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Hotels as a target for terrorism: a study of the Helsinki area hotels' preparedness for an attack

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The threat of terrorism is an issue that is not to be taken lightly in the world of today. The year 2015 has sadly been marked with an unsettlingly high number of acts of terror across the globe that claimed a multitude of civilian lives. The hospitality industry and hotels in particular are especially vulnerable to a potential terrorist attack, and this fact attracted the author's attention to the issue of the prevention of such attacks and the measures (if any) that the Helsinki hotels are undertaking to that end, eventually making it the focus of this work.

The main goal of this research-based thesis thus is to answer the following research question: *How well are the hotels in Helsinki city area prepared for a potential terrorist attack?*

For the initial phase of the research, a brief overview of the history of terrorism both in general and in hotels is completed, as well as that of the current anti-terrorist measures employed in the hotels worldwide.

The structured personal interviews are then conducted in two of the hotels of the area in order to gather first-hand information on such measures employed in those particular hotels. In addition to the interviews with the hotel managers, two more are conducted with the members of HAAGA-HELIA teaching staff with experience in hotel management, who possess the necessary knowledge and expertise to provide extra insight into the topic.

The findings from the interview are weighted against the data collected in the initial overview in order to assess the hotels' current attitude to the threat and to answer the main research question.

The results of the research show that the hotels in the Helsinki area are not well prepared for a potential terrorist attack, *however*, given the past history of terrorism in Finland and the current extremely low perceived likelihood of such an attack, the level of the security measures they employ at the moment is entirely justifiable and adequate.

Finally, the author's reflections on the results of the research are presented, its implications, the successfulness of reaching the set objectives, recommendations for possible future studies on the topic, an analysis of trustworthiness and reliability of the research, and the look at the resulting learning outcome for the author.

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1   Introduction

The Western world of 21st century faces few issues that truly threaten the core of its existence. Our mastery of sciences and understanding of the world around us grows exponentially as the years pass by, giving us the tools to be better prepared to combat the problems arising from the sources not originated by mankind itself, such as illnesses, natural disasters and the like. And while it is certainly true that we are still very far from living in harmony with our own planet, it is not an unreasonable argument that the most pressing and immediate threat to our society no longer lies today in the conflict of "man versus nature", but rather in that of "man versus man".

One of the most dangerous aspects of this conflict is war, a beast of many faces and shapes, ever-present on the face of the Earth since the time the first of men found out that in a conflict, contrary to the famous proverb, the sword may very well be mightier than a pen. Those of us fortunate enough to live at a reasonable distance from the zones of military conflicts, are rarely affected personally by the devastation, even if every once in a while the ripples do reach us in the comfort of our homes, whether through the means of the Internet, television, or other information sources. There is, however, another threat, which may appear either as standalone or as the most perilous of these ripples that we always have to be wary of, even in the calmest of times. This is the threat of terrorism.

Just like war, terrorism has been around since the ancient times, with the first documented acts dating back as early as the 1st century, by the Jewish extremist groups Sicari and the Zealots fighting against Roman Occupation of Judea (Burgess 2003). But no matter the actual date of the emergence of the phenomenon, its impact on the course of history of human society is undeniable – both in case of acts that were successful and those that weren't. Who knows in what world and society we would have been living today, had Guy Fawkes succeeded in the execution of the infamous Gunpowder Plot of 1605, blowing the House of Lords to smithereens, and, with it, King James the 1st of England, or had the perpetrators of the 9/11 failed in their dreadful quest. These two cases, though separated by almost four centuries and a different in almost every way possible, are still, in their essence, two apples from the same tree. However, speculation on the historical significance of such acts aside, one fact remains – we, if we want to continue growing as the humanistic and civilized society, should deem such acts barbaric and reject them as an appropriate tool in resolution of any conflicts. Thus, we should also do our best to prevent them, especially as they so often lead to losses of life among the innocent civilians.

1.1   Rationale

The way the issue of terrorism relates to hospitality industry and hotels in particular is the fact that among many potential targets for terrorism hotels are some of the most vulnerable. The characteristics contributing to this factor include: large territory of the building premises and its surroundings, multiple entrances, relatively low security of the whole perimeter, and, most of all – a constant flow of people of a large volume, both into and out of the hotel territory (AlBattat & Mat Som 2013, 4.). All those combined make hotels into a perfect target for acts of violence of any magnitude, and historical record shows that in cases when terrorists succeed in their goals, at least partly, the losses, especially those of life, could be devastating.

The author's interest in the topic had always been present, but it was sparkled more, to the point of turning into a focus of their thesis, by the 2015 attacks at the Riu Imperial Marhaba Hotel in Sousse, Tunisia, as well as the Charlie Hebdo shooting. And while the latter incident is not directly related to the topic, it still showed the incredible ease with which it's possible to conduct the deadly terrorist attack in a public place, with a minimal use of resources and a high number of casualties. Another reason for the choice of the topic is a relative scarcity of information available on it, at least research-wise, as opposed to simple news articles.

1.2   Research question

Prior to formulating the research question, the author would first like to present the reader with an anecdotal example from his personal history that in his opinion demonstrates how low the perception of a potential terrorist threat might be in hotels in Finland.

A friend of his was once staying at one of the major hotels in the central Helsinki area with his father. They were heading somewhere from the hotel but needed to leave a package of certain electronic devices for safekeeping at the hotel desk. As the storyteller remarks, the package looked quite suspicious on the surface if one didn't know what it was – with some wires protruding and other manufacturing details showing. They then approached the desk clerk (someone who has yet to see them before) and asked whether they could leave the package at the reception. To their surprise, the receptionist agreed without even asking for identification and the proof that they stayed at the hotel, and without inspecting or asking questions about the package itself.

While the author is not attempting to make a general observation on the terrorism prevention guidelines in Finnish hotels out of this standalone example, this case still gives

food for thought, as one can't help but wonder how a similar situation would turn out if an actual terrorist tried to sneak in a bomb in a the same fashion, and ended up doing so completely unimpeded. The general carelessness of this nature, combined with the rising terrorist threat worldwide, paints a worrisome picture that will have to be addressed sooner or later.

Thus, the main question that the author hopes to answer in this research is as follows – *How well are the hotels in Helsinki city area prepared for a potential terrorist attack*?

1.3   Objectives & limitations

The first objective (required for the completion of the second) is to make a brief overview of the history of terrorism both in general and in hotels, and of the current security measures the hotels worldwide are undertaking in order to prevent acts of terror on their territory.

The second, and a primary objective, is to gather first-hand information from the hotels of Helsinki area on such measures that they employ and weight the findings against the data collected for the previous objective in order to assess the preparedness of these hotels against a potential attack.

The objectives shall be reached through the analysis of the information gathered from the research and interviews, which would help to determine what the attitude of these hotels to the issue, i.e. whether they are employing the latest existing anti-terrorism measures or whether the management considers the threat too negligible to devote the spending of resources to its prevention, or are somewhere in between on the topic.

The target area for research is limited to Helsinki area for several reasons. Firstly, Helsinki is the biggest, most populated and one of the most visited cities in Finland with most hotels existing on its and nearby territories, allowing for the collection of data from a wide range of establishments. Secondly, given that the chosen way of collecting the information from the hotels is through a personal interview, it puts certain physical limitations on the distance the author could travel to gather that information. Thirdly, as the presented work is a Bachelor's thesis, it is reasonable to focus on a less broad area and aspect of an issue, while any later and more advanced research could expand on it by, for example, conducting a study through the whole country.

1.4   Research methods

The objective and nature of the topic studied point towards the research-based type of thesis, with the research being qualitative rather than quantitative. Data on the theoretical framework is to be collected, analysed and systematized through the use books, research & news articles and other sources of information available on the topic.

Moreover, the information on the Helsinki hotels' security measures is to be conducted through a personal interview with the members of the hotel personnel (the positions of the personnel interviewed may vary, with the important factor being their competence in the area) containing various questions on the matter. The justification for the choice of the method and the questions used in the interview can be found in the "Empirical part" chapter.

1.5   Validity & reliability of the research

In the current research the author will be guided by the principles integral to the nature of scientific method – those of reliability and validity. A brief definitions of the essence of these principles is as follows:

"The extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as **reliability** and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable" (Golafshani 2003, 598).

"**Validity** determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are" (Golafshani 2003, 599).

The author's reflection on the successfulness of their adherence to these principles is presented in the Discussion chapter.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Overview of the concept of Terrorism

2.1.1 A brief look at the history of the phenomenon

The English word "terrorism" first emerged during the time of French Revolution, a derivative from the French phrase "*régime de la terreur*" which referred to attempts to locate and eventually execute the traitors of the revolutionary government. Although the initial meaning of the word held a positive shade, in time, after Maximillian Robespierre's, own demise under a blade of a guillotine, it took a negative connotation, when the English statesman and orator Edmund Burke started referring to the supporters of the Revolution as terrorists. (Kushner 2003, 360.)

The first acts that could nowadays be described as "terrorist", however, could be traced to a much earlier time in human history. Recently debates have been sparkled on whether even the Biblical Moses himself could be considered a terrorist (Ramsey, 2014), due to his actions leading to the multiple deaths among the Egyptian populace. The less extreme and more historically verifiable data points towards the time of Roman occupation of Judea in the 1st century, when Jewish extremist groups Sicari and Zealots engaged in multiple public executions of both Jews, in case of the former, and Romans and Greeks, in case of the latter, with an intent of sending a gruesome message both to the authorities and their sympathizers – a method akin to those now considered terrorist. (Burgess 2003.)

Another example of the pre-modern era terrorist are the Assassins – the eponymous 11th century Shia Muslim group known for murdering people who in their view didn't hold up to the standards of their extreme version of Islam, publicly and in broad daylight, usually on the days of religious significance. Another similarity to the modern-day terrorists with religious agenda is their view of their possible deaths on such missions in the context of a divinely rewarded sacrifice. (Burgess 2003.)

However, the religious cause terrorism is just one of the many facets of the phenomenon. The other major one behind it is often political motives. In one of the most impactful events of Russian history of the 19th century, czar Alexander II known as The Liberator for his crowning achievement in successful emancipation of serfs, was assassinated in 1881 by a revolutionary group "Narodnaya Volya" translated as "The People's Will", seeking to entice the government to introduce democratic reforms. Their actions, in an ironic twist of fate, brought upon a result opposite of that desired – the slain czar's successor, Alexander III, was a significantly less liberally-minded ruler than his predecessor, who went back on

certain existing reforms put forward by him and hunted down the members of Narodnaya Volya, spelling the eventual end of the organization. (Spartacus Educational 2015.)

Of the many terrorist acts of the 20th century, none had probably had more dire consequences for the world's history than the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria by Gavrilo Princip, a 19-year-old member of the Serbian nationalist organization "Black Hand" on June 28, 1914. The assassination gave a precedent for Austria-Hungary to declare the war against Serbia, after which more nations declared the war on each other. This event in widely agreed by the historians to be the one that set in motion the events, which sparkled the beginning of the Great War, known now as the World War I. (Biography.com 2015.)

In the post-World War II times, the acts of terror have become an even more widely used instrument in the arsenal of those aiming to state their cause through violence rather than peaceful communication. Amongst the most tragic events of that era is the massacre of the athletes and coaches from an Israeli delegation at the Olympic Games in Munich on September 5th 1972. The perpetrators, eight Palestinian members of the "Black September" group captured the hostages in the Olympic compound, demanding in exchange for them, the release of more than two hundred prisoners from the jails in Israel as well as two more from these of Germany. During the negotiations, the terrorists refused multiple offers made to them by authorities, among which were a monetary sum or the exchange of hostages for the German foreign minister. Eventually, the agreement was reached to transport both the hostages and the terrorists to Egypt, with the German police officers stealthily waiting at the airport to attack the Palestinians. The resulting shootout led to catastrophic results, with all of the hostages perishing in the process. (Combs & Slann 2007, 189.)

The beginning of the 21st century was marked by probably the most infamous terrorist act ever to be carried out in history of humanity – the September 11th 2001 attacks. The author won't dwell too much on the details of the event in this paper as it they are well known to the most of the general public. It suffices to say, with almost 3000 victims and billions of dollars in damage to the United States economy, this horrific event is burnt into the memory of humankind, shaping the cultural and political environments in the world for years afterward.

Even the year 2015 which has yet to end, is already marked with red on the calendar with, among others, the attack on Riu Imperial Marhaba Hotel in Sousse, Tunisia, as well as the

Charlie Hebdo shooting in Paris, France, with the two incidents featuring just one and two gunmen respectively, but resulting in more than fifty fatalities together.

These few but very impactful examples demonstrate that terrorism has often been and remains to be a powerful tool in the hands of extremists of various groups and creeds, and the recent acts only showcase the potential for devastation and carnage even when the perpetrators are few and are not heavily armed. The conclusion that one must draw from this information is clear – the time to take this threat lightly has not yet come, and nowadays it might be more important than ever to be always prepared for potential attacks. This is particularly important for the businesses and organizations that could be viewed by terrorists as the potential targets, whether it is due, for example, to the specific individuals involved in those organizations, the sheer volume of its employees or customers or the ease of access to the territory. This, of course, is certainly applicable of all to hospitality industry, and hotels in particular.

2.1.2 Modern definitions of terrorism

As it can be seen from the examples above, terrorism is a very complex and diverse phenomenon, which can manifest itself in many different forms and be carried out by different agents. And in order to study and be able to protect oneself against any given phenomenon, one must define it first.

The task of defining terrorism is, however, a laborious one. As Kushner (2003, 359) puts it in his "Encyclopedia of Terrorism", "There are as many definitions for the word *terrorism* as there are methods of executing it." He also briefly mentions the old cliché "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" – a sentiment, which, in the author's opinion, has no place in the civilized modern world – as no one's pursuit of freedom should require them to cause suffering and deaths of innocent civilians.

The hardship of finding the right definition is evident from the fact that there still isn't one agreed upon between the Member States of the UN, a fact that "prevents the United Nations from exerting its moral authority and from sending an unequivocal message that terrorism is never an acceptable tactic, even for the most defensible of causes" (UN.org 2015). However, there is a consensus on what elements should be included in the definition, among which there is a following *description* of terrorism as:

"any action, in addition to actions already specified by the existing conventions on aspects of terrorism, the Geneva Conventions and Security Council resolution 1566 (2004), that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, when the purpose of such an act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a Government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act".
(UN.org 2015.)

In Finland, the definition of terrorism is the one introduced by the European Union in a following in a document entitled "Council Framework Decision of 13 June 2002 on combating terrorism" as:

"… the intentional acts referred to below in points (a) to (i), as defined as offences under national law, which, given their nature or context, may seriously damage a country or an International organisation where committed with the aim of:

— seriously intimidating a population, or
— unduly compelling a Government or international organization to perform or abstain from performing any act, or
— seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country
or an international organization,

shall be deemed to be terrorist offences:
(a) attacks upon a person's life which may cause death;
(b) attacks upon the physical integrity of a person;
(c) kidnapping or hostage taking;
(d) causing extensive destruction to a Government or public facility, a transport system, an infrastructure facility, including an information system, a fixed platform located on the continental shelf, a public place or private property likely to endanger human life or result in major economic loss;
(e) seizure of aircraft, ships or other means of public or goods transport;
(f) manufacture, possession, acquisition, transport, supply or use of weapons, explosives or of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons, as well as research into, and development of, biological and chemical weapons;
(g) release of dangerous substances, or causing fires, floods or explosions the effect of which is to endanger human life;
(h) interfering with or disrupting the supply of water, power or any other fundamental natural resource the effect of which is to endanger human life;
(i) threatening to commit any of the acts listed in (a) to (h)"
(The Council of the European Union 2002.)

In addition to these and multiple other official definitions, there exist ones found in academia, which are just as diverse and rarely in agreement with each other. Presented below are several of them which can be found in literature on the topic:

The already mentioned "Encyclopedia of Terrorism" presents a following definition, as they put it, "in the more traditional understanding of the term – violence against civilian targets with the intent of instilling fear and creating political or social change" (Kushner 2003, 359).

Another book by Combs & Slann (2007, 320) that shares the same name goes for perhaps less academic and more poetic, but nonetheless reasonable definition: "a synthesis of war and theater, a dramatization of the most proscribed kind of violence – that which is perpetrated on innocent victims – played before an audience in the hope of creating a mood of fear for political purposes".

Lastly, in an item named "The Revised Academic Consensus Definition of Terrorism", of Perspectives on Terrorism journal, Alex P. Schmid describes how the lack of one official legal definition for the concept led to the necessity for at least an consensual academic one, the latest version of which he provides. The complete complied definition spans many paragraphs, but the essence of it is represented in the following extract:

> "Terrorism refers, on the one hand, to a doctrine about the presumed effectiveness of a special form or tactic of fear-generating, coercive political violence and, on the other hand, to a conspiratorial practice of calculated, demonstrative, direct violent action without legal or moral restraints, targeting mainly civilians and non-combatants, performed for its propagandistic and psychological effects on various audiences and conflict parties"
> Schmid (2012.)

The same article also refers to a book by the same writer from which the definition is taken which combines 260 more of them (Schmid 2012) – an impressive number that shows the scope of the problem of pinpointing the exact characteristics that are essential to this phenomenon. All in all, for this work, the author believes, it is not crucial to settle on one universal and comprehensive definition – it's enough to just have the perspective on the different angles of the issue provided by those aforementioned authors and organizations.

2.2 Terrorism and Hospitality industry

2.2.1 Overview

Although the threat of terrorism can be related to almost any aspect of our lives, as interactions with organizations, both public and governmental and simply with other human beings are a necessary part of our everyday existence, there are certain activities and entities that are more vulnerable to this threat than others.

The nature of hospitality and tourism industry itself is such that the people and interactions between them are an integral part of it. As it can be observed from the multiple definitions of terrorism introduced in the previous chapter, even if they differ in some aspects, they all have one characteristic in common – the targets described in them are mainly innocent civilians not directly involved in any military or other conflicts. Thus, for this very reason, hospitality industry represents one of the best potential targets for terrorist acts of various magnitude and scope.

Among the most alluring for terrorists characteristics and aspects of tourists and industry in general are such factors as: publicity resulting from the involvement of international tourists in these incidents; potential serious harm for the economic and social environment of the targeted countries; and, lastly, the actual size and scope of the travel industry itself, which allows the terrorists a multitude of choice of potential targets – as large groups of tourists could be found at a wide variety of locations, as well as a choice of the type of attack – be that suicide bombing, highjacking or simple shooting, among others. Lastly, the tourists themselves could be used by terrorists as valuable hostages. (Henderson 2007, 55-58.)

The effect of terrorism on the industry, even of those acts not specifically targeted at it, could manifest as a serious blow to its performance and future development – as a result of high publicity and media coverage of such events, resulting in feelings of uneasiness and fear induced in the general population and potential tourists among them, negatively influencing their travel behaviour. This results in travel plans getting cancelled or relocated to places perceived as less dangerous, hurting the businesses in places where attacks occurred – to the point of significant changes in their existing plans and business strategy for the future. The effects are most serious in those locations suffering from a repeated attack. (Henderson 2007, 59-60.)

2.2.2 Terrorism threat in hotels

As it has been briefly mentioned in the Introduction chapter, of the many potential targets for terrorists in hospitality industry, hotels are among the most "soft" ones, meaning that there are many characteristics integral to hotels and the way they are run which make it more vulnerable to attack as opposed to certain other alluring targets. Presented below is a bit more detailed description those traits (AlBattat & Mat Som 2013, 4.):

1. Large territory of the building premises and its surroundings.
2. Multiple entrances – an essential trait for creating a better operational flow from a logistical standpoint.
3. Relatively low security of the whole perimeter – while a military base could be a viewed as an important potential target by the terrorists to attack, the level of security there is so high, it renders the chances of success very low. Hotels, however, could have territories of the size comparable to these bases, but the security is hardly proportional – which, however, is understandable, at least from the viewpoint of customer comfort.
4. A constant flow of people of a large volume, both into and out of the hotel territory – the most important characteristic in the context of a possible attack, as it allows the terrorists both a higher chance to get to on the territory of the hotel unnoticed, and also a higher number of potential victims in case of a success.

While on the surface it seems that terrorism prevention measures are a no-brainer for the hotels that care about the safety of their guests, the tricky part about their introduction is that they often require a trade-off in customers' comfort and satisfaction from visiting the hotel when implemented – the searching of suitcases, metal detectors and other security measures could be seen as a major nuisance by them. Thus, many hotels nowadays are still reluctant to make any significant changes, even though the amount of attacks on hotels has been on the rise since 2001. (Hall 2009.)

2.2.3 Notable cases from history

With the hotels possessing such glaring weaknesses to a possible terrorist attack, it is to be expected that the historical record should be abundant with the examples of such cases. Presented below is a brief look on some of the most infamous of them.

A case from rather distant history, but nonetheless still relevant today, the terrorist act at the Jerusalem's King David Hotel in the early afternoon hours of June 22nd 1946 had claimed the lives of more than 90 people, and injured half as many. The attack was carried out by the Jewish underground group "Irgun Zwei Leumi", fighting against what they considered the unlawful British occupation of Palestine and aimed at the British administrative headquarters for Palestine which were housed in one of the wings of the hotel. The perpetrators disguised themselves as personnel and set up several bombs in the premises under the wing. Although Irgun members claimed to have sent out several warnings before the explosion in order to warn the hotel staff and minimize casualties, the hotel was not evacuated. (Kushner 2003, 181.)

Although the attack was not typical in the sense that the actual target was not civilian, even though the building's main function was that of a hotel, it still shows the ease with which devastation can be unleashed in its premises. And the fact that the target was an important administrative centre makes it even more curious that the security measures which should have been higher than in a regular hotel were not efficient enough to prevent it. It also shows that, in case the claim of the warnings was true, that at times those can be not taken seriously, and in a cases where the danger turns out to be real, this leads to the fatalities that could have been otherwise avoided.

In an example from the more recent years, the six-wheeled dump truck filled with explosives detonated at the gates of Marriott Hotel in the Pakistan capital of Islamabad in the night of September 20th 2008 by a suicide bomber, led to deaths of more than 50 civilians, with five times as many sustaining injuries. The attack also left the hotel building burning with a six-meter deep crater gaping open in front of it. Prior to the bombing, some Western security experts at Marriott voiced concerns about the level of security at the hotel, and even though it was improved the previous year, it ended up not being enough to prevent the incident (Masood 2008.)

The perpetrator himself was never identified and no organization took responsibility for the attack. However, no matter their identity and motives, the fact remains the same – with over three hundred people among the dead and injured, this horrific act of violence has left a lasting impression on the world population.

One of the most deadly terrorist attacks in the modern history of India took place the same year as the Marriott bombing, barely two months after, between November 26th and 29th in Mumbai where ten members of an Islamist organization "Lashkar-e-Tayyiba" wielding

grenades and automatic weapons brought carnage in seven target buildings and locations of the city, including two luxury hotels popular with the tourists – Taj Mahal Palace & Tower Hotel and Oberoi Trident Hotel. The attacks leave 164 people dead, with 31 and 30 of the casualties resulting from the three- and two-day sieges at each of the respective hotels. (CNN 2015.)

Another example of a terrorist act carried out with minimal resources but leading to a high number of casualties, this incident showcases once more the vulnerability of even the most luxurious hotels, especially to a hostage-type situation that could lead to a prolonged siege which is hard to bring to an end without many fatalities in the process.

Peter Foster of The Telegraph (2008) presents a great summation of the aftermath and the effect of this event on the world population in the following passage: "To have pictures of burning Taj Hotel broadcast around the world will have a deeper impact than even perhaps the terrorists intended, striking a blow against a symbol of Indian wealth and progress and sending shivers down the spine of some of the richest and most powerful people on the planet".

This quote really puts the perspective onto the perception of terrorist attacks at the hotels as opposed to maybe some other less notable targets – not only do they demonstrate that the wealth and influence can be powerless against brute senseless violence, and you can come face to face with it even when you think you've escaped from the troubles of the world for a while.

The latest major terrorist attack aimed at a hotel and its visitors as of this day, and one of the most successful in regards to the number of victims versus the complexity of the attack and the weapons used, is the incident at the beach near the Hotel Riu Imperial Marhaba in Sousse, Tunisia on June 26th 2015. The assailant, a 24 year old student from Gaafour, acting on religious motives, massacred 38 people with an AK-47 carried concealed in a beach umbrella in a five-minute attack which started at a hotel beach and continued through the territory of the resort. (Smith-Spark & Walsh & Black 2015.)

Probably the most jarring and shocking of the incidents presented in this overview due to its relative simplicity in the face of the devastation caused, this attack demonstrates like no other that there exists an ever-growing need for stricter security measures at the hotels and territories adjacent to them, especially in this age when some of the most dangerous and trigger-happy terrorists – religious extremists may strike anywhere and anytime. While perhaps incidents like the Marriott bombing are harder to anticipate and avert due to the

weapon of choice that could cause significant destruction even if it does not reach its intended destination, the ones like the Sousse attack seem much more preventable.

2.2.4 Modern anti-terrorist measures in hotel industry

With the number of international tourists growing every year, the question of safety and security measures in hotels is becoming the topmost priority among these travelers, according to a multitude of researchers in the field of hospitality. (AlBattat & Mat Som 2013, 1.) While there are many issues that fall under "safety and security" category, it is the terrorist acts like the 9/11 that prompted hotels the most to increase their security budgets as of late, investing more into the upgrades and installation of heavy-duty equipment in the front areas. Other measures such as safeguard surveillance, checks of baggage, personal metal detectors, employees' emergency checks at the employee entrance, and guest verification before reissuing the room key have also been introduced. (AlBattat & Mat Som 2013, 3-5.) Overall, many experts in the field agree that the first priority of hotels in this regard should be the prodromal stage of crisis – that is, the one that embodies preparedness, planning, and prevention of crises as opposed to the actual emergency stage when a crisis takes place. This should be accomplished through the introduction of emergency (crisis) management plans that are also continuously updated. (AlBattat & Mat Som 2013, 5.)

A crisis management plan, in turn, is defined by the European Network and Information Security Agency as follows: "A clearly defined and documented plan of action for use at the time of a crisis. Typically a plan will cover all the key personnel, resources, services and actions required to implement and manage the Crisis Management process". (BCMpedia 2015)

In the immediate days following the 2008 attacks in Mumbai some security experts and analysts stated their doubts about the possible implementation of more rigid security measures in the hotels, as the quick fix solution did not exist, in their opinion, to the intrinsic vulnerabilities of hotels to acts of terror, and, once again, the concerns about customer satisfaction when faced with these measures come into the picture. (Bradsher 2008)

However, statistics show that the security industry grew by more than one third after this particular terrorist attack. Along with the more classic security measures mentioned in the previous paragraph, there emerge some brand new original ones, with one example being the "Mobile Surveillance Unit", an advanced camera system which could be placed atop any vehicle with a view distance of hundreds of meters, both during the day and night

hours. While such systems may seem expensive to implement, the latest studies show that instead of profitability loss they lead to the increase of around 20%, which demonstrates also the customers' satisfaction with the changes. (Chand 2013, 51.)

Measures are also being taken in regards to prevention or at least minimization of damage from the attacks similar to the Islamabad dump truck suicide bombing. The exterior walls of the hotels are being reinforced, while the entry to the gates is customized in a way that allows the prevention of gatecrashing with such vehicles, with this entry points also featuring such devices as Boom Barriers, tyre busters and bollards. This, complete with the Under Vehicle Scanning System which in addition to its namesake activity also collects the information on the driver and the license plates of the vehicle, minimizes the chances of an intrusion. (Chand 2013, 52.)

Other intruder prevention systems like The Leela Palace New Delhi hotel CCTV-linked infra-red rays one are also getting popular. Another extremely important issue is the preventing the explosives of any kind entering the building premises, and for that there exist devices like the multizone Door Frame Metal detectors featured at Grand Mercure Hotel in Bengaluru. They allow for a full scan of a hotel visitor without any actual physical contact, which is a great benefit in the face of the previously mentioned dilemma of the guest security-comfort tradeoff. Finally, in addition to these new and enhanced systems, there are still used the improved versions of the classic mainstay hotel ones like Bomb Blankets and Bomb Inhibitors. (Chand 2013, 52-53.)

Not all advances in hotel anti-terrorism measures come from new technology – some are the result of the improved qualification of the hotel personnel in regards to the matter. For example, raining programs which emerged after 9/11 and were co-developed by certain hotel chains, had helped tighten security standards in the industry. Moreover, in certain cities, e.g. New York, the security personnel nowadays is required by law to be certified via training in private security companies (with 16 hours of yearly refresher courses), while those in Washington have to study to become experts in activities such as crowd control and surveillance. (Sturken 2012.)

One of the security experts in the field, Paul Goldenberg, president and CEO of risk management consulting firm Cardinal Point Strategies, states: "One of the most successful ways to counter terrorism is really to empower staff employees and people to be aware of their surroundings and to understand vulnerabilities and understand threats." (Griffin 2011.)

Overall, it can be seen from these examples of the technologies and guidelines existing nowadays to combat and, even more so, *prevent* terrorism in hotels, the key to success in this mission in the combination of careful planning of the prodromal stages of a crisis, usage of advances in modern technology, and, finally, the education and training of hotel personnel in preparedness for and handling of situations involving a terrorist attack on the premises.

2.2.5 Terrorism threat in Finland

An important point of note for this research is the estimated risk of a terrorist threat in the country of Finland in general. The information on such estimates can be obtained from the document called The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2015 (World Economic Forum 2015) published by the World Economic Forum. According to The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index for Finland, the country is currently rated 6.7 for the Business costs of terrorism and 7.0 for the Index of terrorism incidence. The Business costs of terrorism grade refers to the costs on business imposed by the threat of terrorism, while Index of terrorism incidence indicates the simple average of the number of terrorism-related casualties (injuries and fatalities) and the number of terrorist attacks. Both indexes are measured on a grade from 1 to 7, worst to best. (World Economic Forum 2015.)

Judging on these grades, Finland currently holds (or shares) the 1st place on both indicators among the 141 economies represented in the report, making it one on the safest countries in the world, both for civilians and businesses, in regards to the threat of terrorism.

3   Empirical part

As it was mentioned in the Introduction chapter, the primary objective of this research is to study the preparedness of the Helsinki area hotels for a potential terrorist attack. Such analysis can only be performed with the first-hand information received from these hotels, since this data is not available publically, e.g. on their websites, for obvious reasons of security.

3.1   Choice of a research method

Since the research conducted for this work is of a qualitative type, the range of most common suitable methods of data collection for it includes, according to The National Science Foundation (2002, 49): surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations and tests. Below is a brief look at two of those techniques that the author deemed most suitable for the purposes of this research:

1. "Survey – a data collection tool that always includes the two main parts – questions (both open- and close-ended) and responses. Its best applications is in situations in which the number of responders is large or the questions are all clearly formulated. They are generally suitable for collecting descriptive data on a wide range of topics, but the flip side is the relative shallowness of that data". (The National Science Foundation 2002, 49-50.)

2. "Interview – a tool that comes in two varieties: structured and in-depth. The former type always features a detailed set of questions from which the interviewer rarely deviates, while the latter has less of a predetermined structure, allowing for the deeper insight into certain aspects of the topic at a possible cost of the uniform coverage of the whole topic. In general, interviews often provide the deepest and most valuable data, but are also time-consuming and require a lot of skill on the part of the interviewer in order to get the most clear and useful answers". (The National Science Foundation 2002, 50-52.)

The method of a structured personal interview has been chosen over the alternative methods for several reasons, the main of which being the delicacy of the subject matter – it is unreasonable to expect that the management would allow for the details of their anti-terrorism measures to be discussed through any means other than personal contact, which allows for the best security of the conversation. Moreover, the structure of the most of the questions featured in the interview is open-ended as opposed to multiple-choice which makes each question require more detailed answers, which are easier to get in a face-to-face conversation, especially if the need for any clarifications arises. While the method of an in-depth interview also seems appropriate for the investigation on the chosen topic, the matter of strict time constraints makes it less appealing. Moreover, the

uniformity of questions is required for a better analysis and comparison of the data from different hotels, which makes a structured interview a better tool in this regard as well.

3.2 Interview questions

Through the research done in the Theoretical Framework part of the thesis the author devised the following list of the questions used in the interviews conducted, divided in groups by a common subtopic:

Introduction:

1. *Is terrorism prevention a part of your crisis management plan?*

2a. *If no, why?*

2b. *If yes, describe briefly the main components of the terrorism prevention guidelines in your hotel, if possible.*

Technology:

3. *What technologies do you take advantage of in these guidelines?*

4. *Have there been significant changes or additions to the plan in the recent years sprouting from the continuing advances in technology?*

Learning from the past:

5. *What are the differences in your view on the topic of terrorism prevention in hotels compared to 5/10/15 years ago? Do you think there is less or more need for such precautions?*

6. *How do you react to the latest terrorist acts around the globe, especially those significant enough to gather large media attention? Recent examples – Tunisia / Paris / Mali attacks.*

Guests:

7. *What is your view on the trade-off between safety & security of the guests and their comfort?*

8. *When your hotel is visited by VIPs / famous guests, do you "step up" your security? If yes, how?*

Other hotel specific questions:

9. *Do you improve your own security practices via research and comparison of similar practices in other hotels worldwide? If yes, how?*

10. *Do your security specialists possess any specific education or training in the field (especially in regards to terrorism prevention), and if they do, what kind?*

11. *What type of a terrorist attack do you consider most likely and thus prepare against the most?*

12. *Finally, if you yourself were to estimate your hotel's preparedness against a terrorist attack on a scale from 1 to 10, lowest to highest, what grade would you choose?*

The questions have been tested for comprehensibility and time consumption with two volunteers chosen amongst the friends of the author – one with a background in studies in hospitality industry, and one without, both of whom had fluent English skills with it being their second language. Despite the different backgrounds, the results yielded were very similar, and positive – there were no confusion in understanding the questions' wording and neither considered the list of questions to be too long or too short, estimating the time required to answer all of them in the range of 30 minutes, thought, of course, it depends on the individual characteristics of the interviewee.

3.3 Struggles in the search for the interviews

Initially the author's intent was to conduct the interviews with only the current hotel managers of the city's hotels, however, it quickly became apparent that securing even just a few interviews on the topic would be a real struggle. While the late autumn – early winter period is always a busy time for the hotels in preparation for Christmas holidays, and some interview rejections related to time constraints are expected, this wasn't the primary reason behind many of those received by the author.

The one that was, however, was related to the security & privacy policies of the hotels where the interviews were requested – they simply did not allow for any information regarding these matters to be shared. While the author did expect a certain amount of rejections, the eventual number ended up much higher, to his dismay. Even though the questions were specifically designed in a way that they required the least possible amount of detailed and delicate information to answer, that was, in most cases, not enough to persuade the hoteliers to change their stance and allow for even a brief interview to be conducted. Such unexpected and unfortunate turn of events, obviously, was highly

detrimental to the author's intent and diversity of research, as the eventual sampling of just the two hotels (even with the full-length detailed interviews held in both), is under the ideal amount required for the full analysis of the terrorism prevention situation in the city's hotels.

However, despite such a serious setback, the author was able, in his opinion, to find another way of adding relevant data, credence and reliability to the research. In addition to the two interviews conducted in the Helsinki hotels, he was able to arrange two additional ones with the current HAAGA-HELIA teachers, both of whom had previous experience in hotel management and were able to give an educated opinion and insight into the topic of modern terrorism prevention in hotels, as well as some information on those practices held in the hotels they previously worked at. In regards to the latter point, in the interest of keeping any of the received security information private, the names of the teachers and the hotels they managed will not be mentioned in this work, they would instead be referred to as Teacher #1 and Teacher #2 respectively. Presented in the next chapter are the overviews of those two interviews.

3.4 Teacher interviews

3.4.1 Teacher #1 interview

The interview with the first teacher went in a less strictly organized and more of a free conversation manner in the sense that the questions written for the hotels were not as applicable in their case, as the hotel management experience they had dated back to the early 21st century at the latest, and therefore was not as immediately relevant to the present day's situation and practices. However, they still were very much interested in and informed on the topic of this research and were able to provide the author with some valuable general insights.

One of the first points noted by them was that up until and including the present day, the "terrorism prevention" as the part of crisis management plans has been close to nonexistent in the hotels of Finland, since terrorism itself remains something that had not really happened in the country very often. Thus, it had not yet become an issue that would be lodged in people's minds enough to warrant any kind of a preventive action. The same situation and mentality (at least in regards to hospitality business) is something that is not unique to Finland or Scandinavian countries in general – in the "reactive vs proactive" debate the former side is often favoured.

The reasoning for this is mostly the question of assessment of a possible risk – if something has a very low probability of occurring, then in many cases the proactive preparation against its occurrence, particularly in the long run, ends up being a costly enterprise that might not be worth the resources spent on it – especially if these costs are not a one-time investment (e.g. a purchase of security cameras). After all, one cannot prepare against every possible threat equally well without jeopardizing some other aspects of the business operation – it makes more sense to prepare against the risks with the highest probability of occurring and leave those least possible out of the equation. Therefore, in Teacher #1's opinion, terrorism threat in Finnish hotels might still be among those risks belonging to the latter category, even when taking into account some of the more worrisome world events related to the matter and their increasing frequency. However, they do frankly admit that in case a terrorist organization would choose to act on its soil, Finland in general would be an easy, soft target.

One last interesting point they brought up in regards to the security measures in hotels worldwide is that of the existence of the two widely different cultures or approaches to it – the "built-to-be-seen" preventive measures (more prevalent in, for example, India), and "hidden" ones (characteristic of Scandinavia). And in this case the appearance does not necessarily represent the actual preventive power – it might be equal between the two example hotels from both cultures, but is rather aimed at the potential customer to influence their feeling of security and confidence in their safety. Those vary from customer to customer, but the general trends can be observed and played to and that is why such differences exist, even if under the surface the actual security situation could be the same.

3.4.2 Teacher #2 interview

The second interview the author was able to get at HAAGA-HELIA was in a bit of a different format from the first one since it was done using the same list of questions prepared for the hotel interviews, as the teacher's hotel managing experience was relatively recent and they were therefore able to answer all of the questions in relation to the last position that they held in a hotel. Though the name of the hotel would not be mentioned, it's rather important to note that it belonged to one of the major hotel chains prominent in Finland and thus the security standards employed there were the chain's standards, featured in many other of their hotels. Presented below is the overview of the interview divided by the question subtopics:

Questions 1 & 2:

While the hotel managed by the Teacher #2 did indeed have an extensive crisis management plan, covering many topics and risks that are related in some aspects of their nature to terrorism (e.g. bomb threats or armed assaults), there was not a specific chapter related to this particular threat. The reasoning for not having it was the estimated low probability of a terrorist attack both in the hotel, and in the country in general.

The guidelines for the crisis situations did include the following three main areas of importance which would also be applicable for a terrorist attack situation:
- The access to the building (everyone who is not a customer was required to have proper identification and access cards/keys)
- Manual monitoring of the lobby area and the outside premises hourly, especially in the night hours
- Instructions for the staff and communications plan in a possible crisis situation – e.g. buying time while security company/police department is contacted. Another point of importance is that the main priority would always be saving people's lives over saving the property/money.

Questions 3 & 4:

There were no technologies particularly unique to the prevention of the terrorist attack installed in the hotel, but, once again, those related to the prevention of the other crises would be of use in such a situation as well. Those included motion detection security cameras, reinforced Front Office back room doors for the staff to hide from the perpetrator(s) in case of a robbery/armed attack, electronically locked access to any of the important locations, (including elevators), and a sophisticated communication system featuring Internet connection-based IP-phones in place of all regular ones.

The teacher did recall, however, their experience in working in another large chain hotel in Helsinki, which often (at times almost daily) had "bomb dogs" brought in by the police to check for the possible explosive devices.

Questions 5 & 6:

In the Teacher #2's opinion, the need for those measures had indeed increased in the last decade in a half, both worldwide and in Finland in particular, and the hotels are discussing the possibility of introducing new or improving the existing ones, but they are still not completely ready or willing to do it yet. In regards to the recent terrorist acts, those events do certainly influence those discussions, raising awareness of the threat more and more, and even though they are unlikely to have affected the daily operational side of the hotel

operation, they might have more influences on the strategic level and future planning for the hotel companies.

The teacher did note, however, that in case Finland or another Scandinavian country would be hit by a terrorist attack, such changes would definitely be immediately developed and implemented, even though by that point the damage would already be done.

Questions 7 & 8:

The fine line between the comfort and safety of the guests was also referred to by the teacher, however, they believe that with the appropriate level of professionalism in organisation of the security measures, it's possible to achieve the point of having the showings on both of these points on a relatively high level without the necessity for a trade-off. This refers, most of all, to the appearance and behavior of the security specialists/officers on the premises, to the point where they can be either unnoticed by the guests or be considered the regular members of the staff. Secondly, the technological progress also allows security devices such as metal detectors to become smaller and less noticeable over the years, while retaining and even improving their functionality.

In regards to the improved security measures for the VIPs in the hotel run by the Teacher #2, these did appear there, mostly through the additional security briefings for the staff and preparation in advance for the visits. An interesting point of note is that many of the foreign VIP guests would organize the additional security measures by themselves – e.g. by bringing several personal security officers (with them even having a possibility of keeping a constant contact with the city's police department through the mobile connection).

Questions 9 & 10

The security improvements in that hotel were indeed done on the constant basis, both through the reflection on the recent events/practices in the hotel and through the information about other local establishments. No major changes were usually introduced, but the minor improvements such as, for example, additions of the new security cameras or new tools for Front Office managers, were added frequently.

The chain that the hotel belonged to had a main security office in its headquarters that housed security specialists with major background in business and knowledge of the world security practices, that not only had contacts with other security professionals

themselves but who were also responsible for staff training in many of the chain's hotels, including this particular one, so even though there wasn't a separate security office in the hotel premises, the staff did indeed have proper skills for handling crisis situations.

Questions 11 & 12

While in the Teacher #2's opinion in Finland it is very hard to predict an attack type and its source as the country has not faced many such incidents in the recent past, the people that are most likely to perform a terrorist attack are the ones belonging to some extremist political (e.g. nationalist) or religious movements. These individuals are also often characterized by the aggressive and violent but erratic behavior, so the attack is likely to be less thought-through and more impulsive and crude – e.g. a break-in with the automatic weapons, like the recent case in Mali.

Finally, the teacher estimates the overall preparedness of the country's hotels as low, in the range of 3 or lower on the scale ranging up to ten, with some exceptions in big luxurious hotels known for housing VIP guests. Their own hotel was given a bit higher grade of 4 thanks to the aforementioned security trainings and guidelines, but it is still a relatively low number in case an actual attack did indeed occur.

3.5   Hotel interviews

As it was mentioned in an earlier subchapter, the author encountered significant difficulties in securing any interviews in the city hotels, however, eventually he was able to find two managers who agreed to do it. The two hotels belonged to the two different categories – one a standalone small hotel with less than a hundred rooms and the second one a rather large chain hotel, so that fact ensured the insight into the topic would be given from two different angles, which would be more valuable for the research than a look from just the one perspective.

As in the case with HAAGA-HELIA teachers, no names of the hotels or managers would be mentioned to ensure anonymity and security of information gathered.

3.5.1   Manager #1 interview

The first hotel manager interviewed by the author holds the General Manager position in one of the smaller standalone hotels of the area and is also responsible for safety and

security protocols in its premises. The interview was conducted using the previously referred to list of questions, all of which were found suitable to answer by them.

Questions 1 & 2:

The answer to the first question was a firm "no" with the justification being that the hotel had not had any reason as of yet to prepare for a possibility of a terrorist attack – for as long as this hotel has been open there hasn't happened anything that could be described as such, whether on the hotel premises or in the city in general. Moreover, such a threat does not truly exist as such in the minds of Finnish citizens yet – in many ways thanks to a stellar historical record in that regard, at least of the recent past.

There is, however, a safety and security plan existing in the hotel, thought it mostly deals with issues other than terrorism (though somewhat related still), such as the fire hazards or minor disturbances caused by intoxicated or aggressive people. Another interesting security measure is the communication with the police regarding the guests arriving from certain countries – the hotel is required to send the passport information of such individuals to the police offices. Additionally, the hotel has been helpful in catching petty criminals and other suspects sought suspects sought by the Helsinki law enforcement unit via the use of data obtained on the security cameras.

Questions 3 & 4:

Technology-wise, the hotel is well equipped with the effective but common security measures like automated fire alarm systems, panic buttons, security surveillance cameras (which can be monitored even from home by the manager) and locked doors with remote microphones (closed during nighttime or when the receptionists feel the need for such precaution). In regards to the recent advances, only the security cameras were mentioned, as, once again, no need for further improvements has arisen yet.

Questions 5 & 6:

In Managers #1's opinion, the pressure on the hoteliers in regards to the terrorism prevention measure has indeed risen as of late, but not to the extent which would require any changes at this moment. Moreover, it is not clear from where the need for them would sprout exactly – whether it is the government legislature, the customers' preferences the hotel own initiative or elsewhere. While no such need exists and everyone considers the

security measures to be adequate and proportionate to the threat, the change and thus further investment into them would most likely be the money wasted.

In relation to the latest terrorist attacks, their opinion was that although these events are truly tragic and worrisome on a larger scale, they believe that Finland is still a country which is relatively safe from having something similar happening on its territory – at least because these attacks were largely religious in nature, and here there rarely arise conflicts associated with it. "If it happens, it happens", Manager #1 put it – "but you can't always prepare for everything". Another important point they mentioned is "extremes creating extremes" – meaning that the reaction to the terrorists attacking a country as peaceful and relatively uninvolved in the larger world disputes as Finland might cause a larger backlash that they would expect and harm them and their goals more than benefit them.

Questions 7 & 8:

Echoing the previously stated thought on the current lack of need for improved security, Manager #1's opinion on the trade-off between safety and comfort of the guests is now more on the side of the latter, though they did emphasize the need for striving for the balance in that regard.

The visits by VIP guests in the hotel in some way do incite higher security measures, but most of the time only from the side of the guests themselves – they are the ones who organize it if they feel the need for such precautions, and not the hotel staff.

Questions 9 & 10:

The security improvements in the Manager #1's hotel are, as previously mentioned, rarely updated on a constant basis, and if some new ones are introduced based on other hotels' practices, they only come from those of the Helsinki area and not worldwide.

There are no actual trained security specialists in the hotel and the staff member responsible for security organization is the General Manager himself. Most of the related issues are outsourced to a security company.

Questions 11 & 12:

There are no types of a terrorist attack considered likely by the management of the hotel – and if something like a bomb attack would happen there, there would be little possibility to prevent it anyway. An interesting additional point noted by the manager, however, is that the relatively small size and the fact that the hotel in essentially non-branded make it a less attractive potential target for the terrorists. So, in some sense, even though the actual technical terrorist prevention ability of the hotel is low, there is some additional "protection" in being a relatively low profile establishment.

Finally, the grade given by the Manager #1 for their hotel preparedness against an attack is 2 on the scale of 1 to 10. While the number appears very low, they believe that in context and in the current environment in regards to the threat, it is more than justifiable to have it at that level for the time being.

3.5.2 Manager #2 interview

The second hotel manager that the author was able to get for an interview is currently employed as a Service manager in one of the big chain hotels in Helsinki – indicating a significant difference from the previous interview, both from the hotel type perspective and the organizational structure of the company. Presented below is the overview of the answers received during the interview.

Questions 1 & 2:

The crisis management plan at the hotel (and the other hotels of the chain in Finland) where the Manager #2 is employed does not contain any mentions of the word "terrorism", so there is, consequently, no actual prevention guidelines for events of that nature there. There are, however, guidelines for the cases of bomb threats and other similar occurrences, just as in the hotels featured in the previous interviews. Once again, the reason behind the omission of terrorism threat from the plan is its perceived low risk which makes the preparation for it a costly and ultimately inefficient enterprise. According to the Manager #2, the staff members of their hotel have significant work experience in other hotels of the city, both chain and standalone, and the knowledge gathered from those members also indicated that there is still little need for introduction of separate anti-terrorism measures for now.

Questions 3 & 4:

The hotel is also equipped with the regular standard security equipment – with almost no difference from the hotel run by Manager #1 – security cameras once again being the most valuable tool for the tracking of any potentially suspicious activity in the hotel. The separate electronic keys for all members of the staff are another security measure that limits potential access to the premises. The communication system in the hotel is also of a rather ordinary type and includes both regular and mobile phone connections between the staff.

In regards to the technological advances, in the five years that the Manager #2 had worked in this particular hotel, there weren't any major improvements of note that they could recall. However, despite the fact that the technological side of the security system there does not seem overly advanced or sophisticated, when comparing it with another city hotel (belonging to another big chain) where they worked for a number of years previously, the manager states that in their opinion the security measures in their current place of employment are more advanced still.

Questions 5 & 6:

According to Manager #2, during their long career in the hospitality industry in Finland, they almost never did encounter the word "terrorism" in any official context, in relation to their job or hotel security – however, they admit that the recent events do have the possibility to impact the view on the security procedures in the overseeable future, especially if the trend of their frequency persists, or if Finland itself becomes a target for an attack. However, for now, the focus of the security procedures, at least in their hotel, remains on the more common and likely daily threats and risks.

Questions 7 & 8:

The manager's view on the guest comfort in relation to security, again, leans closer to the comfort part of the dichotomy for the reasons of the low threat likelihood. However, sometimes the guests still have to be informed on and guided through the security protocols and guidelines – usually in the cases of groups booking meetings at the hotel, usually on request from these groups themselves.

The answer to the question of "stepping up security" for VIPs very much echoes the ones received in the previous two interviews as well – some additional measures are taken, but it's much more frequent for the guests themselves to take care of those.

Questions 9 & 10:

As mentioned previously, the improvement of the security measures at the Manager #2's hotel do not take place particularly often and the hotel itself is rarely a flagship for the change – if any significant changes were to take place, they would often happen first in other large hotels of the city area.

No specifically educated security specialists are employed at the hotel, the work is carried out mostly by the manager themselves. They are in charge of organizing staff orientations, yearly security trainings for the staff and creation of the illustrated safety and security manual for them.

Questions 11 & 12:

The most likely type of a terrorist attack in the manager's opinion would have to do with some sort of a large-scale political or business meetings held in the city and their hotel in particular, and those are the times where additional security alertness might be needed.

The grade given by the Manager #2 for their overall safety and security in the hotel was in the range of 7 to 8, but that of the preparedness for the terrorist attack was estimated on a significantly lower level of around 5.

3.6 Summary

Overall, it can be stated that all of the interviews were very successful in what they were aiming for, with the author getting most, if not all, of the answers to the questions presented in last three of the four of them, and some valuable insights from the first one, even though it was conducted in a bit of a different way from the others.

It is immediately apparent from the answers gathered that the main similarity between all of them is the fact that even though each person interviewed has confirmed the existence of a "crisis management plan" in the hotels they work/worked at, there is no such clause as a "terrorism prevention" in any of them. The reasoning for that in each case is the

perceived low risk associated with the threat of terrorism, both on the premises of their establishment, and in Finland in general.

Since there is almost no difference on the former point in the answers, consequently the questions regarding technology as a tool of assistance against a potential terrorist attack also received somewhat similar answers, though a bit more varied still. Even though neither of the interviewees recalled having any particular anti-terrorist technology installed in the hotels they were employed at, some of them did mention that technology played an important part in their security systems – security cameras and advanced pass-key systems were universally used in these hotels. The hotel at which Teacher #2 was employed seems to have had the most advanced security system of all, and even considering that, there's nothing ground-breaking or unique to the technological advances they employed there.

The opinions on the necessity of the more advanced anti-terrorist measures in the hotel industry were somewhat more split, but none of them deviated much from the common point – that the time for those has not yet come, at least not in Finland. The terrorist threat might be rising in the world in general, but the Scandinavian countries so far seem to have avoided any major incidents of that kind on their soil, so it might turn out that any additional preparation for something so unlikely would just be time and money spent unwisely. The hotels, in particular, would probably benefit more from focusing on day-to-day common issues rather than a distant phantom menace of terrorism.

In the light of the previous answers, it is easy to guess that in the hotels in Finland the issue of the customer safety/security and comfort trade-off is not a pressing one, and the balance there can be easily achieved in most establishments, with the adequate security measures maintained constantly with guests never feeling uneasy about it. Even in the cases of VIP guests visiting the hotels rarely step up their security procedures, letting the guests themselves figure out and organize the best additional security measures they deem necessary.

In regards to the special training for the security personnel, most of the hotels featured in the interviews no only didn't feature those, but rather didn't even have any particular security personnel of their own as such, with the issues related to the matter being taken on by a member of the staff in addition to the duties they perform for their main position. A notable exception is the hotel where the Teacher #2 was employed, where the main headquarters of the chain contained a security office which provided trainings to the

personnel of the hotels of the chain, making them probably more prepared for handling certain crisis situations than the employees of the other hotels.

Finally, as it can be gathered from all of the previous answers, none of the interviewees considered any type of a terrorist attack at a hotel on the Finnish soil to be even moderately likely, and thus, the answers to the question of self-assessment of their hotels' preparedness against a terrorist attack were all lower or equal to 5 on a scale of 1 to 10.

4 Discussion

4.1 Reflection on the results of the research and reaching of initial objectives

With the results gathered and summarized, the author can now attempt to answer the initially posed **research question**: "How well are the hotels in Helsinki city area prepared for a potential terrorist attack?"

The first and most obvious conclusion that can be drawn at a glance from the author's research and the interviews in particular is that the hotels of the Helsinki area seem to be very poorly prepared against any type of a potential terrorist attack. First of all, they do not take advantage of the modern security technology, the overview of which was presented in the Theoretical framework chapter – even such common devices as metal detectors are overlooked, let alone anything more advanced. Secondly, there are almost no specifically educated security staff in those establishments, and not every hotel has personnel security trainings in addition to the introductory ones, and even those that do only have them once or twice a year. Lastly, the hotels in Finland possess the very same common vulnerabilities as the those worldwide, and thus are just as susceptible to a potential attack, but the security systems they employ seem to not reflect the danger – any attack similar to those mentioned in the "Notable cases from history" subchapter would very likely end up successful, causing devastation and massive casualties.

This conclusion, while correct technically, on the surface, does not, however, take into the account the likelihood of the potential attack and the costs of preparation against it. As observed in the "Terrorism threat in Finland" subchapter, the country is currently the 1st out of 141 economies studied by the World Economic Forum on the factors of Business costs of terrorism and the Index of terrorism incidence, making it an extremely safe place in regards to terrorism. Therefore, with this information in mind, it is not unreasonable to expect that the Helsinki hotels would choose to focus on other more pressing threats and risks instead of something so unlikely to occur in the first place. Moreover, the resources that would have to be spent on the additional measures targeted at terrorism prevention, especially those that requre a constant investment (e.g. additional security personnel) are therefore very unlikely to be worth their cost in the long run.

Thus, the actual conclusion and the answer to the research question posed, that one must gather from those results is as such: the hotels in the Helsinki area are not well prepared for a potential terrorist attack, ***however,*** given the past history of terrorism in Finland and

the current extremely low perceived likelihood of such an attack, the level of the security measures they employ at the moment is entirely justifiable and adequate.

It has to be mentioned, though, that while the threat of terrorism is still rather negligible in Finland, things might change for the worse if the latest trend of frequent attacks by religious and political extremist groups continues. Therefore, in the author's opinion, while it might not be necessary for the Helsinki area hotels to implement any new and advanced security measures as of the present moment, it could be valuable still to at least research the possibilities and develop plans for potential implementation in advance in case the need does indeed arise.

Going back to the point brought up by the Teacher #1 – the different cultures of security, the hidden and built-to-be seen one – it is the author's opinion that the approach of hotels of Finland which is closer to the former culture, is still an appropriate one for the country and its hospitality industry. Thus, the potential improvements of security measures could perhaps focus more not on the technical side of the issue, but others – like the introduction of highly professional security personnel in the hotels – a measure that could greatly increase the overall level of security without being obvious or even bothersome to the guests and other visitors. However, even without the addition of these new staff members it is possible to improve the overall risk awareness and preparedness of the hotel employees via frequent trainings which could feature crisis situation simulations and other activities aimed at increasing these skills – something similar to the practices undertaken in the New York and Washington hotels which were referred to in the Theoretical framework chapter. After all, the employees are the main resource that the hotels have for handling any kinds of crises, including those that go under the category of terrorism.

Finally, in regards to the initially formulated objectives, the author's view on whether or not they were reached in the current research is as follows:

An overview of the of the history of terrorism both worldwide and in hotels, and of the currently existing security measures the hotels was completed successfully, even though there was less information available on the second point that the author was hoping for. Nonetheless, the available data was enough to make a reasonable summary which was used for comparison with the information on the security measures in Helsinki hotels obtained through the interviews. Thus, the first objective was reached successfully.

While all of the interviews conducted by the author were largely successful and yielded a significant amount of valuable data, which was enough to draw educated conclusions on the topic and to give a confident answer to the research question, the number of interviews was still much lower than what the author had initially hoped for. Therefore, it could be argued that the second objective was reached as well, but only partly so.

4.2 Recommendations for future studies

In regards to the possible further studies on the topic of terrorism threat in hotels in Helsinki or Finland in general, the author can recommend the researchers interested in the topic to consider the two following possibilities. The first one is to focus on the width of the scope of the research in order to get more results from more hotels in the city or nationwide (or, perhaps, in the regions similar to Helsinki in the number of tourist arrivals – e.g. some parts of Lapland), in order to get a more reliable sampling – though in that case they could face the same problems in securing the interviews on this sensitive subject as the author of the current research had.

The second option would be to go more in-depth rather than wide, and maybe go for a research aimed at the creation of a list of recommendations for a particular hotel or city hotels in general for the measures that they could take and technologies they could implement to foster their defences against the threat in the future, if the necessity for that arises. One could even go as far as creating a full manual or even just adding the chapter of anti-terrorism prevention for the crisis management plan of a hotel, but that would of course require some close cooperation with the hotel in question. As mentioned in the previous subchapter, these measures could focus on the empowerment of staff against the possible threats – so the manual/chapter could contain the development of these crisis situation simulation trainings.

The author does hope that this research proves useful for others interested in the topic and could foster their desire to pursue further studies into it, as the threat of terrorism and the ways of battling it is an extremely relevant issue in the world of today.

4.3 Trustworthiness of the research

The assessment of trustworthiness of one's own research is always a somewhat biased task, as it is hard to see the fault in one's own methods and practices, since otherwise they likely would not have been chosen in the first place. However, the author believes that there's always a room for reflection and improvement, especially if one strives in their research to be objective, unbiased and verifiable.

For this particular research, the need for previously published sources was not as high as for some other research-based theses, as the main research results were gathered though the interviews, it was nonetheless important to find reliable sources for the theoretical framework in order to be able to create a list of questions for the interview, and later mirror the results against actual data, for example in regards to the existing terrorism prevention measures. Moreover, the historical record and the data on the current situation of terrorism occurrence in Finland was also crucial for assessing the level of a terrorist threat in the Helsinki area hotels.

In regards to **validity** of the research, at this point, after it has been already completed, the author still firmly stands by his choice of the methods for it, especially in regards to the pick of the personal interview option over, for example, a simpler option of a mailed questionnaire. Even though the chosen method yielded fewer results and took considerably more effort in gathering them than the alternatives could, the payoff lies in the depth and trustworthiness of those results, something that would have been lower had the method been different, especially considering the nature of the subject matter.

The previously referred to difficulty in securing the interviews and the resulting low number of them is a somewhat serious issue, as such narrow sampling could negatively affect the **reliability** of the results obtained. However, as some of the interviewees reflected not only on their employment record in one hotel they were representing, but on their and their colleagues' industry experiences as a whole, this does add additional credence to the results. Therefore, if one was to repeat the research using the same methods used by the author once again in the hotels of Helsinki area, the results obtained by them should be, in their essence, similar to those represented in this research.

Despite those certain difficulties and limitations of the research, it is the author's belief that its results are nonetheless both reliable and valid, and might therefore be of use to the management of the hotels of the Helsinki area in regards to their assessment of a terrorist threat to their establishments and the possibility of future security improvements. Even though the results show that there is no need for any immediate changes, there is nonetheless use in recognizing the possible increase of the risk and in being prepared for such a turn of events.

4.4 Learning outcome

The thesis research and writing process proved to be of great use for the author in more ways than just pure education and learning on the topic – though, undeniably, those are of

utmost importance as well, and the author feels that they have gained some very important knowledge and insights in the course of their research. However, other aspects such as critical thinking, information handling, time management and writing expertise were also among those secondary skills positively influenced in the process. Overall, it was an extremely important and useful experience for the author and they hope that it would prove to be of a great assistance in case they decide to further pursue the research on this or any other topic in the near future.

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