

# Regional development & resilience in the Gotland region

## An analysis of regional development plans



Department of Human geography, Lund University

SGEK03- Exam

Supervisor: Mikhail Martynovich

By: Jonathan Olsson



**LUNDS**  
UNIVERSITET

## **Abstract**

This paper is a case study analysis of the region of Gotland, and it investigates how Gotland as a tourist dependant region can improve their resilience. I analyzed two different regional development plans “Vision Gotland 2025” and “Vårt Gotland 2040”, look at key differences between these and also look at employment data in Gotland from 2005-2018. This is done with the following research question: *What differences can we see from “Vision Gotland 2025” to “Vårt Gotland 2040”?*

As well as the sub question: *To what degree has Gotland aimed to increase their resilience as a tourist heavy region, as envisioned with the new development plans?*

The analysis is done with a mixed method approach of both a document/ideal type analysis and a quantitative analysis. The theoretical framework is based on Evolutionary economic geography and the term resilience.

When comparing the two different regional development plans we can see that there has been an increase in interest and use of terminology related to resilience from “Vision Gotland 2025” to “Vårt Gotland 2040”. The new regional development plan is more directly aiming to improve resilience of the region.

*Key words:* Regional development, Resilience, Tourism

**Content**

- 1. Introduction.....5**
  - 1.1 Aim and Research Question.....6
  - 1.2 Gotland.....6
  - 1.3 Definitions.....7
  - 1.4 Delimitations.....7
  
- 2. Conceptual framework.....8**
  - 2.1. Regional resilience from a theoretical perspective .....8
  - 2.2 Litterature review.....12
    - 2.2.1 Resilience and tourism.....12
    - 2.2.2 Tourism resilience & Covid 19.....15
  
- 3. Research Methodology.....17**
  - 3.1 Qualititative method. ....18
    - 3.1.1 Ideal type analysis. ....18
    - 3.1.2 Document analysis.....19
  - 3.2 Quantitative analysis.....20
  - 3.3 Data collection .....20
  - 3.4 Reliability of sources.....20
  - 3.5 Selection.....20
  - 3.6 Operationalization.....21
  - 3.7 Limitations.....22
  
- 4. Results.....23**
  - 4.1 Quantitative results .....24
  - 4.2 Analysis of “Vision Gotland 2025” .....25
    - 4.2.1 Introduction and purpose.....25
    - 4.2.2 Vision and general goals.....26
    - 4.2.3 Develop city and agricultural areas.....28
    - 4.2.4 Clean Water and accommodation.....28
    - 4.2.5 Education.....29
    - 4.2.6 Health.....29
    - 4.2.7 Sustainable growth.....30
    - 4.2.8 Increase sustainable communications and communication systems.....30
  - 4.3 Ideal type analysis of Vision Gotland 2025.....31

4.4 Analysis of “Vårt Gotland 2040”.....	33
4.4.1 Challenges for the region.....	34
4.4.2 Vision and goals.....	34
4.4.3 Promote health participation and safety and security.....	35
4.4.4 Develop culture and make use of cultural environments.....	35
4.4.5 Invest in skills.....	35
4.4.6 Increase accessibility.....	36
4.4.7 Be a leader in climate and energy transition.....	36
4.4.8 Conserve water and environment.....	36
4.4.9 Promote innovation and renewal.....	36
4.4.10 Strengthen and develop the business community.....	37
4.4.11 Enhance attractiveness.....	37
4.4.12 Create favorable Conditions for construction and housing.....	37
4.5 Ideal type analysis of “Vårt Gotland 2040”.....	37
<b>5. Discussion.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>6. Reference list.....</b>	<b>43</b>

# 1. Introduction

In 2008 the Gotland region adopted a new policy document with goals and visions that were to be guidelines for the region for the foreseeable future. The Regional development program, RDP, named “Vision Gotland 2025” and was used by the region until very recently. When the Covid-19 virus hit and shocked the world in 2020 many regions future in the world was uncertain, and in the academic world an increased interest in how to combat it arose.

By February 2021 “Vision Gotland 2025” had been abandoned to instead make room for a new RDP called “Vårt Gotland 2040”. In Gotland (2021) the region states that “Vårt Gotland, aims to make way for the best possible future for the people living and working on Gotland as well as for everyone that visits the island” (Gotland, 2021).

Given the changes that happened in the policy documents and the new goals for the region, something must have changed. An obvious observation would be that Covid-19 hit and affected the entire world, but what were other different developments that affected how Gotland viewed it’s future?

Gotland as a region is however not a unique phenomenon, there are several similar looking regions across Europe, and in the world that have a large part of their economy dependant on or tied to a certain type of economic sector. E.g., many regions located in the alps, such as Lombardi, have seen similar development since the increasing spread of Covid-19 and the consequential loss of people traveling to a lesser extent. These types of regions are facing similar contemporary challenges and therefore there exists an interest to analyze how these will develop, as well as how these can build up their resilience in face of shock or ongoing shock. The case of Gotland is therefore interesting, this study can be used to accumulate cumulative knowledge that will be of scientific as well as societal importance. This will be a case study of how specialized, specifically tourist heavy, regions can increase their resilience.

The findings of the study can be used for future research as a base, as stated before other regions are facing similar challenges and therefore it is not far fetched to assume that there might be similar developments as well. The “skeleton” of this study could be used to facilitate studies on other regions which could later be compared with one another to generate broader knowledge.

## 1.1 Aim and Research question

The aim for this paper is to investigate how Gotland, with its increasing dependence on tourism can build up resilience and further develop the region to withstand potential shocks better. By analyzing and comparing the two different policy documents “Vision Gotland 2025” and “Vårt Gotland 2040” I hope to identify how the region has chosen to change the vision for itself. Furthermore, I will also look into employment data of people in the tourism & hospitality industry of the region and analyze how this has developed throughout the years and how it might have impacted some of changes in the different RDP:s.

The aim is fulfilled by answering the following research question:

- RQ: What differences can we see from “Vision Gotland 2025” to “Vårt Gotland 2040”

As well as a sub question to help me in answering my primary research question:

- SQ: To what degree has Gotland aimed to increase their resilience as a tourist heavy region, as envisioned with the new development plans?

The potential findings of this study can also be of use when investigating how other regions dependent on one industry can build up resilience.

## 1.2 Gotland

Gotland county (or län) is the largest of the Swedish islands and is the only county in the country that is managed by a municipality as apposed to a county. This is due to the fact that the county only consists of one municipality instead of multiple, as is the norm in Sweden. Around 60 thousand people call the island their home, a number that is increased during the summer months in particular, when tons of tourist visit the island. A lot of them focused on the city of Visby, which has been declared as a world heritage cite. The city is one of the best preserved “Hansa” cities around the Baltic Sea, has a famous Ring wall and medieval connotations (Gotland, 2021).

Gotland is also the hosting region of the famous “Almedalsveckan” that has been in function since 1968. A week where the political elite of Sweden gather on the island to engage in debates with each other as well as meet with the public. The event has risen to become of the most important opportunities for politicians and political parties in Sweden to gather interest as well as support for their specific political movement.

Today tourism might be one of the biggest driving factors for the regions economy. Visitors to the island have been steadily increasing, and with them more and more people have been able to support themselves fully or partially because of it. E.g., with businesses in transport, hotell, camping and private leasing of housing. Restaurants, museums, bars, artists, breweries etc. are also the most profitable during the summer period where the most tourists visit the island (Gotland, 2021).

### 1.3 Definitions

#### Document analysis

The analysis of the two regional development plans will be done with the interest of regional resilience. There are several other aspects of the documents that are interesting and could deserve an analysis of their own. This will however not be done.

#### Hospitality and Tourism sector

I have chosen to define the hospitality and tourism sector in this paper as following:

Companies in the Hotell & restaurant industry, Campings, Bars and Museums.

There are several other sectors that are in a way, or another connected to these types of companies and/or can see an increase in business because of tourist being present on the island. These types of businesses have not been included when I have collected data on number of employed people in the Hospitality and tourism sector compared to overall employment of the region.

#### Resilience

This paper will define resilience according to the evolutionary economic perspective. And draw inspiration in key features of resilience in mainly two papers, one by Simmie & Martin (2010) and one by Boschma (2015). Even though these definitions are the most widely used today in a scholarly context, it is worthwhile to mention that other definitions of resilience exist and have been the standardized view of resilience in the past.

### 1.4 Delimitations

This paper will investigate regional resilience in the Gotland region which relies on the tourism and hospitality industry more than other regions. Therefore, this paper is delimited to how tourist dependant regions can improve their resilience and the document analysis of

the two regional development plans will be done with this in mind. There are other plans for development in the region that will be mentioned but an analysis of these will not be made.

## **2. Conceptual framework**

### **2.1 Regional resilience from a theoretical perspective**

This part of the paper will discuss the conceptual framework that will be the basis when doing the analysis of the data that will be presented. Firstly, I will give an overview of where the concept of resilience comes from, which will later transition into how scholars generally view it today. Then a discussion about previous research about resilience and resilience in the aspect of tourist heavy areas will also be done in this section. These articles and theories will then later be used when the analysis of the documents is being conducted. The theory is centred around resilience and sub terms associate to it.

The concept of resilience and ability to withstand different types of shocks have gained an increase in popularity and attention in the latter years and has had some momentum for some time (Simmie & martin 2010). The authors define resilience in a few different ways throughout the paper, but the definition that stands out and has, arguably, gained the most momentum in contemporary history is the one that follows the evolutionary economic definition. Which defines resilience as a regions ability to withstand and develop/re-develop from shocks, their ability to create new growth paths as well as how well a regions adaptability is.

This definition gained further ground when Boschma (2015) made the term more popular and defined it as the ability of a region to accommodate shocks and their long-term ability to develop new growth paths. If a region is resilient it is more likely to survive the damages a potential shock can make, as well as begin to thrive again after said shock. And emphasises the importance of different regions long term ability to withstand different types of shocks and the regions long-term capability to manage and how they configure/reconfigure their socio-economical structure. Therefore, this paper will use the Simmie & Martin as well as the Boschma definition with support of evolutionary economic geography when using the concept of resilience and associated terms to it.

The increased interest can be linked in part as a reaction to specific events and shocks that have increased the incentives for particular types of public policy responses. How we perceive disaster and shock can have a material impact on different forms and mechanisms of



resilience, such as for example the scale and scope of a state response. Responses can differ greatly depending on the ongoing type of shock. E.g., rapid catastrophic disasters and slow-paced cumulative stress building shocks require different types of reactions from local and/or state government. Furthermore, how regional economies respond and adapt to these types of disturbances and shocks may be the key influencer in how they will develop and evolve into the future. This is interesting in the case of Gotland since the region was affected by the Covid-19 virus in the beginning of 2020, with the rest of the world, and the regions has since responded with the new policy document “Vårt Gotland 2040”. How will this response from the local governance affect the region and its future development, and how does it compare to the previous regional development plan that was implemented? This will assist us in answering this.

Furthermore, one of the key aspects that Simmie & Martin (2010) highlight is a regions resilience capability and adaptability. They define resilience capability as the differential ability of a regions or locality’s firms to adapt to changes and shocks in a competitive, market, technological, policy and related conditions which shape a given regions evolutionary dynamics and trajectories over time. And define adaptability as the potential to adjust to changing circumstances in an appropriate way. This can be done according to three basic mechanisms by which an entity, e.g., local firm, can change to become better adapted. Firstly, the intentional response on the perception of different circumstances; Secondly, homeostatic ability, the automatic following of specific rules in relation to target behaviours and thirdly, developmental ability, cumulative unfolding of new behavioral patterns within a specific set of constraints.

Boschma (2015) develops the thinking regarding adaptability further and also talks about related variety. *Adaptability* and *related variety* are two key factors in the concept of resilience. Related variety is defined (Boschma, 2015) as a wide range of different related industries, these industries provide the potential for inter-industrial knowledge exchange as well as recombination’s. The higher the related variety of a certain region, the higher the adaptability of said region. As variety and adaptability increase, Boschma (2015) also states that the local environment will increase in its supportive characteristics. With an increase of supportive characteristics, a region is also more likely to expand into *new growth paths* and increase their innovational capabilities as these often can trace their origins to the existence of related industries.

Region Gotland is facing challenges similar to these, if the region is to increase their resilience it needs to expand from the tourism industry, create new growth paths and increase their related variety. If these indicators for resilience are found in the new regional development plan, it will be a good sign that the region is trying to develop itself in terms of thinking resiliently.

A regions economical resilience and adaptability is expected to be influenced by variety in a couple of ways. In regional economics, the level of local sectoral variety or diversity is often stated to influence regional economic vulnerability to exogenous shocks, where regions who have a more diversified economical structure will be less perceptible to the negative effects of shocks. Or in the very least have a stronger ability to recover from said shocks, than more economically specialised regions. More economically specialised regions are not only prone to sector-specific shocks, but also lack the width of economic activity that would assist the region in offsetting such disturbances. Simmie & Martin (2010) also conclude that another addition that a regions adaptability and sectoral variety influence is the innovative capability of local firms. Innovation is the key feature for the local economies capability of creating economic variety. Variety's importance in understanding regional economic resilience is tied to the existence of variation of different firms and firm behaviour. Firm behavior in a region operates in conjunction with the mechanisms of firm selection, competitive survival, or failure of firms, within the same region to impart adaption of the regional ensemble of firms as a whole over time.

To develop this further Boschma (2015) claims that a region should not be completely developed into one sector but having related variety is preferable rather than not having connected industries at all. Even though there exists a relationship between the industries there also exists enough variety between them that they can continue without the existence of each other. Furthermore, when a region has related variety the chances for new paths and innovation increase. Which also contributes to the regions capabilities to withstands shock when industries are skill related, because this increases the regions chances of matching available labour to the available work.

One way that Gotland could develop to ensure an increase of regional resilience is through related variety. By expanding what the tourism industry is in the region and what type of services it provides. It could expand into different areas so as not to be as defined and dependent on the classical concepts within tourism. Another risk that the region is facing is the notion of *place dependency and/or path dependency*.

Boschma (2017) explains how place dependency originates from the local reproduction of localized knowledge, territorial institutions, and vested interest, which tend to hamper processes of unrelated diversification of a regional economy. Whereas path dependency on the other hand, stems from shared cognitive frames, standards and institutions embedded in global socio-technical regimes, which tend to hamper development of new niches and their further development into alternative socio-technical regimes. While place dependency relates to socio-spatial embedding, path dependency relates to socio-technical embedding.

Path dependency increases the risk of a potential *lock in* of a region. A lock in is defined as the processes whereby an economy, e.g., regional economy, becomes locked into a particular path of economic development through the operational activity focused on self-reinforcing localised increasing return effects. This has however been discussed since it can be seen as both something positive and negative. One interpretation is that an economy is resilient if it is able to maintain its “locked in” status even when faced with external shock. On the contrary another interpretation would be to regard the lock in status as something negative since it is holding back the adaptation of the regional economy to a shock. Which implies that path-dependant lock in undermines a regional economy’s resilience (Simmie & Martin 2010).

Regional economies represent complex adaptive systems with different emergent patterns of behaviour and organisation. Complex adaptive can be characterised with some identifying key features. These kinds of systems typically have functions and relationships that are distributed across different system components at different levels of scales, giving said system degrees of connectivity. The relationship between a certain complex adaptive system and its environment is neither fixed nor easy to identify, hence making operational closure difficult, as well as making the system subject to constant exchange with its environment. Because of complex feedbacks and self-reinforcing interactions complex adaptive systems are characterised by non-linear dynamics with the results that they are often characterised by path dependence. Furthermore, they can also be characterised by emergence and self-organisation (Simmie & Martin 2010): there is a tendency for macroscale structures and dynamics to emerge spontaneously out of microscale behaviours and interactions of system components. The same process of self-organisation also imbues complex systems with potential to adapt their structure and dynamics, either in response to changes in the external environment, e.g., shocks, or from within through co-evolutionary mechanisms (Simmie & Martin 2010).

There are certain implications that follow from these features. One of the key aspects to the idea of regional economic resilience is the argument that complex adaptive systems are

characterised by two conflicting tendencies: Firstly, there exists a tendency in said systems towards increasing connectedness and interrelatedness among system components; Secondly, on the other hand, increasing connectedness and interrelatedness can tend to reduce adaptability of systems to changes in environmental conditions. This indicated that there exists a trade-off or conflict between connectedness and resilience: The more internally connected a system is, the greater risk for being structurally and functionally rigid, and hence less adaptive (Simmie & Martin 2010).

Since Gotland is an island region it is somewhat isolated because of its geographical position, the need for connections to and from the island becomes enhances. If the region doesn't improve its connection to other regions, there exists a risk in then becoming more internally connected, and therefore more rigid and less adaptive.

## 2.2 Literature review

### 2.2.1 Resilience and tourism

The interest of regional resilience in regions, like Gotland, who have big ties to the tourism and & hospitality sector has increased in latter years. In a world that is facing a global crises resilience has become one of the key concepts, with significant relevance for tourism. In “Tourism, resilience and sustainability” (Edited: Cheer & Lew 2016) They take a deep dive into specifically what the role of resilience takes in tourism regions and how it can be done in a sustainable way. Lew's scale, change and resilience (SCR) model is used as a reference point for distinctions where tourism resilience is underpinned by slow and fast change variables in the book of collected study cases in context of tourism resilience. Fast change implies sudden and largely unexpected changes, e.g., large earthquakes or extreme climate change, but socially akin to the violent overthrow of a government or sudden economic crisis, while slow changes are related to gradual variation and changes over time. Demarcating between fast and slow change is a critical part of resilience thinking because in case to case, adaptive capabilities and the calls to actions that are made require unique and tailored responses.

In “Managing crises in tourism – Resilience strategies from the Caribbean” (Lewis-Cameron, Jordan & Robert, 2021) The authors offer an up-to-date analysis of ongoing resilience issues regarding tourism islands & regions in the Caribbean. What they call “ the most strongly

branded tourism playground region of the world”. In the following segment of the paper the terms island and region will be used interchangeably.

One of the first risks they brought up in the study is “ that overdependence is a recipe for disaster. When a regions major industry is in decline and suffering, this can have effects on the whole economy, sending it downward and manifesting vulnerability. If the Gotlandic major industry will decline, this is a real risk for the area. When the shock eases and the economy bounces back, this is an expression of resilience. These kinds of dynamics are enhanced and aggrandized depending on the island, the smaller the size and population of the island/region. Combined with the fact that the Small Islands claim that their proneness to external shocks is ingrained and a structural weakness. The different island nations and regions of the Caribbean are more prone to fast change than its Swedish counterpart of Gotland. The risk for natural disasters such as: Volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis is extremely high. Furthermore Cameron, Jordan & Robert (2021) also conclude that the powerful economic lobbies that drives the major industry is often intertwined with the political elite that ensures that their interests are safely protected since they deem it “too big to fail”. Furthermore, the general lack of economies of scale and of large and competitive domestic markets in the regions often means that different services, often essential, are done so almost exclusively by monopolistic service providers. The dominant forces on these islands are working to lobby the populations to the idea that a dominant economic situation is not to be challenged. As a consequence, from this, when the negative effects of a dominance are exposed to an economic or environmental shock, the political narrative in these regions is directed carefully towards a ‘bouncing back’ perspective rather than reasoning about alternatives and trying to hinder similar future shocks from having the same detrimental effects on the region (Cameron, Jordan & Robert (2021).

The tourism industry has emerged itself so well with the representation of culture and nature on the island regions of the Caribbean that they almost have become synonyms to one another. Not only in an economic sense but often in how the population also views their region as a “tourist” one, making it self-fulfilling. The regions have different levels of dependence on the industry that rises to higher grounds because of the own populations view.

Cameron, Jordan & Robert (2021) present two different diversifications strategies that can be implemented in order to diversify a region/island and making it more resilient. The first strategy that is being presented involves diversification of tourist products *within* tourism.

Regions should, according to this strategy developing their tourism beyond the classical “Sun,

sand and sea” deal and instead take other directions and expansions. This can be done with development into e.g., particular niches such as carnival events, scuba diving or agro tourism. These types of tourism niches and branches allows the tourism industry to branch away from the classic “tourist” areas and hence engage with different segments of the market, tap into different local resources, and establish a broader connection network with other parts of the local community.

The second path/strategy is to diversify *beyond* tourism. To be able to be effective in this strategy the region needs a combination of forward thinking and substantial investments. For example, a number of different islands in the region have developed different financial service sectors. These different sectors have developed low tax advantages that appeal to richer citizens of other countries, however since this has somewhat of an arguably controversial character, these practises have been decreasing. As well as other schemes, such as the ‘citizenship by investment’ which offers passports for sale to people wealthy enough to afford it and in need of ‘back up plan’. These have however also been decreasing, due to their appeal for “shady” characters and bad image association it brought to the islands. In contrast to this, one strategy to diversify beyond tourism that has been greatly successful is the legacy of the cultural icon and artist Bob Marley on Jamaica. Who has been enduring for a long time and integral to the islands branding. Cameron, Jordan & Robert (2021) argue that the creative industries in particular are of considerable potential in the Caribbean.

The tourism region of Gotland is, even though not located in the Caribbean, similar and faces similar challenges as these. The findings present by Cameron, Jordan & Robert (2021) are of interest since similar strategies to diversify could be implemented and used by the region to increase its resilience. Both plans regarding diversifying beyond or within tourism are strategies that could work just as well in Gotland.

Furthermore, the authors also present three research strands in tourism resilience: Destination resilience, business resilience and community resilience. Destinations resilience is the effort by local governments, civil society, and private sectors to ensure that the region bounces back from negative shocks as quickly as possible and adapt the region to withstand future shocks. Business resilience is tied to the notion of destination resilience, due to the critical role that tourism business plays in providing visitor services. In regard to business and destination resilience, the authors propose three types of adaptation needed in securing business continuity. Technical adaptation that incorporates new and traditional technologies, business management adaption, that is aligned with marketing communication and strategies, and

behavioural adaptation with changing tourist behaviour with information (Cameron, Jordan & Robert 2021).

Lastly, community resilience, which arguably has emerged in tandem with sustainable tourism ideas. Which focuses on “Social survival processes that are put into action by local communities to address the negative social and economic impacts experienced during crisis”

Several aspects of what was discussed in the 2.1 section of resilience, Roberts et al (2021) put in a new light in regard to the tourism context. Shocks and resilience effect regions and industries different, the tourism system is often regarded as a system comprising of very interrelated components – the tourists, geographical elements, and the industry itself. The tourism system is by no means a closed one, meaning that different shocks in one part of the system can have detrimental effects on other parts, making the industry very vulnerable.

The finding of the risk of having a large portion of interrelated components can be of use when studying Gotland, if a large portion of the employed population is in the tourism and hospitality industry there exists risk of increasing interrelatedness and thus decreasing the resilience capacity of the region.

### 2.2.2 Tourism, resilience & Covid 19

As stated in section 2.2.1 there has been an increase of interest in resilience in latter years, this interest has been further enhanced with the shock of Covid-19 that hit the world in the beginning of 2020. Gotland and other tourist regions where some of the regions that were hit the hardest. One of the authors that has taken an interest in these types of regions is Sigala (2020) who analyses and discusses how we can better research, manage & understand how tourism has been impacted, and the transformational affordance of Covid-19.

Sigala points out that the virus can also be used as a transformational opportunity for regions. An industry should not only be resilient and recover, but also reform itself to be able to reach what Sigala (2020) calls “The next normal and economic order”. Crisis can be a change trigger, but it can also be used as a political tool to stabilize existing structures. Therefore, the transformational opportunity of the industry is dependant on how central actors, e.g., employees, policymakers, local communities, in the industry are affected by, respond to, and recover from crises. Sigala (2020) also states that technologies have worked as a catalyst for innovation and change and a tool to further build tourism resilience in the face of a crisis.

If Gotland is to come out of the shock of Covid-19 there needs to be policy driven changes in the regional development plans that among other things need to increase the technological capacity of the region and its potential for innovation.

Technologies role in reimagining & creating new paths for tourism has been further enhanced with the crisis/shock of covid-19. Previous trends that gravitated towards smart destinations and tourism services, use of AI and other similar digitalization's have been accelerated in regions to combat the impacts that came with the shock of the virus. Sigala (2020) therefore suggests in their paper that research about Covid-19 tourism should re-shape the purpose, usage and mean of technological advances that form how our societies, and economies are transformed as well as how tourism is being practiced both by visitors and employees because of Covid-19 or with the help of it.

Other authors that have taken an interest in these types of regions are Gursoy & Chi (2020) who have analyzed how tourism & hospitality heavy regions resilience and industry development has been affected since the emergence of the Covid-19 virus. The virus has caused a disruption how people travel as well as how they view the experience of traveling. In general people are less likely to travel to a "holiday destination" with only one out of three people claiming that they were willing to stay at a hotel at a destination within the next few months. This has put an obvious strain on an already hard industry with high operational costs and high dependency on a steadily increase of demand of their products and services. Similar to Sigala (2020), Gursoy & Chi also suggest that technical innovation and a higher emphasis on research supported by local or federal government will be integral in future development and survival of said industries. One example of these kinds of innovations is the usage of AI. The authors state that with the help of AI regions could enhance services which could help in combating the spread of potential diseases as well as increase a regions resilience.

These findings also emphasis the use of technology, which might become a key aspect for tourist regions when developing their resilience. If similar shocks happen in the future, Gotland needs to not only diversify greater beyond the tourism sector but also ensure that the region has enough workers with competence that can drive innovation and enhance the services within the industry.



### **3. Research methodology**

In this section of the paper, I will go over how the methodology of the paper is going to be done. I will discuss as to why I have chosen to do a mixed method approach between qualitative and quantitative methods, how the data has been collected as well as why the region of Gotland has been chosen. Furthermore, in this part, I will also operationalise the “tourism industry” and explain how this paper will be using the term in more detail as well as measuring it. Lastly, I will also showcase how I will look at resilience in this paper in regard to development and the tourism industry.

The study that is being done in this paper is a case study of Gotland, an in-depth study of the regions capacity for resilience and what type of changes that can be found between the two different regional development plans. The choice to do a case study is beneficial since, it allows me to deep dive into one specific case that later can be used for a more generalised knowledge of how industry dependent regions can improve their resilience.

The primary focus of my methodology will however be on the ideal type/documents analysis that will be done on the two different regional development plans presented by the region of Gotland “Vision Gotland 2025”, presented 2005 and “Vårt Gotland 2040”, presented in 2021. The analysis will look at the focus of the different regional development plans and see how they differ in terms of their aims towards resilience, has there been an increase in using terminology associated with resilience, as defined in section 2? has the Covid-19 virus played a part in this development? Is the new plan more aimed towards increasing the regions diversification?

The two documents have been chosen because of their clear-cut role in the regions goals for future development of the region as well as for their relevance in contemporary time. A similar study on a region in Sweden has not been made during the expansion of the pandemic and hence the paper will offer a new view on regional resilience in terms of the tourism industry and how a region such as Gotland is planning on their future development.

The quantitative part of the study will take a smaller proportion of the methodology, in this section of the paper I will look at data of employment from the Gotland region from 2011 to 2018. Data from the secondary source “statistiska centralbyrån”, SCB, will be used and I will compare the development of employment in what I operationalise as the “tourism industry” with that of total employment of the island.

## 3.1 Qualitative method

### 3.1.1 Ideal type analysis

As previously stated the main focus will however be on conducting qualitative research with the help of a smaller quantitative one. The qualitative analysis will be of a descriptive character. The most important comparing point in this type of analysis is constituted of some form of theoretical construction (Esaïsson, et al, 2016). In this paper this will be done through a “Ideal type analysis” Ideal type analysis is often associated with the social science researcher Max Weber and has gathered momentum in the scientific philosophical debate. One common ground in the “ideal type” debate is that these ideal types do not exist in reality and that they are simply imagined extremities of a phenomena in question. Esaïsson et al., (2016) claim that the ideal types are aiming to showcase important properties of the current phenomena. They constitute a purification of certain decided elements of reality: A simplified explanation, that however is not something inaccurate. What is typical for the phenomena that is being analysed?

A typical example of an ideal type is exemplified by the authors: A word that is often used to showcase what ideal typical is, is ‘liberalism’ or ‘liberal’. Depending on the context the words are often used to characterise ideas such as the value of freedom of speech, freedom of trade, the positive effects of competitiveness and on the individuals supremacy over the collective. Obviously, not every single person that joins the “liberals” always, or almost never, to every single degree embrace all the characteristics mentioned above. But still the use of the definition is still practical and usual. It exemplifies what most of us know as ‘liberalism’ or a ‘liberal’ person (Esaïsson et al., 2016). An ideal is hence not representative of an average.

When constructing our “ideal type” of a certain phenomenon the common practise is to look at previous definitions. If the phenomena and terminology is somewhat established and has been used before in several other instances, these go-to definitions, such as general language use and research instances, should be the ones used when establishing your ideal type.

### 3.1.2 Document analysis

As stated in section 3.1.1 the 'ideal type' analysis will be applied to the two development plans proposed by Gotland. These documents are going to be the bulk of the analytical study; however, these will also be supported by a few articles on how different plans have developed, and how the region has changed during the time period that transcribed between the two different documents. By limiting the document and 'ideal type' analysis that is being done to the two documents as well as a few articles on the regions development the paper will be more feasible and pinned down. Rather than a general study with no real "scope". The analysis will be conducted by first summarising the two different regional development plans, this will later be followed by comparing the goals and aims of the plans with how they compare to our ideal type of resilience.

### 3.1.3 Quantitative analysis

While the qualitative part of this paper is the main analysis tool used in order to try and answer our research question, the quantitative analysis will also assist us in doing so as well as help us figure out how larger proportion of the total employed people in Gotland are working in what we have chosen to define as the tourism industry. As previously stated earlier in section 3, we will collect data from Statistiska centralbyrån and will look at the employment of the tourism and hospitality industry and compare how this measure up in comparison of total employment in Gotland.

Choosing to combine a qualitative analysis with a quantitative one is not the most common of choices, but a mixed method approach has been done several times before and can prove to have a few beneficial characteristics. Kelle (2006) writes that despite the existence of so called 'paradigm wars' between different methodological traditions of qualitative and quantitative research, mixed method approaches have seen an increase in usage in the social science methodological sphere. Since all methodological approaches have certain limitations as well as strengths, Kelle proposes that qualitative and quantitative methods should be combined in order to compensate for their mutual as well as overlapping weaknesses. Furthermore, Kelle also argues that the purpose of method integrations is twofold: Firstly, it serves for the mutual validation of data and findings as well as for the production of more coherent and complete pictures of a certain given investigated domain than a monomethod can produce and yield.

### 3.2 Data collection

As previously mentioned, the majority of the data that is going to be analysed comes from the two documents “Vision Gotland 2025” as well as “Vårt Gotland 2040” from the official website of region Gotland. Data from Statistiska centralbyrån will also be used. The data from SCB that will be collected contains two different categories, year and total employment and cannot be ranked, therefore these will be categorized as nominal/categorical (Bryman, 2016). This data will be displayed using pie charts showcasing the development of total employed people in the tourism & hospitality industry compared to that of total employment in the region from the years 2011-2018. By displaying the data in pie charts, they will be easily understood and readable which will in turn make the findings of the paper more accessible (Bryman, 2016).

### 3.3 Reliability of sources

Statistiska centralbyrån is a Swedish state run government agency operating under the ministry of finance and is responsible for producing official statistics used for decision making. This made the website an ideal spot to look for statistics, as well as the fact that the website is officially state run and widely used (SCB, 2021).

The second website that is being used to collect my empirical data is Gotland.se, the official website of the region of Gotland. A website that offers information about the regions development goals, education, labour market and basically everything else that could be of interest about the region. These characteristics of the website makes it highly reliable and an ideal place to collect data from in terms of scientific and social interests that might exist for the region (Gotland, 2021).

### 3.4 Selection

The region that has been chosen, Gotland, in this empirical study has been chosen based on the view of the region as one of the ultimate “Hemester”, home vacation destinations, of Sweden. In order to understand how a region plans to develop themselves and to what degree they rank the importance of resilience I needed to select a region that posed an interesting situation as well as a potential project that can feasibly be investigated during the given time period and resources. Which Gotland offered.

Firstly, since one of the big objects of interest within “resilience” is a regions ability to create new growth paths and not be locked to one certain kind of industry, e.g., Tourism & Hospitality industry, the region is interesting. Furthermore, since the Swedish people and island regions own inhabitants generally view themselves as a tourist region & destination this make the region an interesting study.

Secondly, the regions recent changes in development plans for itself “Vision Gotland 2025” and “Vårt Gotland 2040” offers a unique opportunity to investigate something that has happened very recently and that is still an ongoing process. How can I region that is reliable on the tourism and hospitality industry tackle this kind of change and what kind of new changes to they deem important to make in face of a shock that his hit recently?

Furthermore, the selection of Gotland was also spurred on by the fact that the accessibility of Swedish data is very large as well as open. This means that I could easily access the official development plans for the region, data of employment figures from Svenska statistiska centralbyrån as well as other articles on the development of the region.

### 3.5 Operationalization

Our operationalisation needs to be tied to established and well-known terminology as well as anchored in reality in a way that is measurable and understandable.

In this paper I am doing this by using the established terminology and definitions of important concepts and terms from section 2.1 and 2.2 “Resilience and tourism” & “Resilience, tourism and covid-19”. In our terminology section we define resilience according to Simmie & Martin (2010) as “a regions ability to withstand and develop/re-develop from shocks, their ability to create new growth paths as well as how a region and their adaptability”. And Boschma’s (2015) definition as “the ability of a region to accommodate shocks and their long-term ability to develop new growth paths. If a region is resilient it is more likely to see survive the damages a potential shock can make, as well as begin to thrive again after said shock, the importance of different regions long term ability to withstand different types of shocks and the regions long-term capability to manage and how they configure/reconfigure their socio-economical structure”.

In this case we will be looking at the plans that are presented in the development goals from “Vision Gotland 2025” and “Vårt Gotland 2040”. Key words and terminology as associated with how we have defined resilience and it concepts will be identified and will be used as

indicators that the region is aiming to improve its resilience – or the other way around. The “conceptual framework” that includes both our definitions of resilience as well as specific tourist heavy regions and improvement of resilience will be used as our “ideal type”, and this is what the documents will be compared to. How do they measure up to our “ideal type” and to what degree can we state that they are aiming to improve the regions resilience?

In this paper I am defining the tourism and hospitality industry as companies in the hotel & restaurant industry, campings, Bars and Museums. Which will be measure with my quantitative method. By looking at how big of proportion of the total employed people of Gotland are involved in what we have defined as the “tourism sector” throughout the years we will get a better understanding of how dependent the region has been of the industry from the time of the original development plan to the recently released one. This will be an indicator as to what level of dependency the region has on the tourism and hospitality industry.

### 3.6 Limitations

The terminology of “resilience” is a wide concept, and as stated earlier in the paper different definitions of it exists. I am also primarily looking at how tourist regions can improve resilience, this somewhat limits the study and it’s potential future scientific relevance. Even if a correlation between changes in the documents as indicators for increased interest in developing resilience can be found, these can also be regarded as indicators for different kinds of developmental goals of the region.

Another possible approach would have been to aim for a broader study and with the use of a larger pool of quantitative data. This could have allowed for making more general results that could be used in a larger context. However, it is worthwhile to mention that such an approach would be lacking in other regards. It can be hard to quantitatively measure “resilience” since it has no clear-cut definition and hence operationalising the term in smaller measurable variables as indicators would be difficult.

There also exists some criticism against descriptive analysis when comparing them to explaining ones. Arguing that a descriptive analysis has less to say about their reality than explaining ones, that they are just the first steppingstone to create an explaining analysis and that hence an explaining analysis is therefore harder to achieve and leads to more cumulative knowledge than its counterpart. However, as stated by Esaisson et al., (2016) when referencing to political scientist David Laitin, a big portion of the long-standing scientific

contributions in social sciences have been more about constructing and releasing theoretical constructions, concepts, or terms, rather than formulating explaining theories.

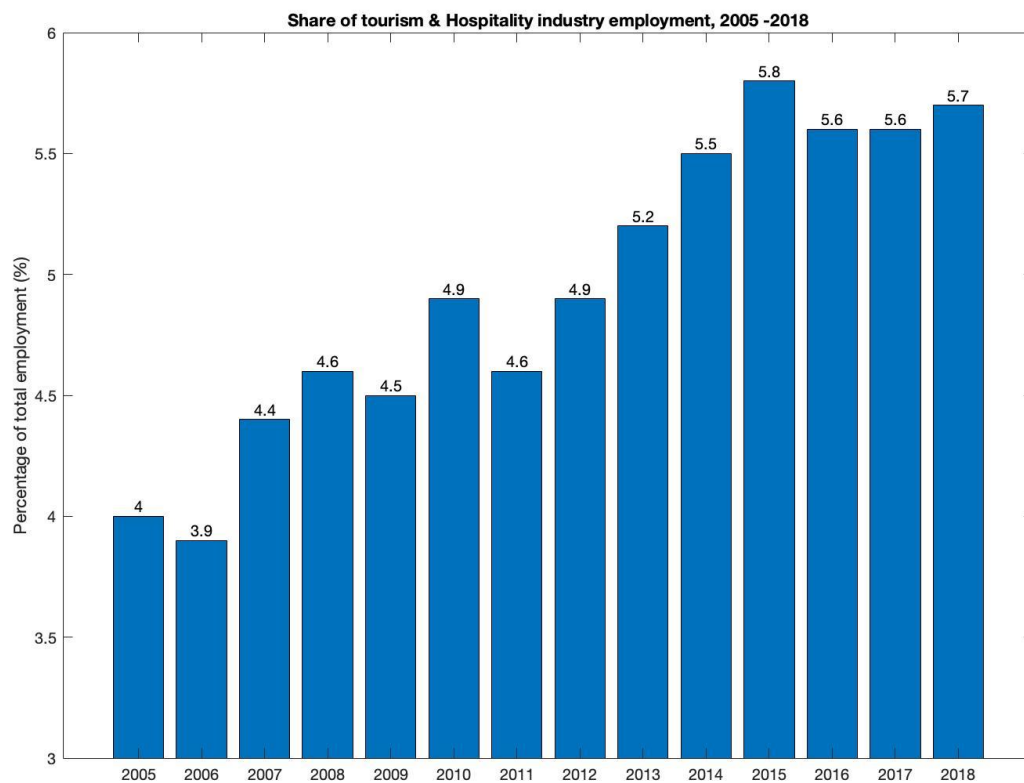
## **4. Results**

This part of the paper will present the results generated from the empirical research. I will present the analysis of the two different regional development goals that has been presented by region Gotland “Vision Gotland 2025”, released 2008 and “Vårt Gotland 2040” released 2021. These will assist me in answering my research question “*What differences can we see from “Vision Gotland 2025” to “Vårt Gotland 2040?”*” as well as my sub question “*To what degree has Gotland aimed to increase their resilience as a tourist heavy region, as envisioned with the new development plans?*”. First I will do the quantitative analysis of the data collected from “statistiska centralbyrån”. This will be done through the display of charts that showcase the total level of employment in the “Tourism and hospitality industry” compared to that of the total level of employment in the region as a whole. Which will be done on data from 2005 to 2018. I will also look at the number of people employed in the tourism industry in Gotland compared to other regions in Sweden in 2018.

Then I will do the document analysis of Vision Gotland 2025 and analyse how the goals presented in this document line up with our “ideal type” version of resilience development in tourist regions. This will be done by looking at the different categories of development presented in the document, summarize the goals of these and then compare how the goals of these categories compare to my “ideal type”. The same thing will then be done on the document “Vårt Gotland 2040”.

## 4.1 Quantitative analysis

Looking at employment data of the region, we can see a clear increase in number of people employed in the tourism and hospitality industry from 2005 to 2018. This is according to our operationalization interpreted as a higher reliance on the industry and is displayed in figure 1 below.



(Figure 1, SCB 2021)

When comparing the employment rate of people in the tourism and hospitality industry in Gotland compared to that of other regions in Sweden, we can see that Gotland has the highest percentage of workers in the sector than any other region in the country. Gotland sits at 5,7% while the closest region behind is Jämtland at 4,5 % followed by Stockholm with 4,2 %. This is interpreted as a further indication that the region is more reliant on the industry compared to that of the rest of the regions in the country. See figure 2 below.



Region	Percentage of workers in Tourism & hospitality industry 2018
Stockholm	4.2
Västra Götaland	3.2
Skåne	3.2
Östergötland	3.0
Halland	3.6
Jönköping	2.5
Uppsala	2.8
Dalarna	3.2
Gävleborg	3.2
Norrbottn	3.4
Örebro	2.8
Värmland	3.1
Västerbotten	2.8
Södermanland	3.1
Kalmar	3.1
Västermanland	2.8
Västernorrland	2.7
Jämtland	4.5
Kronoberg	2.5
Blekinge	2.6
Gotland	5.7

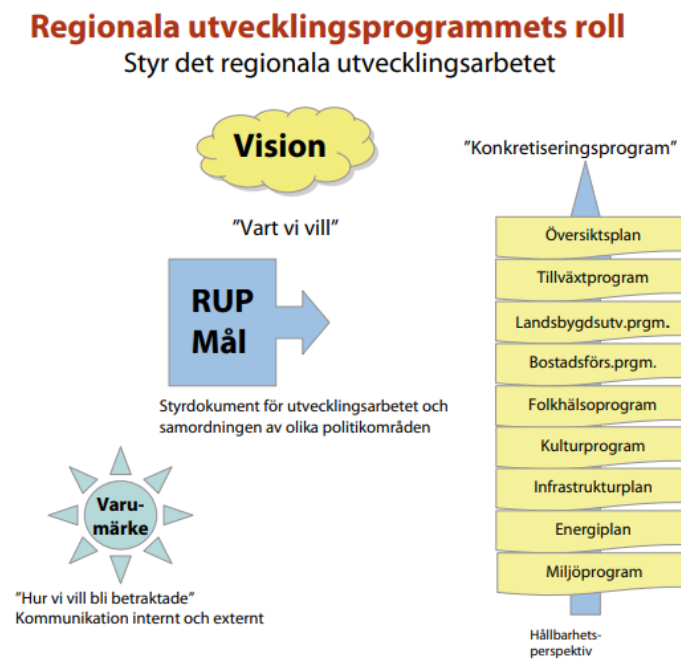
(Figure 2, SCB 2021)

## 4.2 Analysis of “vision Gotland 2025”

### 4.2.1 Introduction and Purpose

“Vision Gotland 2025” is introduced to the reader with the prologue “Gotland is the Baltic regions most creative and magical place incused with closeness, sustainable development and filled with life”. Which the region presents as the “general” vision of the regional development document. This is complimented with a great focus on informing the reader about how the document is supposed to conduct a strategi for the regions growth development and what the regional development program is aiming for (RDP or RUP). With “growth development” it is clearly stated that the aim when claiming this is to create it sustainably.

Which is made up of off three different dimensions, economical social and environmental (Vision Gotland 2025). This can be seen in figure 3 presented below.



(Figure 3, Vision Gotland 2025, 2008)

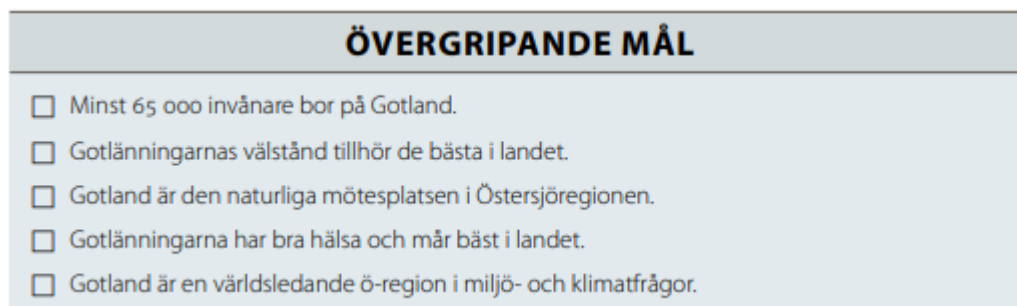
The aim of the RDP is to increase the branding of the region which will “Develop and market Gotland, as well as strengthen the attractiveness and competitiveness of Gotland (vision Gotland 2025).

#### 4.2.2 Vision and general goals

In this part of the RDP the region places a great emphasis on how the geographical location of the island regions is advantageous. “The location in the Baltic Sea is an asset. It offers a geographical closeness that makes the island a natural meeting plats for national, international co-operations revolving around business, education, culture, research and environment”.

The general aim of the vision of the RDP is that the island region should be the natural meeting place for everyone in the Baltic Sea and that the development that is being made is going to be sustainable both environmentally as well as economically.

This is further emphasised with the general goals presented in in next section, as can be seen in figure 4 below.



(Figure 4, Vision Gotland 2025, 2008)

The first aim of the goals is to increase the inhabitants of the region to at least 65 thousand. Which is desirable because it would help in the upkeep of the public sector and to diversify the labour market. The RDP goals state that this one of the most important aims for the region since the regions income through communal taxes and the tax equalization system is directly tied to the number of people living in the region. To secure steady flow of income and to diversify the labour market the region therefore needed to increase the population. Leading up to when the document was released the region had had a net negative population development (Vision Gotland 2025, 2008).

The second goal is to increase the economical welfare in the region. Generally speaking, the amount of people that have been employed in the region have been on historically good levels compared to that of the national average. However, when looking at income and buying power, the regions had during the release of the document been on very low levels. When talking about increasing the economic welfare of the region it is again heavily emphasized that this should be done sustainably. To ensure this the regions means that “Economical growth and welfare can only be upheld in the long run with careful consideration and investment of the common resources” (Vision Gotland 2025, 2008)

The third goal is to ensure Gotland as “The” meeting spot in the Baltic Sea. The document does not however really develop how the region should ensure this to happen. They instead simply state that “measurements are done yearly over the amount of guest nights stayed as well as the number of meetings in form of conferences national and international. As well as the number of people traveling to and from Gotland” (Vision Gotland 2025, 2008)

The fourth aim is regarding the health of the people living in the region. The reasoning behind this goal is that the healthier people are, the more likely they are to “Complete their lifegoals”.

To improve the public health in the region the RDP want to improve the ability to partake in the local community, the education, social and economical safety, and a physical and social environment that makes a healthy environment easier (Vision Gotland 2025, 2008).

The fifth and last general goal of the RDP is to ensure that Gotland is leading when it comes to environmental issues. This is tied to the other goals in the fact that the regions wished to reach all their goals “sustainably”. The aim here is to increase the supply and demand within different areas such as “Culture, food, design and experiences in nature” instead of increasing material consumption and in this way secure a more sustainable development (Vision Gotland 2025, 2008).

#### 4.2.3 Develop city and agricultural areas

In order to develop the entire region, the RDP wants to improve different areas of both urban and agricultural areas. The general goals are present here, the regions aim in regard to living on the island is to “increase population and to make agricultural areas to a creative environment for business owners, inhabitants and tourism”. Furthermore, the regions also wanted to enhance Visby city’s standing and its creativity, competence, and word heritage level (Vision Gotland 2025, 2008).

A few smaller towns are also mentioned as key points to develop as service points to further enhance the connection between rural and urban. And it that way increase the standing of the rural areas.

#### 4.2.4 Clean water and accommodation

Regarding clean water, the section mostly states that the RDP aims to increase the access to clean water and that the development. In terms of accommodation the RDP is a bit more developed. As with previous section we can here se connections to general goals. The main interest in increasing access to accommodation is to secure a steady increase of the population, which in turn leads to a larger workforce and economy. The goal is to secure accommodations for all different kinds of people and in that way make the region a more attractive place to visit as well as make a permanent home out of.

#### 4.2.5 Education

The RDP presents a few different goals and strategies regarding how it wants to improve the education and competence of its inhabitants, see figure 5 below.

<b>MÅLBILD OCH STRATEGIER</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Andelen invånare på Gotland som genomgått eftergymnasial utbildning ska ligga över riksgenomsnittet.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Andelen elever i den gotländska gymnasieskolan som går över till högskolestudier ska uppgå till minst riksgenomsnittet.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Utbildningsresultaten i grundskolan ska ligga bland de 75 bästa kommunerna i landet.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gotland ska ha en väl fungerande arbetsmarknad som syftar till att öka sysselsättningen och minska utanförskapet.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arbetslivets behov av rätt kompetens ska tillgodoses.

(Figure 5, Vision Gotland 2025, 2008).

Education is greatly emphasised as one of “the” most critical aspects when it comes to developing Gotland. Different levels of education should all work towards promoting access to all inhabitants to pursue education. Which will provide a strong base to increase the theoretical competence, research as well as technological development.

An entrepreneurial approach should be a defining feature in the work that is being made in the education system of the region. Access to workforce with the right kind of competence is essential for the Gotland regions business life and its ability to continue to develop. Because of constant needs for renewal as a consequence of production, technology and knowledge increase the significance of education also increases. Therefore, the RDP states that it is important to eliminate the knowledge gap that might emerge between supply and demand of workforce. The primary reason for absent growth at the release of the document, 2008, is according to Gotland’s businesses a lack of the right competence for the right kind of job.

#### 4.2.6 Health

Life expectancy should increase, and by making it easier for everyday people to make “healthy” choices they hope to empower individuals, businesses, and neighbourhoods.

#### 4.2.7 Sustainable growth

The aims within sustainable growth are to enhance the competitive climate of businesses as well as the Gotland regions competitiveness, as can be seen in figure 6 below.

<b>MÅLBILD OCH STRATEGIER</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Klimatet för företagande ska vara tillåtande och uppmuntrande.
<input type="checkbox"/> Gotland ska vara ledande när det gäller idéutveckling, entreprenörskap och nyföretagande.
<input type="checkbox"/> Gotländska produkter ska marknadsföras och säljas i olika delar av världen.
<input type="checkbox"/> Gotland ska vara ett etablerat resmål, såväl nationellt som internationellt, året runt.
<input type="checkbox"/> Gotland ska vara en känd, erkänd och efterfrågad samverkansaktör mitt i Östersjöregionen.

(Figure 6, Vision Gotland 2025, 2008).

The position of the island region creates special opportunities for the business environment. Where the boat and flight traffic to the island is highlighted as critical for the regions potential to develop. The RDP states that both the trade and tourism of the island are sometimes restrained because of the location and that it sometimes can be hindering in economical and logistical development. Furthermore, the region also wants to work on the “brand” of Gotland as something attractive, where sales of Gotlandic products and “the new unique Gotlandic can be created for the future”

#### 4.2.8 Increase sustainable communications and communications systems.

The communication systems are determined to be essential for a large portion of peoples opportunities for work, studies, services e.tc. as well as local business access to the market and production. To increase this the region has a few goals, see figure 7.

<b>MÅLBILD OCH STRATEGIER</b>
Gotland har som en integrerad och dynamisk region i Europa och som ett centrum i Östersjöområdet en transportstruktur som gynnar tillväxt och utveckling och som är miljömässigt hållbar, genom att:
<input type="checkbox"/> Öka tillgängligheten till Gotland genom att tid och kostnad för resor och transporter minskar.
<input type="checkbox"/> Stärka Gotlands koppling till nationella och internationella trafiksystem.
<input type="checkbox"/> Öka Gotlands förbindelser med omvärlden genom fler flyg- och färjedestinationer, särskilt södra och östra Östersjöregionen för utökad färjetrafik.
<input type="checkbox"/> Verka för ett långsiktigt hållbart kommunikationssystem; ekonomiskt, socialt och ekologiskt.
<input type="checkbox"/> Hamnarna i Visby, Slite och Klintehamn ska ha full kapacitet för sina uppdrag gällande färjetrafik, gods, fritids- och kryssningstrafik.
<input type="checkbox"/> Säkra och trygga utvecklingen av flygplatskapacitet.

(Figure 7, Vision Gotland 2025, 2008).

### 4.3 Ideal type analysis of Vision Gotland 2025

Throughout the RDP we can see some indicators that the region has some interest in what could be identified as our ideal type of resilience. Looking at the main goals of the RDP we can pick apart where these can be found.

The first goal to increase the inhabitants to at least 65 thousand is motivated in the RDP as an effort to keep a steady upkeep of income to the public sector and to diversify the labour market. With a larger population the region will get more income and it hopes that a large pool of people will diversify the market. While the aims of this goal are to diversify the market in some ways, which we can connect to the idea of diversification in resilience, the means of how they want to do it is not necessarily supported by the ways we have defined our ideal type.

The second goal was to increase the welfare, which they aim to reach with raising income and buying power through investments of common resources. This doesn't really meet any of the indicators that we have put out for our "ideal type" resilience. However, it could be argued that the desire to raise buying power of the region can be desirable, since a greater buying power will probably eventually lead to a bigger local market which in turn leads to greater potential for local business to invest in research and innovation (Simmie & Martin 2010).

The third goal to "ensure that Gotland is the meeting spot of the Baltic Sea" looks more in line with our ideal type. But how this is meant to happen, is hard to tell from the RDP. But the idea of making Gotland the natural meeting spot of the Baltic Sea has merit. As Cameron, Jordan, and Robert (2021) identify one of the two main strategies for tourist heavy regions is to diversify within tourism. If a region can diversify beyond the typical tourist areas such as the beach they can engage with different segments of the business market and tap into different local resources.

The fourth goal is regarding the health of people in the region. With healthier people the region believes that more people will complete their life goals. The fourth RDP goal, although generally important for a region, doesn't hold that much interesting value in terms of analyzing how it lines up with my ideal type of a resilient region. There might be some argument to be made that healthier people are better workers and better workers are keener on developing their companies and evolving. But I deem these kinds of arguments far fetched and can't support them enough through a theoretical standpoint.

The last general goal is regarding the environment. The region wishes to be leading in terms of environmental issues. Here I can't really motivate any real connection to our ideal type of resilience either.

Continuing to the different categories we can see some indicators that resemble our ideal type of resilience, but they are not abundantly clear. For example, in section 4.1.7 "sustainable growth" we can read that the region wants to work on the "brand of Gotland" as something attractive, where the unique Gotlandic is in the centre. This can be seen as one of the strategies that was presented by Cameron, Jordan & Robert (2021) where they suggest that tourist heavy regions diversify beyond tourism. While this was exemplified with the artist Bob Marley on Jamaica, the idea of creating a better branding for Gotland is an indicator that does move the RDP from 2008 closer to our ideal type of resilience.

In 4.1.5 "Education" the RDP wants to improve the level of people that engage in studies beyond high school as well as improve the access to compatible workforce. To ensure future development and eliminate potential lack of compatible workers. If the population of the region pursue higher levels of education the region will also most likely see firm behaviours that are more competitive to attract the workers with best competence, and more competitiveness to attract competence can lead to innovation which will help with increasing the adaptability of a region which in turn improves regional resilience (Simmie & Martin, 2010).

Section 4.1.8 "Increase sustainable communications and communications systems." Also showcases indicators that the RDP wants to improve resilience. By increasing communication and communication system the region hopes to increase local business access to the national and international market outside of the region. By doing this the region is making attempts to create new paths and avoid a potential lock in. Spreading out the reach of the local market will enable it to be less dependant on what happens on a local level (Boschma 2016).



## 4.4 Analysis of “Vårt gotland 2040”

### 4.4.1 Challenges for the region

The RDP present 5 general challenges that the region is facing right now and in the future, these are:

- Climate, energy, and the environment

The environment is stated to be our times central issue. The importance of protecting the environment and at the same time develop the competitiveness of the regions is one of the challenges. Climate adaptation is needed in several areas of society, and Gotland also needs to protect its unique cultural heritage and natural environment (Vårt Gotland 2040, 2021).

- Social Cohesion

A substantial part of Gotland’s youth is without occupation such as work or studies. There are also challenges regarding the health on the island, a lot of people are facing problems with obesity, around 50%, which needs to be tackled (Vårt Gotland 2040, 2021).

- Demographic development

The region is the smallest Swedish region when looking at number of inhabitants. The number of inhabitants is however growing, which is something that the RDP wants to develop further. Right now, the leading reason for a positive development is that more people are moving to Gotland, rather than moving from it. The region wants a positive development to secure future development of the region and create a more diversified working market (Vårt Gotland 2040, 2021).

- Globalisation

Gotland wants to increase their competitiveness in relation to the rest of Sweden and the world. Right now, the region has a generally low gross domestic product, GDP, compared to the rest of the Swedish regions. A lot of the industries in Gotland are dependant on season variations and to be competitive they need to increase their market reach. Sustainable communication system, such as transport to and from the region needs to be improved in order to improve attractiveness, competitiveness, economic development, and welfare of the region. The impact of the coronavirus has emphasised the vulnerability on being dependent on

the tourism industry as well as the value of a high degree of self-sufficiency (Vårt Gotland 2040, 2021).

- Digitalization

Digital infrastructure and access to digital expertise is needed for future development. The more connected Gotland is, the greater the chance for the region to attract more location-independent business. Expanding digitalization of the region is also of importance to promote the emergence of new products, methods, and businesses (Vårt Gotland 2040, 2021).

#### 4.4.2 Vision and goals

The visions are based on the strengths of Gotland and shows what the region wants to achieve long term. See figure 8.



(Figure 8, Vårt gotland 2040, 2021).

The goals that the RDP presents are based on the vision and challenges presented earlier in the paper. The development plan has three main goals that it wants to achieve long term.

*Gotland is a safe and inclusive society with good quality of life*

The region is a safe and open society for its population as well as visitors. Gotland should have safe and attractive living environments, rich recreational space, dynamic cultural life, well functioning welfare and services, and good opportunities for education and self-sufficiency. Gotland society should be “Resilient, adaptable and embrace change” (Vårt Gotland 2040, 2021).

### *Gotland is a role model in energy and climate transition*

Gotland is climate neutral, at the forefront of energy and climate transitions and has reached the goals based on the UN Paris agreement ahead of time. Using its assets, it the best possible capabilities in developing the region and at the same keeping this development sustainable (Vårt Gotland 2040, 2021).

### *Gotland is an innovative growth region with development capacity*

Gotland's resources should be used in a sustainable way that promotes growth. With a strong business community, trade, and industry as well as academia. Gotland should be a meeting place and work as a location to test and develop new ideas. Collaboration, innovation, and reformation gives companies new possibilities and smart welfare services are developed. The region has favourable conditions for entrepreneurship, transport services and living environments. The supply of skills will be ensured through attractiveness, education, and occupational matching (Vårt Gotland 2040, 2021).

#### 4.4.3 Promote health, participation and safety and security

Health should be equally accessible for all the inhabitants of the region. People with good health are the building blocks for the future sustainable development of the region. The region should strengthen individuals capacity for self-sufficiency and increase resilience and safety in society (Vårt Gotland 2040, 2021).

#### 4.4.4 Develop Culture and make use of cultural environments

Promote children's reading capabilities and increase the access to culture and creativity. Use culture as a force for social development as well as preserve cultural heritage sites and ensure that Gotland is developing and promoting these sustainably (Vårt Gotland 2040, 2021).

#### 4.4.5 Invest in skills

To be able to recruit the right kind of competence is of great importance for Gotland's future development. Potential fast changes in society and the need for conversion also puts a high demand on ability for renewal as well as lifelong learning. The region wants to get a higher percentage of people that enroll in education beyond high school. Match the need of the labour market in different trade and industries. The main goal is to ensure that more people educate themselves and that the knowledge that is being accumulated can be easily interchanged between industries (Vårt Gotland 2040, 2021).

#### 4.4.6 Increase accessibility

Increase Gotland's connections with the outside world and increase accessibility to and from the region. Since the region is an island the connection and logistical aspects of being connected is very important. Other kinds of communication systems, both physical and digital, to ensure that different services and businesses can operate as normal need to be secured. An increase in digitalization is also needed for Gotland to increase its attractiveness and competitiveness. Securing access to digital infrastructure and the right competence is needed to continue development (Vårt Gotland 2040, 2021).

#### 4.4.7 Be a leader in climate and energy transition

Reduce the overall climate impact through society, transition to a more sustainable and robust energy system based on renewal energy. Encourage knowledge-sharing and participation to enhance the regions capability for climate and energy transition. Increase the society's capability to adapt to a changing climate. The region needs to prepare for faster climate change and be able to handle extreme changes that might happen radically or over a longer period of time (Vårt Gotland 2040, 2021).

#### 4.4.8 Conserve water and environment

Improve and conserve access to surface and groundwater. Transition more and more to a sustainable consumption and production-based water supply. This will ensure supply of water for future generations as well as progress the region to reach the UN Paris agreement sooner (Vårt Gotland 2040, 2021).

#### 4.4.9 Promote innovation and renewal

One of the key aspects to create growth and accelerate the development within a lot of different areas of society. A well organised innovative environment enables Gotland to step ahead in areas such as: Climate and energy transition, diversify the business community, develop welfare services, and create an attractive labour market. Furthermore, Gotland should increase competitiveness through smart specialization, enhance competitiveness through identifying and prioritize industries with the best potential for growth, in three areas: Hospitality, food industry, energy transition in trade (Vårt Gotland 2040, 2021).

#### 4.4.10 Strengthen and develop the business community

Improve the conditions for companies so that it's easier to start, run and develop companies. Increase companies potential to reach a bigger market. Use international collaboration to further enhance the local businesses and seize opportunities afforded by digitalization (Vårt Gotland 2040, 2021).

#### 4.4.11 Enhance attractiveness

Attractiveness is a running theme in the RDP and the region wants to enhance it to increase knowledge and interest of Gotland as well as to entice more students to study on the island and stay there after their studies (Vårt Gotland 2040, 2021).

#### 4.4.12 Create favourable conditions for construction and housing

Create conditions that enable a diverse range of construction across the region. A well-rounded housing market will help in making Gotland more attractive and help with making the region more sustainable (Vårt Gotland 2040, 2021).

### 4.5 Ideal type analyse of Vårt Gotland 2040

Compared to that of the previous RDP, "Vårt Gotland 2040" shows more strong indicators for as to how a tourist heavy region can change, adapt, and improve its resilience. Sometimes outright using the word resilience as a motivator for why a certain goal should be pursued by the region as well as other terminology that has been discussed in the conceptual part of this paper. If we start by looking at the goals presented by the region we can get an idea of what is different compared to the other RDP.

The 5 challenges and aims presented by the RDP are somewhat similar to that of Vision Gotland 2025. The first goal is regarding the *environment*. The goals here are aimed towards the Paris agreement and to claim that these are working towards the resilience of the region, according to how we have defined it, would be a stretch. One possibility would be to argue that the goals in improving the regions environmental aim could combat the potential fast shock that would happen because of an eventual environmental disaster and not being able adapt and overcome it (Robert et al, 2021).

The second goal regarding *social cohesion* is somewhat easier to tie to how they might improve resilience of the region. It revolves around the health of the inhabitants, which can somewhat be relevant for regional resilience. Of course, people that live in any given region

needs to remain healthy in order to work, be productive and contribute to the regional development. Furthermore, one of the challenges within social cohesion that the region wants to address is regarding that a large part of the Gothic youth are without occupation, such studies or work. Having a large portion of the youth that is choosing not to pursue further studies can result in lacking enough people with competence. If the Gotlandic economy is going to continue to grow and be competitive, nationally, and internationally its business environment needs to have a stable income of people with competence (Boschma 2016).

The third goal is regarding *demographic development*. Which could also be found in the first RDP. The challenge for the region is that it's the smallest region in Sweden in terms of population and needs to increase this number in order to "secure future development and a more diversified market". The goal to secure a more diversified market is a strong indicator for increasing regional resilience. We can tie this to concepts both such as innovation, regional diversification, and the desire to avoid potential "lock ins" (Simmie & martin 2010) (Boschma 2016).

The fourth goal is regarding *Globalisation*, which is something that was not touched upon whatsoever in "Vårt Gotland 2025". Right now, the regions GDP is low compared to the rest of Sweden and it needs to increase. The region states that "a lot of industries are dependent on season variation and to be competitive they need to increase their market reach". Which can be partly tied to not being dependent on a single type of industry, tourism, which right now is deemed to be dependent on summer months. Increasing the market reach and expanding beyond tourism as well as within tourism are the strategies that are suggested by Robert et al., (2021) where they suggest that these are the two main strategies for regions dependant on tourism to diversify and increase resilience. Diversifying within tourism should according to Robert et al., (2021) be done into particular niches, for Gotland this could for example be revolved around using the status of Visby as a heritage site and e.g., start a "medieval winter week" or similar to entice tourist to travel even during the colder months of the year.

The last challenge/goal in the RDP is *digitalization*. The region wants to develop the digital infrastructure to increase the connectiveness of the island with the rest of Sweden and the world. By developing digital infrastructure, the region hopes it will attract more location independent business. This could increase the regions capabilities to create a new niche (path), Boschma (2016) explains that path dependency relates to socio-technical embedding and by aiming to improve digitalization and attract a larger pool of business, it can be seen as attempts for regional diversification.

Other indicators for attempts to increase resilience in the RDP plan can be found in for example 4.6 “ Gotland is an innovative growth region with development capacity” we learn that the RDP aims to further develop the region as a meeting place to test and develop new ideas. And that Collaboration, innovation and reformation are prioritized to give companies new possibilities. The supply of skills needed for this is to be ensured with attractiveness of the region and education. Aiming to improve innovative capacity and developing the region to develop new ideas is supported by the conceptual framework regarding resilience. We can for example see this being supported by Simmie and Martin (2010) who state that “Innovation is the key feature for the local economies capability of creating economic variety”. If the region increases its innovative capability they will also be contributing to creating related variety which develops a regions resilience in the face of a shock, since the local economy is not based on one economic sector (Boschma 2015).

## 5. Discussion

In this section of the paper, I will discuss the results from the empirical analysis with the assistance of the theoretical framework presenter earlier in the paper. Firstly, I will discuss my main research question “*What differences can see in terms of developing resilience in the tourist region of Gotland from “vision Gotland 2025” to “Vårt Gotland 2040?”*”. After this I will answer the secondary question “*To what degree has Gotland aimed to increase their resilience as envisioned with the new development plan?*”

In terms of answering my first research question we can see some differences in the two documents under the results section. The two documents are similar in some goals and aims in what they want to achieve but there are some clear differences that stand out.

When looking at differences in the documents from “Vision Gotland 2025” to vårt Gotland 2040”. We can clearly see that there is an increase in interest of thinking “resilient” in “Vårt Gotland 2040” compared to that of off the previous RDP. In the first RDP plan there were some indicators in terms of increasing regional resilience, but when comparing it to the latter RDP there are clear differences in terminology and in terms of goals in the plans.

This could be due to the fact that in 2008 the concept of resilience was not as established as it is today, with some of the key texts of the theory being realised in 2010 and 2016. Even though there are some indicators that come close to our ideal type of resilience in some ways it is not as close as the later plan that was released in 2021. I would argue that the reasoning

behind that we see an increase here is due to partly the fact that the conceptual framework regarding resilience was more established in the beginning of 2021. But also because of the hit of covid-19. The shock of the virus turned the world upside down in many ways, and regional development was no different. As we can read from the RDP from 2021 “The impact of the coronavirus has emphasised the vulnerability on being dependant on the tourism industry as well as the value of a high degree of self-sufficiency”. Since the RDP “Vårt Gotland 2040” was released in the beginning of 2021 it is not unreasonable to assume that the planning for this new RDP has been in the works of a few years. With the emergence of the virus an increased interest in resilience and how to deal with shock seems to have appeared within the region.

As can be seen from the ideal type analyse of Vårt Gotland 2040, there are several instances where this becomes clear, the most typical which was quoted earlier. That the region is reliant on tourism is supported not only by the fact that the region themselves claim this, but also from the quantitative part of this paper where we for example could see that in data from 2018, the region had the highest percentage of people working the hospitality and tourism industry in Sweden compared to any other region. See figure 4, Gotland was at 5.7 % of people working in the industry (2018) while the closest region was Jämtland, 4.5 percent, followed by Stockholm at 4,2 percentages. If we compare the two RDP there are clearer implications for the tourist region to increase resilience to combat not only the corona virus but also future elements of potential slow or fast shock. The clearest changes that can be seen between the goals of the different RDP’s are the implementations of the new goals/challenges “Globalisation” and “Digitalization” in “Vårt Gotland 2040”. In the goal of “Globalisation” we can see a clear shift where the region wants to reach a bigger market and at the same time eliminate some of the “seasonal variation dependence” that some of the industries have. That the region wants to increase their competitiveness in order to secure future development, increase GDP and local buying power are clear indicators that come close to our ideal type of resilience (Boschma 2016).

Furthermore, other goals that are presented in this section such as increasing communication and logistical connection to and within the island are also good signs of attempts for resilience. Simmie & Martin (2010) write that “the more internally connected a system is, the greater the risk for being structurally and functionally rigid, and hence less adaptive”. So, by increasing communication and logistical connection the region can be seen as attempting to



spread out connections and be part of a larger system. This is of particular importance because of the regions natural isolation as an island.

We can see that the interest to increase the regions connections outside of the region are present with the first RDP as well, under section 4.1.8 “increase sustainable communications and communications systems”. While the aim here is somewhat similar and we can see indications for what could be interpreted as aims for resilience, the aim to reach these goals are not as clearly supported by the literature. They state that they want to increase the connections to and from the region both nationally and internationally which we can connect to our ideal type of resilience, however I would argue that the aim for them in doing this in the first RDP is not as clear. In the newer RDP we get a clear goal of increasing it to enhance connections to a larger system of market so e.g., that the local business community can get further reach. However, in the first RDP they simply state that they want to do it, but we don’t get a clear understanding as to why.

If this implies that the region is aiming to be more resilient with the release of the second RDP is hard to say. On one hand, the end result could be argued to be the same, increasing connectivity, but on the other hand with a more clear-cut agenda and goal it is also more likely that the goal will ultimately succeed.

In terms of answering my SQ: *To what degree has Gotland aimed to increase their resilience as envisioned with the new development plans?*

I would argue that the region is making clear aims to improve their resilience with the new RDP. After comparing the two documents we can see a clear difference, and at the same time we can also see under our quantitative analyses that there has been an increase of people employed in the tourism and hospitality industry during the years. This in combination with the shock of covid-19 seems to have been some of the key reasons for an increased interest from the region in thinking resiliently. When looking at how we have defined resilience according to both Boschma (2016) as well as Simmie & Martin (2010) “a regions ability to withstand and develop/re-develop from shocks, their ability to create new growth paths as well as how well a regions adaptability is.” the new RDP shows more indicators towards this and comes close to our ideal type. As a tourist heavy region there are clearer plans to improve resilience, this can for example be seen in section 4.6 “Gotland is an innovative growth region with development capacity”. Where they state that Gotland should be a meeting place and work as a location to test and develop new ideas and Collaboration, innovation and

reformation gives companies new possibilities and are promoted. These actions can be supported by e.g., Sigala (2020) that suggests that the use of technology and innovation has become even more important in tourist regions since the shock of Covid-19, “technologies role in reimagining & creating new paths for tourism has been further enhanced with the crisis/shock of covid-19.” By aiming to further work towards enhancing the innovational capability of the region as well as promoting in as a meeting place to develop new ideas the region is taking steps to develop the region in line with our ideal type.

Furthermore, a lot of the changes between “Vision Gotland 2025” and “Vårt Gotland 2040” have already been showcased earlier in this text, where there are clear signs that the RDP from 2021 has been aiming to increase and develop the regions resilience in several aspects.

For future research regarding similar analytical interest, it would be interesting to see how the development of the employment in the tourism and hospitality industry will look after the released of the latest RDP. This could however not be done in this paper, since the data available only spanned to 2018. Following the release of “Vision Gotland 2025” the development of employment in the industry stayed quite similar and this could be connected to the development plan where the aim to diversify wasn’t as close to our ideal type of resilience as what we could see in “Vårt Gotland 2040”. If the policymaker and regional developers of the region are successful, we should arguably see a decrease of percentage of people working in the industry and instead a greater diversification of the workforce in the region. This is of course purely speculative, and a detailed analysis would need to be done to make more substantial claims.

In conclusion we have answered both our RQ as well as our SQ. And we can see that the development of employment in the tourism and hospitality industry in the region has increased since 2005 and that the region is the most dependant on the sector out of the Swedish regions. The release of “Vårt Gotland 2040” is concluded to be more revolved than its predecessor and theoretically it provides a solid aim for future development of the region in the foreseeable future.

## 6. Reference list

- Boschma, R (2015) Towards an Evolutionary Perspective on Regional Resilience, *Regional Studies*, 49:5, 733-751
- Boschma, R., Coenen, L., Frenken, K. and Truffer, B., (2017). Towards a theory of regional diversification: combining insights from Evolutionary Economic Geography and Transition Studies. *Regional Studies*, 51(1), pp.31-45.
- Bryman, A., (2015). *Social Research Methods*. 5th ed. Oxford: OXFORD University Press.
- C. Michael Hall, Daniel Scott & Stefan Gössling (2020) Pandemics, transformations, and tourism: be careful what you wish for, *Tourism Geographies*, 22:3, 577-598,
- Cameron, A., Jordan, L. and Roberts, S., (2021). *Managing crises in tourism*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cheer, Joseph & Lew, Alan. (2017). *Tourism, Resilience and Sustainability: Adapting to Social, Political and Economic Change*.
- Dogan Gursoy & Christina G. Chi (2020) Effects of COVID-19 pandemic on hospitality industry: review of the current situations and a research agenda, *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 29:5, 527-529,
- Esaiasson, P., Gilljam, M., Oscarsson, H. and Wängnerud, L., (2012). *Metodpraktikan*. 4th ed. Stockholm: Norstedts juridik.
- Gotland i siffror, Gotland.se [online] available at: <https://www.gotland.se/64224> [Accessed 20 November 2021]
- Gotland SNI2002., Statistiska centralbyrån, [online] available at: <https://www.scb.se/> [Accessed 29 November 2021]
- Gotland SNI2007, Statistiska centralbyrån, [online], available at: <https://www.scb.se/> [Accessed 29 November 2021]
- Gotland totalt anställda, Statiska centralbyrån, [online] available at: <https://www.scb.se/> [Accessed 29 November 2021]
- Kelle, U. (2006). Combining qualitative and quantitative methods in research practice: Purposes and advantages. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(4), 293–311.

Sigala Marianna (2020) Tourism and COVID-19: Impacts and implications for advancing and resetting industry and research, *Journal of Business Research*, Volume 117, 312-321,

Simmie, J. and Martin, R., (2010). The economic resilience of regions: towards an evolutionary approach. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 3(1), pp.27-43.

Statistik efter arbetsmarknad, Statiska centralbyrån, [online] available at <https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/statistik-efter-amne/arbetsmarknad/sysselsattning-forvarvsarbete-och-arbetstider/registerbaserad-arbetsmarknadsstatistik-rams/> [Accessed 29 November 2021]

Vision Gotland 2025, Gotland.se [online] available at: <https://www.gotland.se/75704> [Accessed 20 November 2021]

Vårt Gotland 2040, Gotland.se [online] available at: <https://www.gotland.se/gotland2040> [Accessed 20 November 2021]