



KNOCK, KNOCK. WHO'S THERE?

THE EFFECTS OF VISUAL SENDER RECOGNITION

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Introduction

- The number of survey invitations individuals receive has increased significantly over the past decade.
- A commonly cited explanation for declining response rates is survey fatigue due to overexposure (Groves, 2006; Kreuter, 2013; Peytchev, 2013; Leeper, 2019) and who the sender is thus becomes more important.
- In high-trust contexts like Sweden (OECD, 2024), government-affiliated branding may enhance legitimacy and increase the likelihood that invitations are read and considered.
- This study examines whether including a local government authority's logo on the survey invitation affects response propensity.



What is sender recognition and why does it matter?

- The sender of a survey request influences both response rates and nonresponse bias (Groves et al., 2012).
- Requests from commercial sources tend to reduce participation (Edwards et al., 2002; Greer et al., 2000).
- Familiar or locally recognized senders improve response rates and reduce bias (Edwards et al., 2014; Ladik et al., 2007; Millar et al., 2021).
- Prior studies often focus on sender cues after the envelope is opened (e.g., logo or signature in the web survey). Fewer studies assess the impact of sender recognition at the envelope level—the earliest point of contact.



Purpose of the study – Test if sender cue:

- Increases response rates
 - Due to higher trust in the sender
- Decreases non-response bias
 - (Perhaps) as a consequence of a higher response rate

Experimental design & procedure

- Simple random sample
- Mixed mode self-completion survey
- Individuals from age 16 and older residing in Gothenburg
- All received up to 9 total reminders: 1 initial invitation, 4 by mail, 4 by text message
- Sample persons were randomly assigned to a treatment or control group
- The two groups:
 - The SOM Institute and Gothenburg City logos (n = 4,504):
 - The SOM institute logo only (n = 4,496):

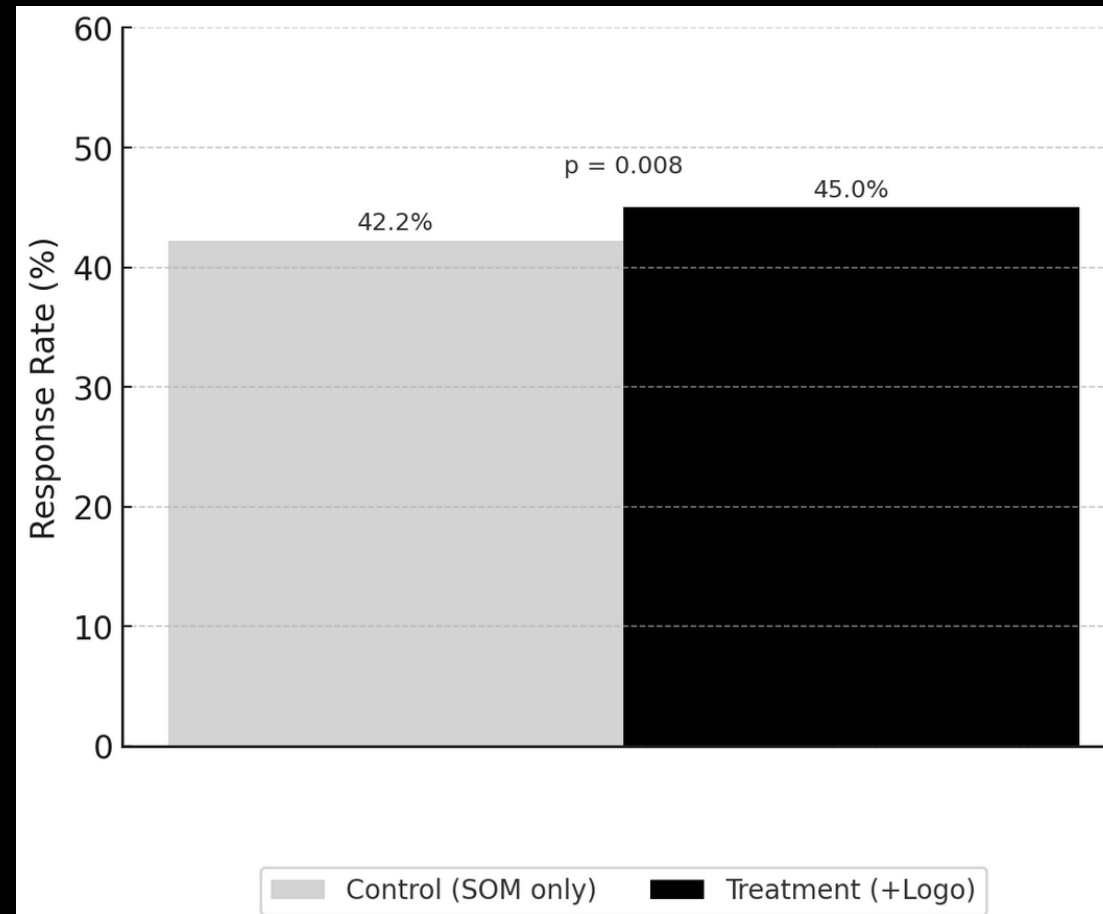




RESULTS



Response rate (RR1) significantly increased in the group which got two logos



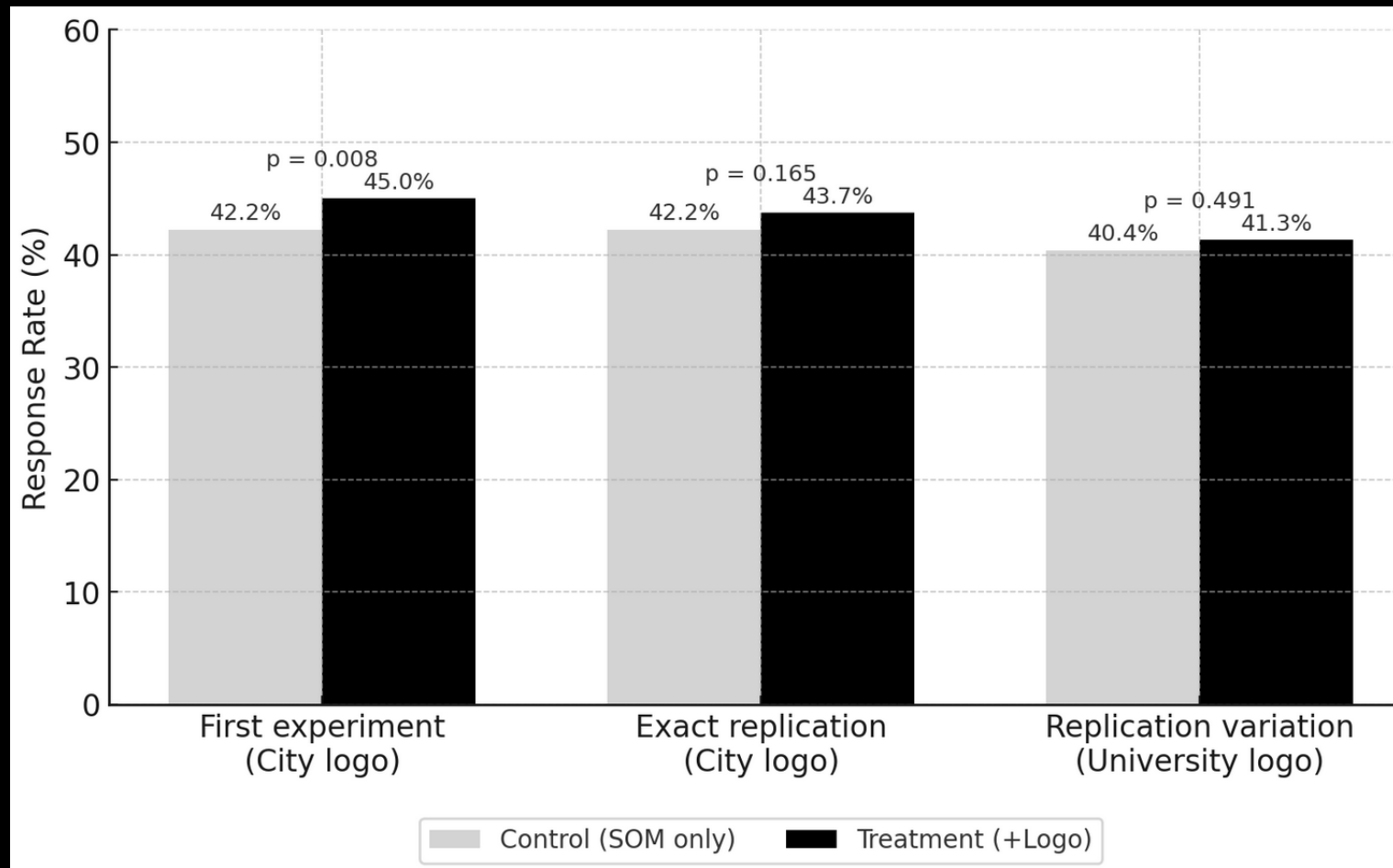
Replication! Experimental design:

- Same conditions as for the first experiment;
- Exact replication (2024):
 - The SOM Institute and Gothenburg City logos (n = 4,530)
 - The SOM institute logo only (n = 4,470)
- Replication with different logo (2024)
 - The SOM Institute and University of Gothenburg logos (n = 3,023)
 - The SOM institute logo only (n = 2,977)





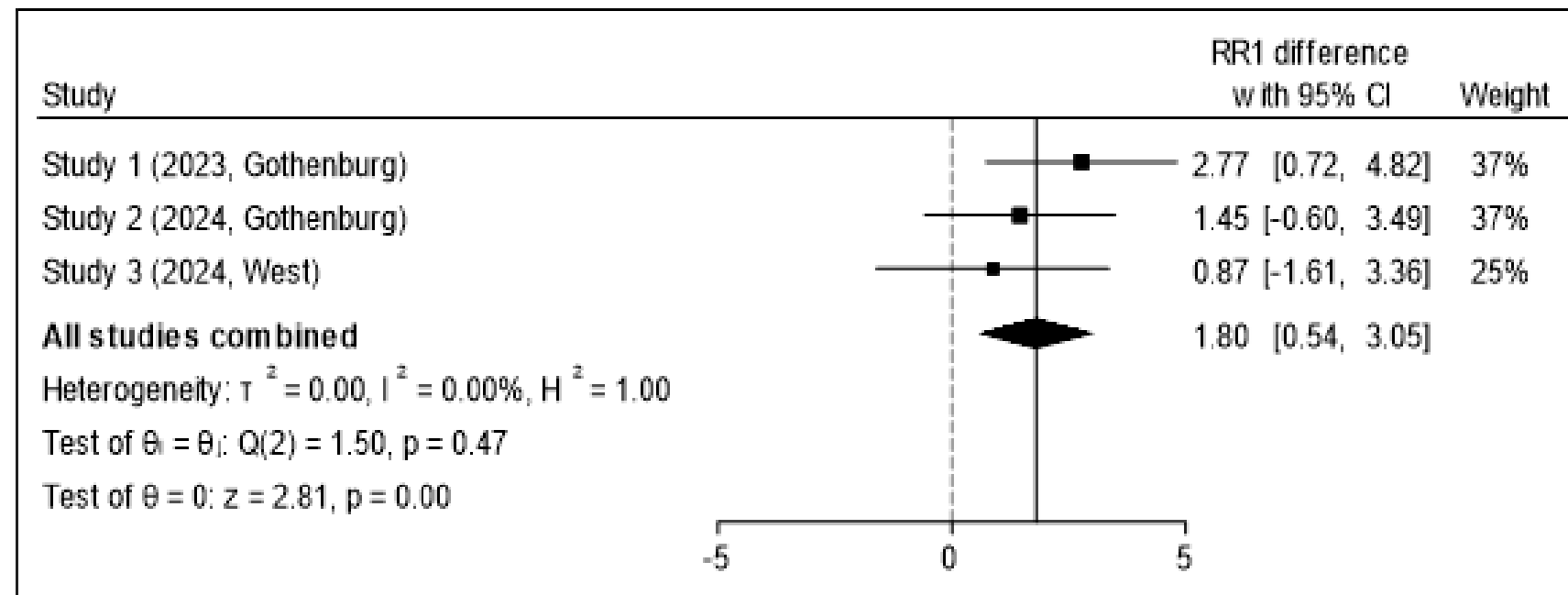
Response rate (RR1) did not significantly increase in the replications





Response rate (RR1) meta-results; A significant result in the meta-analysis

Figure 1. *Results of meta-analysis, Study 1, 2 and 3*





Non-response bias: No improvement

Perhaps even slightly worse in Study 1 as response rate increased in the first study

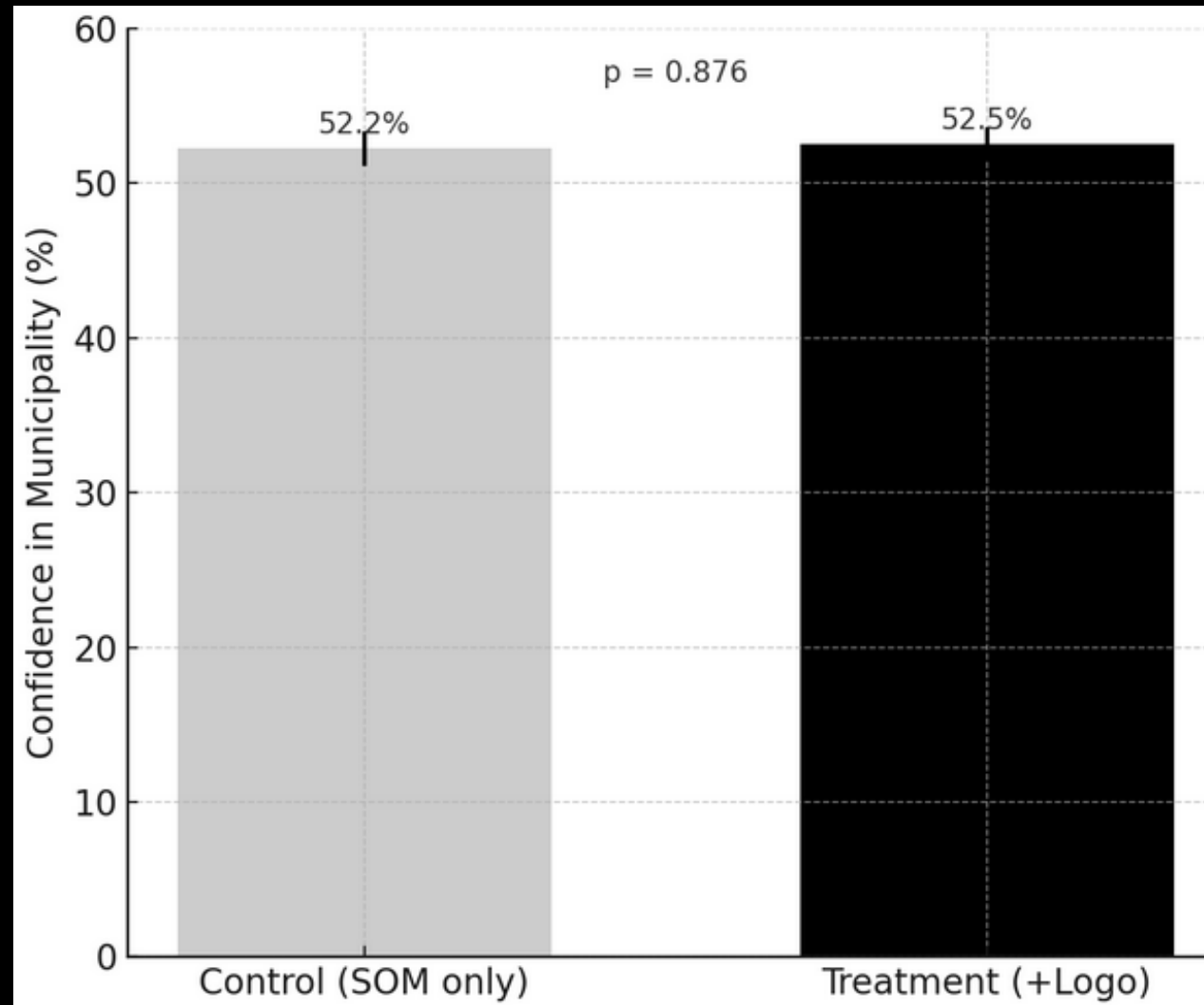
Table 2. *R*-indicators and 95% CI

		R-indicator	Confidence intervals
Study 1 (The SOM-survey in Gothenburg 2024)	The SOM Institute and Gothenburg City logos	0.67 (.01)	[.64, .70]
	SOM Institute logo only	0.70 (.01)	[.67, .73]
Study 2 (The SOM-survey in Gothenburg 2024)	The SOM Institute and Gothenburg City logos	0.68 (.01)	[.66, .71]
	SOM Institute logo only	0.68 (.01)	[.65, .70]
Study 3 (The SOM-survey in West Sweden 2024)	The SOM Institute and University of Gothenburg logos	0.67 (.02)	[.64, .70]
	The SOM Institute logo only	0.66 (.01)	[.63, .69]

Note. Standard errors in parentheses.



No difference in "Confidence in the municipality"





Results

- The meta-analysis showed a significant positive effect on response rates when an additional logo was included alongside the SOM Institute's logo.
- No significant differences in non-response bias were found between experimental groups across the three studies.
- The Gothenburg City logo had a stronger effect on response rates than the University of Gothenburg logo, likely due to greater local recognition.

Conclusions:

- Increased response rates may be driven by sender/logo recognition
- It remains unclear whether the effect is due to the specific content of the second logo or simply the presence of a second logo.
- Government-affiliated logos are a low-cost, potentially scalable method to enhance response rates, but logo count and recognition must be considered when generalizing results.



Thank you for listening!

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Resources

- **Notes on Survey Methodology at the SOM Institute:**

<https://www.gu.se/en/som-institute/publications/research-on-survey-methodology>

