Resilience and vulnerability in the tourism industry during a pandemic

A comparative study between Finland and Sweden on different geographical scales

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ABSTRACT

In 2020 the Covid-19 virus spread rapidly and became a global pandemic. This had a severe impact on the tourism industry since travel was halted due to restrictions imposed to stop the pandemic. This makes it an essential geographical problem since tourism is about the movement of people in different environments. This study examines how tourism has been impacted in Finland and in Sweden by doing a comparative analysis. This because they are neighbouring countries who have had different strategies when it comes to managing Covid-19. The study also investigates how tourism in larger cities have been impacted compared to smaller cities. This will be done by performing interviews with people working in this industry as well as analysing relevant governmental reports. Due to the huge gap of knowledge surrounding the pandemic this thesis provides relevant issues to be studied.

The results show that Sweden and Finland have been similarly affected by the pandemic with a sharp decline in overnight stays, almost no foreign tourists and businesses struggling to survive. Although the results show that Finland's harsher strategy against the virus have kept the Covid-19 numbers relatively low, but instead have made the businesses in the tourism industry suffer more due to politics making it more difficult for them to seek aid. The results also show that the smaller cities have not suffered as much thanks to domestic tourists, with some businesses having their best year yet. However this likely only means the smaller cities are not winners but only less losers. Many businesses have been very creative in adapting their operations to the restrictions of the pandemic; however many are worried about the future and if the pandemic continues for longer. Although many businesses have managed to survive and proven to not be completely vulnerable, resilience is still something the industry needs to develop. In preparation for future crises businesses could improve cooperation with other businesses and organizations, build an economic buffer, as well as improve sustainability to become more resilient.

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Table of contents

1. Introduction

In the year of 2020 the Covid-19 disease became a world-wide pandemic with a severe effect on the global economy. The rapid spread of the virus caused countries to close their borders which halted travel as well as local restrictions bringing tourist destinations to a standstill. It became very clear that the tourism industry had been especially susceptible to the measures used to counteract the spread of Covid-19. Tourism is a part of the hospitality industry and can generally be defined as the movement of people between places outside of their everyday environment for personal or business purposes (World Tourism Organization, n.d.). The tourism or hospitality industry is the commerce around the tourists and their consumption, it consists of many different sectors such as accommodation, restaurants, transportation, additional services, renting as well as culture and sport events to name a few (Svensk Turism AB, 2010). The tourism industry and the hospitality industry go hand in hand and are connected in many ways, but one can roughly define the tourism industry as being concerned with providing services for tourists only, while the hospitality industry is concerned with offering services to tourists as well as locals (Revfine, n.d.).

A tourist destination is a geographical term of a physical space, either with or without certain boundaries where a visitor can spend the night, it is made up of all the products, services, as well as experiences and activities the tourist can take part in at that destination (World Tourism Organization, 2019; Żemła: 2016). As such tourism businesses are usually a part that makes up a tourist destination. The whole function of the industry is to mainly serve travellers (Camilleri, 2018). Tourism is a geographical phenomenon since it concerns space, place, the environment, and the mobility of people within these spheres, thus making it a relevant concept within geography and a relevant issue during a pandemic which has severely restricted the mobility of people (Hall, 2013; Williams, 2009:3). There are still many question marks remaining concerning the pandemic and its impact on the tourism industry since it is still ongoing, which is why this study intends to give some insight and answer some of these questions.

For this thesis four study areas in two countries have been chosen: Helsinki and Jakobstad in Finland, and Gothenburg and Lysekil in Sweden. The tourism industries in Sweden and Finland have both been affected due to both global and local restrictions. The number of foreign tourists has declined in both countries due to borders closing in many countries hindering travel (SVT, 2020; Statsrådet, 2021). This creates an interesting pattern and raises the question of how

tourism has been affected in two neighbouring countries who have taken two different approaches to combat the spread of Covid-19. During this pandemic Sweden has remained relatively open by essentially not closing its borders and allowing the society to stay open in order to keep the economy going (Habib, 2020). Finland instead has had a stricter approach to the pandemic than Sweden by closing down its external and even some internal borders and having more rigid regulations on how businesses can operate (Argento, Kaarbøe & Vakkuri, 2020). One reason for this difference in response could be that Sweden has not been involved in a war for 200 years while Finland still has stark memories of being a part of World War 2 and thus having the mindset and laws of being prepared to deal with an emergency, such as the Emergency Powers Act or having emergency supplies stockpiled (ibid.). Sweden's constitutional law also did not have a clause for an emergency such as a pandemic, and a forced lockdown is also not possible due to its constitution (ibid.).

It also creates an interesting dilemma if the pandemic can both be an almost impossible challenge for some parts of the industry and at the same time be something that benefits other parts of it, depending on the type of tourism service and the location. Such as if there is a difference in how the big city tourism has been affected compared to rural tourism. This study might also shine a light in how tourism has had to adapt in order to survive a global pandemic and if it also can help promote a more sustainable tourism industry for the future. There is also the question in how the tourists themselves have changed in their behaviour due to the pandemic, and if this will be persistent even after the pandemic (Kock, Nørfelt, Josiassen, Assaf & Tsionas, 2020). Resilience has often been an issue in the tourism industry, and according to research this industry tends to be lacking in proactive thinking when it comes to crisis management and focus more on reactive solutions after a crisis already have happened, something that can increase their vulnerability (De Sausmarez, 2007). Therefore it raises the issue of how an industry based on movement can handle a crisis that restricts it.

1.1 Research problem and purpose

Tourism is mainly about the movement of people between different places, due to the pandemic this has been severely restricted, which now offers a relevant geographical problem to be studied. The tourism industry is by its nature dependent on the mobility of tourists and can therefore find it very difficult to survive during a pandemic, making it a very volatile sector. Tourism is a global phenomenon that has now largely ceased to exist (Sigala, 2020). It is partly

due to the structures of the society on a governmental level that has decided how restricted the mobility in a country will be because of their Covid-19 strategy (Chica, Hernández & Bulchand-Gidumal, 2021). Therefore the industry and the businesses within it have had to adapt themselves according to these strategies on both a national level and down to a local level.

This study will essentially view local responses to a global phenomenon by delving into the geographical issues caused by the pandemic. The global spread of Covid-19 offers an unprecedented situation and thus the main purpose of this study is to contribute with knowledge that might deepen and increase the understanding of the circumstances around this pandemic and the effect it has on the tourism industry. There is a huge gap in knowledge at the moment with many uncertainties and this study might be able to help provide new information as well as a better understanding of how the tourism industry can become more resilient to crises.

The aim of this comparative study is to investigate how tourism in Finland and Sweden has been affected by and adapted to the Covid-19 pandemic and if there is a difference between larger cities and smaller ones. The aim is also to study in what ways the tourism industry has adapted to the different Covid-19 strategies implemented by the governments in order to survive during the pandemic. In addition, this study aims to come up with some recommendations of how this industry can become more resilient to be able to handle a similar crisis in the future and thus serve as a contribution to science. To succeed with these aims a set of research questions has been drafted for this study:

- How has the pandemic impacted the tourism industry in Sweden and in Finland?
- Has the pandemic affected tourism in larger cities differently compared to smaller cities?
- In what ways has the tourism industry adapted to the pandemic?
- What lessons have the tourism industry learned in order to increase their resilience?

1.2 Delimitations

The geographical limitations of this study are set to four cities: two in Finland and two in Sweden. The two larger cities chosen are Helsinki in Finland and Gothenburg in Sweden, the two smaller are Jakobstad in Finland and Lysekil in Sweden. These were chosen since they have a similar population in addition to being cities close to the sea. This was necessary so they

could be compared on a more equal level, the choice of being close to the sea came naturally for the smaller cities since the two larger ones are as well allowing for a more fair comparison. The comparison of Sweden and Finland allows for substance for this study since they are neighbouring countries that are very similar in many ways yet have chosen different strategies for handling the pandemic, thus making it a relevant topic. The temporal limitations are mainly narrowed down to the year of 2020 since that is the year Covid-19 became a global pandemic and the whole year was thus affected by it. But the temporal limitation can also be defined to the future since this study hopefully will give insight into how a city's tourism industry can adapt to survive the remainder of the pandemic as well as in future ones.

2. Study areas

The four chosen cities are presented below with a short background to their tourism.

Figure 1. Map of Sweden and Finland with the study areas included. Map made with snazzymaps.com

2.1 Helsinki

Helsinki (Helsingfors in Swedish) is the capital of Finland and has a population of around 654 000 of which 78% speak Finnish and 6% Swedish (Helsingfors stad, 2021). It was founded by the Swedish king Gustav Wasa and has been located at its current location since 1643 (ibid.).

Helsinki is a popular tourist destination with almost 4,5 million overnight stays in registered accommodation establishments in 2019, among these around half were domestic tourists and the other half foreign visitors (Helsinki facts and figures, 2020). This is an increase of almost 8% since last year. Most of the foreign visitors come from Russia, Germany, USA, UK and Sweden. (ibid.). The two most popular tourist attractions in Helsinki are Linnanmäki Amusement Park and the sea fortress Suomenlinna with both over 1 million visitors in 2019. Other popular attractions are the churches of Temppeliaukio, Uspenski cathedral and Helsinki cathedral and crypt, as well as the zoo Korkeasaari. (ibid.).

2.2 Gothenburg

Gothenburg is the second biggest city in Sweden with 580 000 inhabitants, it was founded in 1621 by king Gustaf II Adolf (Göteborgs Stad, n.d.a). Located by the Swedish west coast and with the Göta river cutting through the city, Gothenburg has been characterized by waterside activities and flourished due to its sea trade (ibid.). Gothenburg offers a lot of activities and places to visit for tourists, one of the most popular attractions is the amusement park Liseberg with 3 million visitors in 2019 (Göteborgs Stad, n.d.b). Other popular attractions are the science centre of Universeum with over half a million visitors yearly, the archipelago of Gothenburg, the botanical gardens as well the museum of fine arts (Goteborg, n.d.; Universeum, n.d.). More and more visitors are coming to Gothenburg with 2019 being the most successful year so far with 5 million overnight stays in hotels and hostels (Göteborgs Stad, n.d.b.). Business tourism is a growing sector due to its very good cooperation between the city, academia and the businesses (ibid.).

2.3 Jakobstad

The city of Jakobstad (Pietarsaari in Finnish) was founded in 1652 by the Swedish countess Ebba Brahe who named it after her late husband Jacob de la Gardie, the city has around 19 400 inhabitants of which 56% speak Swedish and 35% Finnish (Jakobstad, 2020). Located by the Gulf of Bothnia Jakobstad has a maritime history and was traditionally a shipbuilding and seafaring city, which is still a part of the city's cultural heritage (Jakobstad, 2021). The proximity to the sea is also one attraction for the city with its beaches and guest ports as well as archipelago cruises during the summer. Some other popular attractions in the city are the gardens of Aspegrens and the botanical garden of Skolparken, there is also the city's historical museum as well as the arctic museum of Nanoq (ibid.). There is also a rich cultural life in

Jakobstad with many events throughout the year, however the most popular and biggest event is Jakobs Dagar, a weeklong town festival arranged every year in July which attracts thousands of visitors (ibid.). In 2019 Jakobstad, along with the surrounding region, had 45 900 overnight stays, a number that has remained relatively stable the last four years. Of these about 29 600 were by leisure tourists and 16 300 by business tourists. This amounted in 3,1 million € from accommodation sales in 2019. (Visitory, n.d.).

2.4 Lysekil

Lysekil is located on the Swedish west coast, about 70 km north of Gothenburg, and has a population of around 14 500 (Statistikmyndigheten [SCB], 2020). First records of Lysekil was from around 1570 and the community mainly lived off fishing, farming and navigation, but it wasn't until 1903 that Lysekil became a city (Lysekil, n.d.). The commercial life in Lysekil has traditionally been centred around the various natural resources, such as fishing, seafaring but later also quarrying, which allowed for the community to blossom and grow (Västsverige, n.d.). During the late 19th century open-air swimming-baths opened which led to Lysekil becoming a popular seaside resort (ibid.). Visitors today can still enjoy the open-air swimming-bath Kallbadhuset, other popular sights are the seaside park Havsbadsparken, the church of Lysekil or the saltwater aquarium of Havets Hus which attracts 80 000 visitors every year (Västsverige, n.d.; Havets Hus, n.d.). There are also many activity-based attractions in Lysekil such as diving, rock climbing, kayaking and coastal hiking (Västsverige, n.d.). Lysekil has been a popular seaside destination still increasing in visitors, in 2019 there were over 138 000 overnight stays with an increase of 17% from previous years (Turistrådet Västsverige, 2019).

3. Background

3.1 Tourism strategies

The tourism and hospitality industry are made up of several sectors, both private and public, and often these are to some extent dependent on each other and are thus both competitors in the business as well as complementary to one another (Svensk Turism AB, 2010). To promote and increase tourism in a country, both towards locals and foreign visitors, different strategies on different levels (e.g. national, regional or local) might be adopted by a country and focus on several areas, such as marketing or tourism infrastructure (Stokes, 2008). Tourism planning serves as an instrument for government policies to be implemented in the tourism sector (Williams, 2009:157). Below are the main points in the current strategies of both Finland and Sweden presented as well as an introduction to the countries' strategy for the pandemic.

3.1.1 Finland

Tourism is a growing export business for Finland and of the total export revenue for the country the tourism export constituted for over 17% in 2017, the total turnover from the tourism industry makes for about 15 billion € and makes up 2,6% of the country's GDP (Arbets- och näringsministeriet, 2020). Therefore the tourism industry is important to Finland for both the national economy and the employment. It also acts as a fiscal multiplier on other business areas, such as the building industry, food industry, textile industry as well as financial services. (ibid.). Domestic tourism is central to the industry with the domestic tourist demand accounting for about 70% of the total demand, it thus has an equalizing effect in case a change in the international political situation alters the demand from the international market. Most of the tourism in Finland is connected to people's free time, because while business tourism is mostly located to the larger cities with greater economies and universities, leisure tourism is more evenly divided regionally to both cities, rural and coastal areas. There is also a quite even season-wise distribution with tourists travelling all year around, although the summer months are the peak. (ibid.).

The current Finnish national tourism strategy was launched in 2019 with an end date of 2028 when the goals are to be reached. It is a long-term strategy and is to be used as a tool to assemble

the different participants within the tourism industry. (ibid.). Tourism is also something that promotes a balanced regional structure in Finland. The Finnish state finances cultural objects (such as museums and cultural heritages) as well as open-air services such as national parks and other outdoor recreational areas, thus tourism services with fees are created. This leads to tourism supporting the preservation of local cultural heritages as well as maintaining a high quality of outdoor experiences both for tourists and locals. The strategy maintains the sustainability of tourism as an essential issue in its development, and that all kinds of tourism operators have to develop a sustainable and responsible tourism industry that takes into consideration all three sustainability aspects: environmental, economic, as well as social and cultural. The goal is to be the most sustainably growing tourist destination of the Nordic countries. The strategy also aims to further even out the differences between the tourist season, this will be done by developing and promoting different themed tourisms, such as nature tourism, luxury tourism, wellness tourism, gastronomic tourism and educational tourism to mention a few. This current strategy was published just a few months before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, as such the goals and measures had to be adjusted although the priorities were to remain the same. (Arbets- och näringsministeriet, n.d.a).

The first case of Covid-19 was detected in Finland at the end of January 2020, however the epidemic did not fully break out in Finland until the beginning of March 2020 with increasing cases throughout spring (Moisio, 2020; West, Ekholm & Lång, 2020). The Finnish government acted quickly by announcing a state of emergency in the country and implemented measures to slow down the spread (Tiirinki et al., 2020). Further on in March the Emergency Powers Act was invoked where public gatherings were restricted to a maximum of 10 people, schools were shut down as well as sit-down services in restaurants and bars (West, Ekholm & Lång, 2020). At the end of March the capital province of Nyland (Uusimaa) was quarantined with its borders shut down due to the rapid spread of the virus there, the border stayed shut for three weeks (ibid.). In April the epidemic reaches its highest point in Finland but starts to recede throughout the rest of spring, this allows for schools and restaurants to open back up but with recommendations of social distancing (ibid.). Throughout the summer Finnish society returned to a somewhat state of normalcy and the Emergency Powers Act was withdrawn. Travel restrictions were lifted to some countries (Sweden not included), however at the end of August 2020 the once again increasing numbers of infected caused a recommendation for masks to be used in public spaces and public transport to hinder the spread of Covid-19 (ibid.). At the end of August the Finnish institute of health and welfare (THL) launches a mobile app called

“Coronablinkern” (“Koronavilkku”) to anonymously track the spread of the virus via the users’ movement, the app is downloaded by over 1 million users in a short while (ibid.). By November 2020 the app has been downloaded by more than 2,5 million users and it is predicted that about 35% of those having received a positive Covid-19 test have reported this to the app and thus those potentially exposed are alerted and can take necessary precautions if needed (Institutet för hälsa och välfärd [THL], 2020a). Throughout the rest of 2020 the spread is relatively stable in Finland with a few local peaks in some provinces, travel restrictions and other recommendations stay in place to hinder the spread of the disease (West, Ekholm & Lång, 2020.). At the beginning of 2021 vaccinations of healthcare workers have begun and vaccination of the elderly population is at plan (ibid.). The Finnish government allowed for 150 million Euros to the public organization Business Finland to be used to support businesses within the tourism sector (Östling, 2020). At the time of writing (14.3.2021) Finland has had 65 315 cases of Covid-19 with 786 deaths (Institutet för hälsa och välfärd [THL], 2021). This means 1 case of infection for every 83 people and 1 death for every 7057 people (Worldometer, 2021).

3.1.2 Sweden

The turnover from the tourism industry in Sweden reached 306 billion SEK in 2019, which accounted for 2,5% of the GDP and employs around 126 000 people (Tillväxtverket, 2020). Most of the tourism consumption was done by domestic tourists (67%) while foreign tourists accounted for 33% of this turnover. The majority of the total turnover is gained from commerce, lodging as well as restaurants and flights. (ibid.). In 2010 a new strategy for the Swedish tourism industry was presented with the aim of having a continuous sustainable growth and increased market shares for tourism in Sweden (Svensk Turism AB, 2010). It is intended to be a long-term strategy to be ended in 2020 and to use the results of the project to then form a new strategy. One aim is to reach a turnover of 500 billion SEK in 2020. This was in hindsight a quite high aim since the turnover in the tourism industry in 2009 was 252 billion SEK and in 2019 it only had increased by 54 billion SEK. The strategy report does however admit that the tourism industry is a complex system with many different kinds of businesses, interconnected with and dependent upon public frameworks and at the same time facing keen competition within the industry. (ibid.). Some of the potential threats the report listed for the strategy are climate- and sustainability issues, political instability, and a less prosperous economic development than predicted. The strategic goals are to attract as many foreign visitors as possible within the prioritized target groups, develop more exportable destinations as well as

supporting the already existing ones, and to get more Swedes to travel and utilize domestic tourism services. The tourism industry is important to the regional development of rural areas by acting as a life-force as well as being valuable to the larger cities serving as gateways into the rest of the country. (ibid.). The goal of Sweden's tourism politics is for the country to have a high appeal as a tourist destination and to have a long-term competitive tourism industry which contributes to the development of sustainable development and increased employment throughout Sweden (Tillväxtverket, 2018). One of the main challenges is to succeed with obtaining sustainable development within the tourism sector in all three areas: environmentally, economical, and social (ibid.). For this to be achieved there is more work needed in the areas of research, technical development, and investments of sustainable transport solutions among others. Some of the methods used to improve sustainable development within the tourism sector includes certification, the use of labels, standards, follow-up systems, and indicators (Tillväxtverket, 2019). Sweden also has a national strategy for developing nature tourism, the goals of this strategy are to increase the appeal of Sweden as a travel destination, increase the turnover in the nature tourism industry, and increase the degree of professional business enterprising within nature tourism (Nationell Naturturism Strategi, 2018). All of these goals also serve to create a long-term sustainable development for the whole Swedish tourism industry (ibid.).

The first case of Covid-19 was detected in Sweden at the end of January 2020 but the disease didn't become widespread until March and April when the number of deaths peaked during spring (Folkhälsomyndigheten, n.d.). Unlike many other countries, Sweden's approach to handling the virus was less invasive in 2020, there was not a general lockdown and the focus was more to slow down the spread of Covid-19 instead of stopping it completely (Ludvigsson, 2020). Throughout March to April the government came out with stricter regulations, e.g. gatherings of more than 50 people forbidden, some travel restrictions within Sweden and banning visits to elderly care, as well as recommendations of social distancing, avoiding unnecessary travel and working from home (ibid.). After a brief spike in the number of infected during June, the rest of summer the number of infected and dead decreased and remained on a relatively stable level until October (Folkhälsomyndigheten, n.d.). In October administrative guidance from Folkhälsomyndigheten (Public Health Agency of Sweden) were tightened in some counties, for example in Västra Götaland to refrain from visiting shopping centres, gyms, sport events, and to refrain from having physical contact with people from outside the household (Folkhälsomyndigheten, 2020). In October the number of infected as well as deaths

kept on rising until it hit a peak around Christmas time 2020, since then the numbers have gone down and remained relatively high but stable (Folkhälsomyndigheten, n.d.). The 8th of January 2021 the Swedish parliament decided to adopt a temporary act to allow for more binding measures in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19 (Regeringskansliet, 2021). This new act will allow the government to establish limitations to certain activities, such as public gatherings and events, commercial centres, and public transport (ibid.). At the end of December 2020 vaccination against Covid-19 has started in Sweden, persons living at nursing homes, those with access to home care service, as well as health care staff will be prioritized first (Regeringskansliet, 2020). The goal is to vaccinate everyone over the age of 18 and those under 18 in a risk group during the first half of 2021 (ibid.). To help and support the tourism industry many Swedish authorities contributed with financial support. For example the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket) manages 67 million SEK to 34 different projects in order to provide a sustainable adaptation to the pandemic (Ledin Höglund, 2020). At the time of writing (14.3.2021) Sweden has had 712 527 cases of Covid-19 with 13 146 deaths (Folkhälsomyndigheten, n.d.). This means 1 case of infection for every 14 people and 1 death for every 772 people (Worldometer, 2021).

There is a stark difference in the number of infected and dead in Sweden compared to Finland, however one must take into consideration the population difference between the two countries. Sweden has a population of around 10,1 million people and Finland of about 5,5 million in 2021 (Worldometer, n.d.). In addition, the way of reporting deaths by Covid-19 differs a bit as well. In Finland a death by Covid-19 is registered as such if the case of death is assumed to be because of the coronavirus infection, but in Sweden a death by Covid-19 is registered as such if the deceased was infected by the virus, no matter the cause of death (Folkhälsomyndigheten, 2021; Institutet för hälsa och välfärd, 2020b).

4. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework acts as a foundation for a study of which the whole research is constructed on (Osanloo & Grant, 2016). It acts as a framework to support the principles of the study, research problem and to show the relevance of the study (ibid.). First an introduction to Covid-19 and tourism is given, afterwards the concepts of vulnerability and resilience within the tourism industry is presented, following is the theory around crisis management, and finally the theory around tourism governance.

4.1 Covid-19 and tourism

In December 2019 a new class of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) was discovered in the Hubei province of China, which would become responsible for the respiratory disease named Covid-19 (Chakraborty & Maity, 2020). In the beginning of 2020 the disease spread globally and was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) in March 2020 and had a large impact on global economic, political, and socio-cultural systems (Sigala, 2020). Due to the severe spread of the disease countries had to take many drastic measures to prevent its spread, this included for example restricted travel, home quarantines, crowding bans, and even lockdowns (ibid.). These measures have had a severe impact especially on the tourism industry by halting global travel and even forcing many tourism destinations to end their operations and businesses (Fotiadis, Polyzos & Huan, 2021). This meant that in just a few months global tourism went from "overtourism" to "non-tourism" (Gössling, Scott & Hall, 2020). Due to the nature of their operations, hotels and other accommodations were considered hotspots for both importing the disease from outside as well as spreading it, and thus transforming a local outbreak into a pandemic (Fotiadis, Polyzos & Huan, 2021). Global tourism has therefore intensified the spread of Covid-19 and the resulting health crisis (Qiu, Park, Li & Song, 2020). Apart from the directly affected tourism operations, e.g. hotels and transportation businesses, it also spread to other businesses related to tourism, such as events, restaurants and even laundry services (Gössling, Scott & Hall, 2020). This shows how intertwined tourism is to the economy in many places.

Due to the unprecedented circumstances there are many in the industry and research that are now calling for change and to use the pandemic as an opportunity for transformation (Sigala, 2020). After the collapse of the tourism industry due to the pandemic, scholars now focus on

the re-organization and innovation of the industry to allow for future growth in a post-pandemic world (Lew, Cheer, Haywood, Brouder & Salazar, 2020). Issues that need to be addressed are for example social inequalities, which not only occurred before the pandemic but has even worsened during it, something that calls for a re-envisioning for the future of tourism and travelling (ibid.). It is difficult to predict how the pandemic will progress and how the tourism industry will change. Though Lew et al. (2020) foresee that in the immediate future there will be an effort to return to the past with many tourists anxious to start travelling again, however as time goes by old values will be discarded and new values rise from the global ordeal of the pandemic which will favour new business models, innovations and alternative governmental policies which will allow a growth for the industry. The values that will drive this according to Lew et al. (2020) are among others peace, equity, fairness, health and green economies.

Not only the industry operators might call for change, researchers ponder that there will be a change in the psyche of the tourists themselves as well, in what way however is still too early to predict (Kock et al., 2020). Although Kock et al. (2020) emphasizes that understanding this change in the tourists' mindset will be crucial for the adaptation of tourism businesses as well as researchers. The pandemic had brought on a paradigm shift in the behaviour of tourists and some things that were taken for granted pre-pandemic might not work in the same way after (ibid.). All of this press on the fact that more research will be needed once the pandemic is over to see how and if tourist's behaviour has been altered and how the industry needs to adapt to it. As previously mentioned there is much uncertainty as to how the tourism industry will recover due to the unprecedented situation the pandemic has generated and the full impact of it can't be seen yet since the pandemic is still ongoing. Previously, regions which have been affected by an outbreak, such as Asia during the SARS outbreak in 2003, have had to struggle with recovery while tourists instead have favoured destinations unaffected by the outbreak (Cooper, 2006). But since this is a global pandemic with practically no country left unaffected, tourists have no second option to turn to besides domestic destinations. Leaving it somewhat a conundrum to exactly how the global industry will recover.

4.2 Vulnerability and resilience

The tourism industry has traditionally been very vulnerable to various risks but tended to be able to bounce back and adapt its resilience (Sigala, 2020). In recent years there have been several crises globally that have affected the industry, such as terrorist attacks, political

instability and natural disasters, this can affect destinations that rely on their positive image to attract tourists (Ritchie, 2004; Calgaro, Lloyd & Dominey-Howes, 2014). The reason why it is such a vulnerable industry can be various depending on the tourist destination, it can for example be due to weak socio-economic structures that have a harder time coping with a crisis, such as in Gambia during the Ebola outbreaks in 2014 which also affected the country's tourism industry (Novelli, Burgess, Jones & Ritchie, 2018). Another reason for vulnerability is that a crisis, such as an outbreak of Ebola or Covid-19, is that it might spread fear which can deter tourists from travelling and thus proving devastating to the tourism industry (ibid.). This instilment of fear that prevents tourists from visiting a destination can also be found in the aftermath of a terrorist attack, which by some researchers are one of the crises affecting the tourism industry most since its main objective often is to spread fear (O'Connor, Stafford & Gallagher, 2008).

The current extraordinary and unparalleled crisis shows that the nature and impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is not only different but might have even more long-term effects on the industry (Sigala, 2020). The reason is the scale of the pandemic. Previous disasters, although widespread, have been on a more local level, for example the tsunami in the Indian Ocean region of 2004 or the terrorist attacks in USA in 2001, but this pandemic is on a global scale which meant that the shutdown of travel and tourism activities was worldwide (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). And although previous outbreaks, such as the SARS outbreak in 2003, also became global and had an effect on the tourism industry, it was more temporary as the disease did not have the same level of infection or spread as with Covid-19 (Brug, Aro & Richardus, 2009). Another reason the industry might have been so vulnerable is due to the tourism crisis and disaster management. Because although there have been several studies about crisis management in this industry, very few of them have related to health issues (Yeh, 2020). Therefore this lack of preparation and research may have contributed to the vulnerability of the tourism industry in the current pandemic. However the Covid-19 crisis may allow for new research and thus future preparation and adaptability.

To reduce vulnerability a tourism destination or business might try to increase their resilience by various means through tourism governance. Resilience is the ability of a system or organization to be able to return to a state of normalcy after a disturbance (Filimonau & De Coteau, 2020). For a tourist destination being resilient means having the ability to adapt, learn, and self-organize after a disaster, be it a terrorist attack or a global pandemic (ibid.). It is also a

useful concept in order to understand the changes of and the impacts on a certain system, for example by identifying the thresholds of a system (Espiner & Becken, 2014). The idea is that when a system passes a certain threshold it cannot recover to its original state with its core functions intact, after this the system enters a different state and new structures have to be formed (ibid.). And according to Espiner & Becken (2014) the key aspect for resilience and vulnerability is the ability of being able to respond to change. This signifies that how fast a system, or tourist destination, is able to bounce back after a disturbance is dependent on its capacity to adapt to the disturbance (Filimonau & De Coteau, 2020). This capacity is then dependent on the resources and structures of the destination as well as the magnitude of the disturbance (ibid.). Previous research on resilience in tourism has mostly focused on adaptation when it comes to challenges concerning climate change or economic upheavals, but research is lacking regarding the complexity that is tourism governance, development and management of tourist destinations from a resilience viewpoint (Luthe & Wyss, 2014). Resilience thinking serves as a support to crisis management, by ensuring that not only the relevant structures to deal with a crisis are in place, but also the fundamental systems needed to construct those structures (Cochrane, 2010).

4.3 Crisis management

Crises are a threat to the tourism industry not only because of the damage they cause but because they're often very unpredictable (De Sausmarez, 2007). There is no clear and universally acknowledged definition of the term 'crisis', but usually it is described as a disaster, a negative event, or a catastrophe (Pforr & Hosie, 2008). Crisis management is the act of intervening during a crisis to prevent the situation from declining further, or if this fails to try to reduce the damage and try to restore the situation to the pre-existing conditions (De Sausmarez, 2007). The tourism industry is by its very nature vulnerable to crisis, yet still the issue of crisis management has to a large extent been overlooked by the industry (Santana, 2004). This vulnerability also makes e.g. a tourist destination susceptible by perception. This is when the destination is not crippled by the crisis itself but by the perception of potential tourists that the location is unsafe or unstable and might avoid it altogether. (ibid.). This loss of confidence in a destination, or a whole country, can have devastating effects for the local tourism industry. This is something that might be true during the pandemic as well with reports of mostly domestic tourists avoiding larger cities and favouring smaller, more rural destinations during their summer vacation in 2020.

To prevent future crises destinations or businesses may learn from past disasters by planning emergency procedures in order to attempt to reduce the severity of a similar event by developing crisis management strategies (Laws & Prideaux, 2006). Communication and sharing knowledge among other industry organisers is a critical method (ibid.). Because when it comes to crises the question is not often if it will happen but rather when and what kind, so for a destination or business to be able to manage this crisis in a successful way a disaster plan or strategy might be essential (Irvine & Anderson, 2006). However the majority of previous research had often focused on crisis management in recovering from a crisis and less on the management of the build up to a potential crisis (De Sausmarez, 2007). The reason may be that it's a more complex issue trying to anticipate a crisis; however it might be a better strategy for a destination or business in trying to minimize the impact of a crisis beforehand than in hindsight (ibid.). According to De Sausmarez (2007) a crisis can be divided into three different stages: an initial pre-crisis period, the crisis itself, and a post-crisis period (ibid.). In the pre-crisis period the first warnings or indicators of a potential crisis emerges, for the Covid-19 outbreak this is arguably during the end of 2019 and beginning of 2020 when the first reports from Wuhan emerged and when the virus started to spread outside of China. Here the potential crisis can be monitored to some extent and preparations can be made, arguably this failed in many destinations or even countries, perhaps due to the unexpected rapid spread of the virus or because of a lack of previous experience of a pandemic. For an appropriate and effective crisis management strategy to be formed there needs to be a long enough pre-crisis period as well as sufficient monitoring of it (ibid.).

4.4 Tourism governance

The term tourism governance concerns the politics of tourism around policymaking, planning, and management (Bramwell & Lane, 2011). The role of the government in tourism vary between countries as well as depending on different factors such as the jurisdiction and scale of governance needed (de Aurajo & Scott, 2018). The role of the government when it comes to tourism is usually about planning, legislations and regulations, coordination, promotion among others. However some of these roles, such as planning and promotion, might be done in collaboration with or completely by other types of organizations. This is because it is often impossible for the government to take on all these roles in an effective way, resulting in tourism governance being performed in cooperation with non-government organizations, the private

sector, as well as civil society. (ibid.). This causes tourism governance to be more extensive than the government itself due to the incorporation of multiple actors (Bichler, 2019). Tourism is also a lot more than a business due to it being a heavy influencer and contributor when it comes to the environment, politics, construction, welfare and innovation (Vargas, 2020). Tourism governance incorporates both more physical aspects such as spatial design and land use, as well as more social features such as public systems. Tourism governance also acts on different scales and can be local, national or global, but it depends on the structure how effective the tourism governance is. (Bichler, 2019; Beaumont & Dredge, 2010). There are also different levels of power with some of the involved actors having more power than others in influencing the processes around tourism governance, something that can cause conflict within the involved actors (Bramwell & Lane, 2011). When it comes to developing more sustainable tourism a tailored and effective governance is of key importance (ibid.). This includes having a diverse range of actors involved in the decision-making process, this includes the local communities. (ibid.). This is an important aspect for tourism governance since negative aspects of tourism often impacts and becomes a burden for the local community, and according to research local residents often feel excluded from or ill-equipped for participating in tourism governance (Bichler, 2019).

Local residents and business owners tend to be the most well-informed when it comes to what works under local conditions, thus are important when it comes to establishing effective designs of tourism destinations (ibid.). The difficulty of tourism governance is that it involves several different social groups, stretches over several political administrative levels and geographical scales, all of these aspects needs to be taken into consideration which makes it harder to develop in a sustainable way to meet the different needs and objectives (de Aurajo & Scott, 2018). In the current pandemic, swiftness and agility is needed to be able to face the many uncertainties that comes with it, but this is often hindered by bureaucracy, often provided by the public sector (Vargas, 2020). The pandemic has shown that there is a need to understand the likely new change in tourist behaviour in order to know how to communicate and market a destination (ibid.). Therefore, according to Vargas (2020), the pandemic should be seen as an opportunity for improving tourism governance and use the initiatives of the people within a society. This could be important in reviving tourism when the pandemic is over since tourism is done alongside local communities. (ibid.).

4.5 Theoretical summary

To summarize the base of the theoretical framework, one can say that the current pandemic has brought an unprecedented situation for the tourism industry due to travel having been reduced sharply. The pandemic has shown how vulnerable the industry is to this type of crisis and also how intertwined the tourism industry is with the economy. Often it is not only the apparent tourism industries, such as hotels and tour operators, that are harshly impacted but also other businesses dependent on tourists, such as restaurants. It is likely that the industry and even the tourists will change their behaviours in the future due to a change in regime that the pandemic might have brought on, but the question is to what extent and how. It also opposes an interesting pattern that a global pandemic has such local implications, which makes it difficult to build resilience from since there hasn't been a similar event in modern times at this scale. Although the pandemic has shown that resilience and crisis management is something the industry needs to develop in order to be less vulnerable to similar events in the future. This also includes tourism governance in order to re-energize the tourism industry after the pandemic.

5. Methods

This thesis will be a comparative study of how the tourism in Finland and Sweden has been affected by and adapted to the Covid-19 pandemic and if there is a difference between larger cities and smaller ones. The aim is also to study how the tourism industry has adapted to the different Covid-19 strategies implemented by the government in order to survive during the pandemic, as well as coming up with some recommendations to increase the resilience of this industry. This will be done by qualitative research methods in the form of informant interviews and analysing of relevant documents which will provide quantitative data.

5.1 Research design

This study can be described as a mixed methods design with clear traits of a convergent parallel mixed methods design (Creswell, 2014:219-220). This since a combination of qualitative and quantitative data is used and compared, however the study is mainly qualitative in nature but with clear traits and use of quantitative data. The different data provides different types of information, the qualitative provides deeper and more insightful data while the quantitative gives more numeral and exact data. (ibid.). This combination was not the intended method for this study, but due to the lack of interview respondents because of the pandemic this was the method used in the end. It was deemed to be an appropriate design for this study since the quantitative data could fill in some gaps that were lacking from the qualitative data and vice-versa, allowing for a higher quality of the results due to a lack of respondents.

According to Bryman (2016) qualitative research focuses more on words and their meaning rather than the quantitative method in terms of collection and analysis of data (Bryman, 2016:374). Bryman also presents an outline of the main steps of qualitative research which will be applied in this study, the six steps are the following (Bryman, 2016:379):

1. General research questions
2. Selection of relevant sites and subjects
3. Collection of relevant data
4. Interpretation of data
5. Conceptual and theoretical work
6. Writing up findings and conclusions

The first step encompasses working out the research problem and purpose of the study to get a clearer view of what is to be studied. Here the theoretical framework was drafted to serve as a sort of spine for this study, it was developed to get a sense of how the research problem came to be and why it is an issue. This was done by reading relevant articles and documents to get a view of the situation to help formulate the research questions. The interview questions were also drafted in this step. The second step included identifying the cities that would become the study areas in this thesis and to make sure they were relevant and comparable. This step also involved identifying the potential interview candidates and to send out interview requests and secure meetings with them. The selection of interview candidates was done through purposive sampling (Bryman, 2016:408). This was deemed the best sampling method since the goal was not to make a generalization of the public but to sample participants strategically to find those that work within or with the tourism industry that should have the necessary knowledge. This was combined with snowball sampling since the interview requests were sent to an organization's general email and then a suitable respondent was chosen by the organization to participate (Esaiasson, 2012:189). In this step the reports to be used as data sources also were selected based on the relevancy of their contents.

The third step was to perform the interviews and thus gather the data. The fourth step was to analyse and interpret the data gathered by looking at themes emerging from the reports and the interviewees to try and find answers to the research questions. The fifth step included identifying if any new concepts emerged from the research and if it can be connected further to issues outlined in the beginning of the thesis. Here connections to the theoretical framework were made to see where this study fits among those theories. The sixth and final step was to summarize the findings and write a conclusion based upon the paper. Here the goal was to finally answer the research questions and to fulfil the purpose of the study.

5.2 Primary data

For this thesis interviews will be the main method of data collection. Interviews are a good way to get a deeper understanding of an issue, allowing for more in depth details to be discovered (Herbert, 2010:158). For this study a qualitative method will be used in the form of informant interviews. This is deemed a good method since it is less the opinions of the interviewees that is needed in this study and more their experience as knowledgeable people working within this sector (Esaiasson, 2012:227&253). Interviews as one method was chosen over e.g. surveys

since it is a more preferable method when it comes to researching more complex issues such as ideas and perceptions, which is the case in this study (Coles, Duval & Shaw, 2013:61). Interviews also allow one to stray from the set of questions and ask further ones or have a longer discussion, which could end up providing more data than a questionnaire could. Another viable option would have been focus groups; this method could also have given good data results but was in the end opted out. This is because focus groups are better when wanting to establish a general agreement on certain topics and are in many cases dependent on the group dynamic (Coles, Duval & Shaw, 2013:64). For this study it is the individual experiences and knowledge of the interviewees that is needed and therefore informant interviews were deemed more suitable than focus groups.

The interviews were held online through the video application Zoom, this was both due to the physical distance to the interviewees and due to the current pandemic. However one interviewee preferred to conduct the interview by telephone and for it to not be recorded, this was deemed an acceptable demand from the participant but the risk that this somewhat has affected the outcome of the data cannot be eliminated although it is deemed small. Another interviewee chose to respond only by email, this was also deemed acceptable since it was seen as better to have an interview via email than none at all. This of course might have affected the outcome of the data since there was an absence of the human interaction compared to a face-to-face interview which might have increased the risk of misunderstandings. And some misunderstanding did seem to happen as some answers did not really answer the questions as intended, however this was not the case of all answers so the interview was not in vain.

The choice of online video interviews instead of face-to-face interviews is not deemed to have affected the outcome of the data since this is nowadays a very common way for people to hold meetings and might in some ways be easier for both the interviewer and the interviewees when it comes to saving time. Since the interviews are conducted through a video call it still allows for a similar experience to a face-to-face interview so that both persons can see each other and thus visual aids and gestures can be used which might help with understanding both questions and responses (Walliman, 2010:100). However the risk with conducting an online video interview is that technical difficulties may arise, such as sudden loss of internet connection or bad audio, which can cause the interview to be interrupted or risk confusion in a question or answer which can affect the outcome of the data. However these risks were deemed necessary or unavoidable due to the current pandemic situation, since the alternative of face-to-face

interviews were not an option. Notes were taken during the interviews but they were also recorded to allow for repeat checking afterwards. The interviews usually lasted 30-40 minutes.

Table 1. The interview respondents of this study.

City	Organization	Respondent	Date	Medium
Gothenburg	Göteborg & Co	Ossian Stiernstrand - Analyst	11.3.2021	Telephone
Lysekil	Lysekil Tourist Information	Maria Kilbo - Information clerk	18.3.2021	Zoom
Jakobstad	Jakobstad Tourist Information	Tiina Pelkonen - Tourism and marketing planner	24.3.2021	Zoom
Jakobstad	Concordia	Sara Libäck-Sandin - Project leader: Sustainable Tourism	19.4.2021	Zoom
Helsinki	City of Helsinki	Jukka Punamäki- Senior advisor	7.4.2021	Zoom
National level - Sweden	Visita	Thomas Jakobsson - Chief economist	14.4.2021	Zoom
National level - Finland	SMAL	Heli Mäki-Fränti - Managing Director	13.4.2021	E-mail

For the four cities the main organization of tourism was targeted since they were deemed to have the most insight in what tourism has looked like in their respective city and were all a part of their city's organization. Except for Concordia in Jakobstad which is a development corporation that works with different businesses in the region, including tourism organizations. Apart from the four cities that were interviewed two national organizations were chosen as well: Visita and The Association of Finnish Travel Industry (SMAL). Visita is a Swedish sector and employer's organization representing around 8000 hotels, restaurants and other businesses in

the tourism sector in Sweden (Visita, 2018). Visita's goal is to help businesses to grow and develop and is also the tourism industry's representative in political questions. They work for laws, rules and business conditions to be drafted so they give better opportunities for the industry and work as a collective voice for the tourism industry (ibid.). The Association of Finnish Travel Industry (SMAL) is an organization of about 190 travel agencies, tour operators and incoming agencies that run its members' interest in interactions with public authorities, legislators as well as with different organizations (SMAL, n.d.). The sales of its members added up to over 2 billion Euros in 2019 which is approximately 95% of the total sales in the sector (ibid.).

The interviews were semi-structured in the sense that questions were previously written down to have a template to follow, however follow-up questions and side conversations were also included which did not follow the question sheet (Walliman, 2010:99; Bryman, 2016:201). This allowed for more freedom to direct the interview depending on how the interviewee wanted to set the tone for the conversation but still having a clear set of agenda to follow. The questions were also sent to the informants prior to the interview, this was done to make sure they can be well prepared and hopefully give deeper and more well-informed answers instead of being "put on the spot" or being unsure during the interview. After the interviews were conducted the answers from the participants were summarized in text and sent to the interviewees for inspection. This was done to further eliminate misunderstandings and to ensure the participants agree with the summary of the interview and their part in it. These summaries were then studied and compiled into the results based on how they answered the research questions.

5.3 Secondary data

Primary data is collected by the researcher themselves, in comparison secondary data is recorded or put together by another person or an organization (Coles, Duval & Shaw, 2013:56). The use of secondary data can serve as a complement to the primary data to fill in any missing gaps (ibid.). This is the case for this study since interview requests with important national tourism organizations in both Finland and Sweden were denied, and thus the analysis of secondary data was chosen as a substitute. When using secondary data it is important to make sure the content is of quality and trustworthy so it can be used as a valid source of data (Walliman, 2010:71). In the case of this study this is not deemed to be an issue since all documents that will be analysed are official reports by the authorities, one published by the

Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, and the other two by the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth. The strength of using reports from official authorities is that it ensures to a higher extent that the data is produced and scrutinized by professionals or experts with often a high level of resources (Walliman, 2010:78). On top of that, since it is published by the authorities and available online it is also open for scrutiny by the public, thus their credibility tends to be reliable since it is important for their continuing existence (Walliman, 2010:79&84). These reports are seen as both quantitative and qualitative data sources since they provide both experiences from the tourism industry in each country, but also statistical information in the form of numeral data.

Table 2. The secondary data used in the study.

Authority	Report title	Title translation	Year	ISBN
The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland	Matkailun suuntana kestävä ja turvallinen tulevaisuus	A safe and sustainable future as a trend in tourism	2021	978-952-327-773-1
Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth	Pandemins effekter på hotell- och logiverksamhet i Sverige	The effect of the pandemic on hotel and lodging operations in Sweden	2020	978-91-88961-72-3
Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth	Turism och besöksnäring efter coronapandemin	The tourism and hospitality industry after the corona pandemic	2020	978-91-88961-59-4

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland is the administrative authority in charge of creating conditions for economic, social, and ecological sustainable growth and is a part of the Finnish government (Arbets- och näringsministeriet, n.d.b.). The document to be analysed is a sector report and pertains to the tourism industry in Finland and the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the different sectors in the tourism industry (such as accommodation, transport, and restaurants etc.) during 2020 and as well as future goals for the industry in

Finland, both related to the pandemic and not. Due to its broad reporting of the many sectors in the industry and the pandemic's effect on them, this report was chosen as a relevant secondary data source to be studied.

The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth is the administrative authority working to promote sustainable growth and competitive companies throughout Sweden by supporting and strengthening regions and companies (Tillväxtverket, 2021). The first document to be analysed is a report concerning the effect of the pandemic on the accommodation industry in Sweden and is formally to be used as a basis of knowledge for future development of policies and efforts for recovery in the industry. This report will be referred to as 'the first Swedish report' in the results and discussion. But since this report focused on the hotel and lodging operations, another report by the same administrative authority was chosen to act as a makeweight by providing additional data about the tourism industry as a whole.

The purpose of the second report is to map knowledge and to find out the consequences and possibilities for the Swedish tourism industry due to the crisis of the pandemic and to be used as a tool for prioritizing and planning by the authorities. This report will be referred to as 'the second Swedish report' in the results and discussion parts. However, the first report was published in November 2020 and thus does not have statistics for the whole year, but it does have good information for the period between March and August of 2020, thus including the summer season which is very important to the tourism industry. The second report was published even earlier, in July 2020, but the information it provided still gave some useful insight to how the tourism industry as a whole was impacted at the beginning of the pandemic. Therefore both reports were deemed as relevant sources of secondary data to be analysed in this study. All three documents were studied to find relevant information to answer the research questions and the research problem by carefully reading through the documents, highlighting important information and compiling it into the results.

5.4 Data analysis

The tourism industry is in an unprecedented situation at the moment, so considering that so little is known due to the pandemic this study has a more exploratory approach in its analysis with the goal to find out more about the issues surrounding the research questions (McGregor, 2018). The analysis process of both the primary and secondary data can be described as

following the *Data Analysis Spiral* defined by Creswell (2017) (Creswell, 2017:185-186; McGregor, 2018). The analysis was done by first getting familiar with the data as well as organising it to have it all easily accessible, then getting a deeper understanding of the data by re-reading it, taking note of the important parts by highlighting them as well as taking notes. In the following step the data was interpreted, and different themes were derived based on the research questions in order to try and answer them. These were then written down in order to represent the data and account for the findings as the results of this study alongside patterns and comparisons found in the data. (Creswell, 2017:185-197; McGregor, 2018).

This extraction of key themes observed in the data characterizes this analysis as being thematic by nature (Bryman, 2016:697). When having a convergent parallel mixed method design the analysis of the both data types are generally done side by side, as in this study as well (Creswell, 2014:222). The reports were the first ones to be analysed and then the interview data. The findings from these data sources were then compared to find similar themes and to confirm some of the outcomes. However a confirmation of the findings from both data sources were not necessary since the two types of data provided different type of information, although it was seen as a positive thing that strengthened the findings. (ibid.).

5.5 Validity

If a study has high validity it generally means that the results are credible and a reliable method has been used (Thomsson, 2010:31). Validity refers to the integrity of the study and if it measures what it is intended to measure, reliability refers to the consistency of the study and if the same results were to be achieved if the study were to be repeated (Bryman, 2016:157-158). When it comes to a mainly qualitative study such as this, alternative criteria for evaluation can be applied (Bryman, 2016:384). Validity and reliability often deal with absolute truths, which can be difficult to apply to a social setting which is why alternative concepts can be used instead (ibid.). In this study the eight criteria provided by Tracy (2010) will be done to assess the quality of this study, these criteria were deemed fit to encompass the quantitative data of the study as well (Bryman, 2016:390, Tracy, 2010):

- *Worthy topic*. Arguably this is a relevant and significant topic to study since the pandemic is still ongoing and there are still many gaps in knowledge surrounding the pandemic's impact on the tourism industry (Sigala, 2020).

- *Rich rigour.* The data can be seen as rich enough although it is not a perfect sample, this because interviews are a good way to get in depth knowledge and experiences from the respondents. In addition, governmental reports will be analysed to give further data. Of course one can always argue for more interviews, however not everyone that was reached out to agreed to participate in an interview, along with limited time, as well as the fact that the pandemic is still ongoing generated fewer interviews. This means that many are busy trying to cope with the current situation, which has impacted the number of interviewees as well since some potential respondents declined because of this reason.

  In the end the number of interviews came down to seven. This was an issue in the beginning since the aim was to get a higher number of participants in order to get more data, but due to how pressed the tourism industry is because of the pandemic this was the final outcome. In the end enough information was provided to help answer the research questions, as well as a certain saturation in the material was reached, so therefore this criteria is fulfilled.
- *Sincerity.* This criteria is about how candid one is concerning values and approach. The method part of this study is thorough and it is clear how the data was gathered and that it is the opinions of the respondents that are analysed and used. Certainly it is hard for any researcher to stay fully unbiased when it comes to social issues, however in this case the process should be transparent for anyone who reads it.
- *Credibility.* This study should have a high credibility due to two methods being used, both interviews and governmental reports. To increase this credibility the interviews were sent to the respondents afterward for them to review to make sure it matched their point of view. However one has to take into consideration that even though the respondent represented the organization they also represented themselves. This means that an interview with another person from the same organization might have yielded different results to some level. Still the respondents are knowledgeable key figures whose opinions are deemed relevant.
- *Resonance.* This criteria is also seen as fulfilled since this study is well-written, easy to understand, and has an impact on the readers, at least those interested in this subject.
- *Significant contribution.* Considering this study contributes with some new insight and a significant comparison between two neighbouring countries around a relevant issue, one can argue that this criteria is fulfilled.
- *Ethical.* The respondents were all informed of the purpose of the research beforehand and also given another short introduction at the beginning of the interview to make sure they

knew the nature of the study. They were also all given the option to remain anonymous in the study, but all chose to have their name published.

- *Meaningful coherence.* This criteria should also be seen as fulfilled since this study achieves what it sets out to do by answering the research questions by using appropriate methods, as well as arguably interconnects literature, findings and interpretations.

6. Results

Below the results from the governmental reports and interviews are presented. The results are divided into subheadings based on different themes that emerged and tied the results together.

6.1 The decline in tourism

According to the sector report from the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, the year of 2019 was the fourth consecutive year of growth in Finnish tourism and predictions for early 2020 showed continuing growth until the start of the pandemic. During spring of 2020 due to the first restrictions, travel reduced rapidly in Finland. The number of air passengers went down in March by 56% and in April by almost 99% compared to the previous year as stated in the same report. The situation was similar in Sweden according to the first report published by the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth. During April the number of foreign airport arrivals dropped by 98% compared to April 2019, and air travel is one of the industries that were hit quickest and hardest by the pandemic according to the second Swedish report.

In Finland there were also sharp declines during April in the accommodation sector (-86%), restaurant sector (-63%) and in travel agencies, tour operators and reservation services (-87%) compared to April the previous year according to the Finnish report. For the period between January to November the amount of overnight stays was 36% less than the same period in 2019. In Sweden between the period of March and August 2020 the amount of overnight stays decreased by 43% compared to the same period in 2019 according to the first Swedish report. During July and August some recovery was noted largely due to domestic tourists. But other sectors were also heavily impacted during the initial phase of the pandemic according to the second Swedish report, such as the transport sector, events, conference and exhibition sectors with many of them losing all their bookings.

In Sweden people tended to holiday in their home country instead of abroad according to the first Swedish report. Foreign overnight stays declined by 84% percent between March to August compared to the previous year. Since this report was published in November 2020 it does not contain statistics for the whole year, but it is predicted in the report that the commercial lodging businesses will have lost 25 million overnight stays in 2020 which will be a decline of about

40% compared to 2019. Of all the types of lodging it was hotels and hostels that had been hit the hardest since they are largely dependent on foreign tourists, while campsites have fared better due to domestic tourists. Holidaying in rented cabins or apartments became popular in Sweden during summer as stated in the same report. Even though overnight stays in rented cabins or apartments declined by 33% between March and August 2020 the decline in domestic overnight stays was only 3% for the same period and it even doubled during July. The report does disclose that there are large regional variations in overnight stays in all lodging categories, in the capital county of Stockholm decline was the largest with 66% fewer overnight stays compared to 2019, the counties with the least downturn only had a decline of about 20%. Another pattern of regional differences is that coastal communities have had more positive growth during summer than inland communities details the same report.

6.2 Effects of the pandemic

In Finland the local effects of the pandemic began to show in the industry's unemployment and layoff statistics in March 2020 according to an analysis in the sector report. In May about 30% of staff in accommodation and restaurant companies had been temporarily laid off, and about 15% had been laid off permanently. The number of layoffs in the industry were multiplied compared to the previous year according to the same report. In Sweden between March and August 2020 almost 10 000 employees were given notice within this sector, of which many more led to termination to a larger extent compared to other sectors according to the first Swedish report. Of those given notice during March and April in the hotel and lodging operations 68% were terminated three months later. In Sweden there was an increase of bankruptcies within the hotel and lodging operations sector as stated in the same report.

During the period of March to August 3900 companies went bankrupt with almost 14 500 employees affected. This was an increase of 5% compared to the same period in 2019. This was also the sector hardest hit by bankruptcies compared to any other according to the same report. Although most closures happen without bankruptcy procedures so a larger number of companies might have been forced to close down during the pandemic than the statistics show. However according to the Finnish report, in Finland the number of bankruptcies decreased between January and November 2020 in the industry by 18%, largely due to a temporary amendment to the Bankruptcy Act which limited the ability to file for debtor bankruptcy.

6.3 Differences between cities

During summer in Finland, domestic tourism partially outweighed the loss of tourist income caused by the pandemic according to the Finnish report. Demand for domestic tourism was mostly focused on smaller destinations and in many larger cities tourist numbers were significantly lower than before. However according to a survey in the same report, Finnish tourists made over 9 million domestic leisure trips that included overnight stays in May to August. But of these 7 million were free accommodation trips, such as staying at their summer cabin or with family. Thus cottage holidays were very popular among domestic tourists during summer and overnight stays in both rented and owned cottages increased by one and a half times compared to the previous year, on the other hand hotel holidays were less popular with about a third fewer overnight stays compared to previous summer. Not surprisingly foreign tourism in Finland was very low during summer and there were 86% less registered overnight stays between May and August compared to summer 2019 according to the same report. As a whole, according to preliminary data between January and November 2020, a total of 13 million overnight stays were recorded in Finnish accommodation establishments with domestic tourists accounting for 11 million overnight stays and foreigners for 2 million overnight stays. Overnight stays by domestic tourists decreased by 25% and by foreigners by 64% from the previous year as stated in the report. Although there was more domestic tourism than previously estimated in the summer of 2020, it is still not enough to cover the gap left by international tourism according to the report.

The interviews confirm what the reports have observed regarding the tourism in larger cities having been hit harder by the pandemic than smaller cities and more rural areas. In Helsinki it had been a devastating situation: *"A disaster obviously…the situation is unprecedented.*" (Jukka). In the city overnight stays had been reduced by 60% in 2020 compared to a decline in 38% in the rest of Finland. So while Helsinki has taken a hard hit, tourism has even grown in other parts of the country. In Gothenburg the situation has been similar with an economic downturn of -60% after the pandemic struck in March 2020. Even here the respondent mentions the same phenomena of a large reduction in tourism in larger cities but an increase in rural tourism. This can be seen in the two smaller cities as well. In Lysekil the respondent acknowledged that the visitor statistics hadn't declined as much as expected: *"Many businesses have had their best year so far. Likely since many hasn't left and 'staycationed' instead, even the locals." (Maria).* In Jakobstad the situation had been similar: "*Summer was really good*

with many visitors, lodging accommodations has been fully booked. But the autumn and spring was difficult and the year as a whole went on minus." (Tiina). The respondent from SMAL confirms that the tourism sector in Helsinki has suffered greatly since domestic tourists have favoured other parts of the country, likely to avoid the high Covid-19 numbers in the capital region. The respondent from Visita speculated that one reason larger cities are more affected could be that foreign tourists visit them to a higher degree, which is why the loss of them is felt to a larger degree.

The trend of people vacationing in their home country or region, so called "staycation", has been evident during summer of 2020. In Jakobstad the respondent estimated that 99% of the tourists were domestic and mainly consisting of families and older couples. In Lysekil most of the visitors were domestic and from the region, and the TV show "*Tjuv och Polis"* was shot here which might have attracted some more visitors. Lysekil is also not so dependent on Norwegian tourists like the areas on the northernmost parts of the west coast, so the fallout of them hasn't been felt too much either. In Gothenburg it has been difficult to tell what kind of tourists have visited the city: "*…no international tourists, and then mostly business travellers. Local area tourists and day tourists…but there are only indications that it's like this, we can't know exactly since a lot has been closed and we haven't been able to perform random samplings [of the tourists]"* (Ossian). The same goes for Helsinki with the few leisure tourists mostly being domestic visiting friends or family as well as some business tourism due to Helsinki being the capital. But in all leisure tourism has been close to zero. However the respondent from Visita points out that although seemingly more Swedish people travelled inside the country in 2020 there wasn't an increased Swedish consumption. Surely some places got a higher demand than previously but these were few. *"The 'staycation' effect is strongly exaggerated. Demand didn't increase among the Swedes overall, not even during summer."* (Thomas).

6.4 Adapting to the pandemic

Even though some hotels in the smaller cities had a good summer, many other businesses such as restaurants, cafés and establishments dependent on groups had it very difficult. In Lysekil the restaurants have struggled but they were also the businesses that adapted quickly by opening up for take away services or selling the ingredients in a meal bag that the customers can cook at home. Many have had the attitude of *"don't cancel - adjust!"* (Maria). In Jakobstad many

restaurants also started take away services, other tourism businesses, such as museums and sights, have instead adapted by focusing on marketing or planning.

In both Gothenburg and Helsinki the businesses have had a hard time adapting. In Gothenburg the Swedish strategy as well as demand has been hard to predict making it difficult for the tourism industry. In Helsinki some hotels have adapted by changing some hotel rooms into rentable "home" offices, but the revenue is small compared to previously. *"Helsinki relies heavily on international tourism so it is hard to change those products so that the domestic customers will use them"* (Jukka). Although according to him, overall in Finland many companies have adapted their products for the domestic market, for example in Lapland, however they have had to alter the price so that Finnish customers are willing to buy them. The respondent from SMAL also acknowledges that many businesses have taken advantage of the pandemic and managed to develop their strategies, products and marketing tools as well as to digitalise their business. The respondent from Visita noted that business tourism in smaller cities wasn't as affected by the pandemic as in the larger cities, this could be because of the smaller cities having more business travellers that couldn't perform their work remotely, such as construction workers. But he also comments that the smaller cities *"…are not winners, only less losers"* (Thomas).

According to the Finnish report, many tourism companies in Finland have adapted to the pandemic in different ways such as developing their digital tools to allow for online purchases of their products or services. This has especially been important since online sales have increased greatly during the pandemic as well as other solutions that have had to develop to reduce the spread of the disease, such as hotels having online check-ins for their guests and events being held virtually. The second Swedish report also mentions that virtual experiences are being offered by museums, theatres, as well as in musical events.

6.5 Covid-19 strategies and tourism

When it came to the country's strategy for Covid-19 in relation to the tourism industry, both the respondents from Helsinki and Jakobstad answered that many in the industry are dissatisfied by how the Finnish government has handled the pandemic. The respondent from Helsinki stated that the new rules and laws have been difficult to understand and change all the time. *"In the tourism industry you often have to look one year ahead in order to create the products and sell*

them internationally, it's been extremely difficult…of course it's not only because of the government, nobody has ever dealt with anything like the pandemic before..." " But still the industry feels that the government had not performed as well as they could have and that's because of the mixed signals and changing laws, so that's been one of the biggest problems." (Jukka). But he admits that in general Finland has done well and has some of the lowest Covid-19 numbers in the world, so in that aspect the government has been successful. The respondent from Jakobstad Tourist Information also acknowledges the difficulties the restrictions have caused which has made it very hard for restaurants and cafés to operate and agrees that the changing rules and regulations have made it challenging. But she agrees that something had to be done about the spread of the virus and that we can't see all the impacts yet.

6.6 Governmental aid

When it comes to governmental aid there are some mixed opinions. The respondent from Helsinki recognizes that there is some monetary support to companies but many of them don't think it's enough. According to him Finland is quite strict when it comes to the maximum amount that the government can give to companies without affecting the competition. Concerning the Scandic hotels: *"…in other Nordic countries the maximum support levels are much higher than in Finland, even though the European Union laws are the same, in those terms the government hasn't done very well, because the support for especially the big companies has been much lower compared to other Nordic countries."* (Jukka). According to the respondent from Jakobstad Tourist Information the aid from the government doesn't respond well to the needs of the businesses in the region. *"In our area there are many part time entrepreneurs in the tourism industry as well as sites and attractions that are being upkept by an association or a non-profit organization. The possibilities for [them] to apply for grants are very limited."* (Tiina). On top of that the sum of the aid granted has often been underdimensioned compared to the economic losses due to the restrictions according to her. The respondent from Gothenburg states that although the aid from the government has been considerable, it has been lacking in management. *"…those that have been granted aid have often had to wait a long time for the money to arrive. The extent and degree of the aid has been extensive but those that have a hard time always want more"* (Ossian).

In Lysekil the city has been very active in helping the tourism industry by raising awareness of the different businesses, having digital markets, allowing for outside terrace service, extended or discarded fees to the city as well as giving the employees of the city a gift card that could

only be used in a local shop or business. In Gothenburg the city together with Business Region Göteborg have tried to help businesses with new business models and collaborations as well as making it easier to apply for grants. But he admits that as long as there are restrictions in place and thus no demand it comes down to survival. In Helsinki the city also has tried to help the tourism industry by lowering rates of rent, relaxing the terms for outside terrace serving and allowing food trucks to go places where they haven't been allowed before. But just like in Gothenburg, if there are no customers and no demand then the city can only do so much, but in general the city has done well according to him. According to the second Swedish report the organization Visita launched information campaigns to help tourism businesses adapt to become safer ahead of the summer season of 2020 by for example launching checklists and information to them.

6.7 Predictions for the future

The first Swedish report predicts both short-term and long-term effects the pandemic might have on the hotel and lodgings operations industry. Short term effects include a higher rate of unemployment for young people and foreign-born citizens and a need for continuing economic support for businesses. A long-term effect the pandemic might have is less business travel due to the now common usage of digital meetings, which might have a severe effect on hotels and conference facilities. This new trend was also predicted by the Finnish report, but they also predicted the future possibility of combining remote working with holiday by working from a resort, thus allowing for longer stays at holiday destinations which will favour the tourism industry. The economic situation might also impact consumers in that they will have less money available for travel and thus slowing down the recovery of the industry in Finland. According to the report it might also take until the year 2023 until tourism demand in Finland returns to the figures of 2019. The first Swedish report speculates that after the pandemic travel demand and consumption won't decrease, at least on a long-term scale, but will likely change in its character and content. An example is that the renting of cabins and private apartments became more popular during last summer which might evolve into a trend of individualized travels. This might also become the case in Finland where cabin holidays became very popular during the summer as well.

According to the Finnish report the measures of restrictions in Finland have successfully reduced the risk of infection and the spread of the disease, but at the same time the tourism

sector in particular has been severely affected. The turnover of tourism companies has decreased sharply and the sector has had to lay off significantly more staff than in previous years. Especially accommodation and food service activities had suffered the most from the pandemic, however these are apparently the sectors that have been able to adjust their operations and costs slightly better than others according to the report. The most commonly used means of reducing costs were layoffs and flexibility in rents and payment terms according to the same report. A larger proportion of companies in the accommodation and catering sector have received financing and other solutions to improve the cash situation than in other industries. Despite the measures of aid from the state, many companies are having financial difficulties and many have felt that the support has not met their business needs, the report states.

When it comes to imagining the tourism industry in the future most respondents are positive in their outlook. In Lysekil the respondent says that the developments achieved during the pandemic will be kept even afterwards and that many businesses have now dialled up their operation to the optimal. *"More effective operations have been created and one learns from everything" "[businesses] won't go back to what they had before"* (Maria). The respondent from Helsinki says that although the pandemic has been bad, the silver lining could be that afterwards people might look more for safe and sustainable destinations with not too many people, something Helsinki and Finland overall is good at. The sustainability aspect is something the respondent from Concordia in Jakobstad also mentions that should be developed in the future.

The respondent from Gothenburg speculates that virtual events and tourism could become more common even after the pandemic: *"...for example the crane dancing at lake Hornborgasjön could be a digital event [livestreamed] ...then one can limit visits and the physical journey but allow more to have the experience"* (Ossian). However he also see the negative effect it could have, for example during the Gothenburg Film Festival twice as many tickets as usually was sold but no visitors actually came to the city as it was arranged virtually, if this continues then it could result in a lot of lost revenue for hotels and restaurants the visitors would normally have consumed. In Jakobstad one worry about the future is that business tourism won't bounce back to what it was before the pandemic with meetings and business matters being handled online. The respondent from Visita agrees that business tourism has been hit much harder than leisure tourism but mentions that business tourism is a broad group and although the part of it that can

be done online has declined, such as conferences and meetings, the other part that has to be done physically, such as construction work, has remained much the same. He shares the thought that business tourism likely won't become what it was, but since business tourism is a product of the economic growth it has a chance to grow with new business emerging in the future due to market growth.

6.8 Worries in the industry

There are many worries in the tourism industry about the present and about the future. One worry is the uncertainty of everything, something both respondents from Jakobstad mentioned. This includes the uncertainty about the possibility of arranging events, the uncertainty about restrictions that change often and how hard it is to keep up with them, and difficulties for business owners to keep on being on their toes and having to open or close their business on a day's notice. There are also worries about continuing harsh restrictions, the respondent from Lysekil mentioned the worry of business owners that the coming summer will be more restricted or that the turnout will become worse than last summer since not everyone is in a good position and many are fighting to survive. The same worry that the pandemic will keep on going for a longer time is also found in Gothenburg. There is a worry that the lasting decline will have a permanent change in people's consumerism, one example is that working from home will be more common: *"The range of restaurants in the city is dependent on people lunching in town…the more working from home the more restaurants have to close down, which will lead to fewer options for consumption for tourists"* (Ossian).

Business tourists are also an important consumer in the tourist industry in Gothenburg accounting for almost half of the overnight stays at the hotels, with more people working from home there might be a lot fewer business travels which might have a huge impact on the hotels in the area. One worry that both the respondent from Helsinki and SMAL mentioned is the lack of a clear strategy on how to open society back up after the pandemic, how it will become when restrictions are lifted and borders open up. The lack of an exit plan worries them and that this might make it hard for the businesses to restart their operations and develop. The second Swedish report mentioned that there is an overall worry that due to the decline in tourists, destinations might relinquish their strategies for sustainable tourism development and instead try to attract visitors as cheaply and easily as possible. This could be a setback in the global pursuit of more sustainable tourism destinations. The same report recognises the worry of a

possible recession due to the pandemic, and that an already weakened tourism industry might be even more vulnerable in such conditions.

6.9 Important lessons learned

When it comes to the most important things learned during the pandemic one topic stood out: cooperation. Both respondents from Jakobstad noted the importance of cooperation between businesses during the pandemic. It pays off to cooperate and it benefits all involved parties when trying to find possibilities together and not just looking at the business next door as competition according to them. But also cooperation on a larger scale and not only between businesses: *"more cooperation will also be needed within the whole industry…the tourism industry is a huge global business and with many international dimensions…we all need each other!"* (Heli). In addition to that the importance of cooperation between different kinds of businesses and industries according to the respondent from Gothenburg. Society can also encourage this cooperation to allow for innovation, something that is necessary when entering a new situation such as a pandemic where old rules don't apply, according to him. Another lesson learned during the pandemic, relating to the need for innovation, is the lack of knowledge. According to the respondent from Helsinki the data and research on tourism is lacking, something that became very clear during the pandemic and might have made the industry more vulnerable. In the future there is a need to develop data management in order to increase their resilience in these kinds of situations according to him.

The second Swedish report states that the pandemic has shown that the tourism industry doesn't have the economic resilience to last for longer periods without revenue. Therefore another thing learned from the pandemic is the need for an economic buffer in case of a similar unpredictable occurrence in the future according to the report. Similarly the respondent from Concordia in Jakobstad comments that *"…to have a buffer for unforeseen events to use in a time of crisis, something that is easier said than done"* (Sara). She also mentions the importance of customer risk diversification by not aiming for one type of customer if they disappear and instead trying to diversify their target group. Similarly the respondent from SMAL comments that the profit margins in the industry are too low and thus many businesses in the sector don't have a strong enough financial position to face a crisis like this. Likewise, the second Swedish report states the importance of gathering more knowledge of possible changes in consumer behaviour in the future, if and how the pandemic has changed the mindsets of tourists when it comes to large

gatherings and crowds for example. This might become more important if the pandemic drags on and the virus mutates into different variants.

7. Discussion

In this part the results from the reports and the interviews will be discussed in an attempt to answer the research questions. The research questions are presented in the discussion to make it more evident that they are being answered.

How has the pandemic impacted the tourism industry in Sweden and in Finland?

7.1 Similar decline in tourism

When comparing the results from the reports it does seem like Sweden and Finland have been very similarly affected, their air travel went down about the same percentage in April 2020 and even overnight stays went down by a similar percentage with -43% in Sweden and -36% in Finland, however one does have to take into account that in Finland it is calculated for the period of January to November while in Sweden only between March and August. When comparing foreign overnight stays between the period of March and August in Sweden and May to August in Finland the numbers were very similar as well. In Sweden foreign overnight stays declined by 84% and in Finland by 86%, these time periods are also much closer to each other and give a very good inclination that these two countries were affected similarly in this regard. Even when comparing the capitals they show similar figures, Stockholm having a decline in overnight stays by 66% while Helsinki having a decline of 60%. This does show that while having different strategies both countries have been affected pretty similarly by the pandemic. This might partly be due to it being a global issue and thus affecting at least the number of foreign visitors very similarly.

7.2 Dissatisfaction with governmental aid

When looking at the aid the countries have received from their respective government there were some mixed responses. From what could be seen from the interviews the Finnish respondents did seem more dissatisfied compared to the Swedish. There were issues with the aid not being enough and Finland having strict rules when it comes to financial support. Of course having strict rules might be important in order not to interfere too much with the competition between businesses. One could assume that Finland's stricter approach to the virus has been successful in keeping the Covid-19 numbers low but have had a more severe effect on the businesses in the tourism industry. Although Sweden and Finland seem to have been

affected similarly by the pandemic, Finland's strategy and politics might have made it harder for the tourism industry businesses when it comes to seeking and receiving aid. This notion of bureaucracy being a hinder is something also evident in the theory of tourism governance as well (Vargas, 2020). These difficulties are evident from both the Finnish report and interviews and a clear problem in Finland seems to be that the governmental support hasn't been enough and the businesses' needs haven't been met. One can argue that the crisis management has failed to some extent due to the gap between reducing the spread of the virus and successfully supporting businesses. This is potentially the case in many countries since research on crisis management has shown to be lacking concerning health issues, showing this is an important aspect to improve on to reduce vulnerability (Yeh, 2020).

And reflecting back to the crisis management theory the pre-crisis period should allow for the first signs of the coming crisis and allow for proper preparation (De Sausmarez, 2007). Arguably the outbreak of Covid-19 allowed for a significant pre-crisis period for many countries to be able to come up with a sufficient strategy, however it is difficult to know if any strategy could have mitigated the effect the pandemic had on the tourism industry due to its global spread and the lack of previous experience as well as the vulnerability of the industry. So one important result from this study is that even though the two countries have had different strategies for the pandemic and have also had vastly different numbers in terms of infected and dead, in the end their tourism industries have been impacted very similarly.

Has the pandemic affected tourism in larger cities differently compared to smaller cities?

7.3 Disastrous situation in the larger cities

When looking at the results there does seem to be a difference in how smaller cities have been affected compared to larger cities. Both Helsinki and Gothenburg describe their situation as being very serious and even disastrous. Both cities are very dependent on foreign visitors for their tourism industries, something that was reduced rapidly at the start of the pandemic, this is likely one reason both were hit so hard in 2020. Another reason why Helsinki and Gothenburg have been hit harder could be that domestic tourists have to some extent avoided them when choosing a holiday location. Both cities have reportedly had high numbers of Covid-19 and so people will likely avoid them because of this and instead choose a destination with lower numbers. This could be why cabin holidays became so popular with domestic tourists in both

Sweden and Finland during summer of 2020. Cabins tend to be located in more rural areas thus ensuring more privacy and a more Covid-19 safe holiday. It's also interesting when comparing business tourism between larger cities and smaller ones. According to the results there is less business tourism in both Helsinki and Gothenburg during the pandemic. Of course due to them being large business centres some business travel will always exist, some necessary business travel will have to be done since not all work can be done remotely. This includes construction work and other types of "hands on" work, this is easily overlooked since this part of business is often not the first to come to mind when thinking about "business tourism". This part of business tourism could be what is remaining while more conference and meeting type of business tourism has moved online. Interestingly there is a clash between what two of the respondents say, the respondent from Visita comments that business tourism in smaller cities does not seem as affected as in larger cities, possibly due to them having more necessary business travellers. But one of the respondents from Jakobstad comments that there were almost no business travellers in 2020 at all. Of course this does not have to have a huge meaning, it could just be that Jakobstad hasn't had a need of necessary business travellers during the pandemic. It could also be due to a difference between the two countries and that the Finnish restrictions have caused a decline in necessary business travel as well.

7.4 Busy summer in the smaller cities

In Sweden there have been very regional differences at least when it comes to overnight stays with the capital region suffering the most. This is likely due to the same reason mentioned earlier of people avoiding Stockholm due to the high Covid-19 numbers as well as the high population density. According to the first Swedish report coastal communities have had more positive growth during summer than inland communities, now this is difficult to confirm since this study only has focused on coastal communities and not inland, but at least in Lysekil the situation was better than previously expected and many businesses had their best year so far. So when comparing Lysekil to Gothenburg it does seem like the smaller city has fared better. This could be due to many from the local area "staycationing" in the city and thus supporting local businesses. It is also likely that many domestic tourists from other parts of the country have visited as well due to it being a fairly well-known summer destination on the west coast. There also seems to be a difference when comparing Jakobstad and Helsinki with the smaller town faring better in Finland as well. Reportedly the hotels were busy and even fully booked during summer in Jakobstad. One theory to why could be that many of the tourists in Jakobstad

were there to visit friends and family and would normally stay with them but due to pandemic restrictions opted for a hotel stay instead. This could explain the high numbers of hotel stays since many likely would opt for a visit during their summer vacation. But even if smaller cities have fared better than larger cities it is still important to remember that the pandemic has struck hard against the tourism industry in any location.

Even though in both Jakobstad and Lysekil there are businesses faring well despite the pandemic there are also many businesses struggling to survive. In both cities there are touristic sites and attractions run by associations or non-profit organizations that do not have the same budget as a full-scale business. And for example in Jakobstad one problem is also the difficulties many part-time business owners in the industry encounter when applying for aid. As the respondent from Visita said: smaller cities are not the winners in this situation but only less losers. So to summarize an answer to this research question one can say that due to domestic tourists avoiding larger cities during the summer of 2020, smaller cities have fared better. However this occurrence varies likely depending on if this smaller is already an established summer destination or is located by the coast. And although they have fared better it does not mean the businesses have not fared ill and many will likely go bankrupt before the pandemic is over.

In what ways has the tourism industry adapted to the pandemic?

7.5 The adaptable restaurant sector

There are several ways in which businesses in the tourism industry have adapted during the pandemic. One notable adaptation that was mentioned in almost all the interviews is in the restaurant sector. Many restaurants in both Sweden and Finland started with take away services to keep their customers during the pandemic. Especially in Finland this was necessary since restaurants during one period could not have seated guests due to restrictions and so take away or delivery was the only option. Similarly in Lysekil some restaurants also sold the ingredients of a meal in a bag that the customers could take home and cook themselves. All of this shows great ingenuity and creativity from the businesses' side by adapting their operations to survive. Interestingly the restaurant sector is one of the hardest hit sectors during the pandemic but also one of the best adapted as well. This since they have managed to adjust their business operations and costs slightly better than others. Perhaps they have managed to adapt so well due to the nature of their business. Even if there are next to no tourists the locals are still likely to eat at

restaurants or buy take away. It might be harder for e.g. hotels of which locals are less likely to use their services, at least to the same extent as restaurants. Although in Helsinki some hotels have adapted to the domestic market by, for example, renting out hotel rooms as remote offices. This also shows creativity to boost their earnings, although the revenue is small compared to before. But in all, the interviews showed that businesses in general have been very creative in finding new solutions to adapt their operations to the restrictions of the pandemic in order to survive.

7.6 Targeting the domestic market

Businesses in Finland also have adapted by improving their digital tools to allow for online purchases. This is something that can arguably strengthen a company's resilience since having their products and services available for purchase online allow them to reach a broader target group and therefore strengthen their business. Many Finnish tourism businesses that otherwise mainly have foreign tourists as their target group now adapted their products to fit the domestic market, this is something they can continue with after the pandemic to have a larger customer base and thus also increasing their resilience to future crises. This risk diversification by not having just one customer target group is one element of resilience surely many businesses within the industry could try to develop to be less vulnerable in the future. But all things considered, a key aspect in resilience is the ability of being able to respond to change, this is something many of the businesses have been able to do (Filimonau & De Coteau, 2020). Even if they struggle and might go bankrupt the fact that they have made it this far is an indication they are not completely vulnerable.

What lessons have the tourism industry learned in order to increase their resilience?

7.7 Boosting resilience

Currently the tourism industry, at least in Finland, will likely not recover until 2023 according to the Finnish report. Even if tourism can resume as soon as possible to somewhat normal levels, the businesses in this industry will have a hard time to recover completely. It is especially hard for the accommodation sector because a loss of revenue of just one unoccupied room can't be replaced at a later date since the amount of hotel rooms is fixed. More rooms can't be added out of nowhere to be sold during a busy weekend to make up for lost revenue and therefore lost revenue can't be replaced. This will make it hard for this sector to catch up to many other kinds

of businesses and may have to keep cutting other costs in order to keep their businesses going. This might mean it can take a while before accommodation businesses can start hiring staff again causing longer unemployment for those that used to work in this sector. It might also halt development throughout the industry if the businesses are busy trying to catch up economically. So for the future businesses could try to increase their economic resilience by trying to build up a buffer to be used in times of need whatever the crisis may be. Although, as mentioned earlier, this could be a difficult and lengthy process.

Most of the respondents are positive in their outlook of the future but at the same time worried. The uncertainty of everything is the most common worry of both the present and the future. This worry of not knowing what's ahead is likely difficult to deal with from a business point of view since it might have a huge impact on their livelihood if Covid-19 numbers go up and more restrictions are put in place and there are even fewer customers. Prolonged restrictions during the coming summer of 2021 could be fatal for many businesses if the tourism turnout is worse than the year before and if not enough of the population, both domestic and foreign, have been vaccinated for borders to be opened up. The results of this study show that the behaviour of tourists might change after the pandemic, something the theoretical framework supports as well (Kock et al., 2020; Vargas, 2020). This indicates that the industry needs to be very observant to this shift in behaviour and consumerism in order to develop their businesses to adapt. Concepts such as sustainability and safety might become more important to tourists as well as having the option to participate in global events virtually. There will likely not be a uniform shift in behaviour, but the pandemic has brought on a new way of experiencing travel and events which will probably stay with us even in a post-pandemic world. But the actors in the tourism industry could take the pandemic as an opportunity for transformation to make sure they are more sustainable in the future and that their customers can feel safe even after the pandemic is over in case that remains as a concern. This is one recommendation that the industry can work towards in order to increase their resilience.

7.8 Learning from the pandemic

Overall, resilience is something that could be developed in this industry and that currently, as well as pre-pandemic, many businesses were very vulnerable according to this study. It is understandable since many have not faced a crisis like a global pandemic before and so it is hard to imagine beforehand that such an event will occur. However with the global scale of our

lives today it is not unlikely we will face a similar event in the future. Therefore this industry should learn from the successes and failures of the pandemic and try to boost their resilience. Because the pandemic has shown that the tourism industry in general has a weak economic resilience, which could also impact the social resilience if there is a lack of a working economy to carry a business through a difficult period. Some of the lessons learned according to the interview respondents, are aspects the tourism industry could try to work on to improve resilience. Such as cooperation which proved to be an important factor for businesses, both in cooperation between businesses but also between cities and countries, as well as the cooperation between a city and the businesses within it. By not simply viewing one another as competition, businesses could reach more potential customers by cooperating to create new products and experiences which could also boost the resilience of the whole city or region as a tourist destination as well. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, communication and sharing knowledge between businesses is a critical method in crisis management which is one of the main aspects businesses can bring with them to increase their future resilience (Laws & Prideaux, 2006). Therefore increased cooperation is another recommendation derived from this study the industry could work on to increase their resilience.

8. Conclusions

The purpose of this study is to contribute with knowledge that might deepen and increase the understanding of the circumstances around this pandemic and the effect it has on the tourism industry and to help fill the current gap of knowledge. The aim of this comparative study is to investigate out how tourism in Finland and Sweden has been affected by and adapted to the Covid-19 pandemic and if there is a difference between larger cities and smaller ones. The aim is also to study in what ways the tourism industry has adapted to the different Covid-19 strategies implemented by the government in order to survive during the pandemic. In addition, this study aims to come up with some recommendations of how this industry can become more resilient to be able to handle a similar crisis in the future and thus serve as a contribution to science

The results of this study shows that the tourism industry in both Finland and Sweden have been deeply affected by the impacts of the pandemic and its restrictions. It also showed that both countries have been affected similarly but in Finland more businesses felt that the government support was not enough or not accessible to all. The study also showed that Helsinki and Gothenburg both seemed to have been harder struck due to the lack of foreign tourists, whereas Lysekil and Jakobstad seemed to have fared quite well during the summer of 2020 thanks to domestic tourism. However no one is a winner in this situation but have merely lost less. The tourism industry in both countries has seemingly been able to adapt fairly well due to the circumstances, showing that the industry is not completely vulnerable in a pandemic. One recommendation for the industry that has emerged from this study is that businesses should use the pandemic as an opportunity for transformation to increase sustainability as well as increasing resilience for future crises. This includes adapting to the possible change in tourist behaviour and consumerism. Another recommendation is to increase cooperation between businesses as well as other associates and organizations since this has proven very useful in the pandemic and could also act as a boost for resilience. A third recommendation that could boost economic resilience is to build a buffer to be used in future crises, this could however be hard for many businesses under pandemic pressure to achieve at the moment.

For future studies one could delve more deeply into the issues surrounding tourism and the pandemic to understand what truly causes a location to be more vulnerable than others, perhaps by focusing on one study area to gain a more profound knowledge. Another idea for future

studies is to do a similar investigation to this one but wait until the pandemic is over to truly see the consequences of it on the industry, and if the phenomena of tourism in smaller cities faring better continues even in the summer of 2021. Another suggestion is to wait a few years and allow the tourism industry to recover somewhat after the pandemic and then continue the topic of resilience to see if the industry has adapted and reduced their vulnerability and in what ways. Considering the unprecedented situation of the pandemic and the lack of knowledge, there are many options for future studies surrounding the pandemic, tourism, and resilience that surely could help with the sustainable development of this industry.

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