

Exploring the multiple roles
of a national airline
in destination development



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Enna Hämäläinen

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Supervisor: Carina Ren

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Abstract

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the multiple roles of a national airline in destination development. A concept of stopover tourism is introduced, and Finnish national airline Finnair and Stopover Finland destination development project are introduced to illustrate the concept of stopover tourism.

Methodology

This study is conducted as a mixed-methods research and following pragmatic scientific worldview. Research material collection is based on a varied collection of material from interviews, articles, public forums, presentations, project database and newspapers, and observations are made from a seminar and from promotional videos.

Findings

National airlines balance with their roles as socio-political corporations and as profit oriented corporations. As instruments in nation building, national airlines also spread national consciousness and unify countries and their people by spreading national consciousness and spirit of nationhood. National airlines are intertwined to socio-political conversations and can result to passionate reactions at the times of negative news. Furthermore, at the times of positive news the national airlines are a pride for the people of its nation. Stopover Finland project has been launched in April 2015 and has Finnair as a leading stakeholder and as a main promotional platform participating the project. This is significant factor, due to the fact that previous stopover projects in Finland have been failed because of lack of leading stakeholder (Finnair) and therefore no common will among the stakeholders. Theoretical framework of stakeholder engagement can be used as a tool to understand different stakeholder scenarios. Models can support to form a stakeholder engagement process and meaningful engagement. Other stopover destinations Iceland, Singapore and Dubai are all having their national airlines strongly participating the stopover concepts. Even though their concepts differ from each other in some areas, what is similar to all the destinations, is the leading role of their national airlines in the projects. This supports the significance of a national airline participating destination development projects.

Originality

It is relevant to acknowledge the complex role of a national airlines and how a balance can be achieved to have a national airline participating in destination development project while operating as a profitable airline. It is also important to understand the significance of a national airline to be participating in destination development but it is also important to understand the many expectations for a national airline.

Key words

National airline, destination development, stopover, Finnair, Stopover Finland

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1 Introduction

“Money is passing by, right in front of our eyes” (Lehtonen, 2014. Authors own translation.) This statement, by the director of Visit Finland, expresses his frustration of unexploited transferring passengers at Helsinki Airport for stopover visit in Finland. Helsinki Airport is a busy hub for travelers between Europe and Asia. In 2014 there were total 15,9 million passengers of which 2,1 million were transferring passengers. (Finavia, 2015) Only a fraction of this large amount of passengers visited Finland during their transfer of flights (Appendix I). As a way to attract the transferring passengers to visit Finland, Visit Finland has launched a Stopover Finland project in April 2015 until the end of year 2017. A stopover tourist, defined by Visit Finland, is a tourist who spends time from 5 hours up to 5 days in Finland during their transfer. (Appendix I) The definition of stopover tourist varies depending of a destination and therefore there is not a standard definition for stopover tourist. For example Icelandair defines the visit of a stopover tourist from 1 day up to 7 days in their Stopover Iceland campaign. (Icelandair, 2015) The ambitious goal of Visit Finland for Stopover Finland project is to be the leading stopover destination in northern Europe in 2020 (Appendix I).

Stopover Finland project is not a new tourism development project in Finland. In fact it has been tried out few times before without success. A consultative research for Stopover Finland project, done by Finnish Trade Organization Fintra Oy, mentioned that one of the main reasons for previously failed projects has been a lack of a leader stakeholder for the project, such as Finnair, as a national airline. In the current project Finnair is strongly committed as a leading stakeholder. (Team Finland 1, 2015) This gives an opportunity to explore the role of a national airline in destination development project and the role of Finnair in Stopover Finland project.

Finnair is a national airline of Finland and a flag-carrier with the State of Finland being the major shareholder with 55,8% share. The strategy of Finnair is to be the leading airline between northern Europe and Asia. Their strategic goal is to double the air traffic by 2020, from the level of 2010, via Helsinki Airport. (Finnair annual report, 2014) Finnair

was founded November 1st 1923. Their long haul operating strategy to East was made already in 1976 when Finnair started to operate to Bangkok. In 1983 Finnair started to operate non-stop flights to Tokyo, as the first airline in Europe. That was enabled with extra fuel tanks as Finnair was not allowed to fly in Soviet Union airspace and they had to able a 13 hour flight. As the first Western European airline Finnair started to operate a direct flight between Europe and China by flying to Peking in 1988. Today Finnair flies to over 70 destinations including codeshare flights with oneworld alliance partners. Finnair Group has around 5300 employees. (Finnair, 2015) Finnair image consists of four key elements: safety, reliability, Finnishness and freshness. (Finnair, 2015)

The accessibility and air traffic have significant roles in destination development (Bowen, 2000). Therefore Finnair, as a major airline operating to and from Helsinki Airport, plays a vital role in the Stopover Finland project. The role of national airline in tourism development is touched upon due to the fact that national airlines play major roles in national images and spread national consciousness, the same way as national anthem or national flag. (Raguraman, 1997) Furthermore Malaysian airlines is used as an example to shed light to the significance of a national airline in destination development.

This study is aiming to research the multiple roles of a national airline in a destination development project. Finnair's role as a leading stakeholder in the Stopover Finland project is considered, but also the role of national airline and the responsibilities coming with the status have an impact and are studied. Model of stakeholder engagement is presented to give a theoretical aspect to engagement of stakeholder in destination development project. Examples of stopover products in other destinations are considered to illustrate the multiple roles of national airline. The research is conducted with number of mixed methods following a pragmatic scientific philosophy. Research material is collected from number of sources such as interviews, academic articles, newspapers, Stopover Finland seminar and social media network to gain as thorough insight to the multiple roles of a national airline in destination development as possible.

There are several stopover destinations around the world that have successfully used their status as a hub to strengthen their position as a destination. In this study used examples are Singapore, Dubai and Iceland, to demonstrate unique stopover destinations and illustrate the complex mechanisms behind these destinations. Singapore and Iceland are destinations that Stopover Finland project has benchmarked to gain valuable information for the project. The reasons for using the examples of these three destinations are the uniqueness of each of them. Every destination has a different story behind the stopover product and each one of them has features of which some can and some cannot be used in Stopover Finland project. The reality of the number of different structures of stopover product makes the study even more relevant to be conducted.

1.1 Problem formulation

Helsinki Airport is a busy gateway for transferring passengers between Europe and Asia. There is a vast number of potential tourists to visit Finland during their flight transfer. This potentiality has raised a question, among both the professionals and the public, why has this potential not been used? Finnish government has launched a Stopover Finland project, as one of the leading tourism development projects in 2015, to attract the transferring passengers to visit Finland from five hours up to five days. (Roadmap of tourism 2015-2025, 2015) Finnair plays a significant role in contributing to tourism development project as a major operator at Helsinki Airport. The problem that needs to be explored is **the role of the national airline in contributing to tourism development.**

1.2 Research question

From the introduction and from the recognition of the problem the following research questions are identified. **What are the multiple roles of a national airline in tourism destination development?** What are the multiple roles of Finnair in Stopover Finland project?

2 Methodology

The following chapter presents the research design and how the research is conducted. The design of the research is presented followed by the used research methods and process of the research. Finally the role of the researcher and relevance of the study are examined. Lastly the delimitations of the study are indicated.

2.1 Philosophy of science

To honor the PBL (Problem based learning) philosophy of Aalborg University, two worldviews of philosophy of science are presented. This research is based on *phronesis* and *pragmatic* worldviews of science. This exploratory research follows the scientific worldviews of *phronesis* and *pragmatism* to explore the multiple roles of a national airline in destination development to discover different understandings with problem oriented outlook.

Flyvberg (2001) presents an Aristotelian concept of *phronesis* translated to prudence or practical wisdom. He defines *phronesis* as going beyond analytical and scientific knowledge (*episteme*) and technical knowledge (*techne*). Flyvberg (2001) argues that *phronesis* is commonly used in social practice, and that limiting social science into either *episteme* or *techne* is misleading. He refers to terms *techne* and *episteme* as self-defeating, arguing that social sciences are the strongest were the natural sciences are the weakest. He states that when social sciences have not contributed to explanatory or predictive theory neither have natural sciences contributed to reflexive analysis and discussion of values and interests, which are requirements for a development for any civilized political, economic and cultural society. These elements he identifies as a core of *phronesis*. (Flyvberg, 2001)

In addition to *phronesis*, this research represents a *pragmatic* scientific philosophy. A *pragmatic* worldview arises out of actions, situations and consequences rather than

identifying and assessing the causes, as in a *post positivist* worldview. In *pragmatic* science, the problem is emphasized and all approaches are used to understand the problem. *Pragmatism* represents problem-centered approach. Focus is on the consequences of actions. This is done by utilizing mixed-methods research and applying both qualitative and quantitative assumptions. This gives researcher a freedom of choice to apply the best methods to execute the research. Therefore *pragmatic* worldview is not an absolute unity but rather a liberal worldview with mixed methods of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to subscribe the data. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) refer to mixed-methods research as a “third methodological movement” or “third wave”, as per Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004). These definitions are result of “paradigm debate”, ongoing for at least three decades, about methods and paradigms in social and behavioral sciences. The debate has discussed about interlocking epistemological, ontological and methodological assumptions. (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003) According to Hannam and Knox (2010) epistemological worldview is a theory of knowledge and relationships between reality and accounts of reality, when ontology is a theory of existence or being, and whether social entities are objective or social constructions. With *pragmatism* worldview, mixed-methods research offers a third alternative for ontology and epistemology (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003) and can help to bridge the differences of quantitative and qualitative research (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2004a in Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Pragmatism may include postmodernism features since the research occurs in many contexts from social to political reflections. (Creswell, 2014) Postmodernist worldview is a result of modernist, homogenous and production-led orientation to postmodern heterogeneous and knowledge-led orientation (Williams, 2006). Due to the nature of the research including national airline and its socio-political role, this research also represents postmodern features. The socio-political environment of national airline gives a postmodern reflections to this study.

2.2 Research design

As this research represents pragmatic worldview the research is conducted with mixed methods, applying both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Qualitative material is open-ended in nature, such as semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions when quantitative material is closed-ended in nature, such as statistics or questionnaires (Creswell, 2014). The most fundamental for mixed-methods research is the research question. The research process should follow the research question by using all the methods necessary. (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004) With quantitative methods the research style is deductive, moving from general to more specific reasoning, being so-called top-down approach. The focus is in theories and testing hypothesis. (William, 2006) In this study the quantitative methods used are statistic material and standardized data collection, such as passenger statistics and annual reports of airlines and airports. With the statistical data the process of answering the research question is supported with factual and unarguable information, so-called hard data. For example a large number of transferring passengers can be estimated by observing a small sample of transferring passengers that leave the airport to visit Finland. With qualitative methods, such as interviews and observations, the perspective of participant can be understood. Algozzine and Hancock (2006:8) have stated that *“in qualitative research, the goal is to understand the situation under investigation primarily from the participant’s and not the researcher’s perspective”*. By interviewing the relevant participants the study has gained valuable information in order to explore and discover the phenomenon. With inductive research style of qualitative methods, the observations have led to broader generalizations and is so-called bottom-up approach. (William, 2006) For example with the observations at the Stopover Finland launch the researcher has gained broader understanding of the phenomenon and the environment of the Stopover Finland network, such as the discussions between the tourism operators during the launching seminar and the tone of voice of the speakers during their presentations.

The benefits for applying mixed-methods in research are in better accuracy as different styles of material can be integrated to support each other. In addition, different types

of instruments enable efficient collection of material from versatile sources. (Creswell, 2014) Mixed-methods research is an expansive and creative way to research without limiting the research process.

2.3 Research material collection

The methods used for this mixed-methods research include interviews, observations and studying informational documents available for public. The material has been collected from various resources, involving not only firsthand information from the stakeholders and official public documents, but also observations from public forums. The relevance, originality and accuracy of the data has been evaluated in each separate case. Emphasis has been given on the professional opinion of each resource to make sure that the provided information is reliable and relevant.

2.3.1 Interviews

Three interviews were conducted for the relevant tourism stakeholders. The interviews were conducted as semi-structured interviews. In semi-structured interview the researcher has predetermined but flexibly worded questions, giving an opportunity for follow-up questions. Semi-structured interview allows the respondent to emphasize the aspects they consider important and giving an opportunity for an emic insider's perspective for the researcher. Algozzine and Hancock (2006) stress the opportunity of the interviewee with semi-structured interview to express themselves freely and to define the world from their perspective and not solely from the researcher's perspective. In this research the semi-structured interviews were well suited to gain an understanding of the phenomenon and the environment. With Heli Mende, from Visit Finland, the interview was an opportunity to gain valuable information about the Stopover Finland project of Visit Finland and about Finnish tourism environment leading to the launching of the project. An interview with Aðalheiður Kristinsdóttir from Icelandair gave valuable information about the Iceland tourism and understanding of the stopover product of Icelandair and the conditions leading to stopover product. With Jarkko Konttinen from

Finnair the interview was an opportunity to hear about Finnair's reasons participating to Stopover Finland project and their interests towards the project and destination development in general.

This being said, the conducted interviews were with Heli Mende, Stopover Finland project manager from Visit Finland; Jarkko Konttinen, marketing director from Finnair and Aðalheiður Kristinsdóttir, project manager from Icelandair. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Unfortunately the recording with Finnair failed, but notes were made right after the interview as in detail as possible. Interviews with Heli Mende and Jarkko Konttinen were conducted in Finnish and the interview with and Aðalheiður Kristinsdóttir was conducted in English.

2.3.2 Observation and information from documents

This mixed-method research has been conducted with number of different materials. Material has been collected from academic articles and books in order to compose a relevant literature review for understanding the research environment. The research material has been collected from number of different articles, videos, public forums, presentations and newspapers. Observations has been made at Stopover Finland project launching seminar and from a video material.

The field of material collection has been broad and the material sources have been varied. Researched articles are columns, blogs and number of newspaper articles online and as paper. Presentation materials are from Stopover Finland launching seminar and from Stopover Finland research database. A video sources are a historical video of Finnair by Finnish Broadcasting Company and a collaboration video of Finnair and Marimekko. Observations have been made from the mentioned videos and also at the Stopover Finland launching seminar and from Stopover Finland LinkedIn network group.

2.1 Content analysis

As a mixed-methods research, this research is combining qualitative and quantitative content analysis in order to answer the research question as thoroughly as possible.

With content analysis the researcher can support and understand the research material by testing theoretical issues and categorizing the research material. With categorizing the varied source of material they share the same meaning. (Cavanagh, 1997 in Elo and Kyngäs, 2007) Qualitative content analysis is a technique to research the informational content of the research material (Forman and Damschroder, 2008). With qualitative content the analysis should start by familiarizing with the material, such as reading through the written material and going through the interviews. Familiarizing with the material thoroughly is important due to the fact the analysis is dependent on the researcher's interpretation. From the qualitative material researcher can recognize themes and analyze around the themes. In this research the analysis is divided into three themes to answer the research question. (Hannam and Knox, 2010)

In this research the role of quantitative content analysis is minor to qualitative content analysis. Quantitative material is mostly statistical data, such as airport passenger numbers and tourism number statistics, and is used to support the research for qualitative material rather than conducting a thorough quantitative research. Quantitative material is typically analyzed to recognize specific patterns or characteristics or relationships from the content. Valid quantitative research is likely when the categories and patterns identified from the material are coherent and reliably applied. (Riffe, Lacy and Fico, 2014) In quantitative research the research categories are predetermined and applied through an automatic algorithmic search process and analyzed solely as a quantitative data. The research material is strongly decontextualized from the larger research material in comparison to qualitative material. (Forman and Damschroder, 2008)

The difference of quantitative and qualitative content analysis is that with qualitative content analysis the aim is to understand the phenomenon around the research material, when with quantitative content analysis generalizations are made out of sample material. (Forman and Damschroder, 2008) In this research the analysis methods are mixed by using qualitative material to understand the destination development phenomenon and roles of national airlines with support of quantitative data of tourism statistics.

2.2 Role of the researcher

Researcher's reflexivity needs to be taken into account in order to create a reliable study. According to Watt (2007:85) *"If design decisions and data analyses are based on personal desires without a careful assessment of the implications of these methods and conclusions, they risk creating a flawed study."* In this study the unflawed research is gained with the fact that the researcher does not have personal relationship with the interviewees or with the Stopover Finland project. This minimizes the risk of personal relations biasing the interviews and the analysis process of the research. However, as per Hannam and Knox (2010: 186) *"reflexivity is self-awareness, and attention to detail in the generation of knowledge, of the researcher"*. Hannam and Knox (2010) emphasize that researcher can never be entirely objective. This requires the researcher to acknowledge her mental world and ideas and her influence in the research process. Researcher has to recognize her seeing and doing. (Hannam and Knox, 2010)

2.3 Relevance of the study

National airlines represent the nation but they also have financial responsibility to operate profitably. They operate as flag-carriers and symbolize the nation but the strategic interests are not necessarily directly destination development oriented. The contradiction signify the multiple roles that the national airlines represent and balance with. This gives an opportunity to explore the characters of national airlines. This study puts the roles of national airlines in broader context in regards to destination development. The

study considers the definition of national airline and the significance of aviation in destination development. The Stopover Finland project specifies the role of Finnair, as a national airline, in destination development and what impact the participation of Finnair has in destination development project.

This study offers an understanding to a role of a national airline and to a relationship of destination development and a national airline. It also gives a theoretical framework for DMO (destination management organization) and a national airline, and scenarios that the relationship can be. With examples of stopover concepts of other destinations the study gives an opportunity to understand possible outcomes of stopover concepts.

2.4 Delimitations

During the research process some limiting factors were encountered which limited the analysis and results. Firstly, the power and judgement of the researcher impacted the material collection and analysis process. The researcher had the power to choose the research material for analysis and therefore the material is dependent on researcher's evaluation and judgement. Secondly, two of the interviews and large proportion of the research material were in Finnish language which were then translated to English during the research process. The translation process is subject to social constructivism as the material is dependent on the judgement of the researcher to choose the applicable words in English.

3 Literature review

This chapter is divided into two topics. The first topic is destination development and how it can be understood. Special attention is paid to the role of air traffic in tourism destination development. In addition, a destination development model is provided to give a theoretical support and scenarios. The second topic defines stakeholder engagement and is supported with two engagement models: an explaining stakeholder engagement process and a model presenting different stakeholder engagement scenarios.

3.1 Tourism development

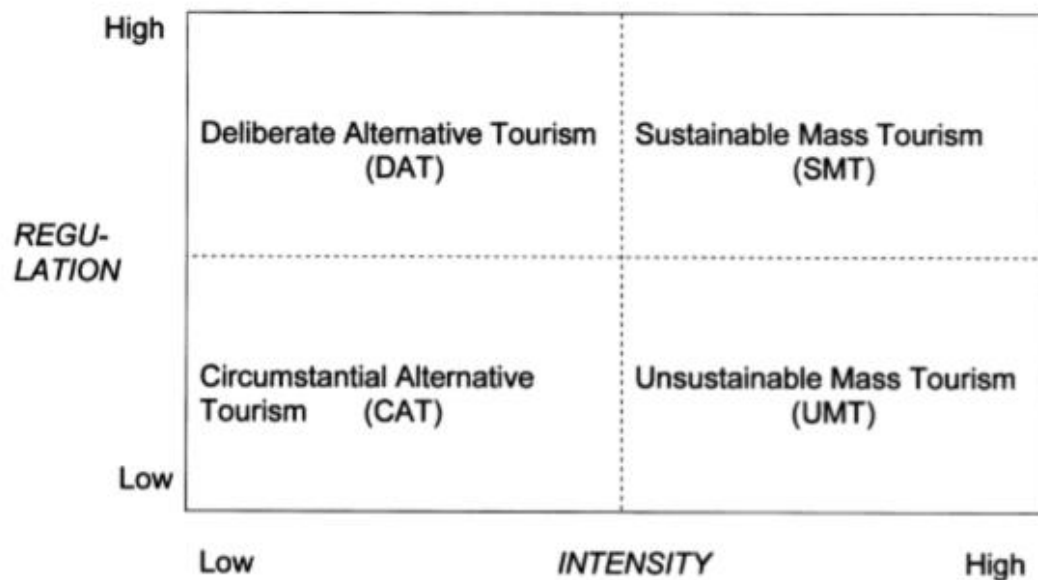
It is acknowledged that tourism destination affects the competitiveness of both the destination and the individual actors. (Aarstad, Gronseth, Haugland & Ness, 2010) Aarstad et al. (2010:270) defines the tourism destination development as *“the activities involved in developing overall strategy for the destination that generates value for the individual actors”*. Competitiveness of the destination affects the competitiveness of the individual tourism actors as much as the destination. (Aarstad et al, 2010) Aarstad et al. (2010) point out the integrated destination development that indicates the importance of spanning the strategies across the actor boundaries and taking into account the multilevel character of the destination. They also refer to destination development as a multilevel phenomenon in which attention has to be paid all the way from individual actor to the destination level. From these two aspects of destination development Aarstad et al (2010) have created a theoretical framework of integrated multilevel strategies, emphasizing the importance for integrated and multilevel destination development considerations. The framework incorporates three major parts: destination capabilities, coordination at the destination level, and inter-destination bridge-ties. The destination capabilities need to be developed in order to enable configured resources of destination-level products and services. Distributed resources are crucial for a tourism destination. In order to achieve coordination at the destination level, integrated mechanism or implementation of coordination is required, along with coherent participation of individual

actors. Inter-destination bridge-ties are essential in geographically separated destinations. They function as information channels as much as channels to exchange and spread innovation and knowledge. (Aarstad et al, 2010)

Bowen (2000:25) points out the importance of accessibility through international air traffic of the destination in destination development by stating that “*the accessibility of a place within the international airline industry helps to define its access to global flows of goods, people, information, ideas and capital*”. He refers to Southeast Asian air traffic development which has been greatly affected by liberalization and airport construction that the governments have been supporting. Especially after World War II the air traffic played a significant role in nation integration of remote and isolated regions of Malaysia, Indonesia and Philippines. Bowen (2000) brings up three critical sectors dependent on the air traffic development of Southeast Asia: manufacturing, business services and tourism. He emphasizes the close connection of air traffic development and tourism development and how even one additional international flight connection can impact positively in the tourism sector. However he also points out how changes in the accessibility can impact negatively on the attractiveness of a destination. Bowen (2000) uses Bangkok and Singapore as examples of profiles of air traffic. Bangkok, as an air traffic hub, offers diverse tourist attractions in Thailand when Singapore, as a gateway to nearby tourist destinations, is profiled as a “shopping paradise”. The role of the State is significant determinant in air traffic development and accessibility due to the fact that the airline competition policies and the quality of airport infrastructures at hub cities are set by national governments. (Bowen, 2000)

Weaver (2000) presents a model (Model 1) of destination development scenarios where he proposes four different tourism development states: *circumstantial alternative tourism CAT*, *deliberate alternative tourism DAT*, *unsustainable mass tourism UMT* and *sustainable mass tourism SMT*. These states are based on the tourism intensity and the regulations associated with the tourism industry of the destination. Intensity and regulation formulate the variables of the model. CAT destinations have non-regulated and small-scale tourism sector and these destinations are resembling alternative tourism

and are in contrast with mass tourism. CAT destinations have alternative tourism characteristics for markets, accommodations, attractions and economic status but is lacking appropriate regulatory environment that ensures sustainable maintaining of those characteristics. When those characteristics are maintained can deliberate alternative tourism, DAT, destination be identified. Unsustainable mass tourism, UMT, is result of unrestrictive regulation and exceeds the existing environmental and socio-cultural carrying capacity. Sustainable mass tourism, SMT, are destinations where high intensity and large-scale tourism sectors are maintained and within the limits of carrying capacity. (Weaver, 2000)

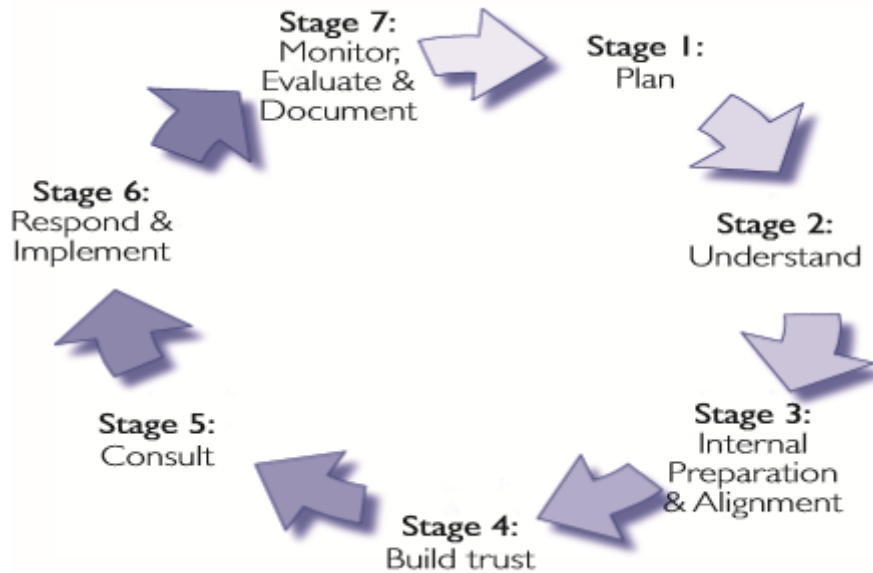


Model 1: Tourism destination development model. (Weaver, 2000)

3.2 Stakeholder engagement

Neil Jeffery (2009), in his book *Stakeholder Engagement: A road map to meaningful engagement*, stresses that an organization can no longer choose if they want to engage with stakeholders, but they can choose when and how they would like to engage with their stakeholders. He refers to stakeholder engagement as “groups who can affect or are affected by the achievements of an organization’s purpose” (Jeffery, 2009). Based on this statement the stakeholders should have the opportunity to give their input to the development decisions of the organization. (Jeffery, 2009) Jeffery (2009) identifies

meaningful stakeholder engagement occurring when organizations establish relations with stakeholders at the time of changes happening in the wider society. He stresses that the process of engagement should be systematic, logical, and practical; and introduces a model that shows the flow of stakeholder engagement.



Model 2: Stakeholder engagement (Jeffery, 2009)

Process of engagement is presented as a circle as the process is constant where the past experiences shape the future planning and engagement. The iterative process enables the organization to learn and improve meaningful stakeholder engagement with mutual respect. The seven steps for successful stakeholder engagement start with **planning**. The understanding for pursuing a meaningful engagement should have already been done when starting the process of stakeholder engagement. The first step is to identify the objectives, the issues that should be addressed, and the primary stakeholders to target for engagement. The second step is to **understand** the stakeholder and their wants and needs with categorization and segmentation techniques. Such techniques can be divided for example in to following three categories: interest (what motivates the stakeholder), influence (the ability of a stakeholders to influence public and how they respond to public) and salience (the stakeholders reaction and respond to an issue). More detailed and deep understanding recognition of the wants and needs can be reached with

techniques of SWANS (stakeholder wants and needs) and OWANS (organization wants and needs) by Andy Neely (Cranfield School of Management). **Internal preparedness and alignment** can be achieved when the interests and objectives of both the organization and stakeholder are acknowledged. The outcomes of the interests and objectives do not need to be entirely mutual but should have common interests to achieve the solution that satisfies both parties. It is also important to recognize different business units' different needs to avoid misalignment. The fundamental part of the meaningful engagement is **building trust**. The previous stages of Jeffery's process assist towards trust between the stakeholder and the organization hence likely successful engagement. After the previous stages of preparation **consultation** can take place. Consultation should include a representative from all the stakeholders affected by the organization. Organization should equally recognize and acknowledge representatives from the minor stakeholders as much as from the major stakeholders. In consultation the organization should be active to acknowledge information, analysis and proposals of the stakeholder's interests and expectations and i.e. be stakeholder driven. Also context focused information should be available for the stakeholders, to assess the motivations, culture, and behavior of the organization, along with appropriate background information. During negotiations a realistic exchange of expectations, needs, and objectives should be presented by both parties. As the final step of the consultation stage a material of key economic, social, and environmental risks should be presented, as well as the actions that will be taken to outcome the impacts. After consultation process a **respond and implementation** should be done based on the issues of both parties. Once the organization has identified the issues, proposals should be presented and measurements to manage the identified issues should be implemented. As the final stage of the engagement process a proper **monitoring, evaluation, and documentation** needs to be managed.

Foster and Jonker (2005) identify two stakeholder engagement styles. In one-sided engagement the organization makes decisions independently and then informs the stakeholder with variety of monologues, preventing the stakeholders' impact on the decision

making process. In this style of engagement, the engagement is seen as a tool of management and control in which the organization has manipulative way to create a belief that their decisions have good impact on the stakeholders. Foster and Jonker (2005) refer to this engagement being rather 'early scholar' and 'linear model' of communication where the stakeholders are the receivers and audience of the messages sent by the organization. Less linear style of communication recognize the "feedback" of the receivers and takes it into consideration to modify their message. However, the nature of this style of communication is still persuasive and controlling by the organization. Modern scholar engagement is two-sided engagement, dialogical, in which both parties' interests and concerns are taken into consideration and the decisions are made in the light of these remarks. This style of engagement does not diminish the power of the organization, but rather acknowledges the possibility to achieve the goals with alternative perspectives. (Foster and Jonker, 2005)

Organizations' relationships with their stakeholders are actions to changes, in order to manage the impacts arising from the changes. It has been identified that trust culture along with associated values and attitudes are key factors for effective engagement when it comes to tourism networks (Johns, Lynch and Morrison, 2004). Engagement creates commitment and stakeholders are more accountable and responsible to organizations they are engaged to. Therefore stakeholder engagement is also seen as a mechanism for organizations to acquit their responsibility and accountability towards stakeholders, often through the decision-making and governance. (Greenwood, 2007) Engagement can be enhanced with psychological and financial commitment, such as membership fee, expressing organizational engagement, or with sense of community coming from specific geographical focus. These factors can work as a "glue" for sustainable and well-engaged network of tourism stakeholders. (Johns, Lynch & Morrison, 2004)

Greenwood (2007) questions the assumption of stakeholder engagement being necessarily an act of corporate responsibility. In her article of *Stakeholder Engagement: Beyond the Myth of Corporate Responsibility* (2007:315) she defines stakeholder engage-

ment being understood as *“practices that the organization undertakes to involve stakeholders in a positive manner in organization activities”* and corporate responsibility as *“the responsibility of the corporation to act in the interests of the legitimate organizational stakeholders”*. Greenwood (2007) discusses about the assumptions of stakeholder engagement activities benefitting stakeholders and therefore being acts of responsibility towards the stakeholders. These acts could bias the intentions of stakeholder engagement by being ‘responsible’ and ‘stakeholder-friendly’ and not genuine. With this statement Greenwood (2007) refers to acts of human resources and social reporting. Jeffery (2009) supports this aspect stating how organization cannot be serious about their corporate responsibility if they are not serious about their stakeholder engagement – and vice versa.

3.2.1 Stakeholder categorization

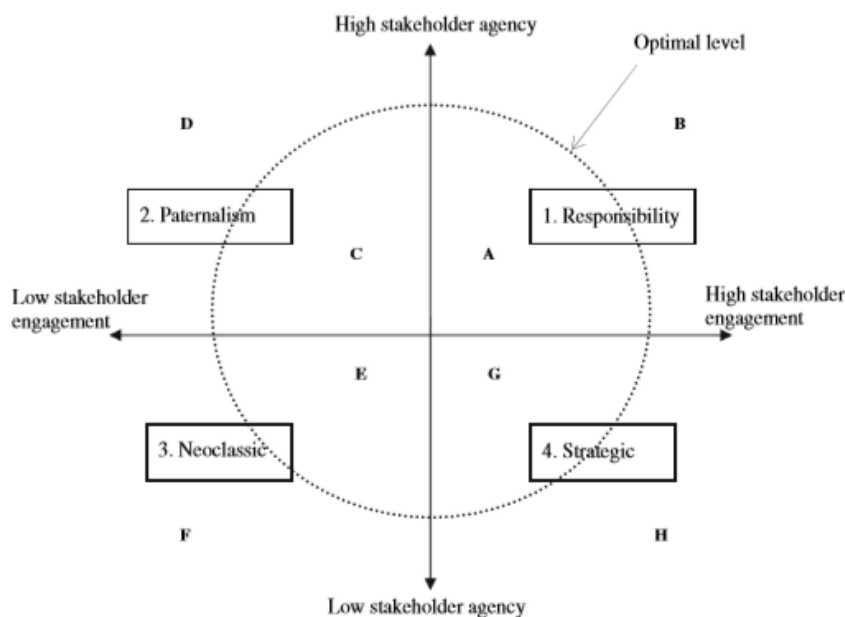
Freeman (1984:46 in Greenwood, 2007:321) has defined stakeholders being *“any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of organization objectives”*. Stakeholders can be recognized as primary or secondary stakeholders. Freeman (1984 in Greenwood, 2007) discusses about the differences depending on the role of the stakeholder in the organization, and identifies stakeholders to ‘narrow’ and ‘broad’ to describe their vitality for the organization. For example Finnair is a primary stakeholder as a main resource provider of tourists and a vital stakeholder for the project to be successful. These roles also identify Finnair as a narrow stakeholder. Freeman sums up the role of a narrow stakeholder as *“vital to the survival and success of the organization”* (Freeman, 1984 in Greenwood, 2007:320).

As opposed to Freeman (1984:46 in Greenwood, 2007:321), Greenwood (2007) categorizes stakeholders as ‘influencers’ and ‘claimants’. Claimant stakeholders precede legitimacy over power or urgency when influencer stakeholders prefer the opposite, power or urgency over legitimacy. (Greenwood, 2007) Jeffery (2009) refers to power as stakeholder’s infliction on the organization and urgency as a sensitivity of a stakeholder on to

the response time of the organization. Moreover, legitimacy represents the stakeholder's reflections on the general opinions and beliefs of the society. According to Greenwood (2007), influencer stakeholders are influenced by the organization, have an influence on the organization, or are mutually influential with the organization, but hold only strategic consideration and therefore are 'morally neutral'. However, Kaler (2003 in Greenwood, 2007) argues that claimants can be influenced or be influencers but they must affect or be affected by the organization in order to be claimants. Finnair's role as a stakeholder in the Stopover Finland project is an influencer. As a leading stakeholder in the project Finnair influences the Stopover Finland project and holds significant power over the project.

3.2.2 Engagement model

Greenwood (2007) presents a model (Model 3) of stakeholder engagement to identify four different styles of engagement, with variables being stakeholder engagement of communication and activities, and high stakeholder agency of mutual goals and interests. The model can be used to illustrate the relationship of Visit Finland and the Stopover Finland project and Finnair as a stakeholder on the project. The model also gives an opportunity to identify the position of Finnair in the Stopover Finland project and the participation or lack of participation in stopover projects.



Model 3: Engagement model (Greenwood, 2007)

The variables of the engagement model (Model 3) are *stakeholder engagement* (x-axis) and *stakeholder agency* (y-axis). **The stakeholder engagement represents the process of consultation, communication, dialogue and exchange.** During high engagement these activities are numerous with high quality whereas during low engagement the activities are opposite. Greenwood (2007) mentions that non-existing engagement is highly improbable but theoretically possible.

Stakeholder agency represents responsible treatment of stakeholders when the organization works for the interests of the stakeholder. The number and breadth of stakeholder agency signify the groups the organization interests. Greenwood (2007) recognizes both single and multiple stakeholders; single stakeholder consideration is one or small number of stakeholders and most often owners and senior managers, multiple stakeholder consideration is the consideration of larger number and broader range of stakeholders. **During high stakeholder agency and engagement the optimal level is achieved, hence the organization has gained large number of stakeholders meeting mutual interests and targets and there are numerous engagement activities.** (Greenwood, 2007)

Greenwood (2007) defines the notion of **optimal level** with the definition of optimal trust by Wicks et al (1999). The optimal level of trust has been defined as *“when one creates (and maintains) prudent economic relationships biased by a willingness to trust”* (Wicks et al. 1999:103). Wicks et al. (1999) introduces a concept of leap of faith that is gained through stable and ongoing commitment to trust that leads to affect-based belief in moral character. They also highlight the need to exercise to whom to trust, to what extent, and in what capacity. The level of optimal trust is also context dependent and shaped by the variety of the actors. (Wicks et al., 1999)

Responsible treatment represents corporate responsibility where *“the company balances the interest of legitimate stakeholders in a manner in keeping with justifiable moral principles”*. (Greenwood, 2007:322) **Responsibility** also represents the quadrant 1 on the model (Model 3) and the foundation of the stakeholder engagement model. Here the optimal level of stakeholder engagement is achieved. Quadrant 2 of the model (Model 3) is called **paternalism**. Paternalism allows the organization to work towards the interests of stakeholders without necessarily engaging with them. Paternalistic management represents more traditional version of social responsibility such as community or charity donations. Quadrant 3 (Model 3), **neoclassical**, is an economically oriented stakeholder engagement, with little stakeholder engagement. Examples of this orientation would be outsourcing of services and employment of labor contracts instead of permanent staff. Thus, the stakeholder relationship is seen as an economic exchange rather than building a comprehensive relationship. Quadrant 4 (Model 3) is labelled as **strategic**. The management of the organization is strategic in nature due to the aim of furthering the goal of the organization by responding to the needs of the stakeholders. In other words, the stakeholders are only an instrument for the organization to reach their target and the intentions of fulfilling the stakeholders’ interests are to benefit the organization. (Greenwood, 2007)

The engagement model of Greenwood (2007) has given an opportunity to put stakeholder engagement to a theoretical framework, to understand different stakeholder engagement scenarios theoretically. Even though the theoretical framework does not reflect theory it can function as an instrument to identify engagement opportunities to execute and put in reality.

The following chapter dives in to Stopover Finland project to learn the goals of the project and understand the pitfalls of the previous projects. Furthermore the chapter introduces other stopover destinations and stopover concepts. Lastly a role of national airline in destination development is introduced to understand how national airline can enable destination development.

4 The road to Stopover Finland project

This chapter is presenting Stopover Finland project to give an understanding of the events leading to launching of the project and the goals of the project for Finnish tourism development. The chapter also provides an overview of destination development from an airport hub to a tourist destination with examples of destinations that have been able to use their status as a hub to strengthen their position as a destination. Lastly a notion of “nationhood” is presented and what the role of national airline comprises using examples of Finnair and other stopover destinations around the world.

4.1 Stopover Finland

Tourism is significant export product for Finland and with total earnings generated by tourism being 4,43 billion Euros. This makes tourism bigger export than the total of the high tech export from Finland and the contribution of tourism to the GDP being 2,5% makes it twice as big as agriculture and forestry. The export earnings generated by tourism has doubled since year 2000. There were total 7,6 million foreign tourists in Finland in 2014 (Visit Finland, 2, 2015) and 2,1 million international passengers were transferring at Helsinki Airport, of which approximately 600 000 were Finnair passengers. (Finnavia, 2014) International tourism has great potential for growth in Finland. Russia is the largest group of international tourists in Finland due to the geographical closeness but Asian tourism is a growing group, especially due to Finnair’s strong Asia strategy. (Visit Finland, 3, 2015) Despite these great numbers there is still need for improvement, especially when Finland is compared to other Nordic countries. Journalist Venla Rossi wrote an article about Finnish tourism in the leading Finnish daily newspaper Helsingin Sanomat in August 2nd 2015. The article discussed about the need of Finland to be made more attractive for foreign tourists. She noted that the annual budget for publically funded organization Visit Finland is approximately 10 million Euros when for example the same budget for neighboring Visit Sweden is approximately 30 million Euros (publically and privately funded) and in Norway (publically funded) the budget is 40 million Euros. When the yearly bed night statistics are compared, from year 2007 to 2014, there

has not been an increase of bed nights in Helsinki, when at the same time the numbers have grown 67% in Copenhagen and 33% in Stockholm. The reason for lack of increase in the bed nights is the major decrease of Russian tourists due to the inflation of Russian ruble. (Rossi, 2015) Russian tourists had over 1,3 million bed nights in year 2014 out of total 5,7 million bed nights of international tourists, including 17,4% decrease of Russian tourists. This makes Russian tourists' share a quarter of all the international tourists in Finland and therefore makes Finland very dependent on Russian tourism. (Visit Finland 2, 2015)

The Stopover Finland project is created to target the above mentioned challenges in Finnish tourism. Geographically Finland is challenging to reach due to the fact that it is surrounded by the Baltic Sea from south and west and located remote in the northern Europe. Therefore air traffic is vital for Finnish tourism. The smoothness of air traffic and airport operations and the price level of flight tickets must be in control in order to make Finland attractive. (Ministry of employment and the economy, 2010) The tourism from Asian countries is growing faster than average tourism growth in Finland. Especially Chinese tourism has tripled since year 2000. With the Finnair's strong Asian market there is great potential for growing stopover tourism. (Vesterinen, 2015) The objective in Finland Stopover project is to make Finland the leading and most attractive stopover destination in northern Europe by 2020. The government is funding the project until the end of the year 2017. The main target group for Finland Stopover project are the transferring passengers at Helsinki Airport with the marketing being targeted to Japanese, Chinese and South-Korean markets. Tourism operators around Finland can participate the project to develop a Stopover Finland product menu of 50 products and packages. The concrete goals for the project are the following.

- More turnover for companies participating the program
- New jobs within tourism and travel industry
- 45% more registered overnights from Asia by 2018 (increase from 585 000 overnights in 2013 to 850 000 overnights in 2018)
- 80 Million Euros more travel industry export earnings from Asia generated by 2018

- By 2020 Finland is the best known stopover destination in the Nordic countries (in Asia)
(Team Finland 4, 2015)

Stopover projects in Finland have been tried out before and the conversations have been going on since year 2000, due to Finnair's strategy to focus on operating between Helsinki and Asian destinations. (Team Finland 1, 2015) In 2008 a research about stopover tourism through Helsinki Airport was made by Haaga institute (Kemppainen et al. 2008) to evaluate the opportunities and to provide recommendations for stopover tourism. The work title was Gateway project. Nearly all the recommendations from the gateway tourism research have not been executed and the goals to attract transferring passengers of Helsinki Airport to visit Finland have not been reached. (Team Finland 1, 2015) The reasons for failed attempts, based on a research by Finnish Trade Organization Fintra Oy (Team Finland 1, 2015) for Stopover Finland project, were the following.

- Lack of commitment and willingness of the participants
- Lack of a leading participant for the project (Finnair)
- Lack of concreteness and commerciality
- Too spread out field of participants and lack of resources, capacity and know-how of the participants
- Lack of activity for joint marketing efforts
- Lack of Helsinki Airport as a showroom for promotion of Finland

The current Stopover Finland project is aiming to tackle the pitfalls of previous projects and learning from them. Finnair is committed to its strong role in the project. (Team Finland 4, 2014)

4.2 Evolution from a hub to a destination

Transport connections impact the development of a destination by making them more accessible and interconnected (Albers, Koch, Lohmann & Pavlovich, 2009). This is supported by a study by Khadaroo and Seetanah (2008:1) evaluating the importance of transport infrastructure with gravity framework, and pointing out that the *“transport infrastructure is a significant determinant of tourism inflows into a destination”*. Khadaroo and Seetanah (2008) investigate the factors of tourism flows in the context of gravity model to analyze the transport capital as a potential input in the tourism equation. The model compares the role of transportation in different destinations taking in to account different variables, such as number of arrivals, tourist infrastructure and common borders. (Khadaroo and Seetanah, 2008) The particularly important features for the accessibility and interconnectivity are links and nodes, such as air routes and terminals. Nodes can have four functions; point of origin, destination, hub and gateway. Three functions can be pointed out to be especially relevant for tourism; destination, hub and gateway. These are because of their position and connectedness in the tourism network. Three characteristics are identified for airport hubs; geographical location in relation to the markets served, good airport facilities and coordination of schedules. (Albers et al, 2009)

The evolution from a hub to a destination is a result of strategic choices. (Albers et al, 2009) Good examples for success stories of such development are Singapore, Dubai and Iceland. The strategies for transforming from hub to a destination both Singapore and Dubai have used a strategic choice of vertically integrated strategy. This means that they have coordinated all the tourism providers and government authorities to provide incentives for the passengers. The airlines, airports, tourism enterprises and the authorities are all engaged to the strategy. (Albers et al, 2009) Icelandair's Stopover Iceland customer volumes are developing similarly as Iceland tourism growth, which has been 20% the last year. (Team Finland 3, 2015) However statistics for Stopover Iceland are not available because the campaign has been started recently in winter 2014-2015. The key to attract transferring passengers to visit the destination depends on the ability of the destination to provide facilities and attractions. When the key functions are running

and the individual features of the destination are developed and successfully combined with the nodal functions, the destination's connectivity has changed to interconnectivity. (Albers et al, 2009)

4.2.1 Singapore and Dubai

The locations and governmental development strategies of both Singapore and Dubai have enabled them to be successful hubs. The development from hubs to destinations have been result of integrated and comprehensive interaction of all tourism sectors. Special characteristics for Singapore and Dubai are their personalizing into shopping paradises. (Albers et al., 2009) Singapore and Dubai are good examples of strategic stopover tourism development and therefore presented in this study.

The success of Singapore to transform from a hub to a destination is a result of successfully orchestrated strategy of integrated tourism and aviation, and it has been governmentally and politically supported. (Albers et al., 2009) Stopover Singapore concept is a joint effort of Singapore Airlines, Changhi Airport Group and Singapore Tourism Board. The main target tourism segments are leisure, business and MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions). The finance of the Stopover Singapore concept is brought together from the three key players, however the independent private travel operators provide the products for visitors. Main objects for the key stakeholders of Stopover Singapore are to develop Singapore as a travel hub and to promote Singapore as a destination of choice. Singapore is also positioning itself as a shopping destination and is known for its good air connectivity to destinations in South East Asia and Oceania. The special characteristic in the Singapore Stopover is that the State of Singapore owns all the three players; Singapore Airlines, Changhi Airport and the Singapore Tourism organization; hence creates mutual interests and goals for the key players. (Team Finland 2, 2015)

Dubai Stopover program is coordinated by Emirates Airline. The key in the success for evolution of Dubai from a hub to a destination is the ownership of the tourism industry. The Maktoum family is the ruler of the sheikhdom of Dubai emirate and therefore is the

end owner of the key stakeholders, which are Emirates Airline, the civil aviation and the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM). DTCM is responsible for all the tourism planning, development and marketing. (Albers et al., 2009)

4.2.2 Iceland

Icelandair is providing a stopover for the trans-Atlantic passengers to visit Iceland. Passengers can add up to 7 days stopover in Reykjavik with no additional airfare when booking with Icelandair. This product has been offered since the 1960's. (Icelandair, 2015) The product is provided, sold and marketed by Icelandair and executed on spot with partnering companies, such as tour operators and hotels. Icelandair flies to 14 destinations in US and Canada and 25 destinations in Europe. In January 2003 Icelandair Group became a holding company for 11 tourism subsidiaries in the Iceland tourism field, Icelandair being the largest subsidiary. (Icelandair Group, 2015)

Promote Iceland (a public-private company to promote Iceland for tourism) is not actively involved in Stopover Iceland product, however they are involved in supporting the brand. During the last 5 years the number of travelers have grown rapidly in Iceland. The reasons for this growth about 20% are the general interest towards Iceland as a destination and also an expansion of Icelandair Group. (Team Finland 3, 2015)

4.3 National airline as an instrument in tourism development

International Civil Aviation Organization defines the nationality of an aircraft in the Convention on International Civil Aviation (2006:9) as following: "*Aircraft has the nationality of the State in which they are registered.*" In other words, an airline is registered in a certain country or is owned by the certain country and therefore represents the origin country.

National airlines have been throughout the history an instrument to build a national identity of the nation and spread the feeling of *nationhood*. Raguraman (1997) refers to

the notion of nationhood by using geographically large and dispersed countries as an example. National airline spreads a spirit of nationhood in these countries by functioning as a vital unifying instrument and bringing the regions closer together. Raguraman (1997) refers to national airlines as *flag-carriers*, spreading the national consciousness and integrating different communities into a cohesive regions. National airline symbolizes the nation the same way as national anthem or the national flag and can join people across the country as *imagined political community*. The national airline has both economical and symbolical role in nation building. Raguraman (1997:240) emphasizes the significant role of air transport by saying “*Apart from its role in economic and regional development, civil aviation, more than other means of transport, plays an important symbolic role in national identity and nation building*”. Moreover, aviation has been intertwined to political and social objectives of most countries. (Raguraman, 1997)

Malaysian airline is an example of an airline having a significant impact on nation building and destination development. With unifying airline Malaysia and Singapore became part of the British Empire. In early years of 20th century Malaysia and Singapore were one nation, Malaya, under British colonial influence. Therefore the development of Malayan civil aviation development was linked to development of British civil aviation. Civil aviation was established in Europe in 1920s but it did not reach Malaya until 1930s. The development of civil aviation also spread idealistic spirit among the pioneering aviators of bringing nations together and defying geography. British national airline ‘Imperial Airways’, founded in 1924, made its maiden flight to Malaya in April 16th 1931. The purpose of this route was “*raising Malaya’s standard of living and bringing the country closer to other nations in time and outlook*” (Raguraman, 1997:241). In May 1st 1947 Malayan Airways started to operate. The local flights helped to develop the different regions of Malaya and to build an imagined political community. In 1957 the Federation of Malaya became an independent nation but Singapore and British Borneo remained as Crown colonies. Malayan Airways (MAL) became a public company and was given exclusive rights for the operation of air services for the next 10 years.

This chapter has given an introduction to stopover concept and to Stopover Finland project. Furthermore the role of national airline has been introduced to illustrate the significance of a national airline in destination development. The following chapter moves into analysis to explore the multiple roles of national airline in destination development.

5 Analysis

The Stopover Finland co-creation workshop report about previous stopover project try-outs (Team Finland 4, 2015) signified the importance of Finnair to be participating Stopover Finland project stating that *“The industry representatives felt there was little commitment and no common will to the Gateway project as Finnair was not leading it; it was not concrete enough and commercial aspects were neglected.”* To understand Finnair’s history with stopover products Konttinen (2015) was asked in an email conversation how Finnair has conducted previous stopover products and how they are conducting the current Stopover Finland project. *“We have had our own travel agency for stopover products until year 2000. The stopover product has been most active in mid 1990s. The production quieted down when we ended the product in 2000. In the current project we are not doing the product ourselves but using a travel agent.”* (Authors own translation. Konttinen, 2015) The gateway project, which Finnair was not participating in, was ongoing in 2008. At that time Finnair had already ended their stopover product and their interests were elsewhere.

Anssi Partanen (2015), Finnair corporate marketing manager, presented several reasons for Finnair to participate the current Stopover Finland project at the Stopover Finland launching seminar. He emphasized the fact that Finnair is already offering stopover tickets but not as a stopover product but as a multi-city product. The multi-city ticket product is offered in almost all fare classes and the opportunity to book a multi-city ticket is available at the first step of booking. Partanen emphasized improvement work being done currently for the booking engine to provide even easier purchasing of stopover ticket and making the stopover option visible. Partanen also pointed out that Stopover Finland would help Finnair balancing their seasonality by offering varied product portfolio and also raising awareness for Finland hence creating extra revenue for whole industry. Partanen stressed the financial investment that Finnair has recently done by growing aircraft capacity with new Airbus A350 XWB aircrafts. The investment has increased the seat capacity from 270 to 297 per aircraft. Partanen added that Finnair is operating domestic flights with the new aircrafts and therefore extra work needs to be

done with marketing in order to increase the utilization. Finnair is strongly committed to Stopover Finland project. (Partanen, 2015)

In the analysis, the role of the national airline in destination development is explored by studying stopover concepts of other destination. Iceland, Dubai and Singapore have successful destination development concepts and they all have unique features but also common characteristics. Engagement model of Greenwood (2007) is discussed to give theoretical perspective to stakeholder engagement. However, with the theoretical framework, the understanding of the roles of national airline can be supported but not fully explained due to the fact that reality cannot be put to single theory. To understand Finnair as a national airline the special characteristics of Finnair and the notion of nationhood are explored. Examples are taken from the past and present to understand the role of Finnair as a national airline and its complex responsibilities. Special attention is paid to Finnishness, one of Finnair's key element.

5.1 Stopover concepts

Stopover concepts have been conducted around the world with different organizational structures coordinating the product. Singapore and Iceland were benchmarked for Stopover Finland project. In Conclusions of Stopover Finland benchmarking studies (Team Finland 5, 2015) the benchmarking of Singapore and Iceland is specified as *"Both the Singaporean and Icelandic stopovers are built around the domestic flagship carrier i.e. Singapore Airlines and Icelandair. The airlines have been the driving forces of the products as stopovers contribute to the national tourism industry and, thus, to their growth strategy."* In this research Dubai as a destination is also explored because of the successful use of its status as a hub to strengthen its position as a destination. Each of these destinations differ from each other with their stopover concepts and therefore cannot directly be compared to each other, but similarities are identified.

It has been mentioned that Singapore and Dubai are conducting vertically integrated strategy in tourism development and as a result have been transformed from airport

hubs to tourism destinations. The strategy has engaged all tourism providers to offer incentives for the transferring passengers hence attracting them to visit the destination. (Albers et al., 2009) Dubai and Singapore have similarities in the ecosystems behind their stopover concepts. Both concepts are owned by a single unit; State of Singapore owns the three key players of Stopover Singapore product (Team Finland 2, 2015) and the Maktoum sheikh family owns the key players of Dubai Stopover product (Albers et al., 2009). The ownership models enable easier and faster decision making processes to launch and conduct stopover campaigns. Dubai Stopover is coordinated by Emirates Airline (Albers et al., 2009). Stopover Singapore is coordinated by Singapore Airlines, Changi Airport Group and Singapore Tourism Board (Team Finland 2, 2015).

Iceland differs from Dubai and Singapore with its ownership model of the stopover concept. As mentioned earlier the Stopover Iceland product is solely provided, sold, and marketed by Icelandair. The execution of the product is done by partnering companies. What makes Stopover Iceland concept interesting, is the fact that Promote Iceland is not involved in the concept. During the interview with Adalheidur Kristinsdottir from Icelandair she mentioned that Icelandair is doing the marketing of Stopover Iceland by themselves because of their extensive knowledge of marketing Iceland as a destination. Kristinsdottir (Appendix III) clarified this and referred to Promote Iceland by saying *“Because the knowledge of advertising abroad and getting all the markets to know the country hasn’t been that much until 2010, when they had this Inspired by Iceland campaign (Iceland promotion campaign).”* As mentioned before Promote Iceland is supporting the Stopover Iceland concept, but they are not participating on it. (Team Finland 2, 2015) Kristinsdottir (Appendix III) indicated that Icelandair is participating on governmental promotion campaign with financing but they are not executing them. Icelandair has a long 50 years old history with stopover product. Kristinsdottir (Appendix III) names two reasons for stopover in Iceland being created. Back in 1950s other airlines did not have contracts to fly between Europe and North America and they were forced to make a stopover in Iceland because of a US base in Iceland and an air contract between Iceland and US. Another reason is the reach of aircrafts back in 1950s when they needed to stop for gas in Iceland. Kristinsdottir sums it up as *“It was an opportunity”*.

The differences of the concepts and the ecosystems of organizations in Dubai, Singapore and Iceland indicate that there are different ways to execute a stopover concept. The government DMO is not a vital part of the concept, but what is similar to all the three destinations, is the involvement of their national airlines in the stopover concepts. Icelandair is fully coordinating the Stopover Iceland concept and the local DMO is not involved in the concept. Singapore Airlines is strongly involved in the Stopover Singapore as one of the key players and Dubai Stopover is fully coordinated by Emirates Airlines.

5.2 Engagement model

Stakeholder engagement model (Model 3) by Greenwood (2007) functions as an instrument to theoretically understand stakeholder engagement by presenting four different stakeholder engagement scenarios. The model helps to understand the stakeholder engagement theoretically but does not reflect the reality, as the reality is much more complex and simply cannot be put to a single theory.

Greenwood (2007) presented responsible treatment as corporate responsibility by pointing out legitimate stakeholders having mutual interests. Finnair holds significant power in the project as a major influencer and plays a vital part in the project as a main carrier operating to and from Helsinki Airport and taking the lead as a stakeholder in the project. (Appendix IV).

When Finnair's financial aspects in engagement are being considered, the stakeholder engagement model (Model 3) gives an opportunity to place the engagement of Finnair on a theoretical platform. Even though the model does not reflect reality, it does give an understanding about theoretical development in stakeholder engagement. The model helps to answer the following questions. Where is Finnair positioned in the engagement model as understood by Finnair? Where is Finnair positioned in the model as understood by researcher? Where Finnair should be positioned in order to carry out successful Stopover Finland project?

As already stated, the **optimal level** of stakeholder engagement is achieved with high stakeholder agency and high stakeholder engagement, hence the organization has gained large number of stakeholders meeting mutual interests and targets and there are numerous engagement activities. (Greenwood, 2007) The optimal level of Finnair's engagement in the Stopover Finland project is achieved when Finnair has mutual interest in the project and is highly engaged in the implementation. When the optimal level is gained, the engagement has reached the quadrant of **responsibility**. Considering the role of Finnair in the project, this quadrant is the target quadrant for the engagement. During Stopover Finland launching seminar Partanen's (2015) presentation represented Finnair being highly engaged to the project. This is supported by aircraft investments and product developments in Finnair. (Partanen, 2015) Finnair's engagement is also emphasized by Jarkko Konttinen, Finnair marketing director, during an interview. He stated that the project is meeting Finnair's interests and that Finnair is investing on the marketing of stopover product. (Appendix II) The results of Finnair's engagement will be seen after the Finland Stopover project is in full motion and the marketing communications are active, but for now the statements of Finnair representatives are supporting the optimal level of engagement. However the actions can be evaluated when the project is executed.

As **paternalism** represents mutual interests of the organization and the stakeholder but not high in engagement activities, it could be seen as a work in progress between Stopover Finland project and Finnair. Based on the statements of Finnair of their high interest on the project but without practical actions so far, paternalism could be said to represent the current position of their engagement on the engagement model. Once Finnair puts their stopover actions in practice, such as the planned marketing communications and the booking engine improvements for stopover products, the optimal level of engagement comes closer and the engagement reaches the quadrant of responsibility on the engagement model.

Neoclassical engagement is the furthest from the optimal level and represents the least engaged relationship. In the case of Stopover Finland and Finnair, neoclassical engagement could have been the reality in the previous stopover project tryouts. As mentioned on the gateway research by Haaga institute (Kemppainen et al. 2008), one of the main reasons for failed attempts to attract transferring passengers to visit Finland during their transfer was the lack of leading participant in the project, which Finnair has been identified as. (Team Finland 4, 2014)

During **strategic** engagement the engagement activities need to be higher in order to reach the optimal level of engagement. When considering a possible strategic engagement of Finnair in the Stopover Finland project, it could be discussed if their strategic engagement is representing their responsibility as a national airline. In other words, this would be the case if they were expressing engagement in the Stopover Finland project as a national airline, hence fulfilling their responsibilities, but not interested to be high in stakeholder agency, such as having genuine interests or needs to the stopover project itself. This strategic engagement could be mutual choice from both parties and therefore a win-win situation. It could be said, that in this situation the optimal level is not needed to be reached. As a hypothetical example for strategic engagement, Finnair could provide a stopover product but the marketing would be taken care of by Visit Finland. In this strategic engagement Visit Finland has a provider for the stopover product and Finnair namely participates on the destination development project.

The stakeholder engagement model has given an opportunity to put the engagement of Finnair in Stopover Finland project into a theoretical perspective. However it only gives theoretical perspective without further considering the interests and needs of the stakeholders. It does not take into account other strategical choices or corporate responsibilities, but only considers the relationship of Finnair and Stopover Finland project. Next chapter analyzes and discusses the notion of a national airline and nationhood, and how national airline differs from other corporations.

5.3 Nationhood

As touched upon in the literature review about the importance of transport connections impacting destination development, Albers et al. (2009) highlighted that transport connections make the destination more accessible and interconnected. Khadaroo and Seetanah (2007) supported this by emphasizing that the transport infrastructure is a significant factor in terms of inflows of tourism into the destination. These statements support the importance of Finnair's participation to the Stopover Finland project. Especially the fact that Finnair's transferring passengers are the main target group for the project. Due to Finland's geographic location and accessibility, the air traffic plays an important role logistically and connectively.

The notion of nationhood in national identity has been introduced earlier. It has been stated that the national airline has significant impact on the national identity and how it symbolizes the nation and joins people across the country as *imagined political community* and spreading the feeling of nationhood. (Raguraman, 1997) Finnair is an example of functioning as an instrument of nationhood due to geography of Finland. It brings isolated areas closer, such as Lapland in the north, and enables the movement between south and north Finland. Raguraman (1997) emphasize the role of national airline in nation building and refers to Malaysian Airline in the development of Malaysia and Singapore.

5.3.1 Finnair as a national airline

As mentioned before, Raguraman (1997) refers to national airlines spreading the spirit of nationhood and functioning as a unifying instrument in dispersed countries. As Finland is geographically long country and the distances between north and south are long, air traffic can provide easy accessibility and function as a tool bringing northern and southern parts of Finland together. As a national airline Finnair has socio-political role which differs Finnair as a corporation from other large Finnish corporations. As Raguraman (1997) mentioned, aviation has been intertwined to political and social objectives

of most countries. Major strategical choices of Finnair does not only affect Finnair itself but also State of Finland and the Finnish public, and therefore creates socio-political conversation. Very recently, in November 2015, it has been rumored in Finnish newspapers about Finnair selling major shares to IAG (International airlines group). Even though these news are just rumors and both Finnair and IAG declined them, they still created conversation in the media about the future of Finnish domestic flights. (Aamulehti, 2015) Finnair has stated that domestic flights have not been successful for many years (Helsingin sanomat, 2014). Finland provides the most domestic flights in Finland operating from Helsinki Airport (Finnair, 2015) and in many domestic airports Finnair operates as an only airline. (Ilkka, 2015) Due to the fact that Finnair is the national airline with the State of Finland being the major shareholder, Finnair has been operating unprofitable domestic flights. But naturally when there is a rumor that the State of Finland is no longer the major shareholder of Finnair, concerns are raised that the unprofitable domestic flights are cut off. Major Finnish county newspaper Ilkka (2015) reported on November 16th 2015 that Finnair is finding new tactics to boost the unprofitable routes to secure them. Finnair CEO Pekka Vauramo commented for Ilkka (2015. Authors own translation.) about the development project to increase the passenger numbers and to avoid cutting off unprofitable routes that *"This is for national service level and for many tourism businesses. We (Finnair) want to give time to find ways to boost the passenger number."* The project is an example of Finnair reacting on its responsibility as a national airline. The challenge is to balance between answering on expectations as a national airline and to operate profitably. Finnair functions as a unifying instrument for the remote areas of Finland and is vital for the local businesses.

The visual identity of Finnair is described as consistent, modern and fresh. The color of Finnair is blue combined with white and silver, and can be associated to colors of Finnish flag - blue and white. The visual image is consistent throughout the brand, such as the Finnair logo, the staff uniforms and the aircraft interiors. (The Finnair brand, 2015) Finnair is co-operating actively with other Finnish brands to spread the awareness of Finnish design. Finnair aircrafts have been painted with famous Finnish brands such Marimekko, Angry birds and Santa Claus for promoting purposes. (Taloussanomat,

2012) In collaboration of Marimekko and Finnair the Finnishness is extensively highlighted. Marimekko for Finnair - collaboration video emphasizes Finnish nature and highlights the brand element of Finnishness. (Finnair and Marimekko, 2014)

5.3.2 National airline and public expectations

National airlines are sensitive topic and create passionate reactions among the public at the times of big changes. Public has opinions and heated conversations are done in the media and in the coffee tables. Intensively passionate reactions were erupted in October 5th 2015 at Charles de Gaulle airport when Air France council meeting announced 2900 job cuts by 2017. The actions of the workers showed strong feelings towards their employer and therefore triggered hot-blooded reactions when drastic job cuts occurred. (Reuters, 2015) The actions of the angry workers were fast disapproved by Air France and called *“outdated behavior”* on a news article (Reuters, 2015). Soon Air France sent out a statement for its customers saying that the incident does *“not reflect the reality nor the ambition of your airline”* (Appendix V). Passionate reactions were also followed by Finnair announcement in August 2013 to hire Spanish cabin crew. The Spanish cabin crew would operate charter flights and replace Finnish cabin crew during strikes. The recruiting of foreign staff was a result of needed cost savings. (Helsingin sanomat, 2013) The news on the leading Finnish newspaper Helsingin sanomat resulted triggered comments from both Finnair staff and Finnish public. The Finnair cabin crew representative said that *“it is very low move to have strikebreakers to do the work during a possible strike, long before the strike negotiations have even started”* (Authors own translation. Helsingin sanomat, 2013). Conversation of the public for the news addressed mainly the use of strikebreakers and salary level of aviation in general. The news gained critical comments discussing about the financial situation of Finnair, the service level of Finnair and salary levels of both Finland and Spain. Some comments were about concern for lack of Finnish speaking staff and criticism towards Finnair for being ignorant for their role as a national airline. Commentators were concerned about losing Finnish speaking staff on Finnair flights and demanded Finnish speaking service from a Finnish airline. As Finnair is a national Finnish airline, customers associate Finnish language in customer

service and national airline is affiliated to its native language. Finnish travel agency Aurinkomatkat (English translation: Sunny tours) is Finnair subsidiary. They advertise being 100% Finnish and using Finnair for all their charter flights, which means that the news of using Spanish cabin crew would impact directly Aurinkomatkat charter flights. Aurinkomatkat advertises being the most reliable travel agency in Finland and having very loyal clientele. (Aurinkomatka, 2015) Not having Finnish speaking cabin crew and customer service available on the flights creates a contradiction with the customer promise and impacts negatively to customer satisfaction.

Following comments have been picked up as examples from the news in Helsingin Sanomat (2013) newspaper about Finnair using Spanish speaking cabin crew on Finnair flights. The comments are readers' comments on the article and used as examples of the reactions that the news created.

Pituna45

I wish to have fluent Finnish speaking service when flying with a Finnish airline. Just like I've had to this date.

Simppa vaan

This is so rude! Let's boycott Finnair! If Finnish airline can't provide Finnish service, then who can? Stupid management of Finnair if they don't realize their selling point.

Sinbad

It's very sad that the only thing that seems to matter is the price of the flight ticket! It this keeps going on we will no longer have our Finnair. We are forced to use those cheap airlines, which I am not too fond of.

From the reactions of public towards Finnair it is natural to move towards notion of Finnishness and how Finnair represents Finnishness as a national airline. As one of Finnair's key elements Finnishness has been a component in Finnair image.

5.3.3 Finnishness

Finnair has been in headlines of Finnish news at the times of achievements as much as at the times of pitfalls. Finnishness, as one of Finnair's four key elements, has been embraced especially at the time of historical milestones. When Finnair bought its first Caravelle jet aircrafts in spring 1960 it was a festive celebration with high profile guests. The celebration was filmed and can now be found as an archived historical film at Finnish Broadcasting Company. The film emphasizes the majestic Caravelle aircraft and the luxurious service with finest Finnish design that the very few can have. The film is also a celebration of air travel which was, for the first time, available for Finnish people with historical Caravelle to fly to the many European capitals. The film is descriptively titled as *"Make your dreams come true and fly with Caravelle"* (Authors own translation. Yle, 2014). The film does not only celebrate the Finnish aviation achievements but also the possibilities of air travel for the public. On the film the Carravelle passengers represent all age groups from senior couples to a young boy traveling with his dog to European cities from Hamburg to London and Paris. The film honors Finnair and Finnish knowhow of design and service. The Caravelle aircraft was named descriptively Finnish as Blue bird. (Yle, 2014)

Another milestone and a big scale promotion campaign of Finnair, was the first Finnair flight to USA. On a Finnair blog post (2009) there is a report of the day when Finnair flew its first flight to USA in summer 1969. On that day Finnair wanted to be seen and all the marketing efforts were put in action. The goal was to *"bring Finland and Finnish culture to the world map"*. The aircrafts were painted with pictures of Jean Sibelius (Finnish composer) and Paavo Nurmi (Finnish sports legend) and the whole service concept was renewed and equipped with finest Finnish design. For the USA flights there were specially trained *"Finn Hostesses"*, in addition to the flight attendants. The Finn Hostesses were specially trained to entertain the passengers and were clothed with the latest and finest Finnish fashion. The first Finnair flight to USA was said to be *"unusually visible appearance in aviation"* (Authors own translation. Finnairin blogi, 2009). The report finishes with a statement: *"As a cherry on top, the crew put on their silver colored mink fur*

hats. In America you wanted to be seen. There was no budget on that trip.” (Authors own translation. Finnairin blogi, 2009)

During the last couple of months Finnair has been in the public eye with some good news. Finnair started to operate with the new A350 aircrafts (Capa, 2015) and made a record breaking profit of 48,9 million Euros in July-September 2015. (Taloussanomat, 2015) Finnair’s success mirrors to the Finnish people as Raguraman (1997) says that *“people take a special pride when their airlines are regarded highly by foreigners simply because there is a shared perception that the success of an airline speaks well of her nation as a whole.”* Raguraman (1997:253) emphasizes the strong association of national airline and the nation and how national airline is a point of contact for foreigners who have not visited the country yet.

6 Discussion

This study has given an understanding of the complex roles of national airlines and the many responsibilities and expectations that national airlines have to answer. The challenging situation forces national airlines to balance in order to answer to the economic, social and political roles. Finnair as a national airline has to operate profitably, while simultaneously operate unprofitable domestic flights and participate as a leading stakeholder in a destination development project. When Finnair makes strategic choice for hiring non-Finnish speaking staff, criticism is inevitable along with risking its key element of Finnishness. Public easily reacts when Finnair is dismissing its role as national airline and is not fulfilling its customer promise. A tough financial situation forces Finnair to do difficult strategic choices and to balance between its roles as commercial airline answering economic expectations and as national airline answering social and political expectations. Nevertheless, a role of a national airline is much more than just an airline.

When considering the destinations with stopover products, it has been pointed out that the participation of the national airline is strong in all the three destinations; Singapore, Dubai and Iceland. This being said, it is vital that Finnair is strongly engaged to current Stopover Finland project as a leading stakeholder. However, it gives an opportunity to discuss the engagement work in the previous stopover projects, which Finnair did not participate, and how the engagement work was conducted or if there was engagement work done to attract Finnair to participate. Models of engagement can be used to support this discussion to discover if there were mutual interests and targets and numerous engagement activities (Greenwood, 2007), and if process of engagement was systematic, logical, and practical (Jeffery, 2009). Even though theoretical frameworks do not reflect reality, they can be used as guidelines and instruments to support the engagement process. Especially in a situation, in which Finnair has not been participating previous stopover projects. An opportunity occurs for a theoretical guideline, to acknowledge that past experiences to shape the future planning and engagement (Jeffery 2009).

Back in 1997, when Raguraman published his article, he discussed the future scenarios for national airlines. He pointed out the strategic alliances that commercial and national airlines have formed. In alliances the airlines can operate code-shared flights and cooperate with maintenance, material purchasing and aircraft parts logistics. Raguraman (1997) predicted a new world aviation system of multinational mega-carriers and decrease of flag-carrier national airlines. In fact, the alliances are present day of aviation (Finnair is part of oneworld aviation) and foreign carriers are operating domestic flights (Norwegian Air Shuttle is operating some domestic flights in Finland). Raguraman (1997) discussed if the major changes of civil aviation lead to diminishing of symbolic significance of national airlines, and civil aviation becoming just like any other industry. This being said, it should not be forgotten that the State of Finland is still major shareholder of Finnair and the selling rumors of Finnair were fast denied. (Aamulehti, 2015)

7 Conclusion

Visit Finland has taken an action to attract the transferring passengers of Helsinki Airport with Stopover Finland project. The significant difference to previous stopover projects is the strong participation of Finnair as a leading stakeholder. A report of Stopover Finland project stated the core problem in previously failed stopover projects (working title: Gateway project) that *“The industry representatives felt there was little commitment and no common will to the Gateway project as Finnair was not leading it; it was not concrete enough and commercial aspects were neglected.”* (Team Finland 4, 2015) Partanen (2015), from Finnair, described Finnair’s interests towards Stopover Finland mentioning aircraft investments, that Finnair has done recently to operate on domestic routes, and their interest for balancing seasonality with Stopover Finland project. Furthermore he mentioned that Finnair has been offering a multi-city ticket option which is similar to stopover product. (Partanen). Finnair will be functioning as main promotional platform for Stopover Finland. (Appendix VI)

This study has aimed to explore the multiple roles of a national airline in destination development. National airlines have significant role in destination development as a flag-carriers and as instruments unifying the country and its people by spreading national consciousness and spirit of nationhood. National airlines are also intertwined to socio-political conversations (Raguraman, 1997) and therefore target for media attention at the times of both positive and negative changes. Examples of heated conversations of strategical choices of national airlines are job cuts of Air France (Reuters, 2015) and hiring of Spanish cabin crew for Finnair during a risk of Finnair cabin crew strikes (Helsingin sanomat, 2013). Both strategic actions of the airlines resulted to triggered conversations in the media and in the public, and exemplify how national airlines as corporations different from other big corporations with their socio-political roles.

A theoretical framework by Greenwood (2007) is used as a support for the research. The framework does not reflect reality but can function as a tool for understanding. An

engagement model (Model 3) gives different scenarios to illustrate engagement of organization and its stakeholders. The model (Model 3) offers four quadrants: responsible, paternalism, neoclassical and strategic. The quadrants reflect four scenarios for stakeholder engagement, of which responsible is the optimal level of engagement having gained large number of stakeholders meeting mutual interests and targets, and having numerous engagement activities. The optimal level of Finnair's engagement in the Stopover Finland project is achieved when Finnair has mutual interest in the project and is highly engaged in the implementation. However, the model (Model 3) does give an opportunity for a hypothetical example for strategic engagement. In strategic engagement Finnair could provide a stopover product but the marketing would be taken care of by Visit Finland. In this strategic engagement Visit Finland has a provider for the stopover product and Finnair namely participates the destination development project.

Stopover Finland project group benchmarked Iceland and Singapore as stopover destinations to learn the key elements of their stopover concepts. In this study, in addition to Iceland and Singapore, also Dubai is explored to illustrate the roles of the national airlines in all three destinations. Differences and similarities were found in the concepts of the destinations. Dubai and Singapore are conducting vertically integrated strategy in their destination development, in which all the tourism providers and government authorities are participating to provide incentives for the transferring passengers. (Albers et al, 2009). Conversely Stopover Iceland product is single handedly coordinated by Icelandair Group, in which Promote Iceland (DMO) is not participating. In common to all three destinations is the strong participation and contribution of their national airlines. Stopover Finland project report concluded the participation of a national airlines stating that *"Both the Singaporean and Icelandic stopovers are built around the domestic flagship carrier i.e. Singapore Airlines and Icelandair. The airlines have been the driving forces of the products as stopovers contribute to the national tourism industry and, thus, to their growth strategy"* (Team Finland 5, 2014) Furthermore Raguraman (1997:240) emphasized the significant role of air transport by saying *"Apart from its role in economic and regional development, civil aviation, more than other means of transport, plays an important symbolic role in national identity and nation building"*.

Finnishness, as one of Finnair's key elements, is embraced in Finnair history but also in the present. Finnish image has played major role in historical milestones of Finnair and is a major component in visual image of Finnair. During Autumn 2015 Finnair has been in the news with its historical aircraft investments (Capa,, 2015) and record breaking profit (Taloussanomat, 2015). The positive news can boost the nationhood of Finland and result to positive national consciousness and destination development. Raguraman (1997:253) sums up the snowball effect as *“people take a special pride when their airlines are regarded highly by foreigners simply because there is a shared perception that the success of an airline speaks well of her nation as a whole.”*

The Stopover Finland project gives great opportunities for future research. The current project differs drastically from the previous project due to the fact that Finnair is participating and is the leading stakeholder. With this research the role of a national airline in destination development has been explored. The future gives an opportunity to research how Finnair carried out its role in Stopover Finland project as a national airline and what the benefits were for the stakeholders and for tourism in Finland.

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9 Appendix

Appendix I

Interview: Heli Mende, project manager, Visit Finland

Conducted March 31st 2015

Appendix II

Interview: Jarkko Konttinen, director of marketing, Finnair

Conducted March 25th 2015

Appendix III

Interview: Adalheidur Kristinsdottir, project manager, Icelandair.

Conducted March 18th 2015

Appendix IV

LinkedIn Stopover Finland

Appendix V

Email conversation with Jarkko Konttinen from Finnair

Appendix VI

Email announcement from Air France

APPENDIX I

Visit Finland transcript

Interview with Heli Mende, project manager, Visit Finland

March 31st 2015

Heli Mende: HM

Interviewer: IV

HM: Tästä stopoverista on puhuttu täällä varmaan kaksikyt vuotta. Me ollaan sitä aikasemmin kutsuttu tällasena gateway matkustuksen nimellä. Eli mietitty miten voidaan hyödyntää Helsinkiä, Helsinki-Vantaan lentoasemaan gateway lentoasemana. Mitä palveluja pitäis tarjota näille gateway matkustajille? Mut sitten ollaan ruvettu puhumaan stopoverista. Eli oikeestaan jos aattelee, niin se ero, gateway ja stopover erot on aika selkeet. Geteway on vähän niin kun transit matkustaja, se pysähtyy mun sen viipymä, tai se vaihto aika on pitkä. Eli se ehtii, tää matkustaja tulla pois sieltä lentoasemalta. Ja tota, käydä Helsingin keskustassa ja muuta, mut yleensä jatkaa sit saman päivän aikana. Tai sitten että on useemman tunnin siellä lentoasemalla ja sit pitäis keksiä jotain tekemistä siellä. Eli tää on oikeestaan gateway. Stopover on mun mielestä enemmän semmonen matkailija joka pysähtyy ihan ja jää yöksi. Yhdeksi tai useammaksi yöksi. Mutta me ollaan tässä meidän projektissa ihan selvyiden vuoks mietitty tätä sillä tavalla että se voi olla se stopover neljästä tunnista neljään päivään. Et me ollaan tavallaan yhdistetty gateway ja stopover samaan pakettiin. Mutta tavoitteena meillä on houkutella Stopover Finlandissa nimenomaan näitä yöpyjiä. Että saadaan viipymää pidennettyä ja sitä kautta matkailutuloa kasvatettua ja yöpymisvuorokausia lisää.

Mutta tosiaan tää stopover teema on ollu vireillä pikän aikaa. Ja Finnair on tehny asian puitteissa monenmoista tässä vuosien varrella, tai vuosikymmenienkin varrella. Se on aina vaihdellu heidän omaan strategiaan liittyen, että onko se ollu painopisteenä vai ei. Et nyt tässä on jokunen vuosi on ollu sillä tavalla että se ei oo heille ollu kovinkaan tärkeessä asemassa. Mutta tällä hetkellä he kokee että se on tärkeä heidän oman toiminnan, niinkun logistiikan sujuvuuden näkökulmasta. Ja tota, Helsingin alueella, tai täällä

etelä-Suomen alueella oli tällanen TOUNET hanke jonka puitteissa tehtiin tällasta stopover selvitystä ja koottiin vähän stopover tuotteita. Mutta se käsittääkseni tyssäs siihen että sitten ei oikeen löydetty niitä markkinoin- ja myyntikanavia. Että se oltais päästy lanseeraamaan ja että se menis tonne Aasian markkinoille. Sitten kun tää työ- ja elinkeinoministerön lanseeraama kärkihanke käynnisty reilu vuosi sitten Tammikuussa. Ministeri Vapaavuori sen käynnisti ja tavoitteena oli siinä kartottaa ja hahmottaa, että mitä tarpeita toimialalla on ja mitä kannattais tehdä että saatais ensinnäkin kasvatettua toimialan arvostusta ylipäättään, yhtenä merkittävänä työllistäjänä ja ihan matkailutulon tuottajana tai vientitulon rinnastettavana matkailutulon tuottajana. Ja sitten ihan tällasia konkreettisia toimenpiteitä myöskin, että mitä tota nyt sitten pitäis lähteä tekemään, jotta sitä matkailutuloa voidaan kasvattaa. Ja siinä yhteydessä, tän kärkihankkeen yhteydessä, TEM sitten pyysi ehdotuksia. Ja niitä tuli kaiken kaikkiaan 42 ehdotusta TEMin eri teemoista. Ja tavoitteena oli saada sellasia mahdollisimman laajoja kokonaisuuksia. Ehdotuksia laajoista kokonaisuuksista. Ei pelkästään yhden pienen alueen tai yhden klusterin kehittämiseksi. Vaan että se olis niinkun mahdollisimman laajalla alueella, jopa niinkun kansallisella tasolla. Ja sieltä sitten näistä 42 ehdotuksesta TEM on valinnut kuusi, joista yksi on tää Stopover Finland. Ja nää kuusi jotka valittiin, niin oli periaatteessa kaikki sellasia että siihen tuli useempiakin ehdotuksia, Stopover Finlandista on tullut useempiakin ehdotuksia TEMille. Ja nää kaikki on sitten kirjattu tähän TEMin tiekarttaan, joka sun kannattaa lukee, jos et oo vielä lukenu.

IV: Mistä kaikkialta, tai ketkä siinä oli...?

HM: Mä en oo nähny niitä kaikkia hakemuksia. Et ne on menny suoraan TEMille. Et mä en oo ollu siinä prosessissa mukana. Toki meitä on Visit Finlandilta ollu meidän tutkimus- ja tuotekehitys johtajat mukana siinä vaiheessa. Mut mä en osaa sanoa nyt et keneltä kaikilta. Mut tiedän kaks tahoja Visit Helsingin, Helsinki marketing Oystä, pääkaupunkiseudun toimijoiden kanssa on tehnyt yhden. Ja sitten siellä on ollu yks yksityisen yrityksen tämmönen ehdotus. En tiedä onko ollu muitakin.

IV: Mitenkä, sä puhuit että neljästä tunnista neljään päivään, niin keskittykö tää enemmän sitten pääkaupunkiseudulle kun Helsinki-Vantaa siinä tiukasti mukana sitten?

HM: Tää on nimenomaan sen takia nimeltään Stopover Finland, et me puhutaan koko Suomesta. Eli sillan kun matkustaja viipyy neljä vuorokautta, niin hänellä on mahdollisuus lähteä Helsingin ulkopuolelle. Tottakai on itsestään selvää, että Helsinki tulee tästä eniten hyötymään koska suurin osa kuitenkin haluaa nähdä Helsingin kun ne täällä on. Mutta me toivotaan, että pikkuhiljaa saatais kasvatettua sitä viipymää mahdollisimman pitkäksi, siihen kolmeen neljään vuorokauteenkin asti, jotta se mahdollistaisi sen, että asiakas voi lähteä vaikka Rovaniemellä käydä katsomassa Joulupukkia tai jossakin muualla päin Suomea omien kiinnostustensa mukaisesti.

IV: Ketkä tässä on kaikista tärkeimpiä yhteistyökumppaneita? Onko Finnair syöttöliikenteen vuoksi? Ketkä muut, kenen kaikkien kanssa te ootte tässä kaikista eniten yhteistyössä?

HM: Me ollaan oikeestaan tällä hetkellä kaikkien kanssa yhteistyössä, koska tää meidän, tän meidänä koordinoiman Stopover Finland ohjelman rahoitus tulee Team Finlandin pk-yrityksille suunnatusta kasvurahotuksesta. Joka tarkoittaa sitä, että tää meidän ohjelma edustaa nimenomaan pk-yrityksiä. Jollon meidän on tärkeä saada tähän mukaan semmoset potentiaaliset pk-yritykset, jota on mahdollisuus, joilla on jo olemassa olevia tuotteita tai joilla on mahdollisuus rakentaa stopover asiakkaille toimivia kiinnostavia tuotteita, tuotekokonaisuuksia, tuotepaketteja. Ja sitten toisaalta taas nää isot toimijat on meille tärkeitä sidosryhminä, koska tota hotelliketjut tuottaa palvelua stopover asiakkaille. Laivayhtiöt tuottaa palveluja stopover asiakkaille. Ja sitten nää alueelliset markkinointi ja matkailuorganisaatiot on tärkeitä yhteistyökumppaneita ja sidosryhmiä, koska he taas tuntee oman alueensa yritykset ja toimijat ja sitten koska meidän yks tavoitteista on tässä tän ensimmäisen ohjelmakauden aikana, joka on ensimmäinen 12 kuukautta, on rakentaa tällöinen markkinointiverkosto, jotta me varmistetaan se, että tää teema jatkaa elämistä myös sen jälkeen kun tää hanke päättyy 2017.

IV: Mitenkä sitten sun oma henkilökohtainen näkemys Suomen matkailusta. Mitkä sä näät kaikista merkittävimpinä mahdollisuuksina ja sitten taas haasteina? Et mikä on tällä hetkellä se...

HM: Tarkotatko sä tätä stopoveria, vai yleisesti?

IV: Ylipäättään Suomen matkailu. Että, mihin suuntaan ollaan menossa, tai kasvetaan tottakai koko ajan. Mutta mikä sun henkilökohtanen näkemys on niinkun mahdollisuuksista ja sitten haasteista?

HM: Suurena haasteena on tällä hetkellä toi Venäjän tilanne. Että ylivoimaisesti Venäjä on meille merkittävin markkina ollut tässä ja meillä on ollut nähtävissä myöskin se, että tietyillä alueilla, esimerkiksi itä-Suomessa, niin yritykset on panostanut pelkästään vaan Venäjän markkinoihin, eikä muihin kansainvälisiin markkinoihin. Jollon nyt sitten kun Venäjä sakkaa, niin siellä ollaan, niin siellä kärsitään. Eliikkä mun mielestä se yks haaste on sellanen, että ei hajauteta tarpeeks. Että laitetaan niin sanotusti kaikki munat yhteen koriin ja nyt se on ollu se Venäjä kori. Että nyt meidän pitäis pystyä jollakin tapaa löytää sellasia ketteriä tapoja lähtee uusille markkinoille. Tai vanhoille uusille. Esimerkiks keski-Eurooppa on ollu itä-Suomenkin alueelle merkittävä markkina aikasemmin. Mut nyt se on tässä Venäjän buumin aikana unohtunu. Nyt pitäis pystyä oleen ketterä sitten tekeen toimenpiteitä niillä markkinoilla, että saatais uusia asiakkaita. Ja sit pitäis uudista, pystyä uudistaan tuotetta jotta saatais houkuteltua niitä uuden tyyppisiä asiakkaita. Ehkä me ollaan niinkun. Yks haaste on se, että ollaan liian hitaita reagoimaan suomalaiset näissä asioissa. Ja sitten ajatellaan, että tää on toiminu ennenkin, niin sitten se toimii jatkossakin. Et se tarvii sellasta jatkuvaa uudistumista. Meillä on paljon mahdollisuuksia. Että paljon tehdään työtä ja koko ajan tää yhteistyö paranee eri toimijoitten välillä. Ja ja nähdään lisäarvoa tosiaan sillä yhdessä tekemisellä ja verkostoitumisella. Ja mun mielestä se edesauttaa sit sitä että saadaan enemmän näkyvyyttä kun kaikki panostaa siihen yhteiseen markkinointiin.

IV: Mitenkä sitten tota stopover projektia mieltien, niin mitkä siinä on, onko ollu jotakin esimerkkejä mitä te ootte hyödyntäny, kohteita tai maita?

HM: No tota, siis me ollaan vasta alku vaiheessa, mä oon vasta kirjottamassa projekti-suunnitelmaa. Mutta tokihan me tiedetään, että mitkä ne tärkeimmät benchmarkit on. Että tän meidän projektin aikana tässä on tarkoitus benchmarkata nyt ainakin toi Islanti stopover. Ihan siitä syystä että, vaikka se ei suoraan kilpaile Suomen kanssa, koska heidän pääkohde markkinansa on Amerikka tai amerikkalaiset matkustajat ja sitten eurooppalaiset matkustajat. No siinä kohtaa sitten ehkä kilpaillaan, mut et he lentää länteen ja Finnair lentää itään päin, niin siinä puhutaan vähän eri markkina-alueista. Mut se on

mielenkiintonen konsepti benchmarkata koska heillä on todella paljon kokemusta. Mä oon itse ollut itseasiassa Icelandairilla töistä, että tunnen sen tuotteen erittäin hyvin. Mut et sielläkin koko ajan tapahtuu kehitystä ja on mielenkiintosta aina sit seurata, että mitän uutta on keksitty ja minkälaista markkinointia on purru. Minkälaista. Saadan sieltä inspiraatiota. Ja toinen on sitten stopover Singapore, joka meillä on tarkoitus tän puitteissa tehdä. No sitten tuolla esimerkiksi Qatar ja Dubai on ansiokkaasti kehittänyt omia stopover tuotteita, et varmaan vähän niitäkin sit katotaan. Mut että tää paino benchmarkauksella on tosiaan Islanti ja Singapore.

IV: Mulle on itseasiassa just, mistä mulle lähti tää gradu idea oli juurikin Islanti. Että se on.. Mä yhden kouluprojektin sinne päin tein ja inspiroi ihan hirveesti. Että se on kyllä. Heillä on merkittäviä muutoksia tapahtunu siellä matkailussa. Minkä takia Suomi sitten, tai tässä nyt aika paljon Helsinkiä käsittelen, niin minkä takia se olis hyvä stopover kohde?

HM: No se on hyvä kysymys. Me ei vielä tiedetä. Meidän on tarkoitus tehdä markkinaselvityksiä tuolla Aasian markkinoilla ja yrittää päästä niitten loppuasiakkaitten päälle ja ymmärtää, että mitä he oikeesti haluaisivat täällä Helsingissä tehdä. Että yks sellanen motiivi minkä takia uskotaan että aasialaiset on kiinnostuneita, etenkin kiinalaiset tässä kohtaa pysähtymään Helsingissä, on se, että he on ehkä sellasia maabongareita vielä tässä vaiheessa. Että se on niinkun tärkeetä heille pystyä kertomaan että missä kaikissa maissa on käyty. Ja silloin kun Helsinki, Suomi tässä vaiheessa tehdään hyvin helpoks heille, se pysähtyminen. Toivotaan, että se jo itsessään sitten kiinnostais. Mut sitten meidän pitää tietenkin ymmärtää niitä muitakin kiinnostuksen kohteita ja motiiveja ja sen mukaan lähtee rakentaa se Stopover Finland menu. Eli meillä on tavoitteena että rakennetaan sinne noin viidenkymmenen tuotteen tai tuotepaketin Stopover Finland menu, jota voidaan sitten vähän varioida, niin että ei nyt välttämättä Kiinassa niitä kaikkia viittäkytä laiteta myyntiin. Mut että sieltä sitten löytyis sitten kaikki potentiaaliset markkinoille näitä asiakkaita kiinnostavia tuotteita.

IV: Mitenkä, sä puhuit että te ootte benchmarkannu noita muita stopover kohteita. Niin mitä kaikista merkittävimpä, Suomen kannalta, tuloksia te ootte saanu?

HM: Me ei olla vielä tehty sitä benchmarkausta. Me ollaan aivan alkuvaiheessa. Mä oon tosiaan vasta kirjottamassa projektisuunnitelmaa. Meillä on tän projektin kick-off 21.

päivä neljättä. Kick-off seminaari. Että siinä mielessä, mä en voi puhua mistään tulok-
sista, koska mitään tuloksia ei oo vielä.

IV: Joo. Okei. Koko ajan tää läppäri tekee tässä jotain. Mä oon vasta tän ostanu, niin
vähän vielä harjottelen tässä tän kanssa työskentelyä.

IV: Mitenkä sitten, onko jotain, jotain sellasia merkittäviä muutoksia, lähinnä nyt Helsin-
kiä ajatellen, niin jotain ihan merkittäviä muutoksia mitä Helsinki vaatii, tai Helsingin
alue vaati, jotta tää stopover projekti onnistuis?

HM: No tietysti se, että jos mietitään aasialaisia matkailijoita, jotka on nyt meidän pro-
jektissa pääkohderyhmänä, ja oikeestaan meidän sitten kaikki markkinointipanostus
kohdennetaan, että meillä on Aasian markkinoilla ainakin nyt näillä näkymin, jos ei nyt
mitään mullistavaa tapahdu, niin sitten tietysti yritetään olla ketteriä ja mietitään. Et
niinkun kaiken kaikkiaan muut niinkun Aasian maat niinkun Korea, Japani, Kiina, jotka
meillä on tässä jo on tärkeitä. Keski-Eurooppa tulee oleen varmasti yks sellanen jossa
halutaan tätä myydä, keksi-eurooppalaisia jotka matkustaa Helsingin kautta Aasiaan. Ja
sit kuulemma Australiassa on osotettu kiinnostusta, jopa amerikkalaiset on kiinnostunu
tästä stopover tuotteesta. Että kyllä se niinkun kiinnostusta herättää. Mut jos aattelee
nyt puhtaasti näitä aasialaisia, niin siellä aika paljon on kohtuullisen kielitaidottomia
matkailijoita. Tai tarkotan kielitaidottomilla sitä, että he ei puhu englantia kovin hyvin.
Meillä täytyis ihan ensisijaisesti panostaa sellasiin käytännön juttuihin, niinkun onko
opasteita riittävästi, vaikka nyt sitten kiinan kielellä. Ja et hotelleista löytyy kieliversiona
ohjeistusta ja materiaalia, ruokalistoja ja niin poispäin. Ihan sellasia käytännön perus jut-
tuja niinkun ensi vaiheessa. Että tehdään mahdollisimman Tai sitten jotakin aplikaatioita
tai mitä ne sitten onkaan, tai mitä voi tarjota matkailijoitten käyttöön helposti ilman mi-
tään roaming kustannuksia. Niin tota, tällaisa pitäis miettiä ja kehittää.

IV: Onko teillä siihen jo jotakin toimintasuunnitelmaa? Vai onko tää vasta ajatustasolla?

HM: Ihan vasta ajatustasolla. Tai ei ajatustasolla, mut se että tiedetään että tämmösiä
asioita tarvitaan. Se riippuu nyt siitä, että miten. Jotkut asiat on semmosia jotka ei oo
pelkästään yritysten hallittavissa, et tarvitaan näitä isompia toimijoita siihen mukaan te-
kemään. Ja jotkut on sitten semmosia, et on niinkun yritysten vaikutusvallan piirissä.
Että esimerkiks hotelliketjut tai hotellit voi miettiä että minkälaista kirjallista dokumen-

taatiota he sitten tarjoaa asiakkailleen. Ja minkälaisia muita, muita, amenities niin sanostusti, he laittaa huoneisiin. Että löytyykö sieltä tohveleita ja vedenkeitinmiä ja tän tyyppisiä juttuja jotka esimerkiks kiinalaisia, kiinalaisille on tärkeitä asioita. Että näitä asioita tullaan käsitteleen sit tän projektin aikana näissä meidän työpajoissa ja miettimään, että mihin pystytään ja kuka mitäkin sitten pystyy omalla, omissa yrityksessään...

IV: Mitenkä Helsingin infrastruktuuri, vastaako se jo sitä mitä pitäis?

HM: No Helsingin on aika helppo kaupunki kuitenkin. Tämä on niin pieni kaupunki. Ja sitten meillä on avautumassa tää junayhteys ens kesänä, joka varmasti niinkun, jos miettii tämmösiä nuorempia yksittäisiä matkajia, niin on aika helppo tapa sitten päästä Helsingin keskustaan. Ja siis, Helsinki on pieni kaupunki, niin kyllä mä uskon että se ei oon niinkun sinänsä ongelma. Että enemmän ongelma on se, että se on vähän liian pieni kaupunki. Et kiinalaiset usein valittaa, että täällä on tylsää kun täällä ei oo mitään tekemistä ja ei oo tarpeeks shoppailtavaa ja nähtävää. Mut että sitä me ei voida oikeen aikaan tässä projektissa muuttaa.

IV: Mitenkä sitten, puhuit tosta Finnairista yhteistyökumppanina ja muutenkin. Onko, onko se sitten aikasemmin, tää Finnairin kanssa yhteistyö, niin onko se vaikuttanut on stopoverin niinkun aikasempiin projekti yrityksiin?

HM: Kyllä varmaan, joo. Voi sanoa, että se ei oo ollu heidän strategia fokuksessa aikasemmin. Niin tietysti sillon se että lentolippuhinnottelu tukee stopover mahdollisuuksia ja niin pois päin, niin on aika merkittävässä roolissa. Ja tietysti semmon yhteismarkkinointi ja yhdessä tekeminen on merkittävässä roolissa tässä. Että se on saattanu olla. Mä en nyt oo. Tää on mun mututuntuma. Että mulla ei oo mitään faktaa tähän. Mutta näin mä arvelen.

IV: Mutta nyt he on tässä ihan mukana?

HM: Kyllä. Joo. Tää struktuurihan on erilainen kun Islannissa. Islannissa se Islanti stopoverin kehittyminen on ollu ihan eri tasolla johtuen siitä että Icelandair lentoyhtiö omistaa siellä hotelleja ja ohjelmapalveluyrityksiä ja DMCitä, jotka on sitten tuottanu näitä stopover palvelua. Et se on niinkun tällanen Icelanair konsernin sisäinen kokonaisuudessaan. Et Suomessa on erilainen tilanne, koska Finnair ei omista tän tyyppisiä muita matkapalveluja. Tietysti heillä on matkatoimistoja, mutta ei hotelleja eikä DMCitä ja niin pois päin.

IV: Aivan joo. Ja ilmeisesti se on ihan Icelandairin pää business strategia tämä stopover.

HM: Kyllä joo.

IV: Että Finnairin intressit ei oo ehkä ollu siihen suuntaan aikasemmin.

APPENDIX II

Finnair interview

March 25th 2015

Jarkko Konttinen

Corporate marketing manager

- Mikä on sinun näkemyksesi Suomen matkailun edistämisestä?
 - Mitä kasvumahdollisuuksia näet Suomen matkailussa?
 - Uskoo voimakkaasti Suomen matkailuun ja sen vaikutukseen ja kasvuun taloudessa. Matkailun osuus 4,2 milj. Eur vuodessa.

- Mikä on Finnairin rooli Suomen matkailunedistämisessä?
 - Onko Finnairille määritelty tiettyä roolia tai velvollisuuksia ja tavoitteita Suomen matkailun edistämisessä?
 - Rooli suuri suomalaisena yhtiönä. Ei määritelty tiettyjä velvollisuuksia.
 - Onko Finnairilla yhteistyötä Visit Finlandin kanssa? Minkälaista?
 - On yhteistyötä. Sekä rahallisesti että markkinoinnissa. Stop-over hankkeessa Finnair merkittävästi mukana, sillä Finnairilla on asiakaskunta hankkeeseen.
 - Onko Finnairin etu Suomen matkailunedistäminen?
 - Miten tämä näkyy Finnairin strategiassa ja markkinoinnissa?
 - On Finnairin etu ja näkyy markkinoinnissa. Suomen luonto ja Helsinki pääkaupunkina on markkinoinnissa. Helsinkiin tarjotaan 100 suoraa lentoa.

- Mikä on näkemyksesi Helsingistä stop-over kohteena?
 - Helsinki loistava kohde sijainnin ja tarjonnan kanssa. Ei nää haasteita stop-over tuotekehitykseen tällä hetkellä.

- Minkälainen on Finnairin tämän hetkinen stop-over tuote?
 - Onko Helsinki stop-over kohteena?
 - Kyllä on. Stop-over hanke vauhdittaa matkailua. Kauttakulkevia matkustajia tällä hetkellä miljoona joista 50 000 vierailee Helsingissä. Merkittävä potentiaali.

- Mikä on stop-over tuotteen kohderyhmä ja miten sitä markkinoidaan ja myydään asiakkaille? Kohderyhmänä Aasialaiset sijainnin vuoksi. Helsinki hyvä stop-over kohde mantereiden välisten lentojen vuoksi.

- Onko Helsinki stop-over tuotteena Finnairin intressien kohde?
 - Onko Helsinki stop-over tuote Finnairin tämän hetkisen strategian ja imagon mukainen tuote?
 - Kyllä on. On imagon mukainen.
 - Näetkö Helsinki stop-over tuotteen potentiaalisena Finnairin tuotekehityksessä?
 - Paljon potentiaalia tuotekehityksessä. Tulee olemaan markkinoitava tuote.

- Käyttääkö Finnair benchmarkausta suorituskyvyn mittaamisessa?
 - Mitä lentoyhtiöitä Finnair on benchmarkannut?
 - Kyllä on benchmarkattu, esim. Islanti, Singapore, Lähi-itä.
 - Onko stop-over tuotetta benchmarkattu?
 - Kyllä on benchmarkattu, esim. Islanti, Singapore, Lähi-itä.

APPENDIX III

Icelandair transcript

March 18th 2015

Interview with Adalheidur Kristinsdottir, project manager, Icelandair

INT = Interviewer

ICE = Icelandair

INT: I am very much interested in Icelandair because you have such a strong stopover strategy so I'd be happy to hear more about that.

ICE: Are you focusing on marketing in general or some markets?

INT: I am going to focus on Finland and Helsinki because I do see potential in Helsinki. I'd like to hear how Icelandair has done it and how it has worked in Iceland. Because I see myself in Helsinki and in the tourism field in Helsinki and it's sort of close to my heart to develop the tourism in Finland so that's why I'd like to see if there is potential in tourism in that area.

INT: First of all, what is your opinion and how do you see tourism in Iceland currently? It has grown wonderfully and how is the tourism in Iceland doing currently and what is the development there currently?

ICE: I mean, it's doing quite well. And increasing tourism. And what has been the focus, has been for the past two years has been the infrastructure needs to be in hand with the increase. And in some cases it needs to improve. Because it's growing a lot and continue to be growing. There all new kind of things coming up, for like the tourism to be exploring and like we have this new whale museum. We have all kind of activities with horses. And nature wise activities. And new here is, they are opening up this ice cave next summer. So we are developing.

INT: I was actually visiting Iceland last April. Me and my two school friends, we did a study of the social media marketing in Iceland tourism. We visited there and it was very visible to see how the tourism has been growing. And how it's evolving all the time and the infrastructure is picking up. And it's mainly focusing in Reykjavik. In terms of stopover tourism, how did you come up with the stopover strategy in the first place?

ICE: Actually, it is very old product, actually. Probably 50 years old, or something. And the main idea at first to start this is that not many airlines in the 1950 they didn't have contracts with the US to fly direct between Europe and North America. That was one thing. And also that the aircrafts at that time didn't have the reach to perhaps go all the way, without stopping. But because, the US base here in the second world war, we had this air contract with the US and we also had contract with some countries in Europe, for instance with Scandinavia, Denmark and UK and Luxemburg. So we were able to take passengers from these gateways and move them to Iceland and move them to US. And use the opportunity. Because the network was not that big at the time and sometimes the passengers needed to stay for like one day, or something. And that is the beginning of it all. So just to be able to use that there is a demand for travelling to US and the supply. The market was not as the demand was asking for. It was an opportunity. Then, this has actually developed. This is not just like. This today, there is very much competition on the trans-Atlantic for the passengers. For us to be able to be unique, to be able to offer something nobody else is offering, gives us an opportunity to both, the countries quite known, after like Eyjafjallajökull, and it's known for its nature and it's known- And you have a unique nature and not that far from Europe. And we've just created a potential to do something bigger with that.

INT: How about the... When did the actual campaign, the stopover campaign, when did you start the campaign?

ICE: Just this winter. The actual global. But we offered this or 50 years, or something. But we started this last, this winter. This fall.

INT: How did you.... What was the strategy or the campaign before that?

ICE: Before that? To advertise like "We've flied to North America. Did you know we have a stopover for 1 to 7 days?" You can go to the Blue Lagoon or experience the nature in Iceland for 1 to 3 days before you head to the US. Basically.

INT: What about the relation between Icelandair and Visit Iceland or any tourism stakeholder in Iceland? Do you have specific targets and goals defined regarding the growing tourism or the tourism development in Iceland?

ICE: We have actually advertised a lot by our self in the countries. Because the knowledge of advertising abroad and getting all the markets to know the country hasn't

been that much until 2010, when they had this Inspired by Iceland campaign. That campaign, we contributed funding to be able to be part of that. And that what we have actually done. We have been part. We have participated in to, when it's governmental promotion. But we are not maybe, we are shareholders and funding, but we are not actually doing the campaign.

INT: So you have your own campaigns but you are still contributing the governmental campaign.

ICE: Yes. With the whole industry. Everyone has a potential to be part of it. And some do and some don't.

INT: Is it Icelandair's direct interest to have a stopover in Reykjavik or is it only by means of differentiating from competitors to have a stopover in Iceland? Because how I see it or how I understand it as a... I don't have that much knowledge of the airline business but how I see it is that it is not necessarily directly Icelandair's interest to have a stopover in Reykjavik, rather just to attract the passengers to fly Icelandair. Why is it such a strong campaign interest on the stopover? To actually keeping them to visit Iceland?

ICE: First of all, like I said it is a unique product creating a difference from what other airlines are offering. We are a small country. We are a small airline compared to the giant airlines flying the trans-Atlantic market. So it's ofcourse increasing our market and we as an airline, we will grow if people like this product we are offering. So yes, it is our benefit to get the passengers onboard. This is something they like and it's actually very popular product. So we listen to the market and try to create something out of it.

INT: What has been the results from the campaign? How much have passenger numbers grown?

ICE: They have grown quite well. But we are still seeing, I'm not going to give you the exact number, I cannot do that. But we are seeing increase in the passenger using this product and it is affecting the whole. It is not the major increase. But it's doing also all kind of other things. It's also like ??? by marketing this product, it is also creating interest in the airline and allowing and getting people to know the company and they will use us. Perhaps they won't use the product but they will know about what we are doing. And if they like it they will choose us. So it's a two plaid sword.

INT: How have you, how is it created in practice? I visited the website and I noticed it was, is it, do you offer the stopover product at the time of booking the flight or is it afterwards they can purchase it as an add-on?

ICE: Mostly when you just buy the flight. We have not been offering it in any extend afterwards.

INT: From the website it looks very easy to purchase. It's very kind of like just few clicks and it's purchased so it's also easy to kind of easy to purchase at the time of booking the flights. So that's very user friendly. Or that's how I experienced it.

INT: What about at the destination. How is it, you said that the infrastructure has to pick up the tourism growing. So when they get to Reykjavik, how is it organized? Because the airport is quite far from the city. So how have you organized when the tourists have arrived to Reykjavik?

ICE: It's just similar when you go abroad. So everyone is just doing all themselves. The only thing we offer is the flight. But you can also combine the hotel and buy some short trips. We do of course sell like how you are travelling from airport to Reykjavik but mainly it's just like any other package people buy. You just choose how you do things. Even though we have had these competitions we are taking them, if you have seen the advertisements. We have had hired people which we have drawn for the competitions to go there to surprise and trips. And people are not maybe getting, you are not picked up at the airport. But maybe that's a potential to have an all-inclusive trip.

INT: Is that's something you are planning on?

ICE: No. It's just a thought. No we are not planning that.

INT: But there is potential.

ICE: There's potential.

INT: How about what kind of, I still want to go back to the cooperation with the stakeholders. In practice, how do you communicate or how do you cooperate with the stakeholders in Reykjavik in regards to the when the passengers arrive to Reykjavik. Do you have some active cooperation with you mentioned hotels or the tourism operators in Reykjavik? Does it require cooperation in that field?

ICE: It's not different from like if you are just selling a trip to Iceland without going to the US in the trip. It is just the same. It is the same as any other. We are not selling this as

a... We are selling this as an airline which people are combining to the trip and choosing what they like to do. We are not selling this as a touroperator.

INT: So it's sort of, is the tourism segment more kind of independent travelers then?

ICE: Yes.

INT: Then I am also including benchmarking on my thesis. Do you do benchmarking as a performance measurement? As an airline?

ICE: Yes we do.

INT: Can you say what airlines have you benchmarked?

ICE: I mean. With the stopover campaign?

INT: Also that but also apart from that. Do you actively benchmark certain airlines?

ICE: I mean we are in competition with SAS and we've been looking closely at them, I would say. So but you always, what we have tried to do is, we have tried bring out the uniqueness of our airline without saying what the other airlines are doing. But you are always looking at the industry as a whole. And there are big players in the market, like BA, Airfrance, KLM and Lufthansa. And SAS in the Scandinavian area and Finnair is also doing good things, you know. So you always look at what is the market doing. But when it comes to the stopover campaign we don't have, we only have our benchmarking in that. Because I think there are only two other airlines offering this in completely different matters, you know.

INT: I was doing some research and I notices Singapore airlines has really strong stopover strategy. But other than that it's pretty unique product and that's why it's pretty good and I really do wanna study that further.

INT: Let me see my questions if I'm missing some.

INT: I still wanna go back to the process of the stopover campaign. Did you have, do you have some research prior the campaign in regarding the... Did you do some research before starting the campaign?

ICE: Well, I mean we have our figures in house of how much the stopover fares is in our business. Other than that we also know the how to sell Iceland to people because we have done that many many years. And have great experience in that. What we did is that we created a group to create a concept to bring this product to create something more out of the product we already have in hand. So basically that was what we did. Of

course you always benchmark now how people are pushing the product. Like they are using the social media quite extensively in this matter. But also we are adding this as a focus in our whole advertisement strategy in each country within Europe and North America. So this is just like a ??? what we always tell you about. "Do you know about our stopover?" That's basically how it's done.

INT: So the campaign is going on as we speak. So do you have time limit when the campaign is on? Do you have some check-points?

ICE: What can I say, we are just starting.

INT: So you don't have much results to present at this point.

ICE: No.

INT: I know you said already that you cannot present much numbers or figures. Is there any statistics you could provide? In regards to maybe the passenger numbers. Or some results or statistics?

ICE: You can go to airport.is and you can see there like, you can choose from like data source or something like that. And you can see that there is like change passengers. Apart from.... No, you cannot use that, sorry. No sorry, I don't have any, there are no public measurements regarding this.

INT: Thank you for the interview.