity, the precedent social condition of the same region. Bauman (1991) describes the apparent characteristics of postmodernity with the following words; institutionalized pluralism, variety, contingency and ambivalence. He means postmodern social conditions are the opposite of modern ideals. He describes modern ideals with the following words; universality, homogeneity, monotony and clarity. Bauman (1991) argues that postmodernity is a counter product arisen from the difficulties in attaining and sustaining modern ideals.

The concept of tribalism expands on Schmalenbach's theory which divide social interaction in urban versus rural (Maffesoli 1996). Maffesoli expands on modernism's mechanical structure of social interaction, and introduces sociality where the structure is viewed as complex and organic (Maffesoli 1996). The theoretic framework in this report applies the structure of sociality.

Social (Modernism)

Mechanical structure

Political-economic organization <-> Individuals <-> Contractual groups

Sociality (Postmodernism)

Organic structure

Masses <-> Roles <-> Tribes

(Maffesoli 1996, p. 6)

Sociality is a concept where Maffesoli (1996) aims to explain social interaction in the postmodern era. In sociality, the human agent's self is dependent on the role one plays in interaction with others in contrast to the individualistic view of the self that pervades modernism which is dependent on an in-born identity. Relativism is therefore one significant criterion for sociality (Maffesoli 1996).

The roles that human agents play can be in professional activities as well as in everyday life, as Maffesoli (1996) does not deny the existence of a political or economic society. He rather focuses on the emergence of communities (i.e. tribes) in sociality, which he calls 'the play-form of socialization', where the role in everyday life is equally important. The emergence of tribes is therefore a creative process where a network of human agents is formed over time, these tribes can become increasingly institutionalized (Maffesoli 1996). Once formed, Maffesoli (1996) mentions symbolism and rituals as examples of what establishes confidence amongst members. He labels this creative process as a 'cultural movement'. As Maffesoli (1996) is clear on highlighting that the bond in the networks are more important than the persons that are connected, that is the importance of reliance. Membership in a tribe is also dependent on the

human agent's choice, influenced by personal preference, which Maffesoli (1996) calls 'elective sociality'. Formation of tribes is in no way exclusive as tribes can be overlapping. The tribe is also connected to a greater level, the masses, where movements within a tribe can be an influential part on the masses, that is the society as a whole (Maffesoli 1996).

2.5 Tribalism in consumer culture theory

According to Evans et al. (2008), culture is a system of meanings in a social network, creating a code of conduct and supplying a framework of perception and interpretation for its members. Items of consumptions are cultural carriers, symbolizing cultural meaning. Culture is a phenomenon that is organic in its nature and is constantly changing along with changes in its context (Evans et al. 2008).

When discussing consumer culture and postmodernism, Featherstone (2007) means that there is no agreed meaning on the definition of the concept, but argues that one mutual aspect of them all is that culture is a core component in postmodernism, something that previously was in the periphery. He highlights the increasing materialism due to the increasing capacity of producing commodities, how these are used by human agents in creating social links and the hedonic aspect of consumption as three main perspectives on consumer culture. Furthermore he mentions the increase in supply of symbolic items as a possible explanation on cultures entrance in the postmodern discourse.

Consumer culture theory (CCT) is an academic discourse which unifies several areas of research, including consumer tribes, but is summarized by Arnould and Thompson (2005) that they are all based on the assumption that consumption in its nature is cultural and the market is the context where the actions are performed. The field of marketplace culture builds upon Maffesoli's (1996) work on neo-tribalism. The market is an arena for multiple meanings and overlapping social networks where consumers are producers of culture (Arnould & Thompson 2005). The discourse highlights the heterogeneity of cultural meanings, that one human agents action must be interpreted in its sociohistorical context. This field sees consumption as a productive action, where consumer agents recreate symbolic value through objects (Arnould & Thompson 2005). Objects are resources for cultural production, and social contexts are arenas where meanings of these objects are embodied and negotiated which highlights how culture is an organic, non-static process (Arnould & Thompson 2005). Studies within CCT show that "tribal aspects of consumption are quite pervasive. These studies highlight how experiential consumption activities, such as [...] temporary consumption communities foster collective identifications grounded in shared beliefs, meanings, mythologies, rituals, social practices, and status systems" (Arnould & Thompson, p. 874). CCT theory has also shown that marketplace cultures' emergent symbolism can be created through opposing dominant, mainstream lifestyle norms, associated with middle-class lifestyle (Arnould & Thompson 2005).

The concept of consumer tribes is influenced by the ideas of Bauman (1991) and Maffesoli (1996) and integrated in theories on consumer behavior (Cova 1997; Cova et al. 2007). Cova et al. (2007) describes this view as part of the second current of postmodernity, where the social link becomes increasingly important for the human agent in comparison to the first current of

postmodernity which highlighted the importance of individualism for the human agent. Individualism is viewed as simply a temporary stage for the human agent's liberation from modern ideals where the social link was devalued as something constraining. Modern social links are formed in traditional groups (such as family) and categorizations (such as class), where the human agent has a static membership (Cova 1997). For the postmodern human agent, social links are instead connected with a free choice and the networks formed by human agents through postmodern social links are called tribes (Cova 1997). The free choice contributes to a less static membership, a belonging, that goes beyond modern classification (Cova 1997).

A consumer tribe is a community of consumer agents evolved from activities in everyday life (Cova et al. 2007). In the marketing discourse, the concept of consumer tribes is partly inspired by Maffesoli's (1996) view on sociality. In conformity with sociality, consumer tribes rejects the perspective of the human agent as individualistic and does not aim to seek understanding through modernist structures such as age, class and gender (Cova et al. 2007). In this discourse, there is an underlying axiom that the human agent is social in its nature. The concept is also broadening the traditional meaning of being a consumer, to a consumer agent who closely interacts and engages with the object of consumption far beyond 'using' (Cova et al. 2007). Brands, products, experiences and ideas are therefore objects used in an altered manner and contextualized by the consumer agent in the social context. The consumer must be viewed in a social and historical context, which Cova et al. (2007) refers to as commercial culture.

The concept of consumer tribes also draws on previous work by Cova (1997) where he argues that the social links are more important for consumer agents than the objects of consumption, which he in this stage refers to as neo-tribalism. He links this concept to postmodernism and describes the phenomenon as the "return of community in our Western societies" (Cova 1997, p. 297). Cova (1997) takes this further and describes postmodern society as a network of micro-societies. Maffesoli (1996) also speaks of the importance of reliance when highlighting the connective links in sociality. In conformity with our choice of theoretical framework, Cova (1997) bases his interpretation of postmodernity on Bauman's work (1991).

According to Cova (1997), the nature of tribes is unstable, small-scale and fluid. Their existence is not dependent on spatiality. The power that brings the tribe into an entity comes from the members, the human agents, through mutual symbolism and rituals (Cova 1997). It is therefore what is shared amongst the members that unites the tribe such as emotions, moral beliefs, everyday activities and consumption practices (Cova 1997). A human agent can have a membership in several tribes simultaneously, and is free to play different roles in different tribes. Modernist structures such as class are less important than the social link, the belonging to the tribe for the human agent (Cova 1997).

2.6 Application of theoretical framework

Our intentions are to use the theories above for analyzing our empirical data. We aim to use theories on sharing economy to identify what material and abstract items we identify as objects for sharing by consumers. Thereafter, we intend to analyze these objects through consumer culture theory, viewing them as cultural carriers with symbolic meaning within the AirDine

context as a market arena. We will use theories of consumer culture and tribalism to seek understanding for the social interactions amongst the participants that we observe during the event. From this, we will include theory of social capital to analyze how the social interactions are taking shape.

3. Methodology

In this chapter, our choices of methodology are presented along with argumentation for the choices made.

3.1 Overview

The marketing discourse of our choice is inspired by a theoretic framework rooted in anthropology and sociology which Cova et al. (2007) argues cannot be studied through finding causality. Cova (1997) also argues that the theoretical frameworks of neo-tribalism in postmodernity enables an ethnosociological research approach when seeking understanding for contemporary consumer behavior. We therefore argue that our choice of performing qualitative methods focusing on ethnography through covert participation and inductive reasoning supports our choice of theoretical framework. We do not pursue objectivity in our research. As we seek to gain an in-depth understanding for the consumer, we argue that using our subjectivity as an advantage, as subjectivity is to be viewed as a resource for deeper understanding (Crag & Cook 2007).

3.2 Qualitative research

As our research aims to seek understanding for the consumer agent's subjective perception of a context, we found qualitative research suitable as it is interpretative; the focus is on understanding the social reality through the participants' interpretations of the reality in a certain context (Bryman & Bell 2013). Furthermore, interpretive method is suitable for understanding the consumer as an agent in the market as well as a member of culture and society (Moisander & Valtonen 2011), which supports our choice of theoretical framework focusing on sociology and consumer culture.

3.3 Inductive reasoning

As we executed our observations with an open mindset with no preconceptions on what we would find, an inductive method was used. This corresponds to the choice of interpretative method, as it should be data-driven in contrast to theory-driven (Moisander & Valtonen 2011). Our objective with using an inductive method was to avoid limiting the study by basing it on a narrow research question and predetermined choice of theoretical framework before the study commenced. A too narrow research question can easily cause a distortion of the social context the researcher is studying (Bryman & Bell 2013). Furthermore, the risk is that the researcher uses an incorrect framework when attempting to understand the human agents and their behavior (Bryman & Bell 2013). Our research area was therefore very wide initially (before gathering empirical data) and was narrowed throughout the process and arrived at the above stated research question toward the end of the process. With such unstructured approach to gathering data, ethnography is especially well suited as the method allows the researcher to engage in a social context with a broad research focus (Bryman & Bell 2013).

3.4 Sampling

We used a purposive sampling method, as we had certain limitations to consider in our study (Bryman & Bell 2013). As we are living in Gothenburg, the city and its surroundings was used as geographical limitation. Due to the limited time for gathering of empirical data, the events had to occur during April. As we did not want to constitute the majority of the guests at the events and therefore have considerable impact on the social context, another criterion was that the number of guest should be more than four people. This decision is an attempt to minimize our impact on the study since we studied a social context which we are not naturally part of. As the study was financed by ourselves we decided to attend events that cost less than SEK 250.

With the above mentioned restrictions the selection of events was very limited, therefore we simply booked the events where two seats were available. We attended four events in total, and evaluated our empirical data as saturated after having attended our fourth observation.

<i>Observation (Host)</i>	<i>Number of participants</i>	<i>Number of hosts</i>	<i>Number of guests</i>
Observation 1 (Claudia)	8	2	6
Observation 2 (Jamal)	7	1	6
Observation 3 (Jon)	8	1	7
Observation 4 (William)	9	1	8

Overview of observations

3.5 Ethnography

3.5.1 Covert participant observations

When conducting the literature search regarding research methods we decided to use participant observations to gather data. However, there was an extensive discussion regarding which type of observation would be the most appropriate. The discussion had its main focus on whether our research role should be known or unknown to the participants. We concluded that the research role should be unknown and therefore we found that covert participant observations was the superior method as we concluded that a known role would reduce the information value of the data. However, there are several factors that must be taken into consideration when conducting covert participant observations. The ethical aspects will be discussed in a separate section below, but firstly we will highlight the advantages that support our choice of method.

By adopting a covert observer role with full participation, i.e. to be completely engaged participants in the social environment studied, we concluded that a covert participation role would allow us accessing to the social context, i.e. our focal research area (Bryman & Bell 2013). It also allowed us to study the participants without any concern that our roles as researchers would be an influencing factor on the situation (Bryman & Bell 2013). We viewed this as a great advantage as we could only follow each group of participants during one specific AirDine event

before the social context would be dissolved. Research shows that it takes a few days for participants to get used to the observer's presence and that during this time the participants do not behave naturally (Bulmer 1982). "It is not uncommon for people in the researcher's gaze to feel self-conscious or threatened knowing that anything they say may be 'written down and used in evidence against them" (Crang & Cook 2007, p. 45). As our time with the participants was limited to only one event we assessed that their knowledge of our research role could have great affect on the social context and the participants' sincerity and therefore drastically reduce both the credibility of the data.

When conducting a covert participant observation it is difficult to document what happens throughout the event without creating suspicion among the other participants (Bryman & Bell 2013). Therefore, we had to rely on our memory, which can be hazardous as the memory is selective and can have effects on the reliability (Crang & Cook 2007). Both of us attended all observations to exploit the fact that different individuals remember different things and to be able to compare how the situations were perceived. On several occasions we had different views on situations during the events. An example of a situation when this was increasingly problematic was during segments of events when English was used as the main language, where we discovered that our perceptions varied in a larger extent than when communication was held in Swedish. Crang and Cook (2007) suggest that when the ethnographer is uncertain of the underlying meaning, this should be written down in the field diary and analyzed later, why we have carefully considered maintaining both of our perceptions in our analysis. We carefully discussed these situations among ourselves in an attempt to come to a somewhat neutral interpretation of the observed social context. Through discussions we created a culture where we allowed each other to be criticizing and questionary to one another, we managed to identify the situations where our separate perceptions varied, a complexity and diversity we argue bring value to the study. Directly after the observations were conducted we wrote down everything we could remember from the evening, using a questionnaire designed by Crang and Cook (2007), see Appendix 1. We also compiled a chronological list of all social interactions and behaviors. Our remembrance was a very important part of this study and knowing it would fade over time we minimized the risk of time by writing down as much as we could right after the events and then continued with the questionnaire the following mornings (Crang & Cook 2007).

3.5.2 Ethics

We are well aware of the ethical implications of our research and our choices of method have been made with great ethical consideration. A branch of ethical research means that gaining insight into social phenomena would be impossible without violating ethical rules, at least to some extent (Bryman & Bell 2013). Therefore a situational approach to ethics where the end should justify the means, is suggested. This viewpoint has been used in our research to make ethical decisions during the research process and when we have found ourselves in ethical grey areas we have made assessments of whether the data is essential for the result of the study or not. There are a set of widely recognized ethical principles researchers have to relate to, which we have used as guidelines for ethical consideration (Bryman & Bell 2013). These involve the areas of consent, confidentiality, anonymity, utilization and false pretenses and will be discussed separately below.

The main purpose of using covert observations was to preserve a natural environment for the participants to be able to study how the discourse evolved naturally. Our choice of method was not to ask for the participant's consent for participation on our research, which have several ethical considerations. However, we concluded that the benefits outweighed the disadvantages if we could ensure anonymity for all participants. Although ethically, the participants should give their informed consent to participate in the study and have the right to discontinue the study at any point, which is a requirement that is impossible to fulfill when using covert observations (Bryman & Bell 2013). This does not mean that the research method is to be rejected. The statement of ethical practice of the British Sociological Association states that using covert methods can be appropriate when it is not possible to retrieve the data through other methods (Bryman & Bell 2013). As we had very limited time with each group of participants, our concern was that we would have great impact on the course of events if our role as researchers would have been known (Cragg & Cook 2007). Another concern was the issue of getting access to the community especially due to the limited time frame for the research project (Bryman & Bell 2013). Our covert roles gave us immediate access. However, we discussed the option of asking for the participants' consent in hindsight, but determined that the risk of meeting the same guests in several events was too great, and therefore could be harmful to following observations.

In order to ensure all participants' anonymity we have used pseudonyms throughout the study. When participants have been cited or written about in the study we have removed all revealing personal details. In cases where stories have been too revealing and might cause harm to the participant, we have chosen not to include the story - not even in redacted form. The study is anonymized to the point where no one but the participants themselves would be able to identify the true identities. We therefore argue that we have dealt with the data collected about participants with utmost confidentiality. This is especially important when dealing with data of private character. In order to publish data about the participants, the researchers has to go to great lengths to anonymize the content so it is not possible to understand who the participant is which becomes increasingly important when the consent requirement is not fulfilled (Bryman & Bell 2013) The material has been handled with great caution and only been accessible in its non-anonymized form to us and our supervisor and we have no intent to use the material for other purposes than this study.

If the participants, however unlikely, would read this study and identify themselves we deem that it would not cause them any physical damage or stress, hinder personal development or lead to lower self-esteem (Bryman & Bell 2013). Researchers need to ensure that the participants are not harmed or in any other way negatively affected by the data collection or what is written and published about them (DeWalt & DeWalt 2010). We did discuss if there was a risk for social harm through lower self-esteem for the participants, perhaps if participants identify themselves through reading our study and their perception of each other could be influenced by our perception, harming the participants' image. We argue that this risk is low, as all participants have made the choice themselves of what they share with us. Therefore we deem the confidentiality and anonymity requirements fulfilled.

The data collected can only be utilized for the research purpose (Bryman & Bell 2013). We have no intention of using the data for another purpose than our research and see no value where the data could be used for purposes that can cause economic, social or physical harm to the participants, why we consider the utilization requirement fulfilled.

For reasons stated previously, we have chosen not to inform the participants about our research role. Researchers are not allowed to give false information about the study, withhold relevant information or manipulate the participants (Bryman & Bell 2013), a requirement that does not apply to our study due to our covert role. No manipulation of the participants or situation was conducted at any point of the study, as our objective was to study how the discourse evolved naturally.

3.5.3 The researcher's impact

Before we made the observations we worked out a strategy for our behavior during the observations. The strategy is inspired by experienced ethnographers. Cassell (1988, p. 97) means that the researcher "... should adopt a role or identity that meshes with the values and behaviour of the group being studied, without seriously compromising the researcher's own values and behaviour... [and] not ... inventing an identity; we all have several,... but... the most appropriate one can be stressed" (Cited in Crang and Cook 2007, p. 42). Based on this we decided to be ourselves and answer the participants' questions truthfully, but with one exception. When asked about our occupation we told the participants that we are second year business students as we did not want to give any clues about writing a thesis since we thought this might compromise our true purpose of being at the event.

An ethnographer needs to be a sociable and reflexive version of him or herself in order to learn about the people he or she observes (Crang & Cook 2007). As we wanted to study how the discourse naturally evolved during the events we needed a strategy not to lead the discourse. Therefore we acted a bit more reserved than we usually are and never initiated new conversational topics or actions such as clearing the table.

Research suggests that to properly understand human agents one needs to understand where they are, both socially and spatially, where they come from and where they are going (Crang & Cook 2007). To obtain this information we asked questions only when feasible without affecting the natural discourse and social environment and without causing suspicion about our true purpose for being at the event. We found that it was easier to ask about the past as this topic was discussed at all the events, the participants goals or hopes for the future was rarely discussed and as we did not initiate new topics we could not ask about it.

Bulmer (1982) means that in covert participant observations the researchers are legitimate members of the culture they are simultaneously studying. When conducting participant observations it is also important to understand and reflect upon the researcher's effect on the cultural and social relations (Crang & Cook 2007). DeWalt and DeWalt (2010) argue that the researcher will bring its own personal characteristics, predilections and biases in to the observation. Therefore we needed to be aware of how our identities affected the research. We

noticed that our behavior had a greater effect on the other participants when there were a lot of first-time participants. During the first observation none of the participants had any prior experience of AirDine, and our reserved and initiativeless approach probably affected the other participants to be more reserved and take fewer initiatives as well. Whereas, during the third observation, with a lot of experienced users of AirDine, our approach had much less impact on the event. Another possible explanation could be that we gained experience during the research period and therefore had a more relaxed approach during the later observations. After each observation we have spent a substantial amount of time analyzing our roles and the effect these had on the outcome in an attempt to improve our roles as researchers throughout the process.

3.6 Introspection

As our research progressed, we became increasingly aware of our own participatory roles in the social context. Although participating with a research agenda, we discovered that we could not neglect the fact that we simply are human agents who are affected by the sociality as well. An emergent strategy along the way therefore was to analyze ourselves and involve these insights in our story. To evaluate how our personal role might have impacted the research, we have also chosen to include reflections about methodology in a section below.

When involving introspection in our research, we have involved verbal data but expanded our view in accordance to Gould (1995) to view introspection as tracking our experiences and simultaneously critically reflecting on our own thoughts, mental images, feelings, sensations and behaviors. He argues that this is a useful technique when aiming to gain inside views on a consumption phenomenon. We argue that this is advantageous to our study, as it complements our data with cognitive and sensory data (Gould 1995) we could not obtain from other human agents in the context. Gould (1995, p. 720) expresses this as “instead of making mediating inferences about internal states, as one must do in studies of outside subjects, the researcher-introspector is able to directly observe internal states”.

3.7 Data management

3.7.1 Coding

When analyzing our data, we have chosen a method for coding through identifying themes, how these relate to each other and build theoretical ideas based on these (Crang and Cook 2007). The themes have been used when interweaving theory and empirical data in our story, to construct order in which the story is told. We have also compiled the themes linked to our research question in a chart to provide structure.

3.7.2 Textual production

Our choice of presenting our data linguistically has been inspired by Clifford Geertz' (2005) *Deep Play - Notes on the Balinese Cockfight*. Through vivid descriptions we have interwoven empirical data and analysis of the same to guide the reader through our subjective experiences. Our aim is bring the reader on a journey and allow the reader to be swept away into the context we have experienced and thus better understand what that has taken place on site during the observations.

3.8 Reflections

In accordance to Gould's (1995) methodology of introspection, self-evaluation is an important part to include in self-observations. We have therefore chosen to include this section to assure that our interpretations are a product of our experiences, and reassuring that these are consistent. Through this methodology, we withheld a critical mindset as Gould (1995) means that what is not apparent at first sight might be when evaluating oneself over and over, i.e. emergent insights. After having performed our research, it is clear that to become a good ethnographer one needs experience. Therefore we conducted thorough evaluations of our performance in the framework of Crang and Cook's (2007) questionnaire (Appendix 1).

After the first observation we concluded that our expectations on the event affected the roles we adopted during the event. Sara perceived that she acted in accordance to the strategy, as previously outlined, but in hindsight we realized that she contributed to a more relaxed vibe through her body language, choice of words and intonation. It is reasonable to assume that her role affected the participants' behavior to some extent. We concluded that we need to be more adaptive in our roles by avoid having expectations on the event and instead adapt our behavior to the situation. Also, we concluded that we need to be mindful of how, for example, body language, choice of words and intonation affects the situation. It is not only about what you say, how to say it is equally as important.

In the third observation we started to feel confident in our research roles and could read the situation and adapt accordingly. We were more comfortable asking questions as we had learned which questions fit into the norms of AirDine events. This was an important insight we brought from previous observations is how supplementary questions and interpose comments constituted effective ways to withhold inclusion in the social context. We learnt how active participation without influencing how the discussions evolve is a prerequisite to obtain the inclusion that is required to be a natural part of the social context. This led us to notice the value in including ourselves as subjects in the context and how our presence affects the discourse's development. We handled this through including introspection as part of our methodology. During the third event, sub-groups were formed which caused some difficulties. We made every effort not to be swept up in any of the emerged sub-groups and tried to balance the two groups as we did not want to risk being excluded from any group and thereby fail to obtain important data, which we succeeded in.

The major challenge of the fourth observation was the number of participants, surpassing the number of participants in former observations. This led to a natural split among the participants who formed smaller groups of conversations, where Frida was part of one and Sara the other. On one occasion, there was a third split where data was lost. In this situation, the disadvantages of solely relying on memory became apparent. As we could not mutually discuss our experiences together in this case, we noticed how valuable our strategy of critically processing our data together had been in previous observations. We could not simply succeed to remember as much in this observation individually. The positive aspect is that this confirmed how valuable our strategy had been in former observations. One of our biggest concerns before conducting any

observations was that our mind's ability to remember would fail us due to the risk of memory deficiencies in ethnographic studies. We concluded that our discussion has been a vital part of remembering, but that our last observation possibly contains more errors than the first three.

In the fourth observation Frida was faced with a challenge. One of the participants turned out to be the CEO of an interesting company. Frida quickly realized the value of connecting with this person which made her focus biased, resulting in not paying as much attention to the other participants and their interactions. However, a possible explanation for the weaker remembrance may be that we both felt that our material was saturated and that the fourth observation confirmed this view extensively, therefore we were not as focused and attentive as in previous observations. This might also explain why Frida was comfortable deviating from her research role.

3.9 Credibility of our research

As we argue above, the subjectivity of our research is treated as an advantage in this thesis, supporting our research question. We are aware of, and welcome, how the same result would probably not be achieved if the study was conducted again by other researchers. In a similar manner, one needs to take into account that the researchers have made a selection of theories that are partly based on self-interest and ambition of the study. We see no need in discussing reliability and validity to our qualitative approach, as objectivity is no goal in the postmodern paradigm where modern standards of credibility are not applicable. We share the view of Bryman & Bell (2013) that objectivity is unattainable.

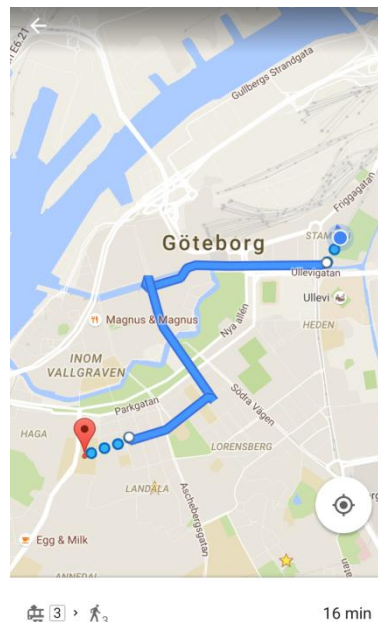
However, we have with all means through careful considerations of methodological choices, critical reflections and sharp analysis aspired to withhold credibility of our research.

4. The tale of AirDine

In this chapter, empirical data and analysis will be interwoven through vivid narration. The purpose is to enable visualization of the researcher's experience for the reader.

4.1 Meeting Gothenburgians through a mobile application

It was the beginning of April in Gothenburg and our first covert AirDine observations was scheduled. It was that part of spring when the nights were still chilly and it was still way too early for the pink blossom to deck the trees in the city. Excitement and nervousness tickled our nerves when we rode the tram through familiar streets, a feeling we later on would discover stepwise faded as we gained more experience from doing ethnographic research. The screen light of the smartphone was piercing in the light of dusk. The blue line in the Google Maps mobile application has throughout our research process been a helpful friend, guiding our paths through Gothenburg.



Our loadstar (Google Maps 2016)

Stepping off the tram and into the home environment of the host, shaking hands with people we had never met before, we found ourselves in the middle of a postmodern, sharing economy phenomenon where technological innovation creates social links (John 2013) as it was all thanks to a mobile application that we were there at all. Through socializing around a dinner table, it was dining as an everyday activity that united us (John 2013; Cova et al. 2007). The face-to-face interactions and the limited timeframe create an AirDine temporary consumption community (Arnould & Thompson 2005). The way the technology unites us regardless of where we live, urban or rural, or who we are, show how our social interactions are organically structured, a postmodern example of sociality (Maffesoli 1996).

We would now like to invite you to participate in this journey and experience it through our eyes. Initially we aim to roughly present all events generally, describing the course of events and our

perception of them. Secondly, we will dive deeper into our experiences, and analyzing particular details in the events and thereafter seeking understanding of the consumer through our theoretical framework. We will highlight especially interesting details based on patterns we have seen in the coding of the data. Finally, we will explore our experience of how the events behind closed doors in a diversified spectrum of the hosts’ homes are connected to the sharing economy.

To set the frame in the eyes of Botsman (2015), the component we identify as sharing in user behavior is the dining experience. AirDine supplies the prerequisites for multiple dimensions of sharing; we have shared the hosts’ home environment linked to sharing spaces, the host has been given the opportunity to share his or her cooking ability with us linked to sharing skills, and we have eaten the food around the same table linked to sharing stuff. Where food and homes are material objects of sharing, cooking and the experiential character of dining are abstract which in its nature is a non zero-sum game, and they are all included in the act of sharing with consumption purposes (John 2013).

Components of <i>sharing</i> in user behavior of AirDine events - The dining experience		
Space: Homes	Skills: Cooking	Stuff: Food

4.1.1 Welcome to Claudia’s

Claudia welcomed us to our first observation in her somewhat worn apartment located in a traditional mid 20th century residential building in the outskirts of Gothenburg. We were a bit nervous as we wandered around the area to avoid being too early. We noticed graffiti tags on almost every street sign and wall. Little did we know that we were to be taken along a journey to the home country of the host. When we arrived, Claudia was preparing the dinner in the kitchen, and we were surprised about the simplistic decoration of the room where we were to eat the dinner as well as her dressed down look, wearing a simple t-shirt and disheveled hairdo. As all guests we met in Claudia’s apartment were new to AirDine events, there was a hesitant atmosphere to start with amongst the participants. When the dinner was served, we learnt that the main course was the ‘national’ dish of Claudia’s home city. From the event description, she had presented the dish, a soup served with chicken. As the chicken was served in large parts with bones and skin, our impression was that eating the course with only a spoon complicated the dining experience. Accompanying the soup she served a chili salsa consisting of imported chili fruits originating from her home country. As the host was passionate about her cultural heritage, several anecdotes sprung from the objects of food that we all shared around the table. Regardless of the hesitant atmosphere, one could feel that there was genuine enthusiasm for Claudia’s stories amongst the participants. While the atmosphere amongst the participants constantly was positive, although some participants were increasingly withdrawn throughout the night, the fully lit lights in the ceiling and opened window with the blinds down in the almost empty childrens’ room where we ate evoked a mix of impressions.

The guests were listening intensely when Claudia shared stories and did not make any proper attempts to tell any stories of their own. To begin with we were all mesmerized by Claudia’s

stories and nodded appreciatively and asked a lot of follow-up questions, but gradually we noticed how the guests, including ourselves, lost interest. In the end we could see signs of relief among the other guests when Anders suggested it was time to leave.

4.1.2 Welcome to Jamal's

In one of the hip parts of town we were welcomed in a sparsely furnished but modern apartment with only a patterned blanket and some misplaced Easter twigs with feathers as decoration. Our cultural journey continued during the second observation. When hopping on the bus, the butterflies we felt during the first observation were not as lively this time. Jamal welcomed us in the hallway, tiptoeing in his bath slippers as he went to serve us sparkling water. In Jamal's dining event both the starter and the main course was inspired by the food culture of his home country. There was initially a confusing feeling regarding if Jamal planned to join his guests for the dinner or if he planned only to serve us, replicating a restaurant. He was invited by several guests to share the meal with us. Although he declined the guests' request, he still brought a chair and shared our company.

It was a positive, light hearted atmosphere in the bare yet somehow cozy apartment. Candles were lit on the table, although the lamps in the ceiling were fully lit. Jokes were flying across the table and the guest quickly became comfortable joking at the other guests expense. We were all laughing a lot and no one seem to be the slightest offended by the sometimes harsh jokes. To our surprise these hilarious segments were interspersed with segments of long and awkward silences. All participants quickly became uncomfortable - fidgeted in their seats, stared at the ceiling or fiddled with something on the table. We had to struggle not to break the silences as this was not part of our strategy. At last Carolina, one of the guests, came to our rescue and broke the silences by asking the other participants questions. Carolina showed a persistent interest in Jamal's life, asking him questions about his personal life, something Jamal gave an impression of being open for. Lighter topics such as occupation and dating experiences was mixed with deep ones, such as how Jamal had experienced homophobia and racism, topics that one of the guests, Anton, could relate to. The mix of highs and lows, laughter and silences, increased our perception of ambiguity in how the participants enjoyed the evening or not, and there appeared to be a relief when Sofia initiated that the night was over.

4.1.3 Welcome to Jon's

Personal decoration was no scarcity when entering the home of our third host, Jon. In the central parts of town, the cozy-lit apartment was characterized with a decorative couch, a considerably set table combining cutlery and porcelain with a traditional Swedish look with modern objects like an Erlenmeyer flask with flowers. Jon opened the door for us looking dashing in his beret and apron, in the background music from the 20's was playing, instantly creating an atmosphere. The interior design, Jon's outfit and the music were all working to create an inviting atmosphere. Solely by reading the event description in the AirDine application we could sense that more thought would go into setting a personal atmosphere in comparison to the previous event, but we were both blown away by the effort Jon had made.

The host surprised us with an unannounced starter containing handpicked stinging nettles that according to the host were picked spontaneously during one of his bike rides. As we tasted the delicious soup, he emphasized his personal, sociohistorical connection to the recipe that was one of his late grandma's signature dishes she served him as a child. The main course was a classic Swedish dish cooked to perfection and served beautifully on the decorative porcelain. The conversation circulated around AirDine and food for a very long time. Toward the end of the dinner the topic of underground culture was discussed for a long time and to our surprise this turned into something we perceived as a competition where the participants tried to outdo the other participants in having the most extreme experience for the underground scene.

Several of the participants were strongly opinionated and during this event several discussions flared up. In contrast to the other events the participants were not afraid to stick up for their opinions and we did not experience the same tendency to just agree with each other. The atmosphere was very accepting of the different opinions, but one incident occurred when two of the guests had different opinions and one of the guests raised his voice to mark his disapproval of Michel's opinion.

As Jon cleared the table after the incredibly tasty dessert we felt a shift in the atmosphere - from dinner to house party. Jon offered all guests his home brewed beer generously and most of the guest accepted his offer several times and the party continued far into the small hours.

4.1.4 Welcome to William's

After climbing five sets of stairs on a rainy Thursday night we rang the doorbell at William's place slightly winded. We heard loud barking from inside the apartment and were surprised when William opened the door and we saw the tiny dog that had caused the loud bark. William let us in and told us to check out the place as he went to open the door for more guests. The apartment was beautiful with high ceilings, a decorated tile stove and neat stucco. As we were waiting for all the guests to arrive we were all standing in the thoughtfully decorated living room chit-chatting with one another. William had placed wine and beer bottles on the table and offered all guests to help themselves when they arrived. He presented the beer and wine as leftovers for previous parties. The guests were a little hesitant to helping themselves, so William started pouring wine into glasses and offering them to the guests who all accepted. When everyone had arrived we sat down to the table and William brought out the food in pots and pans and we started passing the food around.

As usual we started talking about AirDine, and William told us that he is in fact working for AirDine. As he, in accordance with us, had an agenda with his participation in the event, we realized that it is not possible to interpret his actions from a consumer perspective, as he is not an adequate consumer agent in the event. William's hosting style was very relaxed which rubbed off on the guests. He told us about his sociohistorical connection to the mashed potatoes he served, a recipe originated from ancestors. In the description of the event in the AirDine application the mashed potatoes were described as a secret family recipe his mother had taught him. To the mashed potatoes he served a beef stew that had been cooking for several hours, making the meat

deliciously tender. We all enjoyed the food and the pots were passed around the table until they were emptied. However, we did not deem the food to be a gastronomic experience.

The participants separated into several conversational groups quite quickly and the conversations were polite and pleasant but did not reach any deep levels. The conversations were constantly shallow throughout the night, focusing on for example business, travelling and pets. Occasionally, dialogues emerged that were a bit more intense in their character, which seemed to be enjoyed by the participants. Apart from these dialogues, deeper engagement in bringing up deeper conversations was absent, but even so, someone mentioned that it was a shame that there was no connection between the participants as the night was over. William quickly noticed this, offering to connect us through Facebook, as he walked us down the stairs and into the rainy night.

4.2 When creation of culture enters the living room

When consumers who otherwise would not have met enter the home of the host, a creative process of culture begins where the home is the market arena and the participants are the producers (Arnould & Thompson 2005; Hamari et al. 2015). We would like to introduce the symbolic value that we have identified in the components of sharing, and will elaborate the discussion below on how the symbolic values are carried by objects of consumption and how they are negotiated by the participants (Arnould & Thompson 2005).

<i>Host</i>	<i>Symbolic home value</i>	<i>Symbolic cooking value</i>	<i>Symbolic food value</i>
<i>Claudia</i>	Impassive	Mundane	Cultural heritage
<i>Jamal</i>	Impassive	Gastronomic	Cultural heritage
<i>Jon</i>	Expressive	Gastronomic	Cultural heritage
<i>William</i>	Expressive	Mundane	Cultural heritage

Summary of sharing components

Based on the above mentioned observations of host behavior linked to food and cultural anecdotes, one might link this to theory about how consumers create marketplace culture where the market is an arena for cultural production (Arnould & Thompson 2005). We have observed that the host has a central role in the culture production. The central role originates from the host’s power to choose and control the majority of the cultural resources in the event, that is the food and the home environment. We have identified an additional cultural resource of the host, the event and personal presentation in the mobile application which sets a frame of the event for the guests, but we have chosen not to analyze this further as it is detached from the actual social context on site.

The most prominent cultural carrier in the AirDine event is food, where we have identified different symbolic value of the hosts (Evans et al. 2008). Sharing personal, cultural experiences through anecdotes originating from food was a trend we could observe amongst all hosts we

encountered. Discussing the cultural heritage of the host is a way of using mythology, sharing the belief that cultural heritage is something to praise in the dining ritual. The mythology that is created linked to food is often of personal character, where the host constructs a sociohistoric story about what is consumed together. As meaning is interpreted through a sociohistorical context (Arnould & Thompson 2005), the way the hosts use mythology sets a frame of interpretation for the guests.

The level of engagement by the guests, i.e. how they interact in the cultural production, can then be interpreted as how the meaning of the food is negotiated (Arnould & Thompson 2005). The guests are therefore also part of the cultural production, even if not to the same extent as they do not possess the same amount of items as cultural resources. In the first event, the engagement of the guests as negotiators was low, as Claudia dominated the discussion with her anecdotes. Neither did the guests to any large extent attempt to disrupt her dominance with questions that shifted the conversation. The opposite was observed at Jamal's place where the guests, particularly Carolina, lead the conversation by asking the other participants, especially Jamal, a lot of questions. The questions were often of personal character, for example regarding sexual orientation and Jamal's family back in his home country which Jamal seemed willing to share as he answered the questions with great enthusiasm. Another example of individuals who has had a large impact of the cultural production are Julia and Cornelia at William's place due to their highly energetic behavior; speaking and laughing loudly and initiating a lot of conversation topics. Compared to Claudia and Jamal as hosts, the balance between host and guest was more balanced at Jon's and William's events. The guests seemed interested in getting to know the hosts, but so did Jon and William as they were asking their guests a lot of questions, something neither Claudia nor Jamal did.

Apart from being negotiators, the guests' cultural carrier is the beverage some of them brought. For example, at Claudia's event, Göran brought a bottle of wine which he proudly explained was chosen based on Claudia's national heritage. Although there was no apparent connection between the beverage and the food, Göran constructed a cultural connection and the wine became a cultural carrier, used to form social interaction when he passed the bottle round the table offering it to the other guests. This is an example of how sharing is an act of bonding (Belk 2009) through a cultural carrier (Arnould & Thompson 2005).

Summarizing the discussion above, the hosts as co-creating consumers are more powerful than the role of the guest as a co-creating consumer. Generally, networking is identified as the social capital created in the events (Putnam 2007), which is the outcome of the host's creative process of cultural co-creation integrated with the guest's cultural co-creation. However, the forms of networking identified had different focuses; integrational, leisurely and professional. Claudia's and Jamal's events symbolized integration where AirDine supplied meeting of cultural differences that through comparisons of experiences led to an exchange of culture that was interpreted as meaningful to the participants. The outcome of networking as social capital during Jon's and William's events is identified as meaningful for the participants in terms of leisure activities and professional activity, where AirDine as a mean of creating social settings for culinary experience where one could expand one's social network through a similar interest. Leisurely focus is interpreted as focusing on socializing for private reasons, and professional focuses on socializing

with a work-related agenda. As Claudia and Jamal invited us to explore their cultural heritage, the heterogeneity of the event was greater than the other events, creating bridging social capital which is argued to have greater benefits for societies (Putnam 2007).

<i>Host</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Social capital created by consumers</i>	<i>Component of social capital</i>
<i>Claudia</i>	Heterogeneous	Networking with integrational focus	Bridging
<i>Jamal</i>	Heterogeneous	Networking with integrational focus	Bridging
<i>Jon</i>	Homogenous	Networking with leisurely focus	Bonding
<i>William</i>	Homogenous	Networking with professional focus	Bonding

Compilation of social capital created

As seen above, AirDine events is a market arena where consumers create social capital, which potentially leads to creation of social value which our story does not fable. But there is an interesting aspect connected to the sustainability of the social value potentially created - value that might stretch past the time frame of the event. No participant initiated exchange of contact details. Are the social links created through AirDine as a temporary consumer community strong enough to create sustainable social value? As for ourselves, the only enduring social link we created was through a friend request of an AirDine employee, possibly as part of the brand strategy. We will below explore this deeper through the frame of consumer tribalism.

4.3 Is AirDine a tribe? Well, it's complicated!

We have seen how food is a cultural carrier that symbolizes cultural heritage which becomes a natural topic of conversation. We have also witnessed how it is the mutual consumptions practice of eating that unites the participants of AirDine, which one could argue is a mutual ritual and therefore fits accordingly to one aspect of consumer tribes (Cova 1997). As one guest expressed herself, dining is something you do anyway, and why not do it together through AirDine? Through the glasses of consumer tribalism, the meaning that is accredited to food could also be identified as objects that creates mutual symbolism amongst the participants (Cova 1997), as the guests accepts the way in which the hosts express either cultural heritage or food related experience to food through affirmation of the hosts' behavior. Creating social interactions in human agent's home environments varying from time to time is an example of how spatiality not is a prerequisite for the emergence of an AirDine tribe (Cova 1997). In these simplified, generalizing summaries of our experience, one could easily conclude that these examples of symbolism and rituals that are performed by the participants, in the eyes of Cova forms an AirDine consumer tribe (Cova 1997). However, when diving deeper into our observations, we discover that the reality is not as simplified.

Tribalism is based on the membership being free of choice (Maffesoli 1996; Cova 1997). In the case of AirDine we have found this to be applicable only in certain aspects. It is applicable to the

extent that the guests choose to use the application and book the events at a personally selected hosts, but it is false to the extent that the guests have no control over the other individuals they will meet (except for the host). From the hosts' perspective the same complexity is apparent, they choose to host the event and choose to accept booking requests from potential guests, but have limited control over how the social aspects of event will evolve. Once the event has commenced neither the hosts nor guests can choose not to be part of the group and there are no guarantees that the participants will get to consume the type of social interaction they are interested in.

This became evident during the first event. The host Claudia had been telling stories from her life with minimal interruption from the other participants for hours and we both noted that we were starting to get slightly bored. We can only speculate on whether other participants felt the same way during any of the events. When Sofia arrived to Jamal's place she commented on the lack of apparent diversity among the guests and we perceived this as something she was disappointed about. Toward the end of the event Sofia checked her watch constantly as if she was contemplating whether it would be rude to leave. We perceived that Sofia, if given the alternative, would choose to leave the event after quickly scanning the other guests but instead she stayed until she deemed it acceptable to leave the event. Sofia had a choice to attend the event or not, but once there, the choice was removed by social norms.

Cova (1997) means that in tribes the social links created are more important than objects consumed. In the case of AirDine we have learnt that this is true for most participants and not true for some. During William's event Lars, Cornelia and Sara discussed AirDine and the reason for consuming it. Lars expressed how even if the food is good, it is all about the social interactions and meeting people. His tone indicated that this was an obvious fact to him. From his viewpoint nothing else was nearly as important as the social interaction. Cornelia agreed with Lars eagerly. However, we have also seen cases where the object, in this case defined as food, is important. Meja was very firm on the importance of all food served being made from scratch, otherwise there was no point hosting an event. Another guest made a joke about buying prefabricated food and serving it as your own. Meja did not find this amusing and with a dead serious face she said that it was not appropriate to do so as the rest of the participants were laughing at the joke. Another guest mentioned choosing Jon's event based on the fact that previous guests had praised the food in their reviews in the AirDine application. Daniel, who had been on an AirDine event hosted by Jon previously, told us that he returned to Jon because he was a fantastic host and because the food was great, hence both the social link created and the object was deemed important to Daniel. We can conclude that there is a spectrum of different opinions on what is most important with AirDine, therefore it is not easy to claim that it is, or is not for that matter, a tribe.

Cova (1997) describes that members of tribes are able to have different roles in different tribes. In this study we have found the opposite, i.e. the roles appear to be increasingly inseparable. Just as we were about to say goodbye to William he started talking about the creation of a professional network during AirDine events. He exemplified by expressing that if he ever would need a copywriter, he would think of Emma, one of the guest, and would prefer to contact her over a stranger. AirDine can be viewed as a multi-purpose platform, where one's behavior can

lead to other opportunities and therefore it is important that the different roles are mergeable. Within AirDine one is not as free as in a tribe to explore different roles.

In tribes the social link is more important than any modernist structure such as age, class or ethnicity (Cova 1997). The concept of AirDine connects people from different modern groups and creates marketplaces where these people can interact. The majority of the participants in this study have at some point commented on how great it is to meet people who they would not meet in their 'natural' social context. Jamal told us about how he had struggled with meeting and connecting with 'Swedish people' ever since he moved to Gothenburg four years ago. He meant that AirDine made it possible and he was very happy about that. Jamal's definition of 'Swedish people' is interesting in the aspects that it implies that he has chosen to participate in AirDine based on ethnic considerations, which highlights the presence of modern structures (Cova 1997).

Despite the explicit positivity towards the mix of people, we still saw many examples where modern groups were found important and used to categorize people. Lars meant that it can be fun to interact across age categories, but in order to build deeper relationships you need to be the same age, or at least in the same phase in life. He meant that you could not create sustainable social links with someone in another age category. William told us he really enjoys meeting people from different modern groups, but in the next sentence he did not think that AirDine was useful to his 18 year old brother who is new to the city and does not have a social network yet. William meant that his brother would find the conversations boring and not be able to meet friends through AirDine because the participants generally are older than his brother.

Bond and reliance are central notions within consumer tribalism (Maffesoli 1996). The theory states that the bond in tribes is more important than the persons that are connected, that is the importance of reliance. During the AirDine events we have not witnessed any bonding of great value, the conversations often stagnated at a shallow level. Although the different aspects of sharing, the conversations fail to involve feelings or emotion, and therefore fail to fulfill its potential as an act of creating relationships in this short time frame of the event (John 2013). This can be explained by Maffesoli (1996) as the emergence of tribes is a creative process that is formed over time. People meet for the first time during the event, and only have an evening to get to know each other - the participants simply do not have time to bond and rely on each other.

For a fully fledged tribe to emerge continued contact after the event between the participants is essential. The AirDine application does not facilitate this kind of interaction as there are many limitations to how users of the application can connect and message each other. Only the host can view the guests' profiles and connect via Facebook. The guests cannot see each other's profiles or contact each other through the application in any way. If the guests want to stay in touch they need to exchange contact details during the event. It was not until the fourth event we witnessed this happening. As we were all leaving the event, the host, William, who is also working for AirDine, thanked us all for the evening and suggested that he could add us all on Facebook so the guests could find and add each other after that. A few days after the event we received friend requests from William and we have noticed that all guests are friends with William on Facebook now. None of the other guests have tried to contact us and to our knowledge none of the guests have become Facebook friends either.

Viewing AirDine in the light of consumer tribes (Cova 1997), AirDine supplies the prerequisites through a mobile application to facilitate tribalism. After attending these four events we have arrived at a view of AirDine as mainly capable to create temporary entertainment and amusement for one night, a temporary consumption community (Arnould & Thompson 2005) as stated above. Therefore, we cannot conclude that AirDine generates sustainable value per se, but neither can we reject this assumption. When diving deeper into exceptions of the observations, signs have been seen that indicates that tribalism do exist in some form in the sharing economy - let us further present the signs we have seen of the AirDine 'clique'.

4.4 The formation of a clique

The night at Jon's place was clearly distinguished from the other nights in one aspect. As the night went on and conversations that originated from an interest for, and even bragging about, cooking evolved into a heated competition of extraordinary and peculiar personal experiences. This led to a split amongst the participants, creating a clique consisting of Jon, Meja and Henrik. In this network within the social context, where interactions are more intense than generally, it was the wicker experiences that symbolized prestige, a perception that was not approved by all participants around the table. The stories circulated around underground culture, in Gothenburg but particularly Berlin. What started by Jon, Meja and Henrik through comparing insights in underground clubs, DJ collectives and publicly hidden communities in Gothenburg quickly escalated. Jon and Meja shared their original experiences from a particular nightclub, where Meja had partied for around 24 hours straight, something outperformed by Jon's 72 hours. They both depicted their stories through examples of behavior in this scene in aspects of alcohol, drugs, sex and offensive behavior such as showering in urine. Frida and Erik on the other end of the table found the surprisingly deviating stories comical, and bursted into laughter while the subgroup internally boosted each other by constantly outperform each others' stories. The conversations evolving around for example the romanticization of underground culture creates a more intense bond amongst the participants, that the formation of a clique more appropriately can be described as consumer tribalism (Cova 1997).

Interestingly, both Martin and Daniel made attempts to join the clique. Martin asked Henrik if he could join Henrik to an underground club that he told us that he might attend after the AirDine event. Henrik's response, which in the word sense was affirmative, contained an undertone of waving off Martin's approach as he was quick to change the subject. Daniel on the other hand, added his own personal stories, for example attending bondage clubs, which were not internally boosted in the same manner as within the clique. As Cova (1997) means that belonging to a tribe goes beyond modern structures such as class, the clique's behavior implies that they do perceive a sort of hierarchy, based on previous experiences, or at least the ability to create a story that aims to create credibility as an experience amongst other members. The assembly around the dinner table this night might be formed through postmodern structures, but fails in sustaining them fully. Consumer tribal membership might be based on free will (Cova 1997), but is a membership always guaranteed by the tribe?

When trying to analyze the reason behind this behavior, one common denominator for Jon, Meja and Henrik is that they are all experienced AirDine participants. Early on in the event, they shared their previous stories with us. Jon had hosted multiple events prior to this one. Meja had also been a host several times, where Henrik was one of the guests. Meja and Henrik also joined this event together and they kept their drinks in the same, white *Systembolaget* plastic bag. This implies that they have stayed in touch since their first AirDine event together, being proof to deeper social links than what we otherwise have witnessed during AirDine events, supporting our identification of a consumer tribe (Cova 1997). The way they talked about their previous experiences focused on the events from a gastronomic perspective. Meja emphasizes on several occasions the importance of the food being homemade when inexperienced AirDine participants around the table express their curiosity in hosting themselves. Even if you host a brunch, the jam ought to be made from scratch. It is evident that she has a clear perception of what AirDine is and should be. Signs were also seen that the existence of the clique is greater than what we observed in Jon's place, as the clique members talked about 'Sailing-Lotta' and 'the Thai girl in Eriksberg' who have established their own brands within AirDine. The latter was also mentioned by William in our last observation.

Meja is not the only participant with a predetermined expectation of the AirDine event. At Jamal's event, all participants apart from us and Sofia were new to the concept. Although all guests were surprised when our initial suspicions that Jamal did not plan to participate in dining himself, Sofia expressed her perception with words such as 'he should eat with us'. The rest of us were confused, questioning if his intention was to create a restaurant-like situation. The same fumbling behavior could be observed at Claudia's place where all participants were new, but which uttered itself in silence and tentative conversations amongst the participants. We can therefore distinguish an amount of confident behavior amongst the more experienced AirDine participants. When reflecting on our own behavior, we can distinguish the same pattern in our perceptions of ourselves. The more events we have attended, the more confident we have been in our participating roles in claiming a larger space in the social interactions. One might understand this phenomenon through Maffesoli (1996) and what he labels a 'cultural movement', the creative process of which confidence is gained by the human agents in the tribe. The predetermined perceptions of Meja and Sofia are signs of mutual rituals, as Cova (1997) points out as qualities of consumer tribes, that have become increasingly institutionalized, and we can conclude from ourselves that we too are products of this creative process.

Apart from being a sharing economy phenomenon, the sharing economy has also been a topic of conversation during the events. At Claudia's place, AirDine initially served as an icebreaker amongst the guests, a conversation which quickly died. Later on, the topic rose again and this time there was an ironic undertone. All participants agreed on that it was comical that we needed mobile applications to establish this social interaction. At Jamal's place, the conversation about AirDine was initiated instantly when Carolina expresses how this is a great way to work with integration, only minutes after we arrive. As the event goes by, AirDine is compared to other mobile applications with the purpose to establish social interactions but for dating purposes such as Tinder, Grindr and Happn. Sofia says that she would rather meet new people through AirDine since one does not have a predetermined perception of who you meet, as the AirDine guests are unaware of whom the other guests are. Later on, the conversations evolve to regard other sharing

economy phenomena such as AirBnb and Uber. When Jamal tells the guests that he has lent out his apartment through AirBnb, a conversation about legal and fiscal aspects of the sharing economy evolves. This is also a topic which achieves great attention and time at Jon's place. A new perspective on the topic is brought up by Erik when he defends illegal underground clubs and compares it to AirDine, meaning that the difference between underground communities and AirDine is minimal. At William's place, the sharing economy is mainly discussed through a business perspective, due to him being an employee at AirDine and he shares his inside perspective with his guests, something that we identify as a way to market the service through personal participation in the events. Cornelia contributes with her perspective and implies that AirDine is a great way for her to meet people outside her own social groupings as a new student in town. William agrees on the positive aspect of networking that AirDine creates.

Although the sharing economy evidently is a present topic in the AirDine events, the interesting aspect is how the conversations have limited connection to what is actually shared in the context; the dining experience, homes, cooking ability and food as stated above where food is the material item of sharing and the others more abstract (John 2013). What is praised is merely the practical functionality of establishing the social interactions. The only symbolic value that is addressed to AirDine is how Carolina highlights the integrational implications of sharing the dining experience. The conversations that regards legal and fiscal aspects raises the focus on how to profit on AirDine and other sharing economy phenomena indicates that there exists a monetary motivation for sharing economy participation, which contradicts John's (2013) theory on that the monetary motivational aspects of sharing is less emphasized.

4.5 Digitalization is a major sharing economy drive, but how digital are we really?

So, after exploring the social capital of the sharing economy, we find it relevant to incorporate the technological aspects. After all, it was all thanks to a mobile application that we found ourselves there at all. With expanding our view of sharing to involve the technological aspects as well as the social ones, we can gain understanding of the social logics of sharing (John 2013).

The concept of AirDine is sprung out of postmodernism as the concept is based on human agents' interest in meeting across the traditional modern groups they naturally belong to (e.g. age and ethnicity) (Cova 1997). The concept of AirDine was generally a topic that was discussed early on in the events and also a topic circled back to throughout the events. Several participants in this case study praised AirDine's ability to create meetings between human agents who would never have met without the service.

During several events, participants expressed the silliness in being in need of a mobile application to be open to social interactions, which by those who expressed this was significant to their perception of what is 'Swedish culture'. During our first AirDine event, cultural differences were a hot topic. Claudia, the host, who was extremely open about sharing her personal experiences with her guests, pointed out that dinners in the home environment of someone with only slight acquaintances, friends of friends, was nothing uncommon in her home county. Interestingly, the guests seemed to agree on the irony in this cultural behavior, as they confirmed with laughter. The criticism to 'Swedish culture' was noted across all events as a way of creating belonging for

the participants, which could be viewed as criticism of mainstream lifestyle norms in the wide cultural context where the events were held, which previously have been shown being a factor to define symbolic boundaries within a marketplace culture (Arnould & Thompson 2005). Furthermore, this could be a phenomenon which exemplifies John's (2013) broadened perspective on the concept of sharing to include both technological and social aspects of sharing in contemporary consumer behavior. The technological aspect of sharing in this cultural context, appears to be a way for postmodern values, in this example particularly plurality and contingency (Bauman 1991), to flourish. The concluding sense we interpreted of this discussion is that the cultural context in Sweden where we found ourselves, was deeply dependent on the technological aspect in being able to establish these social links.

Although there was a sense of irony about the need of technology, the technology was restrictedly integrated during the events. The charismatic Claudia used her partner's tablet to visualize her home country's dance culture and using videos to enhance the guest's impression of the dance. Apart from this moment, no mobile devices were used openly during the event, a trend we could observe through other events although some guests occasionally and discreetly picked up their mobiles from their pockets and quickly used them.

When visiting Jon's personally decorated apartment in the inner city of Gothenburg, an interesting conversation arose amongst some of the participants. The criticism to mobile devices and Internet's role in social interactions in contemporary society is an interesting paradox in a phenomenon that Belk (2013) means is a result of the evolution of Internet. There is an undertone of contempt when one of the guests, Henrik, tells us about a party he attended, where the men performed a seductive yet comical dance routine for a woman for her birthday. The men were nude, and Henrik told us the story with his own amusement apparent in his voice. What he was less amused about was the fact that one person in the audience had video recorded the dance routine even though the performers had clearly declined such behavior prior to the performance. It was obvious that this upset him, as he explained how this recording could be a factor that prevents this kind of promiscuous yet funny features of a party to appear due to the probability of the documentation to go viral.

The paradox we see in the postmodern era is while Internet and mobile devices are valued in terms of establishing the organic structure of sociality (Maffesoli 1996), the cultural meaning of technology is not as apparent. Only rarely we observe mobile devices during the events we attend. This could possibly be a way to form mutual symbolism in the culture through opposing dominant lifestyle norms (Arnould & Thompson 2005) which in this case is formed as criticism to technology and praising the ability to be present in reality. Jon points out how his perception is that technology has been desocializing, but that AirDine rather is a tool for establishing social interactions. This paradox between the culture that is created in the clique and technology is particularly interesting as Belk (2013) argues that the sharing economy is a direct consequence of Internet. Hence, without technology, neither the AirDine temporary community nor the clique would have existed. So when John (2013) expands the view on involving technological aspects in understanding sharing completely, technology simply serves as the catalyst for the creation of social value in the sharing economy. Contemporary sharing economy integrates technology in the creation of social links where AirDine constitutes an example of new sharing behavior (John

2013). Without the AirDine mobile application, the social value that we have been part of creating would still have remained unreleased and the societal benefits resting inaccessible to society and us as consumers.

5. Conclusion

AirDine constitutes an example of a sharing economy service where consumers are creating social capital. The tale of AirDine in itself has presented how this process can proceed. Consumers create social capital identified as networking. The forms of social capital identified are integrational, leisurely or professional networking. We have identified that for the consumer to create social capital, technology in the form of the AirDine mobile application serves as an intermediary. AirDine constitutes an example of contemporary sharing economy phenomena where technology is integrated in the creation of social links. On site, it is through the act of sharing that consumers create social capital. The objects of sharing include food, cooking skills, home environments and the dining experience. The process of how social capital is created varies, as we have identified the formation of a temporary consumer community which regards AirDine as a concept, but also identified signs of consumer tribalism where networking appears to be more intense for a specific clique within the community.

We can from our research conclude how consumer culture as a phenomenon implicates integration. Through participation in sharing economy phenomena, consumers are creating bridging social capital, which is the most valuable from a societal perspective, as it is enhancing integration. As sharing is the central form of consumer behavior studied, we conclude how sharing in itself possesses the power of releasing otherwise enchained social value. Sharing in our contemporary society thus is a creative process, not distributive. Our research has shown how consumer culture is part of the integrational process in society, telling us how consumption when involving sharing as an act, lead to implications that create value for the greater good of society.

6. Discussion

In this chapter, we aim to present our personal reflections on the implications of our result, reframing the concept through comparison with social media and highlighting the role of technology in the sharing economy. We will also present our ideas for future, complementary research.

Researching consumer culture in the sharing economy has truly been an inspirational journey for us personally, injecting us with lots of new perspectives and ideas on how to use our newfound knowledge in the future. As marketing, innovation and digitalization are great interests of ours, we managed to find a research question that managed to capture all of these areas. But more importantly, when analyzing our empirical data, we made the discovery that our research question also united our focal interests in marketing with our engagement for societal issues. We managed to identify how consumer culture potentially is a drive within the sharing economy that unlocks benefits for society.

Our intention was to create new knowledge from a grass root consumer perspective, which we value as highly useful in the construction of marketing strategies. Additionally, we managed to highlight an example of how the sharing economy simply supplies opportunities for businesses to profit as a market intermediary and simultaneously contribute to integration. We therefore believe the sharing economy creates opportunities for businesses to integrate economic and social value creation, without any aspiration of philanthropy, what Porter and Kramer (2011) means with 'Creating Shared Value'. What we have identified apart from the consumer's role is the actual catalyst to unlock this enchained value - technology.

When analyzing our material, we instantly made an association between AirDine and other social media platforms that we use daily and quickly made a comparison between the AirDine mobile application and the purpose of other social platforms in our own smartphones; Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Tinder, Happn etc. We concluded that AirDine in fact can be categorized as a social media, as they all share the concept of establishing social interactions. But as we dove deeper into the platforms compared to social media as a theoretical concept, we identified how all of these can be differentiated and therefore propose a subcategorization. We would therefore like to reframe sharing economy services that use a mobile application as a social media as we believe the importance for businesses is to understand the firm's new role in the sharing economy paradigm. Where firms traditionally have been a central actor in value creation, the sharing economy shifts traditional roles and gives the consumer the power of the creation. The firm is merely a media channel, a market intermediary. We therefore would like to reframe sharing economy services as social media.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) describes that the concept of social media unites two areas; Web 2.0 and User Generated Content (UGC). Web 2.0 is an ideological and technological concept of World Wide Web usage where applications and content is continuously and collaboratively created with WWW as the platform. User Generated Content is the content provided on these platforms by end-users. To meet this requirement, content needs to be made publicly available to a defined network, involve a creative process and produced unprofessionally. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 61) summarizes what social media is with the following quote: "Social Media is

a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content.”

When speaking of social media in contemporary society, Kaplan and Haenlein (2012) argue that social media is an essential part of our everyday life. When expanding on their own previous work, Kaplan and Haenlein (2012) argue that mobile social media in comparison to traditional social media, is more closely linked to social interactions in the real world (i.e. face to face) than traditional virtual worlds. Here, they highlight geolocalization and time sensitivity as increasingly important components of social media usage. What we can see in our AirDine example is how the events created by hosts are here and now. It enables face-to-face interaction which is a sign of increasing importance of geolocalization, and the events can only be attended at a fixed time, signaling time sensitivity. They also highlight two main trends in the relevance of social media; a power shift from firms to individuals and the merge of real and virtual worlds (Kaplan and Haenlein 2012), which we will expand on below in how businesses can exploit the consumer’s creative role. All these implications require a reframing of the consumers’ creation.

What we would like to suggest is a widened concept of what consumers create through social media; UGC should therefore include both consumer creation that is constructed in the virtual world in the real world. In the virtual world, which includes Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, UGC is not as dependent on geolocalization and time sensitivity. Tinder, Happn and the most prominent example in this thesis, AirDine, rely on UGC in the real world and therefore are examples of new trends in social media, involving elements of geolocalization and time sensitivity. The relevance of UGC value must be recognized by businesses as it is the actual product in experiential consumption. A key insight for businesses in the widened concept of UGC is the new components it involves. Strategies for social media can include geolocalizations such as countries, cities, neighborhoods or streets to name a few and also time components. As AirDine have identified, localization and time creates a scheduled event, but the content is created by consumers and not businesses.

The social capital that we identified was created on site in the real world is in its form not different to virtual worlds; networking. In order for businesses to exploit the opportunities to profit on the social value created in UGC in the real world, we suggest that they address either the integrational, leisurely or professional aspects of value in marketing of the social media, simply through events. Social media businesses might for example create platforms uniting employers with potential employees directly addressing the consumers who seek to expand their professional networks, where businesses can exploit the opportunities social media creates through for example using AirDine as an arena for employer branding. In these contexts, the consumers’ personal and professional roles are merging which is an important insight for business in employer branding aspects and talent management. Social media with reality based UGC are platforms to establish relationships with future employees and a suitable arenas to market the business from an employer perspective. Our research has shown that conversations focusing on career are appropriate within the cultural discourse of the events which are hosted where networking focuses on leisurely or professional networking.

From a consumer perspective, consumers can use social media platforms for creating social links that unites newly arrived refugees with current residents for cultural exchange, through events such as dining. We have observed consumers who value the power of social media to establish social interactions across cultural barriers. For example, disappointment was expressed amongst the participants for the homogeneity of the group, being referred to by one guest as ‘a group of five blonde Swedes’. We speculate if this can be a result of the recent debate about diversity and integration in media, due to increasing flows of refugees, creating a motivation for participation in these events. This could possibly be an example of what Arnould and Thompson (2005, p. 874) expresses as “how particular cultural production systems, such as marketing communications or the fashion industry, systematically predispose consumers toward certain kinds of identity projects.”

As our study has been limited to regard only consumer creation on site, we cannot draw any conclusions on the consumer’s intentions and decision process in attending certain events. It is therefore not possible for us to speculate on which factors possibly contribute to the emergence of the form of the social capital that is created on site. In order to complement our research, we therefore suggest future research regarding the intentions for participating in sharing economy. What attitudes and behaviors precedes the consumption in the decision making process?

Being a platform for integration and meetings across cultural barriers leads us to the international opportunities for these services, as a way of expanding the concept to involve geolocalization (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). In our research, we have experienced integration within a city, but there are no barriers to grasp a wider perspective when speaking of integration. The symbolic food value when integration was identified as the symbolic outcome is cultural heritage, which opens up for global market opportunities. As we have concluded that the sustainable social links are not what is demanded by the consumer, this creates opportunities to market sharing economy services globally and suitable for the tourism sector. The tourism sector is also valid from a social media perspective, as it is time sensitive (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010), being a temporary activity. This creates value for several actors; for cities where the hosts serve as a co-marketer of the city’s brand, for travelers demanding consumption of cultural experiences in the visited city or country.

We would also like to pinpoint the distinction we have identified between temporary consumption communities, where we identify AirDine, and tribes. We believe AirDine is an example on how to profit on the first, but we see additional opportunities to profit on tribes in consumer culture. In order to create these services and successfully market these, one needs to understand the complexity we have discussed above. It would be interesting to see the effects of increasing the mutual symbolism to establish stronger bond and reliance within a social context and if this is effective on tribal evolvement, perhaps through a Star Wars-themed event? However, the risk is that the evolution of these tribes makes the firm’s role redundant due to loss of control of how the social interactions are conducted. What we find especially interesting when exemplifying sharing economy through AirDine, is that these two phenomena are not mutually exclusive as we see the potential existence of a tribe within the temporary consumption community. The potential problem for businesses to address is to withhold the balance between the two, to not lose control and hence forfeit profit opportunities. As we identified signs of tribalism in AirDine, further studies aiming to identify whether tribalism in fact is a phenomena

within AirDine, explore the culture and evaluate the implications this have on the consumer's AirDine experience.

Furthermore, we have reflected on the integrated role of technology in the social contexts that are created through sharing economy culture. The Forum of Commercial Policy states in their report that digitalization is both a driving factor behind sharing economy, and something that is increasingly boosted by the same. Interestingly, we have not experienced that neither mobile devices nor Internet have a significant role when the consumer co-creates the actual sharing economy experience. We have even pinpointed that some participants appears to have a negative attitude towards using technology in social interactions, which is somewhat contradictory due to the significant role that technology have for the event's existence. Due to these observations of negative attitudes to digitalization amongst the participants, it would be interesting to research attitudes and behaviors towards digitalization among sharing economy consumers, as we have identified technology as the catalyst for the value these participants co-create.

But the importance of technology and digitalization in the sharing economy should definitely not be diminished due to the potential lack of importance on site. It is due to technology that social value was unlocked at all. We personally look forward to follow the role of technology in the evolution of Porter & Kramer's (2011) concept 'Creating Shared Value' and how this creates implications for businesses to address societal issues, integration being the example highlighted in our case study, and diminish the division between private and public sector to address the same. As our research has shown an empirical example on how to use consumption to create societal benefits, eliminating the element of philanthropy that is required in for example Fair Trade and maintaining an economic incentive for the firm, we are excited to see the future progress of 'Creating Shared Value'. We also suggest future research on developing relevant methodology for measuring social value, an aspect beyond the boundaries of our qualitative study, which we imply is of importance and included in the future economics discourse. Being able to quantify social value, alike economic value that is measured in monetary terms, is one way of communicating its relevance across supplementary academic fields. Our aim is that the insights we have provided through this research has been inspirational to businesses and hopefully have unlocked barriers for future creation of social value.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire used for writing field notes (Crang & Cook 2007, p. 51-52):

”Locating an ethnographic setting

- what country is it in?
- is it in the north, south, east, west, centre or a combination?
- is it a city, town, village or other setting?
- where in that larger setting is it located?
- what is the background and character of that setting?
- how could you describe your setting's location so readers can picture it?

Describing the physical space of that setting.

- what size and shape did that setting have?
- what were its main physical characteristics?
- how would you describe them so that readers could picture them?
- could you find or draw maps, do some sketching and/or take photographs?
- (how) did this physical setting change?

Describing others' interactions within that setting.

- who were the people, and other ‘actors’, present in that setting that day?
- what did you see them doing and hear them talking about?
- how did they appear to be interacting with one another?
- how could you describe this so readers can imagine being there?

Describing your participation in interactions in that setting.

- where did you locate yourself in that setting that day?
- who introduced you to whom and how did they describe what you were doing?
- how did you see, hear and get involved with what was going on?
- what did you learn from talking and doing things with the people there?
- how did your participation change over time, and in other settings?
- how could you describe this so readers can imagine being in your shoes?

Reflecting on the research process

- what were your first impressions and how have they changed?
- what did you divulge to whom about your work and how did they react?
- how did you think you were being placed by the people you worked with?
- how did your research team (if you had one) work and fit in?

- what effects did this seem to have on the way the research could be done?
- how did your initial findings match your expectations?
- what language problems did you have, and how did you deal with them?
- what were the 'surprises', big or small, that needed further investigation?
- did your powers of description, photography etc. capture enough?
- (how) did the ways you did your research change people's behaviour?
- how was your research taking shape and what control did you have over this?
- how did you change your questions, methods, etc. as a result of these questions?
- how would you rewrite your methodology as if you had known this would happen?

Self-reflections

- how did various aspects of these research encounters make you feel?
- how appropriately did you think you behaved in these encounters?
- (how) did you (try to) please everyone, including your supervisors?
- (how) did you (try to) do the right thing and get that research done?
- (how) did people question your motives or behaviour in the field?
- how did you respond to this and what effects did this seem to have?
- how did you deal with your emotions in your fieldwork?
- how did you have to manage your 'self' in the field, and how hard was this?
- how and to whom did you let off steam, and how did they respond?
- if you felt like giving up, what kept you going?"