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Tourists' perceptions of destinations in crisis

A case study of the European migrant crisis on the Greek islands of Kos and Lesbos

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Abstract

When tourists want to travel, they gather information about interesting destinations. In the information gathering, information about destinations are obtained through different channels, such as media, friends and relatives, travel intermediaries and advertisement. Tourists are very risk-averse, and if it appears in the information searching that there is a perceived risk at the destination, it might lead to the tourist's unwillingness to travel to the specific destination. The purpose of this paper is to study tourists' perceptions of destinations in crisis, with the specific studied crisis being the European migrant crisis on the Greek islands of Kos and Lesbos. The paper studies tourists' perceptions of destinations based on promotional pictures from tour operators and pictures published in media during the migrant crisis. The study is based on semi-structured interviews, and the analysis is conducted through thematic analysis. The results indicate that the promotional pictures from tour operators attracted the respondents to visit the destinations, because their travel motives were linked to the perceptions they have of the destinations. However, when the respondents saw the pictures featuring the crisis from media, the destinations were no longer seen as places for tourism, but as places for helping people. The crisis environment was not something they wanted to see on a vacation, and the inequality between people was discussed. Enjoying a vacation in an environment with a humanitarian crisis was not preferred. However, if a destination that the respondents had booked a trip to suddenly got media coverage because of a crisis, safety, recommendations and practicalities would affect the decisions on whether to cancel the trip or not.

Keywords: Crisis, the European migrant crisis, Greece, place image, travel motives, destination

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Abstract

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Aim and research questions	2
2. BACKGROUND	3
2.1 The European migrant crisis	3
2.2 A note of concepts	3
2.3 The case: tourism in Greece and the impact of the migrant crisis	4
2.3.1 Kos and Lesbos	4
3. LITERATURE REVIEW	6
3.1 Crises and their consequences for tourism destinations	6
3.2 Place image	7
3.3 Media's role in times of crises	8
3.4 Tourists' decision making process	9
4. METHOD	11
4.1 Semi-structured interviews	11
4.1.1 Respondents	12
4.2 Description of the respondents	12
4.3 Thematic analysis	13
4.4 The case and the pictures in the interviews	14
4.5 Ethical considerations	15
4.6 Method discussion	16
5. RESULTS	17
5.1 Travel motives	17
5.2 Sources of information about a destination	17
5.3 Attractiveness	18
5.4 Changed image	19
5.5 Inequality	21
5.6 Self-protection	21
5.7 Shame and guilt	22
5.8 Practicalities	23
5.9 Marketing and information	23
6. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION	24
6.1 Limitations and future studies	28
REFERENCES	29
APPENDICES	35
Appendix 1. Interview guide	35
Appendix 2. Promotional pictures	36
Appendix 3. Pictures from the crisis published in the media	42
LIST OF TABLES	
Table 1. Description of the respondents in the study	13

1. INTRODUCTION

In many countries, tourism is one of the main income sources (Campiranon & Scott, 2014). General economic benefits that tourism have for a country or a destination are for example the contribution of foreign exchange earnings, the industry generates income and employment, and it encourages entrepreneurial activities (Wall & Mathieson, 2006). However, tourism is a fickle industry. The industry fluctuates in demand from season to season (Nielsen, 2001; Wall & Mathieson, 2006), it is depending on tourists' heterogeneous travel motivations and expectations, and the elasticity is high regarding price and income (Wall & Mathieson, 2006). Since the industry in good times have a lot of factors to struggle with, an unexpected event, such as any form of a crisis, can be hard to handle and the outcomes be devastating. Safety, security and risk at a destination, are factors that affects tourists' decision making when choosing destinations (Hall, Timothy & Duval, 2004). A negative event does not necessarily have to originate from a destination affected, the industry can also be affected by pronounced or predicted external events that are beyond the control of individuals and destinations (Ritchie et al., 2013; Wall & Mathieson, 2006). Unwanted events, both originating from the destination or external events, can affect the tourism demand on a destination. When tourism demand is low, the industry suffers. For example, low tourism demand make the need for human resources in the tourism industry and in industries linked to tourism decrease, which leads to people losing their jobs (Tung & Chao, 2011).

During the last decades, the tourist industry has suffered from different kinds of crises. Crises that have affected the tourism industry since the millennium are among others; terrorism, financial crises, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis and diseases. Previous studies about crises in relation to tourism, have mainly focused on crisis management (see for example Campiranon & Scott, 2014; de Sausmarez, 2013; Ghaderi, Som & Wang, 2014; Pennington-Gray, London & Cahyanto, 2011). Impacts and effects of crises have also been studied, and these types of studies have mostly covered crises that have occurred in Asia (see for example Dombey, 2004; Henderson, 2005; Ichinosawa, 2006; Pine & McKercher, 2004). One crisis that has effected tourist destinations in Europe, in the Mediterranean regions, is the European migrant crisis that peaked in 2015. Because of wars, forced labor, security risks and poverty, people from mainly Syria and Afghanistan, but also from other countries in western Asia and Africa have fled to Europe from their home countries (Park, 2015). In 2015 most of these people fled through a route called the eastern Mediterranean route (Frontex, 2017), which is a way from Asia and Africa into Europe through Turkey. With Greece being located in the south-eastern part of Europe next to Turkey, Greece became one of the main ways for the migrants to get into Europe (Leadbeater, 2016).

Before, when television or the internet was not as developed as it is today, crises caused the same damage as it does nowadays, the difference is that previously several weeks or months could pass before people at a distance from the crisis got information about the event. Today, information about crises reaches people at a distance faster due to intensive media coverage through television and internet. These channels can supply up-to-date pictures and statuses of events at any location on earth. With tourists getting information about crises through intensive media coverage, this can affect their travel decision-making process (Avraham & Ketter, 2008). Research has shown that

reports in media are among the top four information sources that both first-time travelers and repeat travelers use when choosing destinations (Jacobsen & Munar, 2012).

1.1 Aim and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to study and analyze how media coverage of humanitarian crises in tourism destinations affects tourists' perceptions of these places. The specific case is the ongoing European migrant crisis in the Mediterranean region. The research questions are:

- i) how is a destination perceived based on promotional pictures on the one hand and pictures of the crisis published in the news on the other?
- ii) how would tourists react if a destination they had booked a trip to suddenly got media coverage because of a crisis?
- iii) how do tourists perceive a destination that is shared by tourists and migrants?

2. BACKGROUND

In this part the studied crisis, the European migrant crisis, will first be presented. Afterwards, concepts important for the study and the case will be presented.

2.1 The European migrant crisis

Over one million irregular migrants arrived in Europe in 2015, which is the highest flow of migration since World War II (IOM, 2015). The majority of these people fled wars in Syria and Afghanistan, but forced labor in Eritrea, and deteriorating security and grinding poverty in Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia and Sudan have also made people flee to Europe (Park, 2015).

Only 3% of the migrants arrived by land, the rest arrived by sea (IOM, 2015). The migrants arrived via different routes, and a route called the Eastern Mediterranean route was the most used during 2015; 885,000 people arrived via this route. This was 17 times the number of arrivals in 2014. The majority of the migrants arrived on the Greek islands, with Lesbos receiving most migrants (Frontex, 2017). When using the Eastern Mediterranean route, migrants arrived in Europe through Turkey. From Turkey, most of the migrants crossed the Aegean Sea to the Greek islands (Leadbeater, 2016). The reason that the migrants arrived in Europe through dangerous sea voyages organized by smugglers, is because of the EU directive 2001/51/EC. This directive states that carriers that transport people without correct travel documents into the Schengen area are responsible for paying the return trip for refused people, and also pay penalties (The Council of the European Union, 2001). Many people have died during the voyages. In 2015, about 3700 people died in the Mediterranean (IOM, 2015) when trying to get a better life in Europe.

Media kept ongoing reporting about the crisis and published dramatic pictures, such as overcrowded or capsized boats. In the beginning of September in 2015, the world got to see a dramatic picture in the news. The picture of a drowned boy whose body floated up on a beach in Bodrum, Turkey, took over the headlines. The 3-year old boy was Aylan Kurdi, a Syrian refugee. Aylan and his family tried to take the seaway from Turkey to the Greek island Kos, but the boat they were traveling on capsized. Aylan, his brother and his mother drowned but his father survived (Lapidus, 2015). The picture of Aylan got attention from all over the world (Aftonbladet, 2015), and the boy became a symbol for Syrian refugees (Lapidus, 2015).

2.2 A note of concepts

This paper discusses different kinds of mobility, leisure mobility, migration and forced migration. There are big contrasts between leisure mobility and forced migration, people who move in leisure purposes do this out of free will and people exposed to forced migration move because of elements that force them to do it (IOM, 2017a). Relevant concepts in this study will therefore be discussed next.

Tourists: The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2014) defines a tourist as a visitor who takes a trip to a destination outside his/her usual environment for leisure, business or any other personal purpose. The visitor is classified as a tourist if the trip includes an overnight stay or if the visitor is a same-day visitor. To be defined as a tourist, the trip has to be less than a year.

Migrants: IOM defines a migrant as a person that has moved from his/her place of residence, within a state or across an international border. This definition includes people regardless of what their legal status is, and it includes people that have moved both voluntarily and involuntarily. The definition includes people regardless of what their reasons for movement are, and regardless of what the length of their stay is (IOM, 2017b).

Refugees: Persons who flee armed conflicts or persecutions. They cross national borders and seek safety in nearby countries. It is often dangerous for these people to return home (Edwards, 2016).

When referring to the European migrant crisis, the two terms refugees and migrants have been used interchangeably in media and public discourse. According to UNHCR (Edwards, 2016), the people arriving by boats in Greece, Italy and elsewhere were/are both refugees and migrants, with the majority being refugees, who have escaped war and other conflicts.

In this paper the term migrants will be used when referring to the people on the move during the migrant crisis. The term migrant is used because it is, according to the definition of IOM (2017b), a broader term, which includes both refugees and migrants. Though to keep in mind is that most people were/are refugees.

2.3 The case: tourism in Greece and the impact of the migrant crisis

Greece is a country located in south-eastern Europe. The country is a sun, sea and sand destination, with a total coastline of 13,676 kilometers (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017). 56% of the international tourist arrivals are being recorded in July, August and September (Sete, 2017). Popular tourist destinations are the Greek islands, that amount to 6000, when small islands are taken into account. Of these, 166-227 are inhabited (Greece, 2017). Pleasant climate at the destination, being on the beach, dining out, spending time with families and/or having romantic experiences with spouse/partner, experiencing distinctive places, traveling around and meeting locals are among tourists' visitor motives when traveling to Greece (Jacobsen & Dann, 2009).

Tourism is important for the country. In 2015 the arrivals of non-Greek residents in Greece were approximately 24 million (by air, rail, sea and road) (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2017). Based on the arrivals in 2015, Greece came in 9th place of the top destinations in Europe (UNWTO, 2016). Tourism contributed to 17,3% of the nation's GDP in 2014, and the total contribution to employment was 19.4% (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2015).

2.3.1 Kos and Lesbos

Visit Greece (2017a) describes Kos as an island with turquoise water, water springs and with ancient and medieval monuments. The travel guide Kosinfo (2017) mentions that Kos is ranked among the top tourist destinations in the Greek islands. Kos was one of the islands that was affected by the migrant crisis (Foster, 2016; Leadbeater, 2016), and Kos appeared in many articles and television programs during the crisis (Cirer-Costa, 2017). Leadbeater (2016) says that Kos became one of the most visible images of the situation, and the tourism industry on Kos did suffer from this crisis. Dawar (2015) writes that searches for hotels on Kos on the travel website Trivago dropped

with approximately 50 per cent in one week in May 2015, while searches for hotels increased on other Greek islands. A study regarding accommodation made by Cirer-Costa (2017) showed that the destinations on the migrants' emigration routes were not able to maintain their market positions during 2015 and 2016. Cirer-Costa's study (2017) showed that those offering tourist accommodation on the island of Kos had troubles in selling all their rooms, and therefore had to lower the prices on the rooms.

Lesbos is the third largest Greek island. Visit Greece describes Lesbos as having a mild Mediterranean climate, olive groves, traditional villages and industrial architecture (Visit Greece, 2017b). Due to the migrant crisis that peaked in 2015, tourists and tourist operators cancelled trips to Lesbos in 2015 and 2016. The migrant crisis affected the tourism industry on the island badly, large cruise ships started docking at ports on other islands instead (Zikakou, 2015), travel companies stopped offering vacation packages to the island, both international and domestic flights were canceled, and room bookings went down (Tejada, 2016). Though, some tourism businesses benefitted from the crisis - many of the migrants that arrived on Lesbos bought ferry tickets to Athens. Many migrant workers from Europe also arrived on the island, such as aid workers and volunteers, and they kept tourism businesses such as bars busy during off-season. UN and Frontex also booked hotel rooms during the off-season, and these actions mitigated the quiet summer season (Amin, 2016).

Due to the crisis in the Mediterranean regions, travel companies started to contribute to the help of migrants in the summer of 2015. The tour operators Apollo, Ving and TUI (previously Fritidsresor) offered their customers to take extra luggage with them when traveling to the Mediterranean (Willung, 2015; Åhman, 2015). The tour operators gave the opportunity for travelers to take necessities such as clothes, shoes and hygiene products with them, to help migrants at the destinations. Apollo offered this to travelers traveling to the island of Kos, Ving offered it to travelers to Kos and Lesbos, and those who travelled with TUI (previously Fritidsresor) could take extra luggage with them to all of the Greek islands and to Sicily (Willung, 2015). In the beginning of September 2015, SAS also announced that they wanted to contribute to the help of migrants, and therefore allowed people traveling to the Mediterranean and central Europe to take extra luggage with them (SAS, 2015).

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this part, previous studies and theories regarding crises, place image, media's role in times of crises, and the tourist's decision-making process will be presented.

3.1 Crises and their consequences for tourism destinations

In their book about crisis management, Laws, Prideaux & Chon (2007, 6) describes a crisis as *“a shock for the tourism industry, an event of serious magnitude that disrupts its orderly operation and requires immediate but largely unplanned managerial efforts to overcome the resultant problem”*. Five different kinds of crises can occur at any destination, *crime-related crises, terror-related crises, political unrest crises, natural disasters and epidemic-related events* (Glaesser, 2006; Mansfeld & Pizam, 2006 in Avraham & Ketter, 2008). A crime-related crisis can be for instance rape or murder, terror-related events can be bombings or plane hijackings, political unrest events can be violent demonstrations or uprisings, natural disasters can be hurricanes or tsunamis, and epidemic-related events can be outbreaks of SARS or AIDS (Glaesser, 2006; Mansfeld & Pizam, 2006 in Avraham & Ketter, 2008). Of these different types of crises, the studied case in this paper would best fit into the category of political unrest events, since the ongoing migrant crisis originates from these kinds of events (see 2.1).

Tourism is built up on many industries. There are industries that are directly connected to tourism and industries that are indirectly connected to tourism. Direct demand for labor comes from tourist's expenditure on for example air travel, hotels or rental cars. Tourism does also generate job opportunities indirectly, for example when tourists use local transport or banking (Wall & Mathieson, 2006). Therefore, if a negative event affects the tourism industry, the supporting industries will also suffer for example by limiting job opportunities (Kozak, Crotts & Law, 2007; Lefebvre & Marktanner, 2014). For example, it was hard for residents in Thailand to generate income and recover their livelihood after the tsunami in 2004, because the low tourism demand affected the related industries. Fishermen for example, relied heavily on the demand for tourist activity (Ichinosawa, 2006).

There is previous research that have studied the effects that crises have on destinations. The consequences a crisis can have for businesses, are for example cancellations and postponements of trips, reduced incomes and profits, declining tourist volumes, and declining customer confidence (Ghaderi, Som & Henderson, 2012). In New York after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, employment in the hospitality and leisure industry fell lower than what would have been if the attacks would not have happened. Personal income developments did not occur in the leisure and hospitality industry either, while other industries saw developments (Lefebvre & Marktanner, 2015). Another study, made by Ritchie et al. (2013), studied the effects of the Gulf oil spill across U.S. coastal regions in 2010. In most regions affected by the oil spill, hotel demand increased. Though, it was not tourists that came on vacation, it was cleanup crews and news media that stayed at the hotels. Cleanup crews and news media did not make up for the losses of tourists either, since they did not have the same expenditure patterns as tourists. Pine and McKercher (2004) studied the effects that the SARS disease had on the tourism industry in Hong Kong in 2003. The consequences for the tourism industry were

devastating, with hotels having to cut down costs by closing floors, swimming pools, health and fitness centers, closing lifts and escalators to save power and also by reducing opening hours for restaurants. Some of the hotels were also put up for sale. In Hong Kong, job losses were seen in catering, hotel, wholesale, transport, amusement, recreational services and retail trade industries. After a crisis it is also uncertain for the destinations whether tourists will return (Ritchie et al., 2013).

When a crisis occurs, it isn't always the tourists themselves that stop them from going to a destination, other instances or people can also try to prevent people from traveling to crisis-affected destinations. For example, governments can give travel advisories against traveling to specific countries, regions or destinations that are going through or recovering from a crisis (de Sausmarez, 2013). When there is a security crisis, countries can increase border controls by for example tightening visa restrictions, use *“airport screenings, body scanners and other measures that are said to enhance public safety but do increase hassles for international and domestic tourists”* (Lefebvre & Marktanner, 2014, 832). It can also be people in a tourist's social network, such as family and friends, that tries to stop a person from traveling to a place because they are afraid of the person's safety (Floyd et al., 2004).

Positive effects such as improved preparedness for future crises is something that can emerge from a crisis (Ghaderi, Som & Henderson, 2012). A crisis at one destination can also have positive effects on other destinations. If one destination is going through a crisis, other substitute destinations can benefit from this. People don't necessarily stop traveling because of a crisis, instead they might travel in different ways and divert to new destinations with more pleasing conditions (Cirer-Costa, 2017; de Sausmarez, 2013; Ghaderi, Som & Henderson, 2012; Wall & Mathieson, 2006), destinations that fulfill the tourists' travel motives. This was the case during the Gulf oil spill in the U.S. The demand for hotels and vacation rentals was moved from the affected coast to other coastal areas (Ritchie et al., 2013). It is also the case of the studied migrant crisis. The study of Cirer-Costa (2017) showed that the islands located near the sources of the conflict had problems selling their rooms. Instead, Mediterranean islands located farther away from the crisis were able to raise their rates because of increases in tourism demand (Cirer-Costa, 2017).

3.2 Place image

Place image is the image of a country, a city or a tourist destination that affects people's actions and activities. Based on the information people receive from various sources they construct place images and cognitive maps (Avraham & Ketter, 2008). Based in part on a place image, people decide on where to live, where to travel, where to study, and so on. Avraham and Ketter (2008) states that in order to attract residents, visitors, investors and so on, places must continuously improve their image.

In the case of a crisis, the destination itself may not have the possibility to market themselves to make the images better. Priorities may be elsewhere in these cases and governments for example does not focus on investing in the tourism sector, instead they invest in sectors needed at the moment, for example in security (Sayira & Andrews, 2016).

A crisis at one destination can form negative images not only of the destination itself but also of the neighboring destinations or even countries, and cause devastating impacts for large regions (Kozak, Crotts & Law, 2007). Sayira and Andrews (2016) studied the image of a region in Pakistan that had gotten negative publicity because of an anthropogenic crisis (war) and the study showed that the consequences of the deteriorated image of one part of Pakistan applied to the whole country. The tourism industry at a destination is thus vulnerable to exogenous crises (Ghaderi, Som & Henderson, 2012).

3.3 Media's role in times of crises

People usually become aware of events happening in their local environment from direct contact with them, while media plays an important role in communicating events that happen in more distant places (Avraham & Ketter, 2008). Since it's simpler, cheaper and safer to travel globally nowadays in comparison to a few decades ago, destinations also have more competition. Therefore, destinations have to enhance their attractiveness and improve their competitive edge, which is hard in times of crises (Avraham & Ketter, 2008). If a destination or a country that is popular for tourists is going through a crisis, it is also likely that the crisis attracts more media coverage (Page, Song & Wu, 2012).

According to Ritchie et al. (2013) media has a major impact on potential visitors' desire to travel to certain places during crises and disasters. Media can shape people's understanding of events and destination conditions during crises, and media sometimes exaggerate the negative outcomes of crises (Ghaderi, Som & Henderson, 2012; Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009). Exaggerating the negative outcomes can be said as reporting negative media events, and negative media events are when media communicates bad news, that make people feel reviled, afraid or choked (Nielsen, 2001). If media publishes negative stories and exaggerates the outcomes of crises, the image of a destination can be tarnished and the recovery process be delayed. Media does not always report from the post-crisis period either, with for example positive recovery stories that would help rebuild tourist confidence. Media can thereby worsen or prolong the image of a destination as a place of crisis (Ghaderi, Som & Henderson, 2012). Avraham and Ketter (2008, 78) therefore states that "*[...] the media play a key role in the crisis life cycle*".

An example of medias urge to exaggerate and publish negative stories during crises, can be seen in a study made by Ichinosawa (2006). When the tsunami hit the Indian Ocean in 2004, TV stations competed to get tourists' dramatic videos and photographs in order to have the most dramatic things to show their viewers. The TV reporters also indicated that some of the video recordings were recorded in Phuket, when they actually were filmed in other destroyed places in Thailand. In this way, Phuket got negative publicity and was presented as a catastrophic place, when Phuket in reality did not suffer that much damage (Ichinosawa, 2006). According to Rittichainuwat and Chakraborty (2009), first-time travelers are more naïve than experienced travelers and believe everything what is said in the media, and thereby build negative images of the destination. Experienced travelers have more realistic perceptions of the risk at the destination and are not always as affected by the things that are said in the media.

3.4 Tourists' decision making process

People have different motivations to travel, motives such as escaping everyday life, relaxation and strengthening family bonds are among these motives. Social interaction such as finding people to share experiences with, educational opportunities such as learning about other places and cultures are also motivations for traveling. To discover oneself, to fulfill a wish or simply shopping, can also be reasons for traveling (Cohen, 1974; Crompton, 1979; Mathieson & Wall, 1982 in Ryan, 2003).

When wanting to travel, a number of decisions have to be made, such as choosing a destination, mode of travel, length of stay and type of accommodation. Tourist products include large monetary outlays and they are seldom spontaneous purchases but carefully planned. Travel options tourists can choose between are many, and because of this tourist destinations have become more competitive, both in prices and in qualities of facilities and services. This has made the decision making for tourists more complex, since there are more factors to take into consideration when making the decision (Wall & Mathieson, 2006). To understand a tourists' decision making process for a trip, Chen (1998, 5) presented a model called "*the Tourists' Cognitive Decision Making (TCDM) model*". According to this model, a tourist go through five stages in the decision making process; *problem formulation, information search, evaluation, implementation and latent influence*.

In the first stage, called *problem formulation*, a person desires or intends to travel somewhere (Chen, 1998). The motivation for traveling comes from *push* or *pull* factors (Nielsen, 2001). A *push* factor is for example when a person needs to get out of his/her everyday life, and the urge to travel pushes the person to find information about alternative places. A *pull* factor is when a destination draw people's attention to it, and these people in that way are stimulated to find travel alternatives. It can also be a combination of the two (Nielsen, 2001). In this stage, the determination of which attributes are important are made, and these are made upon intuition or past experiences. The alternatives are usually developed in this stage (Chen, 1998).

In the second stage, the *information search* stage, the individual start to search information about the possible traveling destinations (Chen, 1998). Information from sources such as travel intermediaries, advertisements, brochures, experienced travelers, friends and relatives and web pages are obtained (Wall & Mathieson, 2006), and the crucial information is used in the decision making. In the decision-making process, perceived risks can affect the tourists' decision-making and purchasing behavior (Wall & Mathieson, 2006). Physical threat, especially threats to health and safety, or disturbances to a tourist's plans can lead to the unwillingness to travel to a specific destination and the change of plans (Kozak, Crotts & Law, 2007; Nielsen, 2001). After learning and adopting procedures, a final set of alternative choices are gotten (Chen, 1998).

In the *evaluation* stage, when information about the alternative destinations is obtained, the evaluation between destinations (Chen, 1998) and eliminations of destinations that aren't interesting (Nielsen, 2001) are being made. The information is evaluated against factors such as time, money, costs of alternative trips, value and experiences being sought for (Wall & Mathieson, 2006). At this stage, information can

still be sought for and therefore promotional material and media representations are still relevant for the decision (Chen, 1998; Nielsen, 2001). The criteria provide guidelines for the decision-making and these criteria will result in the optimal choice alternative (Chen, 1998).

The fourth stage is the *implementation* stage. Here individuals will, according to their decision-making strategy, choose an alternative that will benefit them most.

Latent influence is something that affects the decision making through all stages. Latent influence are factors that are not directly thought of as a part of the decision-making but still affects it, for instance previous experiences or advertisement (Chen, 1998). During and after a trip, tourists evaluate the experiences gained, and the results of the evaluations affect future travel decisions whether it is to the same destination or not (Wall and Mathieson, 2006).

4. METHOD

In this study, qualitative interviews have been used because the background of the study contains sensitive and contrasting subjects that connect to very serious and dramatic issues, such as other peoples' loss of homes, loss of families and death, in combination with leisure tourism. Focus has been on the respondents' opinions, feelings and perceptions (Denscombe, 2009), and it is considered that these are best studied in an interview because the opportunity to discuss, see facial expressions and asking follow-up questions is possible.

4.1 Semi-structured interviews

An interview-guide with topics and pictures was prepared (see Appendix 1), and respondents were searched for and contacted (see 4.1.1). First, a pilot interview was done, in order for the researcher to test the interview-guide and to get familiar with the interviewer role. Based on this pilot interview the interview-guide was slightly modified, with reformulations and added questions. The pilot interview was also seen as useful empirical material for the study, and is therefore included as one of the total six interviews in this study.

The interviews were preferred to be held in quiet and calm places, and therefore four out of six were held in the interviewer's home or the respondent's home. Because of complications in time schedules and holidays coming in between (Easter), one interview was held on Skype and one at a café. The interviews were held between April 10 and April 20 2017, and lasted on average 25 minutes. All interviews were held in Swedish. Information that the respondents' identity and answers were going to be handled confidentially was given, and permission about the interviews being recorded was asked for. All respondents gave permission for recording.

The interviews were semi-structured, and during the interviews the respondents were encouraged to develop their thoughts and discuss freely (Denscombe, 2009). When the interviewer thought of follow-up questions or probing questions during the interview, these questions were asked. These questions functioned as complements to the questions in the interview guide.

The interviews were divided into three parts. First some background questions about the respondents' age, occupation and travel habits were asked (see Appendix 1). The second part consisted of pictures that tour operators use on their websites when presenting their destinations (see Appendix 2). These pictures were shown on a computer. The pictures were first shown under silence, and afterwards questions were asked and discussions held. The third part consisted of pictures from the crisis (see Appendix 3). These pictures were also shown as a slideshow on a computer under silence first, and afterwards questions were asked and discussions held.

The interviews were finished with a question about the respondents' thoughts and feelings about the interview, if there was something that had come into mind and they wanted to discuss.

The interview that was held on Skype also followed a similar structure. In order to get a more physical feeling, a video call was held. Questions about the respondents age, occupations and travel habits were asked. In the second and third part of the interview

that contained pictures, the pictures were sent to the respondent through the Skype chat. First the pictures from the tour operators were sent and she had time to look at them before discussion, and then the pictures from the crisis were sent and discussed.

4.1.1 Respondents

Since the aim is mainly focused on personal thoughts and feelings, the respondents could basically be anybody. However, both people who had visited Greece and people that had never visited Greece were considered to be interesting as participants in the study, and an equal division between these two groups was sought for. The reason for choosing people who have traveled to Greece and people who have traveled abroad at least once in their lifetime is because they can put themselves into the process of deciding where to travel, and it was also thought that they could imagine the situation of a crisis at a destination they are supposed to travel to or have a vacation on, since they have experiences in traveling and know what they search for when traveling. People that have visited Greece are probably familiar with the culture, architecture, landscape and the climate, and have some kind of connection to the studied area, and it was thought that these people might have different perceptions of the studied destinations than people that have never visited the country.

Respondents in my social network were contacted. Eight possible participants were contacted, and six of them wanted to participate in an interview. People that I knew had visited Greece or people I knew had not visited Greece but have been traveling abroad at least once in their lifetime, were chosen. Since I know the people who have participated in this study I knew to some extent about their travel habits, but when asking them if they wanted to participate I also asked about their experiences with Greece in order to get correct information and being able to get an approximately even distribution of people who had visited and not visited Greece.

The people contacted live in Umeå, since I wanted to hold personal, physical interviews where I could see the respondents' reactions to the pictures, such as body language and facial expressions. Since pictures were shown in the interviews, it was also an advantage to hold physical meetings. However, as was mentioned before, due to difficulties in finding time for a meeting with one of the respondents, a Skype meeting was arranged instead.

4.2 Description of the respondents

The respondents in this study were aged between 22 and 28, and all of them were women. All respondents' place of residence was Umeå municipality at the time for the interviews. Two of the respondents had never visited Greece, one respondent had visited Greece once, two respondents had visited Greece twice and one respondent had visited Greece five times. Two of the respondents' travel less often than the other, only every two years, on average. The other respondents travel abroad one to three times every year. Common destinations for the respondents were the Mediterranean regions and cities in Europe, while one respondent's preferred destinations were ski resorts, both in Europe and in the USA.

Table 1. Description of the respondents in the study

Respondent	Age	Gender	No. of visits to Greece	No. of trips abroad/year	Common/preferred destinations
Respondent 1	22	Woman	Twice	Every two years	Mediterranean regions and cities in Europe
Respondent 2	22	Woman	Never	Every two years	Cities in Europe
Respondent 3	22	Woman	Twice	1-2 times/year	Mediterranean regions and cities in Europe
Respondent 4	26	Woman	Never	1-2 times/year	Capitals in Europe
Respondent 5	26	Woman	Once	2-3 times/year	Ski resorts, in Europe and the USA
Respondent 6	28	Woman	5 times	Once a year	Mediterranean regions

4.3 Thematic analysis

In this study, a thematic analysis has been used. Thematic analysis means searching for patterns across data sets, such as interviews. The data material is coded and organized, and repetitive patterns forms themes. Guidelines developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) has been used when conducting the analysis. The guidelines by Braun and Clarke (2006) consist of six phases. The first phase is about familiarizing with the data, transcribing, re-reading and noting down ideas. In the second phase, coding across the data set is done. These codes are then gathered into potential themes in the third phase. In the fourth phase the themes are reviewed and checked if they work in relation to the codes and the data set. Refining the themes, making clear definitions and names of the themes are made in phase five. Finally, the report is made in phase six, with analyses relating back to the research questions.

In this study, the data was first transcribed verbatim into written form. When transcribing I got to familiarize myself with the data more in-depth, and the transcriptions were also re-read a few times (Braun & Clarke, 2006). When re-reading, ideas about interesting parts in the data material in relation to the research questions were found. After this, coding was done, and the coding was done directly on the material. Notes were done on the data material, and color-coding was done to mark important parts in the interviews. The coding was both theory and data-driven. It was theory-driven in that way, that I had the research questions in mind when coding, but data-driven because research question number three evolved from the dataset. The codes were then gathered into potential themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The themes that were important in relation to the research questions and the ones of interest were selected. When reviewing these potential themes, some themes were merged together, and some themes were split into several themes. Some of the themes were also made into sub-themes, and finally the themes were defined and named. The themes were divided into two categories, themes that function as background information for the research questions, and themes that relate back to the research questions. Travel motives and sources of information functioned as background information for the study, and the themes found in these categories were; *escaping everyday life*, *cultural experiences*, *building relationships* and *personal development*, and *Google* and *people*. The themes identified that related back to the research questions were

attractiveness, with the three sub-themes *memories*, *options* and *water*, *changed image* with the sub-themes *help* and *seeing*, *inequality* with the sub-theme *ignorance*, *self-protection* with the sub-theme *safety*, *shame and guilt*, *practicalities*, and *marketing and information* (see 5).

4.4 The case and the pictures in the interviews

Information about the crisis and which Greek islands that had received most migrants was gathered. British news sites stated that the islands of Lesbos, Samos, Kos, Leros, Chios (Foster, 2016; Leadbeater 2016), Kalymnos, Rhodes, Symi and Agathonisi (Leadbeater, 2016) were affected by the migrant crisis. For this study, pictures from Lesbos and Kos have been studied. As have been mentioned before, Lesbos received many migrants in 2015 (Frontex, 2017) and Kos, which is a popular tourist destination, appeared in many articles and television programs (Cirer-Costa, 2017) and became one of the most visible images of the situation (Leadbeater, 2016). Since the year of the peak of the migrant crisis was 2015, articles with pictures from 2015 has been used. The sources of these pictures were news sites on the internet; *Aftonbladet*, *Expressen* and *SVT nyheter*. These news sites were chosen because they are mainly free, *Aftonbladet* and *Expressen* require payment for only certain articles, and because they are generally accessible to everybody. *Aftonbladet* and *Expressen* are also the top two largest newspapers on the internet in Sweden, according to a measuring in 2016 (Karlsson, 2016). The search tool at the news sites were used to find articles, and the islands were searched for one by one. On *Aftonbladet* for example, it was found that Lesbos, Samos and Kos had the most hits in news articles in 2015. When going through the articles of these three islands on *Aftonbladet*, *Expressen* and *SVT nyheter*, it was found that Lesbos and Kos had pictures that filled certain criteria most, criteria that will be described below.

Pictures showing the crisis were chosen first. The pictures of the migrant crisis in the news mostly featured water in different ways. People arriving on boats, boats overloaded with people, sinking boats or migrants in the water, etc. - probably because going by water was the main way into Europe (see 2.1). Since Greece is mostly associated with sun, sea and sand, and these factors also are the ones attracting tourists, most of the chosen pictures of the crisis for the interviews were pictures including water. The same goes with the choices of pictures from the tour operators, the sea and the beach had to be represented. Another factor that was sought for in the pictures of the migrant crisis were pictures of migrants in contact with tourism or tourists. I thought that the respondents would identify themselves with the tourists, and get themselves into the situations on the pictures. During the interviews, the respondents also wanted to discuss the differences between how the place is being used.

Jacobsen and Munar (2012) did a study about which information sources tourists use when choosing international destinations. Jacobsen and Munar's (2012) sample consisted of Scandinavian summer holidaymakers, who visited a popular destination in the Mediterranean. These travelers were passengers on direct scheduled, non-charter flights. The results showed that first-time travelers to the destination, used information sources such as acquaintances and family, and tour operator/travel agency websites. Tourists who had visited the destination before, emphasized their

own experience and information from acquaintances and family. Since people use tour operator and travel agency websites for finding information about a destination although they are not necessarily traveling with these organizations, pictures for the interviews have been taken from websites of tour operators operating in Sweden. The pictures used were from the tour operators Ving, TUI and Apollo. These three tour operators were chosen as sources because they are the three largest tour operators in Sweden, regarding turnover and best results (Largest Companies, 2017; Myrberg, 2015). Ving is the only tour operator offering trips to Lesbos (Ving, 2017e), while all three, Ving, TUI and Apollo offer trips to Kos (Ving, 2017d; TUI, 2017b; Apollo, 2017).

4.5 Ethical considerations

There are pertinent ethical considerations which should be pointed out. The background of the study is a serious humanitarian crisis. According to Ichinosawa (2006), there are primary and secondary effects of a crisis on a destination. Primary effects are effects caused by the original event, and which affect people directly. Secondary effects are socioeconomic damages and disruptions, caused by people not wanting to travel to a place because it's connected with risk taking (Ichinosawa, 2006). In the studied crisis, it can be said that the Greek islands has suffered from the secondary effects, with media reporting about how travel agencies stopped offering vacation packages to these places (Tejada, 2016), and that tourists cancelled their trips (Nevés, 2016). The migrants and the refugees are the ones that have suffered from the primary effects in this crisis. These people have left their lives, homes, cities and countries, because it could have been dangerous to stay there.

People should not suffer from being a part of a research project, and the researcher is responsible for protecting a person that participates in a study (Denscombe, 2009). This study has been conducted on a distance from the studied areas, with people who have not been affected by the primary or secondary effects. The study brought up sensitive pictures, which for some people can be psychically hard to see. In order to prevent the respondents from any psychical harm, some actions were taken before and during the interviews. That the study was going to bring up sensitive pictures was informed to the respondents when they were contacted and asked if they wanted to participate in the interviews, and the respondents could make the decision in participating or not. During the interviews, the respondents were also informed about when the pictures were going to be showed, in order for them to be prepared. Also, when the respondents were contacted, they were informed about the study, that it is a magister thesis, information about the aim of the study was given, as well as the anticipated length of the interviews. All of the respondents gave informed consent (Denscombe, 2009).

The pictures from the crisis used in this study, show both tourists' and migrants' faces. The situations in the pictures are difficult because these people are staying at the same destinations in different purposes. For the migrants, these situations are involuntarily chosen, and the difficulties they go through can be considered unethical to show on pictures. Tourists, who have chosen these destinations voluntarily, make choices and take actions that can be criticized by the audience, and it can also be considered unethical to show individuals in these situations. However, these pictures have already

been published on news sites, and can be accessed by anybody. Therefore, only a discussion regarding the situations in the pictures is enough in this study.

4.6 Method discussion

The fact that the respondents in this study are people that I know, can have both positive and negative effects. It can be positive in that way, that they feel comfortable during the interviews since they know me, and therefore are honest in the information they give. Negative effects can be that they want to live up to my expectations, and shape their answers based on what they believe would benefit my study. Validity is therefore something that also needs discussion in this study. When an interview deals with questions concerning a respondent's perceptions, feelings and experiences, it is according to Denscombe (2009) difficult to verify the respondents' statements. However, actions have been taken in order to guarantee the validity. Previous research on the subject has been studied, and has functioned as guidelines in the preparation of the research questions. The results from this study has also been discussed in relation to previous studies, and these actions have been ways to authenticate the results in the study. In this study, six interviews have been conducted, and the results are based on themes that have appeared in several interviews. Denscombe (2009) writes that when a theme appears in several interviews, it indicates that a larger group share the same ideas. A theme that appears in several interviews is more trustable than a theme that appears from only one interview (Denscombe, 2009).

With internet and social media being a big part of peoples' lives and people using the internet to search for information about destinations and purchasing trips (Jacobsen & Munar, 2012), the information about the migrant crisis, the reports from media and pictures from tour operators have been collected from the internet in this study. Since no contact has been made between the researcher and the studied destinations or people at the studied destinations, my knowledge about the migrant crisis is based on information from the internet, and the reliability can therefore be discussed. However, when searching for information about the crisis, sources that have been considered reliable, for example the International Organization for Migration, Frontex, and UNHCR have been used. News sites that have been considered reliable have also been used.

The pictures used in this study are from *SVT Nyheter*, *Expressen* and *Aftonbladet*. *Expressen* and *Aftonbladet* are evening newspapers, and it can be discussed why other newspapers, such as morning newspapers, were not used. Since the pictures in the interviews are from the newspapers' webpages and news sites usually publish news on the internet during all hours, there should be no difference in what kind of paper it is. Also, the kinds of pictures that have been published during the crisis have not differed between different kinds of news sites. Many news sites publish similar pictures, and sometimes even the same pictures. Therefore the use of sources for the pictures is not considered a problem in this study.

5. RESULTS

First the respondents' travel motives and the sources of information the respondents use when searching for information about destinations will be presented. The travel motives and the sources of information have functioned as background information for the research questions in this study. Afterwards, the themes identified in relation to the research questions will be presented.

5.1 Travel motives

When studying the respondents travel motives for traveling abroad, four themes were identified; *escaping everyday life*, *cultural experiences*, *building relationships* and *personal development*.

Escaping everyday life was the strongest motive for traveling. Not having responsibilities such as work, and being free to decide what you want to do day by day, to see and do other things than what you usually do, were factors that attracted them to traveling. Being away from responsibilities and stress, and becoming another person is also something that attracts people to traveling, by getting the feeling of "*being who you want to be*" (respondent 4).

Cultural experiences were also strong motives for traveling. Some of the respondents were only interested in touching the culture on the surface, such as visiting sights, reading about the destination's history and eating food, while some of the respondents were interested in cultural experiences on a deeper level. They wanted to get to know locals and wanted locals to tell them stories, they wanted to ride public transports as the locals do, and they wanted to hire cars and visit places tourists normally do not visit.

The travel motive of *building relationships* included both building or nurturing relationships with the travel companions or building new relationships with people at the destination. Interests in building new relationships with both other tourists and locals were mentioned.

Self-fulfillment and *personal development* were travel motives among three of the respondents. Overcoming fears, such as flying and trusting people were motives for one of the respondents. The other two stated that traveling makes you grow as a person, for example if there are unexpected obstacles on the way that you have to deal with in a foreign country.

5.2 Sources of information about a destination

In the searching of information about a destination, two themes were discovered in the interviews; *Google* and *people*. Preparation was the main reason for information gathering and looking at pictures before a trip. Being able to look at reviews about destinations, sights and hotels in order to make decisions about where to go and choosing what to do at the destination, were parts of the preparations, as well as knowing what to expect at the destinations.

"I would like to have an understanding of [...] what I'm going to see". (Respondent 2).

“I would like to prepare myself I think, of how it can be”.
(Respondent 5).

All of the respondents mentioned *Google* as the first step in gathering information about a destination. The first results that comes up where the ones of interest. The respondents would gather information from search results such as Wikipedia, official tourist sites, fare aggregators for lodging (such as booking.com), tour-operators, tourist-guides and blogs. One respondent also mentioned looking at pictures on Google, and another respondent would look at Google maps in order to get familiar with the place she is going to visit, and preparing herself to locate at the destination.

Four of the respondents would search for information through other *people*, both people they know and strangers on the internet. Two of the respondents would read reviews other tourists had given of a destination, on for example TripAdvisor. Two of the respondents claimed that they did not usually search for information since their travel-companions would have or would search for information about the destination. One respondent would also ask her friends about information about a destination.

5.3 Attractiveness

When the respondents where shown the pictures from the tour operators (see Appendix 2), positive comments were given. Describing words such as *beautiful*, *cozy*, *peaceful* and *happy* were used. The first pictures didn't awake thoughts of the destinations as being places for a migrant crisis.

All of the respondents said that the pictures from the tour-operators *tempted* them to travel to the destinations. The respondents who usually travel to the Mediterranean regions and the respondents who have the most experience in traveling to Greece, respondent 1, 3 and 6, believed that the destinations would fulfill their travel motives. One respondent described the destinations in the pictures as having everything she needs in a vacation, and another said that the pictures represented what is expected from a vacation. The other three respondents usually like to travel to different kinds of destinations, and said that depending on what they seek, these destinations might fulfill their travel motives.

Memories

Three of the respondents felt that these pictures attracted them because they reminded them of their own traveling experiences. Music, activities they participated in, scents from the sea and the sand, came to mind. One respondent mentioned how she started longing back to them.

“You know how fun it is or how you thrive, when you just get to lay on the beach and chill out, and then go out to dinner in the evening. You have these memories.” (Respondent 3).

Options

All of the respondents perceived the destinations as calm, places for relaxation or places where you strengthen the relationships with your travel companions. At the same time they all also saw possible activities they would want to participate in in the pictures, such as bathing, eating at restaurants, walking around in villages and on

boardwalks, discovering new places and going on bicycle tours. The respondents were attracted to the activities shown in the pictures, because it showed that there was something to do at the destinations at the same time they saw the destinations as places for relaxation. This theme is also connected to theme that will be presented below, water.

Water

The sea and the beach were also themes in the interviews. On the pictures from the tour operators (see Appendix 2), the respondents described the beaches as wonderful, and the water was described as clear blue and inviting. This was a place for sunbathing and bathing, and one respondent meant that beaches and the sea was everything she seeks in a vacation. The possibility to go on small trips with boats were mentioned by three of the respondents, with one respondent feeling attraction to the place since it offered an activity she had dreamed of doing; going on a trip on a boat and jumping into the water.

5.4 Changed image

The pictures of the crisis on Lesbos and Kos (see Appendix 3) changed the respondents' perceptions of the destinations immediately. The pictures did not raise the same thoughts as before. The destinations were no longer attractive, and they were no longer perceived as places for tourism. The feelings and associations made with the destinations before, were changed. Previously the destinations were seen as places where you can relax, but once the pictures from the crisis had been seen, two respondents perceived that the destinations no longer were calm and it would not be possible to relax there. Five of the respondents also discussed enjoyment. One respondent said she would not want to go there and enjoy herself, one respondent believed it would be hard to enjoy herself in that environment and one said that once you would have seen it, you would not be able to enjoy yourself anymore. Two of the respondents said that they would not even consider going there to enjoy themselves. According to one of the respondents, it would not be morally right:

"You don't travel to a place and enjoy the sun and bathing when people are dying around you. That is my opinion." (Respondent 6).

In the pictures from the crisis, it was the pictures with a lot of migrants on the boats, and people in the water, that affected the respondents the most. The sea and the beach, which the respondents perceived as attractive in the pictures of the tour operators, were no longer seen as attractive. After seeing the pictures from the crisis (see Appendix 3), the image of the water and travel motives previously associated with the destinations changed.

"I'm mostly thinking about this picture, [...], a close-up on a man with a child on a raft. It is horrible. The water does not look as clear blue [...]." (Respondent 4).

Another respondent stated:

"[...] I would not have traveled [here] for sunbathing and bathing." (Respondent 6).

Help

Help in one way or another, was a returning subject in the interviews. When the respondents had seen the pictures of the crisis (see Appendix 3), some of the respondents didn't see the place as a place for vacationing no more. Instead, a possibility to go there and help aid organizations was seen. However, if they would actually do it was questioned by themselves. There was a will to book a trip and go there to help, but actually taking the step in doing so was not as clear.

Four of the respondents wouldn't cancel their trips if this kind of a crisis would occur at the destination they were supposed to travel to (see 5.8), and some of the respondents mentioned that they would help in some way at the destination. Giving this help was seen as a way to earn free time later, or to ease their conscience.

"[...] we will help and afterwards you can, I don't know, eat dinner, enjoy the evening, you know [...] feel that you have done something, then you might not have as bad conscience." (Respondent 6).

The ways the respondents mentioned that they would help were giving money, clothes or taking contact with aid organizations and help them prepare food or comfort vulnerable people. One respondent said that if she had booked a trip to a destination and a crisis occurred, she wouldn't cancel the trip and instead see it as a destiny for helping people.

Seeing

The pictures from the tour operators were associated with the environment you want to see when going on vacation. The pictures from the crisis were associated with things you don't want to see on a vacation. When the respondents had seen the pictures from the crisis, negative feelings and thoughts aroused. One respondent felt a little bit sad and bothered. Another respondent said that if she would have been a little more squeamish on the day of the interview, she would have started crying. Three of the respondents agreed on that it would be hard and unpleasant to see situations like these when on a vacation. A vacation is supposed to be a positive experience, and one of the respondents said that going on a vacation is the "*highlight of the year*" (Respondent 3). Seeing a situation like this would affect the mood and the vacation invested in, in a negative way.

However, three of the respondents thought that if they would go to a destination in crisis, they would not necessarily see the crisis.

"[...] I can imagine that it is two different worlds, like, where you go as a tourist, you do not necessarily have to see all this." (Respondent 3).

They thought that if they would stay at typical tourist-places and resorts on the islands, they would not see the migrants. They would try to avoid seeing the crisis, and be around other tourists instead. Seeing the crisis would make them feel guilty, and therefore staying away would ease their conscience. By staying at locations separated from the crisis and not seeing the crisis, they would be able to enjoy their vacation.

5.5 Inequality

Frustration about the inequality between people occurred among the respondents. Questions about why some people have the possibility to travel to a destination in leisure purposes while other people go there because they have no other place to be, were raised. These questions were particularly raised when they saw both migrants and tourists in the same pictures. When these questions were raised, some of the respondents identified themselves with the tourists in the pictures (see Appendix 3), and referred to them as “we”.

Ignorance

Most of the respondents interpreted the pictures with both tourists and migrants, as the tourists ignoring the migrants’ situation and their needs. A lack of understanding of how the tourists could choose a destination like this for a vacation and behave like tourists, and a lack of understanding of how the tourists even could be in that environment occurred among the respondents. The respondents perceived the tourists as just walking by the migrants without caring about them, which annoyed the respondents. Annoyance about the tourists’ selfishness and people’s selfishness in general aroused.

On one picture from the crisis, you can see a woman sunbathing on the beach when a boat with migrants arrive (see Appendix 3). As mentioned before, these destinations were first seen as places for lying on the beach and bathing, but after seeing the pictures of the crisis, this wasn’t longer attractive for the respondents. The picture of the woman on the beach therefore raised opinions among the respondents. A lack of understanding of how the tourist could continue her vacation, with comments on how they would never continue sunbathing after seeing this.

5.6 Self-protection

Self-protection, both physically and psychically, was a theme that run through the interviews. The respondents underestimated their knowledge of the situation, saying they didn’t know much about the crisis and excused themselves about the little information they possessed although most of them knew the crisis in general. Information about the crisis had swept by them in newspapers or in shared articles on Facebook. One of the respondents even remembered specific pictures she had seen in media, with one picture she remembered being the picture of Aylan Kurdi’s dead body washed up on the beach in Bodrum, Turkey (see 2.1).

They were aware of the crisis, and what is happening in the world but they choose to lock-out certain things, things that make them feel bad. They choose not to listen to everything and instead focus on things they want to see. One of the respondents meant that she might had not followed the events subconsciously, because she did not want

to realize what is happening. Two respondents agreed on that it is easy to ignore and delude oneself about a situation when being on a distance from the destination.

Protecting themselves by making up for statements they had was also something that was done during the interviews. Four of the respondents drew connections to everyday situations in Sweden. They mentioned homeless persons and beggars that reside in Umeå and Sweden. They see misery in these forms in their everyday life, and comments on how you can not escape misery anywhere were given. They don't stop visiting places at home because of the risk of seeing things like these, and they don't stop living their lives because of misery in the world.

Safety

Whether the respondents would feel safe at the destinations were discussed by four respondents in the interviews. One respondent said that she would go to the destination, if it wasn't dangerous for her life. Another respondent questioned whether she would feel safe at the studied destinations and stated:

"[safety] is one of the things you have to feel before you travel".
(Respondent 2).

This was also agreed upon by another respondent, who thought that she would have to feel safe in order to call it a vacation. One respondent mentioned that she would be afraid of her own safety at the destinations, because of the situations that can occur when people in need might take irrational actions.

5.7 Shame and guilt

When the respondents had seen the pictures from the crisis, the reactions were different than after seeing the pictures from the tour operators. They started feeling shame and guilt. One respondent stated that:

"[...] you get some stomach pain, thinking about everything I just said, that I want to travel, that it is a luxury and it is only good. And then you get to see another side of the same place [...]." (Respondent 3).

She had not been thinking about the destinations as places for misery, and felt guilty because of her previous thoughts that the place was all wonderful and beautiful. Three of the respondents also felt selfish, when they were thinking about what their actions would be in certain situations, for example when only thinking about their vacation and how to maximize the positive outcomes from them. One respondent said that she would probably travel to a destination undergoing a crisis like this, but after a while she started questioning her thoughts and her ethics:

"[...] am I a horrible person right now? Going on a trip while people are fleeing for their lives." (Respondent 1).

She felt ashamed for the will to travel to the destination in leisure purposes while there where people at the destination who had to be there because they had to.

5.8 Practicalities

Four of the respondents would not have canceled a booked trip to a destination that was going through a crisis like this, and two of the respondents were not sure. They had different reasons for why they would not have canceled or postponed the trip. Some of the reasons has already been discussed, such as if it is not a danger to life, believing that tourist-places are not affected by the crisis and one respondent thinking that when she had booked a trip she might as well go, and see it as a destiny to help people. Two of the respondents explained that they would not have canceled because of economic reasons. One respondent meant that canceling the trip would have been more expensive than going, and the other respondent kept the same track, saying she would not have canceled because she never books cancellation protections. Other factors that would make people go on a vacation to a place in a crisis like this, are if they would have found a good price and found time to go on vacation, and also been able to get time off work.

5.9 Marketing and information

Four of the respondents also discussed marketing and the roles of the tour operators. One respondent started discussing marketing after she had seen the pictures from the tour operators, while the three others started discussing them after they had seen the pictures from the crisis. They agreed on that tour operators show what potential customers wants to see and by that build expectations that it is going to be all beautiful at the destination. One respondent, who was very positive to the pictures from the tour operators but had consciously avoided traveling to Greece during the past years because of the crisis, commented the pictures from the tour operators with:

“[...] it is a pretty idyllic picture. But I think it’s quite misleading.” (Respondent 6).

She started questioning what she will actually be seeing when arriving at the destination, whether it would be as in the pictures of the tour operators or as in the pictures from the crisis. According to her, showing beautiful pictures is not fare, not to the tourists but not the residents either.

One respondent pointed out that tour operators need to be clear in their communication about what is going on in a country, in order to prepare tourists of what the situation can be, and to avoid disappointed tourists. One respondent, who usually is a charter-traveler, said she trusts the companies she travels with, and expects them to take the right actions in situations like this. Two of the respondents also mentioned that if there are recommendations on not traveling to a specific destination, they would follow these recommendations.

6. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The travel motives of the respondents found in this study, escaping everyday life, culture, building relationships and personal development, are similar to tourists' traveling motives found in previous studies (Cohen, 1974; Crompton, 1979; Mathieson & Wall, 1982 in Ryan, 2003). Some of the travel motives that the respondents have when they travel abroad, were also found in the respondents' perceptions of the destinations in the promotional pictures. The strongest travel motive among the respondents was escaping everyday life, with the freedom to choose what to do without having responsibilities. This was also a factor seen in the promotional pictures from the tour operators (see Appendix 2), the respondents saw possibilities to participate in different kinds of activities at the destinations such as going on boat trips, sunbathe or go on bicycle trips. They saw options they could choose between, and they felt that they could choose what they wanted to.

The perceptions of the destinations based on the pictures from the tour operators functioned as pull factors for the respondents. As Nielsen (2001) described it, a pull factor is when a destination draws attention to it, and people in that way are stimulated to travel. The respondents all agreed on that they were tempted to travel to the destinations, which also means that the marketing from the tour operators worked. Four of the respondents also started talking about marketing, and stated that they were aware of that the promotional pictures aim to build positive expectations. Based on the pictures, they constructed place images and cognitive maps (Avraham and Ketter, 2008) and it can be said that the respondents' place image of Kos and Lesbos based on the promotional pictures were positive. The respondents described the destinations in a positive way, it reminded them of previous experiences and they saw possible activities to participate in. The place image affects people's actions, and based on a place image people decide on where to travel for example (Avraham & Ketter, 2008). In this study, three of the respondents believed that the destinations would fulfill their travel motives, and these three were the respondents that usually travel to Mediterranean regions, and had most experience in Greece. The other three respondents usually vary their travel motives with different destinations. It would therefore be likely that the respondents with the most experience in Greece and who usually travel to the Mediterranean regions would go to the studied destinations, while for the other three respondents an interest to travel somewhere awakes.

When a person desires or intends to travel somewhere, he or she starts to search information about possible destinations (Chen, 1998). All of the respondents mentioned Google as a first step to gather information about possible destinations. Google search shows different results when searching for destinations, it shows for example travel pages, tour operators, and it also shows news articles from news sites. This means that when people search for information about a destination through Google, they are also most likely to get information about if there is some kind of a crisis at the destination. Since people are very risk-averse regarding where to travel (Wall & Mathieson, 2006), it is possible to think that when they evaluate possible destinations against each other (Chen, 1998), the crisis-affected destinations will be eliminated in this stage.

The pictures from the crisis (see Appendix 3) did not wake as many positive thoughts among the respondents. The images of the destinations as places for relaxing, places for participating in different kinds of activities, sunbathing and bathing, changed. Media can shape people's understanding of destination conditions (Ghaderi, Som & Henderson, 2012), and based on the pictures from media used in these interviews, the respondents saw the destinations as places with misery, inequality and death. If potential tourists have this place image of a destination, it is not likely that they would visit the destination. Since a vacation is carefully planned and often require large sums of money (Wall & Mathieson, 2006), it is likely that a destination that would fulfill the tourist's travel motives better is chosen. As Wall and Mathieson (2006) mentioned, there are many travel options that tourists can choose between, and if tourists have a negative place image of a destination, the destination must improve the image and the competitive edge to attract visitors (Avraham & Ketter, 2008). News sites have been reporting about declines in tourism on the destinations affected by the crisis (Tejada, 2016; Zikakou, 2015), and that people are not interested in traveling to the destinations because of the crisis have also been seen in this study. While all of the respondents were attracted to the destinations when they had seen the promotional pictures, and three of them were more likely to travel there than the three others, only two of them would consider traveling there for vacation in a crisis situation. That four out of the six respondents did not want to travel to the destinations in leisure purposes because of the crisis, also shows the effects that a crisis has on the place image and the actions people take when they have built up an image of a destination in their head (Avraham & Ketter, 2008). Tourists' unwillingness to travel have bad impacts on the economy of the tourism industry, which has also been the case on these destinations. News sites have already reported about declines in tourism during this migrant crisis, resulting in for example canceled flights and declining room bookings on Lesbos (Tejada, 2016; Zikakou, 2015), and a study made by Cirer-Costa (2017) showed that accommodation businesses on Kos had troubles in selling all their rooms because of the crisis.

However, the two studied islands still worked as pull factors for the respondents. Four out of the six respondents saw possibilities in traveling to the destinations in this situation, but their travel motives would have changed in comparison from the travel motives they had when they saw the promotional pictures. The places were no longer seen as places for tourism and tourism activities, but as places for helping people, and these respondents saw possibilities in going there to help aid organizations. However, they were not sure if they would go through with the plans of actually going there to help. This can be of different reasons, such as economic, that it would cost a lot to travel there to help. Also, if a tourist perceives that there is a risk with traveling to a destination, it can affect the purchasing behavior and lead to the change of plans (Kozak, Crofts & Law, 2007; Wall & Mathieson, 2006).

If the respondents that saw the destinations as places for helping people would go there and help aid organizations, they would in some way contribute to the economy of the tourism industry. News sites have reported that aid workers and volunteers that have been working on the island of Lesbos, have kept businesses such as bars busy (Amin, 2016). However, aid workers and volunteers might not contribute to the tourism economy as much as if they would have gone there for leisure purposes. The respondents in this study would probably not have done things they saw potential in

doing at the destinations when they saw the promotional pictures, such as going on boat trips or bicycle tours. Instead they would probably only participate in essential activities, and buy necessities. As the study of the Gulf oil spill by Ritchie et al. (2013) showed, the regions affected by the oil spill crisis saw losses in tourists, but the hotel demand did not go down because the media that were there to report about the crisis and the cleanup crews stayed at the hotels. However, these reporters and cleanup crews did not have the same expenditure patterns as tourists had, and therefore, the tourism industry saw economical losses.

As was noted in the beginning of the paper, this paper has discussed different kind of mobilities (see 2.2). The respondents would best be placed under the term tourists, since they have experiences in traveling, and travel abroad every now and then in leisure purposes. When the respondents saw the pictures from the crisis, they also identified themselves with the tourists on the pictures, and referred to them as “we”. On the pictures from the crisis, there were also people who were not at the destinations in leisure purposes. These people were there because of migration and forced migration. When the respondents saw people with different motives at the same place, a frustration about the inequality among people occurred. The respondents had agreed on that the situations on the pictures from the crisis were not something they wanted to see on a vacation, and the destinations were not seen as places for tourism. That is probably the reason why they could not understand how people could travel to the destinations in leisure purposes, and felt that the tourists on the pictures were selfish because they could behave like normal tourists in an environment that was difficult. The picture with the woman sunbathing on the beach when a boat of migrants arrived created most reactions. Her being able to enjoy a vacation and not walk away while the migrants arrived on the island, in completely different purposes than hers, were something they considered immoral. However, some of the respondents also questioned their own statements and the actions they would take in relation to the crisis.

Although media play an important role in communicating events that happen on a distance (Avraham & Ketter, 2008) and has the power to shape people’s understanding about a destination’s conditions during a crisis (Ghaderi, Som & Henderson, 2012), two of the respondents in this study would still consider booking a trip in leisure purposes to the destinations although there was a crisis going on. People easily lock-out certain information in order to protect their conscience, and two of the respondents in this study said that people easily refine a situation when being on a distance from the situation. That is probably why two of the respondents in this study would consider booking a vacation to the destinations. When they had not seen the situation with their own eyes, or been in direct contact with the destinations, they refined it in their minds. This is also probably a reason why three of the respondents thought that if they would travel to the destinations, they would not necessarily see the crisis. They imagined that if they would only stay at typical tourist destinations or resorts, they would not come in contact with the crisis.

As Ritchie et al. (2013) stated, media can affect potential visitors’ desire to travel to a destination, and when the respondents had seen the pictures from the crisis, they did not think of the destinations as places for vacationing or places for tourism anymore. Most of the respondents would not have booked trips there for vacationing, enjoyment

or relaxation, with one respondent thinking that it would not be morally right. However, if they had booked a trip to a destination, and the destination suddenly got media coverage because of a crisis, the respondents were no longer sure that they would not go to the destination in leisure purposes. It can be said that tourists in a situation like this go through the evaluation and implementation stage in Chen's (1998) decision making model again. They have already gone through the stages in the decision making model once, with searching information about alternatives where to go, evaluating destinations and personal factors of importance regarding a trip, and finally booking a trip. However, when a crisis occurs they might start thinking over things again. They go through the information they have received regarding the crisis and evaluate the risk of the crisis against factors such as time, money, costs of alternative trips, value and experiences being sought for (Wall & Mathieson, 2006), and again make a decision if they want to go to the destination or not. The factors that the pictures from the crisis were evaluated against in this study were safety, money, expectations and values. Two of the respondents said they would not have canceled due to economic reasons, because it would have costed more since they usually do not book cancellation protections. One of the respondents also mentioned that when she finally had found time to travel and been able to get off work, she would not have canceled the trip. It can be thought that people perceive the cancellation or postponement processes as complicated and time-consuming, and therefore settle with the trip they have booked. One respondent said that as long as it would not affect her safety, she would have traveled to these destinations.

The situation at the destinations were not something that they would have wanted to see on vacation, and most of the respondents got bad conscience when seeing the pictures and when thinking about being at the destinations during these conditions. However, four of the respondents drew connections to their everyday lives, and mentioned how they do not stop living their lives at home either although they see misery and bad things happen around them. That is probably why they thought that they could enjoy themselves to some extent if they would travel to the destinations, but it would ease their conscience to help in some way. Based on the reasoning from the respondents it can be said that cancellation of a booked trip to a destination going through a crisis is something that would be done if there was a perceived risk for the person's life in traveling to the destination. As Kozak, Crotts and Law (2007) and Nielsen (2001) have stated, physical threat is something that can lead to tourists' unwillingness to travel to a destination. That there would be psychically hard parts in traveling to a destination undergoing a crisis like this, was something that was discussed in the interviews. The respondents believed it would be hard to enjoy a vacation in the environments of the crisis and it would make them feel bad and guilty, but if they had booked a trip they would try to make the vacation meet their expectations and try to ease their conscience by helping people. The values and experiences originally sought for in a vacation would be sacrificed in order to not lose large sums of money because of cancellations.

Tourists do not necessarily stop themselves from traveling to a destination, it can also be instances or other people that prevent tourists from traveling to a specific destination (de Sausmarez, 2013; Floyd et al., 2004; Lefebvre & Marktanner, 2014) and in this study, two of the respondents mentioned tour operators and two

respondents referred to the government. If governments would give travel advisories against traveling to a destination that are going through or recovering from a crisis (de Sausmarez, 2013), two of the respondents stated that they would follow these guidelines. If there is some sort of unrest at a destination, one respondent said that tour operators should prepare the tourists traveling there about the situation, and one of the respondents said that she trusted that the tour operators would take the right actions in a situation like that. That is why communication from higher instances and organizations is important.

This study has contributed to the research about tourism in relation to crises, and finally, suggestions for future studies will be presented.

6.1 Limitations and future studies

This study consisted of women only, aged between 22 and 28. In the future, this kind of study maybe could be conducted with a larger age perspective to see if destinations are perceived differently regarding to age. Studying men's perspectives to see if there are differences in comparison to women's perspectives could also be done.

Due to time restrictions, it was hard to find respondents that had visited Greece many times (approximately five or more). A suggestion for future studies would therefore also be to study a destination undergoing a crisis, and compare if there are differences in perceptions of the crisis depending on if the tourist is familiar with the destination or if the tourist is unfamiliar with the destination. Tourists traveling to destinations they are unfamiliar with, have to trust the information given to them through different channels such as media, family or tour operators, while tourists that are familiar with a destination also have previous experiences of the destination. The previous experiences might guide them in where safe places are or they might even have contacts at the destination they trust and can discuss with.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview guide

Basic information

- Age?
- Occupation?

Travel habits

- How often do you travel abroad?
- Where do you usually travel?
- What kind of traveler are you? (free definition)
- How do you seek information about a destination?
- Why do you travel?

What meaning do pictures have for a destination you choose?

Show pictures of Lesbos and Kos from tour operators

- What do you think of when you see these pictures? / What kind of feeling/s do they give you?
- Can you pick a picture that gives you special thoughts/feelings and explain your thoughts about the specific picture?
- Would you travel to these places? Why/Why not?
- Would these places fulfill what you seek when you travel?

What do you know about the European migrant crisis that peaked in 2015?

Show pictures of Lesbos and Kos from media

- What do you think of when you see these pictures? / What kind of feeling/s do they give you?
- Can you pick a picture that gives you special thoughts/feelings and explain your thoughts about the specific picture?
- Would you travel to these places? Why/Why not?
- If you had booked a trip to Lesbos or Kos, and these pictures came up in the media; What would you do? Still go there or take other actions (postpone, cancel etc.)?

Appendix 2. Promotional pictures



Kos (Ving, 2017a).



Kos (Apollo, 2017).



Kos (TUI, 2017a).



Kos (Ving, 2017a).



Kos (Ving, 2017a).



Kos (Ving, 2017a).



Kos, (Apollo, 2017).



Lesbos (Ving, 2017c).



Lesbos (Ving, 2017c).



Lesbos (Ving, 2017b).

Appendix 3. Pictures from the crisis published in the media



Kos (Petersson Ellafi, 2015).



Kos (REUTERS, 2015b).



Kos (Hemmingsson, 2015).



Kos (Horvatovic, 2015a).



Kos (Horvatovic, 2015b).



Kos (Behrakis, 2015).



Lesbos (Hammarström, 2015).



Lesbos (REUTERS, 2015a).



Lesbos (REUTERS, 2015c).