Bachelor Thesis, 15 hp, for a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration: International Business and Marketing
Spring 2019

Coexistence and collaboration between different retail agglomerations

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Title
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Abstract
During the past decades, the establishment of external shopping centers have been increasing, causing debates on how they affect the viability and vitality of city centers. Instead of studying them as individual actors that are in competition with each other, it is interesting to examine them as components that together make cities complete trading destinations.

The purpose of this thesis is to study the coexistence and collaboration between different retail agglomerations. Retail agglomeration attributes are implemented to distinguish existing strengths and weaknesses for each trading venue, in order to identify where they complement each other. The research method is qualitative with an abductive approach. Six semi-structured interviews were conducted with respondents who represent different associations.

The findings of the research revealed that city centers and external shopping establishments are able to coexist if they complement each other through their individual offerings and experiences. Different retail agglomerations attract contrasting customer groups, allowing them to coexist. Collaboration between retail agglomerations can be implemented in several ways and can enhance the attractiveness of cities as trading destinations. The collaboration can occur by implementing shared marketing, shuttle bus services or collective events.

This research is limited to only investigating one medium sized city and three retail agglomeration formats. Furthermore, the choice of participants did not include consumers and store owners, which could have provided additional perspectives. The findings contribute to the study field by highlighting how retail agglomerations can coexist and collaborate and can be useful for other medium sized cities.

Keywords
Retail, Agglomerations, Coexistence, Collaboration, Attributes, Retail Agglomeration Attractiveness

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratitude to

Jens Hultman
Our supervisor, for his valuable insights, engagement and support. His knowledge and constructive comments have guided us in times of confusion and doubt. He has encouraged us and made the research process enjoyable.

Annika Fjelkner
For her linguistic expertise, helpful inputs and encouraging comments.

Respondents
For their contribution and insights on the matter. Without their participation, this thesis would not have been possible.

Each other
For motivating and helping each other in both difficult and fun times and for always sticking together.

Kristianstad, 2019-05-29

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1. Introduction

For several centuries, Swedish cities had distinct centers where the traditional commerce took place. Store owners and consumers gathered at town centers and there was no need to actively work with enhancing the attractiveness of these places. However, at the end of the 1960s, the commerce started to relocate to external establishments and town centers were no longer seen as the main trading destinations. Subsequently, more efforts have been made into improving the urban environment and the commercial offering at town centers in Sweden (Thufvesson, 2017). The growing number of out-of-town shopping malls, also called "big-box" centers, have been allowed to establish themselves due to local authorities seeing this as an opportunity to attract businesses and job opportunities (Thufvesson, 2017). Town centers and shopping malls can be defined as retail agglomerations, which are cluster of stores located in proximity to each other. These can be both evolved and created, where evolved retail agglomerations, like town centers, have gradually emerged over time and created retail agglomerations, like shopping malls, are products of planned processes (Teller & Elms, 2010).

In order to comprehend the impact of shopping malls on town centers, it is crucial to examine the importance of town centers for cities in general. These centers are usually not only the oldest types of marketplaces that exist in cities, they are the most essential ones as well (Thufvesson, 2009). This view is shared by Balsas (2004), who states that a healthy town core represents a healthy community, and is a crucial part of cities. Town centers also function as center points and contain several significant buildings, such as city halls and religious buildings. In addition, meaningful shopping streets, taverns and small shops can be found in these classical town centers, some which have preserved their medieval appearances. Town centers are also associated with activities and political discussions, like festivals, special events, performances and demonstrations. Consequently, it is a place that attracts people for various reasons and many town centers are monumental for their outdoor dining restaurants, flea markets and variety of ethnic stores. A few ways to improve the image of town centers and avoid desolation is to include intriguing storefronts, fountains, captivating lightning and temporary exhibitions (Thufvesson, 2009).

Evidently, there have been debates on how shopping malls influence the attractiveness, viability and vitality of town centers (Thufvesson, 2009; Wahlberg, 2016). They have been accused of outcompeting small stores in inner cities and making the stores' supplies look inferior. Despite this, the number of shopping malls are constantly increasing in Sweden. In 2008 there were 338 shopping malls in the country and hundreds more were expected to be established during the course of a few years. Additionally, many department stores that are located externally, like IKEA, also compete with traditional town centers as they offer free parking and attract consumers in great numbers. The origin of department stores comes from Aristide Bouciacault, who had an idea of including a range of different products and departments under the same roof. The first department store was established in Paris in 1852 and soon after that, the idea started to spread all across the world. Today, the department stores in Sweden are usually specialized with selling one type of products, such as food, home furnishing and consumer electronics (Thufvesson, 2009).

Even though external shopping malls have had major impacts on town centers, it is still possible to manage the complications with shopping malls in several ways (Thufvesson, 2017; Thufvesson, 2009). Thufvesson (2017) stresses the significance of making consumers stay longer in town centers and return more frequently, spend more money and recommend the place to others. Inducing interest and getting consumers to visit the location can be done by creating attractions and events, renovating buildings and raising the level of service (Thufvesson, 2017). It is also important that external shopping centers become less external and more integrated in cities (Thufvesson, 2009). Moreover, town centers and shopping malls should collaborate with each other and strive for becoming constructive complements (Thufvesson, 2009).

However, it is a complex task to understand how retail agglomerations can collaborate and it is a rather unexplored area in previous research. As previously mentioned, retail agglomerations are generally seen as competitors and it is difficult to disregard the negative impacts that shopping malls have on town centers. Even so, Thufvesson (2009) accentuates the importance of collaboration in order to preserve town centers and enhance the commerce for the entire city. One of the aims of this this thesis will thus be to study how established retail agglomerations can collaborate to enhance the attractiveness of cities as trading destinations.

1.1 Problematization

The shift from the traditional retail agglomerations to out-of-town retail agglomerations has caused a relocation for multiple shops and restaurants (Riviezzo, de Nisco, & Napolitano, 2009; Wahlberg, 2016), leading to more store vacancies and negative perceptions of town centers for consumers (Hart, Stachow, & Cadogan, 2013). This has had a crucial impact on the viability and vitality of city centers due to the decreased attractiveness caused by the migration of retailers (Wahlberg, 2016). Furthermore, the image and attractiveness of a city as a whole is also negatively affected as town centers function as marketplaces for cities (Balsas, 2004).

Inevitably, there has been a rise of competition between the different types of retail agglomerations and the core issue for developers and managers is to identify which one consumers prioritize and why out of town formats are more competitive (Teller, Wood, & Floh, 2016). Town centers and shopping malls compete for patronage, which is an essential element for their survival (Hart et al., 2013). Competition also occurs between specific retailers within retail agglomerations for the consumer’s money and dwell time. However, a retail agglomeration can function as a quasi-organization as well, where the retailers are cooperating to enhance the attractiveness of the retail agglomeration as a whole. The collaboration can for example occur by implementing collective seasonal events and promotional schemes (Teller et al., 2016).

The physical retail stores are challenged by the digitalization and the increased e-commerce, this partly due to the convenience and simplicity of shopping online. The physical retail stores are in a transformation from the traditional retail store towards simpler concepts such as “showrooms”, “flagship-stores” and “pick-up points”. However, by being customer-oriented, offering a competent workforce and creating customer-loyalty, the physical retail stores can remain competitive against e-commerce and increase their attractiveness (Johansson, 2018). Even though this thesis does not investigate how the physical retail commerce is affected by the increase of e-commerce, it is still a contributing factor that needs to be taken into account.

In order to determine the consumers’ perception of attractiveness for a retail agglomeration, related attributes can be studied and examined. Shopping malls and town centers are often defined with specific attributes that are relevant to the consumers and have an effect on their patronage behaviour (Teller & Elms, 2010). Attributes can also be used to identify existing strengths and weaknesses for retail agglomerations (Wahlberg, 2016). Therefore, by examining and comparing attributes it becomes possible to establish where retail agglomerations complement each other. Attributes that have been presented by previous studies include accessibility, parking conditions, tenant mix, atmosphere and entertainment (Teller & Elms, 2010; Chebat, Sirgy & Grzeskowiak, 2010; Wakefield & Baker, 1998; El-Adly, 2007; Riviezzo, et al., 2009; Hart, et al., 2013; Konishi & Sandfort, 2003; Damian, Curto, & Pinto, 2011; Teller et al., 2016).

Another factor contributing to the attractiveness of a retail agglomeration is anchor stores. These types of stores often have a strong brand reputation and generate additional traffic and thereby create footfall for the entire retail agglomeration (Damian, et al., 2011). Anchor stores also create more value for consumers' shopping experience and guarantee satisfaction, leading to them prioritizing specific trading destinations. By this, retail agglomerations and anchor stores co-locate to benefit from the spill-over effect (Konishi & Sandfort, 2003). According to Teller et al. (2016), the co-location can also lead to complications if anchor stores outperform the retail agglomeration.

Consequently, by examining retail agglomeration attributes, it becomes possible to determine the factors consumers find to be attractive about specific trading venues (Teller & Elms, 2010). Cooperation between retailers can also lead to the retail agglomeration being seen and function as a single organization and the retailers work collectively to enhance the attractiveness of the retail agglomeration (Teller et al., 2016). However, collaboration between retail agglomerations and how the collaboration can occur is a phenomenon that previous research does not provide a clear answer for. Thufvesson (2009) only mentions that external shopping malls and town centers should strive for becoming complements, thus reducing the negative impacts and competition between the two retail agglomerations.

This thesis aims to fill this research gap by examining how three retail agglomerations in Kristianstad, Sweden, can function as complements to each other through retail agglomeration attributes as well as the possibilities for collaboration between them. This will be done by investigating attributes and determining existing strengths and weaknesses for retail agglomerations. Based on these strengths and weaknesses, the study intends to identify where they can complement each other. Previously, several studies have focused on getting the consumer perception of retail agglomeration attributes but no previous studies have, to the best of our knowledge, focused on interviewing representing leaders of specific trading venues and receiving their perception of specific attributes. This thesis will thus fill a research gap as it will focus on studying the perception leading representatives of retail agglomeration have on specific attributes. As mentioned, collaboration between retail agglomerations is, to the best of our knowledge, an unexplored area in previous research. Therefore, information on any existing form of collaboration or possibilities of collaboration between the three retail agglomerations will be gathered through our empirical method. The leading representatives also have the most knowledge on existing collaboration as well as how further collaboration could occur between the three trading venues, which is an additional reason for focusing on representatives of different organizations.

The retail agglomerations that are going to be examined are Kristianstad city center, C4 Shopping and Härlöv. The research was chosen to be conducted in Kristianstad because the city has for a longer period of time encountered changes in the commerce. In 2018, a new external shopping mall was established in the outskirt of the city and since then several stores have relocated from the town center to the shopping mall. This has affected the image of the town center as several local newspapers have written negatively about the external establishment. The three retail agglomerations are the biggest trading destinations in the city and offer different holistic experiences.

Kristianstad city center is a historical retail agglomeration with a proximity to the nature. In the city center, there are over 250 stores, restaurants and cafés (Handelsstaden Kristianstad, 2018). C4 Shopping is a newly established shopping mall that has a range of different stores and restaurants, but in contrast to the town center, the tenants are located under the same roof (C4 Shopping, n.d.). Härlöv is a shopping district at the outskirt of Kristianstad and consists of various retailers, wholesalers and hardware stores (Härlöv, n.d.).

1.2 Research aim

The aim of this thesis is to investigate how established retail agglomerations can coexist and complement each other with regards to the perception that leading representatives of trading venues have on specific retail agglomeration attributes. Furthermore, the aim is also to examine the possibilities for them to collaborate in order to increase the attractiveness of cities as trading destinations.

1.3 Research question

How can established retail agglomerations coexist and complement each other with regards to the perception that leading representatives of trading venues have on specific retail agglomeration attributes as well as collaborate in order to enhance the attractiveness of cities as trading destinations?

1.4 Outlines

The structure of this thesis will be divided into seven chapters. Chapter 1 will introduce the background and problematization of the chosen research field. Chapter 2 presents previous literature relevant for this thesis. Chapter 3 concerns the chosen methodology, research philosophy and approach used in the study. The empirical data will be demonstrated in chapter 4 and chapter 5 and 6 will present analyses and discussions. Lastly, the thesis will be concluded in chapter 7.

2. Literature Review

This chapter will present previous research which investigates retail agglomerations and attributes contributing to their attractiveness. The previous research presents concepts and theories related to cooperation and competition which are relevant for this study. The literature review will include the changes of retail, the coexistence within retail agglomerations and retail agglomeration attributes.

2.1 The changes of retail

This section presents the two main factors that have contributed to the changes of retail, which are the expansion of external trade and the expansion of e-commerce.

2.1.1 The expansion of external trade

Why do companies exist that convey products and services between the producing companies and consumers? The answer is that the commerce contributes to reducing transaction costs. Retailing assists the meeting between buyers and sellers and makes the commerce one of the most essential forces in the society (HUI Research, 2011). The exchange of goods was one of the main reasons to why collectors, hunters and farmers met in predetermined places and days. Henceforth, marketplaces were created, which in many cases developed into cities. Today, we often judge the quality of cities trough their retail offerings. Therefore, small cities with a good range of shops can in many cases be perceived as larger, richer in content and more exciting than bigger cities with a limited supply (Thufvesson, 2009).

During the past 15 to 20 years, the world trade has grown faster than in previous decades, which indicates an increased specialization. One of the biggest consequences by the transformation in retail is that smaller companies and department stores are being outcompeted by larger niched, chain stores called “category killers”. These have a significantly higher turnover with smaller staff and are often located externally. An example of this are companies in the electronic industry, like Elgiganten and Media Markt (HUI Research, 2011).

Besides the influence of category killers, external shopping malls have also had large impacts on the commerce. The origin of external establishments comes from merchants and customers that have always been attracted to diverse marketplaces to meet and exchange goods for money. During the Middle Ages, a large part of the commerce took place through the cities' marketplaces, but also through trade fairs or big markets at the outskirt of cities. The latter ones were the external shopping centers of their time and contributed to facilitating the meeting between buyers and sellers. A big trend since the beginning of the 1990s is the expansion of external shopping centers, which increased the commerce of many of the larger cities. Furthermore, this has led to an increased competition between shopping malls and town centers, which has in many cases resulted in store vacancies for city centers (HUI Research, 2011).

To understand why the external commerce is expanding, the development should be viewed through the perspective of both customers and companies. From a customer perspective, several factors have contributed to the expansion. Firstly, an urbanization has occurred where an increasing proportion of the population lives in conurbations and in central regions of cities. Smaller towns have lost more of their inhabitants to larger cities with more shopping alternatives. Secondly, the availability of cars has increased, which has lowered transportation costs and made it possible to choose between different trading venues. Thirdly, a crucial factor has also been that larger chain stores have increasingly chosen to establish themselves in populated areas, which are often located externally. Through a company perspective, external shopping centers are attractive due to cheaper land and rent and the fact that delivery of goods is both easier and cheaper for the companies that establish themselves externally (HUI Research, 2011).

Even though the establishment of new external shopping centers can lead to higher competition, they can also function as catalysts for a positive changing process, both for the external establishment and town centers. Instead of giving up the struggle, an effort can be made to enhance the attractiveness of town centers, by for example, improving parking conditions or the infrastructure. By doing this, external shopping centers and city centers can coexist (HUI Research, 2011). This view is shared by Rajagopal (2010), who states that shopping malls and town centers complement each other through their competitive advantages. Town centers exhibit ethnic and cultural attributes, while shopping malls are preferred for factors such as their location and recreational facilities (Rajagopal, 2010). Despite of the popularity of shopping centers, the two different shopping destinations can coexist as they offer complementary offerings (Ozuduru, Cigdem, & Ercoskun, 2014).

2.1.2 The expansion of e-commerce

The past years have shown a decrease in Swedish town center retail and an increase in store vacancies, which damage the reputation of the town centers and cities as a whole. The declining town center retail is partly a result of the increased e-commerce, which has created new levels of expectations, requirements and convenience among consumers. The view of the typical retail store is in development and stores are changing into “showrooms”, “click and collect” and “pick-up points”, which is a transfer from the typical store into a pick-up location. This transformation is a response to the increased e-commerce and an approach to be competitive.

According to Johansson (2018), physical stores have limitations that online stores do not have. One limitation is that the supply offered in the physical stores, where the variety of commodities offered are usually products with high demand. Due to lack of space to store and stock commodities, physical stores are not able to supply their customers with a larger assortment. In contrast, online stores have the capability to offer an endless range of products that attract customers with various needs and demands (Johansson, 2018).

To be available on multiple channels is becoming increasingly important for retail stores to be able to compete with pure online stores. This is referred to as an omnichannel business strategy, in which retailers are available on several channels and are both running online- and physical stores. This strategy enables retailers to keep track of their consumers’ behavior on different platforms and the retailers gain knowledge of the consumers’ needs and wants. This further allow the retailers to develop and improve their business to satisfy their consumers (Chen, Cheung, & Tan, 2018). The occurrence of omnichannel business strategies are increasing, which results in that the line that distinguishes the difference between physical stores and online stores is being blurred out (WSP, 2018).

According to Björn (2018), today’s consumers are more appealed by experiences and extended services than the actual products offered in the physical stores. This means that the physical stores should offer something more than just the product, which could be additional and related services that increase the value of the experience of the physical store. Björn (2018) also stresses the importance of a competent workforce that can assist the consumers with expertise and guidance. This is supported by WSP (2018), who claims that consumers today visit retail agglomerations to socialize and experience, more than just consuming. Consequently, there is an increased demand on restaurants, cafés and service retailers, due to the changes in the consumers' buying behavior (WSP, 2018). The physical retail store should also place their focus on interacting with their customers and create customer-loyalty, since this factor is showed to be of importance for the customers when evaluating positive shopping experiences (Bäckström, 2018).

The future of retail agglomerations depends on the survival of physical stores. Retailers need to remain competitive and gain advantages that online stores cannot meet. Such advantages are factors related to customer loyalty and require physical stores to develop and transform the traditional retail store.

2.2 Coexistence within retail agglomerations

A retail agglomerations can be defined as "a cluster of stores within a clearly defined spatial area" (Teller & Elms, 2010, p. 25). They can be divided into two categories of retail formats, evolved retail agglomeration formats and created retail agglomeration formats. The evolved formats are based in city centers, such as main streets, and can be described as town centers or regional shopping streets. The created formats are strategically planned and centrally managed, such as external shopping malls (Teller, 2008). These two types of formats are managed in different ways. Evolved retail agglomerations are managed in a way that the retailers involved in the agglomeration are marketed together as a whole, but keep the retailers individually divided. On the other hand, created retail agglomerations are marketed as single organizational entities (Teller & Schnedlitz, 2012).

Teller, Alexander and Floh (2016) further explain that retailers within retail agglomerations can coexist and function as quasi-organizations, in the sense that the retailers cooperate by their co-location, but still operate on an individual level and compete with each other. The cooperation between the retailers can be shared parking, a structured and collective marketing or footfall generated between the retailers. Competition occurs when individual stores and retailers compete for a share of the money and dwell time spent by consumers when visiting the retail agglomeration. The combined cooperation and competition within retail agglomerations can be formulated as coopetition, which is when retailers function as both competitors and collaborators (Teller et al., 2016). The benefits for retailers involved in coopetition-agreements are related to the possible growth of the company and by that its competitiveness and an increased innovativeness (Bouncken, Gast, Kraus, & Bogers, 2015).

Even though cooperation is one of the major benefits for retailers within a retail agglomeration, there are also complications. According to Ostrom (1990), there are three “influential models” that can be used as a base when deciding for state or market solutions. The first model presented is “The tragedy of the commons”, which refers to the decay of the environment due to the sharing of scarce resources. This can be referred to stores that coexists within a retail agglomeration, where each store benefits from the co-location and the customers the retail agglomeration generates, but the stores are also competitors where the customers are the scarce resource shared by the established retailers within the retail agglomeration. The second influential model is “The prisoner’s dilemma game”, the model describes the obstacles encountered by retailers when they attempt to cooperate with each other. One obstacle presented by Ostrom (1990) is related to that the involved parties, who strive for cooperation, only choose the strategy that benefits them individually, which will result in the third-best strategy for all involved. For stores co-located in a retail agglomeration, this would mean that each store choses to operate with their dominant strategy, which will affect all involved retailers negatively. The last model discussed is “The logic of collective action”, which focuses on the complications for retailers to act in a way that would benefit the whole group, even if the benefit from achieving common interest is high, self-interested and rational parties will not take collective action (Ostrom, 1990).

The biggest complication associated with cooperation between retailers are free-riders. Free-riders are retailers who take part in the collective and cooperate with other retailers, without contributing to others. Solutions to the problem of free-riders have been discussed, and two main options are moral codes, which are when all retailers abandon their individual strategies in order to work for the collective objectives and results, and “selective incentives”, which are motivators to join the cooperation, e.g. prestige. To solve the issue of free-riders with moral codes have its own issue, which is to encourage all retailers to cooperate for the benefit of the collective. On the contrary, to implement “selective incentives” that only favor the retailers who cooperate, is a more appropriate approach to extinguishing free-riders. However, the implementation of “selective incentives” also includes a problem, which is that it may be followed by authority issues which in the end would eliminate the need for cooperation (Forsberg, Medway, & Warnaby, 1999).

2.3 Retail agglomeration attributes

Specific retail agglomeration attributes have an effect on how consumers judge and perceive the attractiveness of retail agglomerations as well as their patronage behaviour. Attractiveness is described as a construct containing three elements: retention tendency, patronage behaviour and enjoyment with the retail agglomeration. These three elements are strongly connected and are important for managers to understand in order to make consumers return to the retail agglomeration and to meet their needs and preferences. Moreover, attributes can be divided into tangible and intangible categories. Tangible attributes are concrete and observable. They include attributes such as product assortment, accessibility, parking spaces and operation hours. In contrast, intangible attributes are abstract elements that are not directly observable and can concern the atmosphere and store image (Chebat et al., 2010).

Teller and Reutterer (2008) state that retail formats and individual stores can be portrayed by specific retail attributes, called marketing mix components, and managers determine site locations, products strategies, pricing and selling style based on these components (Teller & Reutterer, 2008). Furthermore, Wahlberg (2016) mentions that specific attributes can help determine strengths and weaknesses for town centers. For example, certain town centers benefit from the existing environment, local heritage, culture, local attractions, access to the town center and the mixture of different facilities and stores. Weaknesses could be availability of parking spaces, bad images of a town and neglected town centers (Wahlberg, 2016). Shopping malls and town centers are also not necessarily in competition with each other as they often function as complements. If they have diverse tenant mixes and offer different experiences, the different retail agglomerations are able to coexist, especially if they provide complementary offerings (Teller et al., 2016).

As this thesis focuses on how different retail agglomerations complement each other, it is highly relevant to include attributes that characterize agglomerations as a whole. For this reason, attributes that refer to individual stores, such as price, store promotions and service quality for specific stores, have been excluded. Several scholars have identified five specific major attributes, namely tenant mix, accessibility, parking conditions, atmosphere and entertainment, that represent retail agglomerations (Teller & Elms, 2010; Chebat, Sirgy and Grzeskowiak, 2010; Wakefield and Baker, 1998; El-Adly, 2007; Riviezzo, et al., 2009; Hart, et al., 2013). However, most of these studies apply attributes to either shopping malls or town centers. This thesis will apply the same attributes for all the different retail agglomerations as they are equally applicable.

2.3.1 Tenant mix

The tenant mix involves the number and types of stores that exists in a retail agglomeration. These can be both retail and non-retail types, such as restaurants or food courts. A wide mix of tenants satisfies various consumer needs and attracts customers to the retail location (Teller & Elms, 2010). Hart et al. (2013) also express the importance of including a range of different shops in a town center but refer to this as retail assortment.

According to Wakefield and Baker (1998), tenant variety attracts more consumers as it generates excitement and allows them to constantly compare products. Retail developers take advantage of consumers' versatile shopping behaviors by purposely placing stores in malls and clusters. A range of different tenants is also more likely to influence the frequency of shopping, mall selection, but also shopping mall image. Furthermore, it is important to include restaurants and food courts in the mix as they offer breaks from hours of shopping. There is a possibility that consumers may not revisit the mall or leave prematurely if these facilities do not exist (Wakefield & Baker, 1998).

El-Adly (2007) refers to the tenant mix as diversity and stresses the importance of having different stores, restaurants, food courts and supermarkets present in a shopping mall. It is important to implement shuttle bus services and signs to guide consumers through the mall as it makes it easier to orientate. Consequently, the tenant mix also functions to satisfy consumers with different nationalities and cultures (El-Adly, 2007).

Retail agglomerations, both created and evolved, consist of tenant mixes, which can also include anchor stores. An anchor store can be defined as "a store that increases, through its name's reputation, the traffic of shoppers at or near its location" (Konishi & Sandfort, 2003, p. 413). These stores attract consumers to retail agglomerations and can generate footfall for other retailers. A shopping mall or town center with an anchor store will guarantee the consumers a minimum level of value from the shopping experience, which can also lead to that consumers choose a specific retail agglomeration over other retail agglomerations (Konishi & Sandfort, 2003). According to Konishi and Sandfort (2003) trading venues and anchor stores can benefit from co-location. By fulfilling various customer needs and demands, it becomes possible to attract and satisfy an additional number of customers, which favors both parties (Konishi & Sandfort, 2003).

Anchor stores can contribute with both positive and negative externalities to a trading destination. The positive externalities are factors such as additional number of consumers and increased attractiveness for the entire retail agglomeration. The negative externalities include anchor stores with poor reputation, which can affect the agglomeration as a whole (Damian et al., 2011). A complication with anchor stores could be that their reputation and attractiveness lead to a higher performance from the anchor store than the whole retail agglomeration in general. This could lead to that the anchor store outcompetes the remaining retailers, rather than generating a spill-over effect (Teller et al., 2016).

2.3.2 Accessibility

Accessibility concerns the distance between the initial point, the house or workplace, and the retail agglomeration. This factor does not only cover how simple or fast a consumer is able to reach the destination, but the convenience of doing so. On the way to the trading destination obstacles, such as road works, traffic jams and delays, can occur. This is an important dimension for the perceived attractiveness of retail agglomerations (Teller & Elms, 2010). Chebat et al. (2010) refer to this attribute as access, and explain it as the distance shoppers must travel in order to reach the shopping mall. Moreover, consumers strongly prefer malls that are more accessible and the attribute contributes to the enjoyment consumers receive from shopping (Chebat et al., 2010). This perspective is also shared by Hart et al. (2013), who state that the attribute accessibility refers to travel comfort. El-Adly (2007) uses a different approach and considers accessibility to be a sub-factor of the broader attribute, convenience. Convenience can be reached by choosing an appropriate location for the mall that is easy to reach (El-Adly, 2007).

The accessibility of public transportation is another important element to consider when evaluating locations for retail agglomerations. Like most studies, Riviezzo et al. (2009) also include accessibility in their study, but explain that the availability of public transportation contributes to the attractiveness of town centers. This is also a factor that inadvertently generates footfall for all tenants included in the town center (Riviezzo et al., 2009).

2.3.3 Parking conditions

According to Teller and Elms (2010), parking conditions is a crucial attribute as many retail agglomerations are easiest reached by car. Therefore, cars are the favored mean of transportation and consumers tend to prioritize malls with extensive parking spaces and convenient parking facilities. Moreover, accessibility and parking conditions are seen as the last steps that consumers take when entering a shopping location and the factors have a big impact on the attractiveness of retail agglomerations. An important aspect to consider is that this is an attribute that benefits all tenants in a retail agglomeration. Infrastructures, such as parking conditions, attract consumers that tenants do not essentially generate themselves and store managers need to consider this when choosing locations to place their businesses (Teller & Elms, 2010).

Several researchers often use parking conditions as a sub-group of a bigger and broader attribute, accessibility. Teller and Elms (2010) state that parking conditions can be incorporated into accessibility, referring to the access consumers have to free parking spaces and the different types of parking facilities in an agglomeration. Hart et al. (2013) also include parking spots in accessibility and discovered that consumers highly prioritize low-priced, plenty and convenient parking. Furthermore, this factor also increases town center patronage immensely as town centers are constantly competing with shopping malls that provide comfortable and free parking (Hart et al., 2013).

Riviezzo et al. (2009) argue that the external layout of a town center consists of architectural design. This element has the biggest impact on consumer’ first impression of town centers and the consumers tend to evaluate factors such as buildings, streets maintenance, historical heritage and availability of parking spaces (Riviezzo et al., 2009). El-Adly (2007) integrates parking conditions into a comfort factor, and explains that in order to make consumers comfortable when shopping, it is essential to have plenty of parking spaces.

2.3.4 Atmosphere

When consumers enter a retail agglomeration they are often encountered with stimulus that are a part of the existing atmosphere. The stimuli can be passively or actively used by retail managers and the stimuli contribute to how consumers evaluate the attractiveness of the retail agglomeration. The different types of stimuli that affect the five senses and contribute to the overall impression of the atmosphere are cleanliness, temperature, light, air, architecture and public washrooms (Teller & Elms, 2010; Riviezzo et al., 2009).

Chebat et al. (2010) claim that the atmosphere of a mall consists of several factors, such as music, crowding, and color. These are important for consumer's perception of the trading venue and the attribute refers to the ambiance and aesthetics of the mall. The authors conclude that arousing atmospheres are more likely to be preferred by the consumers (Chebat et al., 2010). On the same note, Hart et al. (2013) explain that the atmosphere of a shopping mall is influenced by crowding, temperature, noise and safety. Consequently, the attribute is affected by environmental factors and influences customer experience (Hart et al., 2013).

Wakefield and Baker (1998) explain that the physical environment of a shopping mall refers to the interior architecture, layout, lightning and cleanliness of a mall. This factor has a strong connection to consumers' intentions to revisit a mall and has a positive effect on their patronage behaviour. Moreover, the first impression a consumer may get from a mall is most likely to be generated by the physical environment. Management should also pay close attention to potential deficiencies in architectural designs and if there is a need for renovations. Shopping malls are constantly in competition with other more exciting shopping malls that could attract the existing out-shoppers (Wakefield & Baker, 1998).

2.3.5 Entertainment

Consumers do not necessarily only visit shopping malls for shopping, but also for other amusing purposes, like entertainment. This attribute is composed of several different elements that bring people together. Unwittingly, shopping malls have become places for social gatherings and can function as community centers and recreation has become one of the biggest reasons to why consumers choose to patronize with specific shopping malls. Henceforth, many consumers, particularly younger ones, tend to spend their leisure time in shopping malls, seeking entertainment. To satisfy this segment, management can include family entertainment centers, special events and designated areas for children to play (El-Adly, 2007).

Hart, et al. (2013) explain that a non-retail activity is an attribute that plays a crucial role in town center attractiveness. It highlights the importance of including activities, entertainment venues as well as special events, like Christmas or Ramadan. By including events that reflect the local heritage of town centers, it opens up opportunities for consumers to feel a sense of belonging to the existing community. These events can be organized and managed by local retailers or certain community organizations. In doing so, the town center can build a stronger place brand, leading to long term patronage as well as greater viability for the town center. Other factors that go beyond retailing and are included in non-retail activities are theatres and nightlife (Hart et al., 2013).

2.4 Summary of attributes

Table 2.1 presents a summary of the attributes used in previous studies. As mentioned, the tenant mix, accessibility, parking conditions, atmosphere and entertainment are five major attributes that describe retail agglomerations as a whole. These attributes have broad definitions and many scholars describe them differently. For this reason, only sub-attributes relevant to this study are presented in table 2.1. The sub-attributes will be examined for each retail agglomeration in order to determine where they complement each other. Different types of stores concern the variety of retailers, such as restaurants and anchor stores, that are present in the retail agglomeration. Convenience of reaching the retail agglomeration entail the comfort of traveling to the location with cars as well as availability of public transportation. Convenient parking facilities refers to comfortable and free parking. The physical environment includes factors such as architectural design and availability of public toilets. Lastly, events entail how many events are held in each trading venue.

Table 2.1 Summary of attributes

Attributes	**Sub-attributes**	**Authors**
Tenant mix	Different types of stores	(Teller & Elms, 2010), (Hart, Stachow & Cadogan, 2013), (Wakefield & Baker, 1998), (El-Adly, 2007), (Konishi & Sandfort, 2003), (Damian, Curto, & Pinto, 2011), (Teller, Alexander, & Floh, 2016)
Accessibility	Convenience of reaching the retail agglomeration	(Teller & Elms, 2010), (Chebat, Sirgy & Grzeskowiak, 2010), (Hart, Stachow & Cadogan, 2013), (El-Adly, 2007), (Riviezzo, de Nisco & Napolitano, 2009)
Parking conditions	Convenient parking facilities	(Teller & Elms, 2010), (Hart, Stachow & Cadogan, 2013), (Riviezzo, de Nisco & Napolitano, 2009), (El-Adly, 2007)
Atmosphere	Physical environment	(Teller & Elms, 2010), (Riviezzo, de Nisco & Napolitano, 2009), (Wakefield & Baker, 1998)
Entertainment	Events	(El-Adly, 2007), (Hart, Stachow & Cadogan, 2013)

3. Research approach

This chapter will include a presentation of the chosen methodology, implemented research philosophy and approach used in this study. In order to investigate the coexistence of retail agglomerations, the thesis will be conducted through a qualitative method.

3.1 Choice of method

This study is based on a qualitative method consisting of interviews. Qualitative studies are characterized by data that is expressed verbally and visually, which provide a multidimensional illustration of the studied phenomena (Denscombe, 2016). Qualitative studies are often associated with methods such as interviews, observations and documents, which can contribute with diverse and nuanced descriptions of the phenomena studied. A limitation with using a qualitative method is the restricted amount of data that can be collected, due to that the process is time-consuming (Lind, 2014).

The choice of using a qualitative method in this research is based on the advantages with the gathering of data through interviews. Interviews enable the respondents to be descriptive and thorough in their answers. This is preferred since we study the coexistence and collaboration between established retail agglomerations, which is related to different perceptions of the situation. In personal interviews, the respondents have the possibility to discuss the coexistence of the retail agglomerations openly and in-depth.

3.2 Research philosophy

According to Bell, Bryman and Harley (2019), the implementation of research philosophy is an important component in a research and it is crucial to be aware of the philosophical assumptions made in the study. This forms the creation of the research and thus the collection and analysis of the information and the formation of the theoretical conclusions. There are two types of research philosophies, namely ontological considerations and epistemological considerations (Bell et al., 2019).

Ontological considerations concern theories about the essence of reality. Ontology is the presumptions made about social phenomena and if their existence is independent from social actors. There are two branches of how to interpret social phenomenon, objectivism and constructionism. Objectivism refer to that social phenomena and the meanings of its existence is separated from social actors and that there are external factors affecting the existence of them. On the contrary, constructionism concerns how social phenomena and the meanings of their existence are achieved by social actors (Bell et al., 2019).

Epistemological considerations are defined as "the theory of knowledge" (Bell et al., 2019, p. 29). Epistemological considerations are implemented after the ontological assumptions of reality have been clarified. The epistemological considerations then aim to understand how to obtain the knowledge of that assumed reality. The use of epistemological considerations is helpful to understand how to organize the research. There are two branches of epistemology, which are positivism and interpretivism. Positivism is related to objectivism and its intention is to explain individuals' behavior. Positivistic research involves research methods such as observations or surveys. Interpretivism is research related to constructionism and explore the actions of individuals as meaning-making, since interpretivism aim to understand the behavior of individuals (Bell et al., 2019).

This study aims to understand how established retail agglomerations, through actions of meaning, can collaborate with each other. Thus, this study will be conducted from a constructivist and interpretivistic point of view as the aim of the study is to understand individuals' behavior and the impact it has on social actions, which is the actions related to established retail agglomerations' coexistence.

3.3 Choice of analytical strategy

In research, theories can be used as analytical strategies. The usage of theory can be divided into three analytical strategies, which are the deductive, inductive and abductive approaches. These strategies determine whether the gathering and analyses of data create theories, or if the theories determine the method of collecting empirical data (Lind, 2014; Bell et al., 2019).

Deductive analytical strategies use theory as a foundation of the research (Lind, 2014). This implies that the theories used in the research are implemented throughout the study. This means that the research always has its base in, and is supported by, theories. Deductive studies have hypotheses based on theories, which will decide the approach of how to gather the data needed to reach a definite, logical conclusion (Bell et al., 2019).

However, studies with an inductive reasoning are not as guided by the chosen theory as the ones with deductive reasoning. Inductive analytical strategies use empirical data to construct theories and models, which create a focus on the empirical data, instead of the theory used (Lind, 2014). Such studies use observations to create generalized conclusions (Bell et al., 2019). According to Bell et al. (2019), the use of inductive reasoning often involves deductive reasoning as well, to ensure the credibility of the chosen theory.

The abductive analytical strategy is an intermediary between deductive and inductive reasoning. Studies with an abductive reasoning have a theoretical foundation, even though it may not be formulated with models or hypotheses. Furthermore, theoretical connections are not exclusively made after the empirical data has been gathered, theories are often integrated in the empirical section of the research and enable researchers to discuss several different theories (Lind, 2014). Abduction can be used to meet the limitations of both deduction and induction and makes it possible for the researcher to involve both the social- and the theoretical area (Bell et al., 2019).

This thesis will implement an abductive analytical strategy, since the research aims to include social- and theoretical dimensions. The theory used to study the coexistence between the established retail agglomerations will be implemented in the interview guide and consists of the five retail agglomeration attributes.

4. Method

In this chapter we present the empirical method and how the data was collected. It will include the research design, case presentation, choice of interviews, selection of participants and an introduction of the used interview guide. Furthermore, it will argue for the methods used to analyze the collected data and how credibility and transferability is achieved.

4.1 Research design

This thesis is based on a qualitative approach and Bell et al. (2019) state that a research design is dependent on the chosen research method. There are five different research designs, quasi-experiments, cross-sectional designs, longitudinal designs, case study designs and comparative designs. When a study is based on more than one case, it is highly relevant to implement a comparative or cross sectional design. This is because a case study design only refers to a single case, which can be an organization, a location, a person or a single event. The difference between a comparative design and a cross-sectional design is that the latter one puts little effort into studying the uniqueness of each case, as it focuses on the sample of cases. However, a comparative design investigates the individual cases and what makes each one unique. As this thesis studies three different retail agglomerations, Kristianstad city center, C4 Shopping and Härlöv, and their specific individual retail agglomeration attributes, it is suitable to use a comparative design (Bell et al., 2019).

A comparative design uses similar methods to study several divergent cases and is referred to as a multiple-case study, as it is seen as an extension of the case study design. The most considerable advantage with this type of study is that it enhances theory-building. This is because the multiple cases give more distinct information on where they stand in relation to the implemented theories. The disadvantage is that researchers often tend to focus more on how the cases contrast from each other, rather than the uniqueness of each case (Bell et al., 2019).

4.2 Case presentation

This thesis investigates the coexistence and collaboration between established retail agglomerations. The aim is to, with attributes, examine how and where the retail agglomerations complement each other. This study focuses on the case of Kristianstad, where the three established retail agglomerations, the city center, Härlöv and C4 Shopping, are currently operating. Kristianstad was chosen for this research because of multiple reasons. Firstly, Kristianstad is a municipality with both a city center, an external shopping mall and a big box retail agglomeration. These are three types of trading places that are interesting to study in the case of coexistence and collaboration. Secondly, Kristianstad is the biggest trading destination in the northeast of Skåne. The city is a medium sized town located in the east of Skåne where the external retail agglomeration, C4 Shopping, is the only shopping mall established. Thirdly, it is an interesting case due to the changes in consumers trading behavior and how the established retail agglomerations handle the situations of store vacancies and increased competition.

4.3 Data collection

This following section will present the qualitative method used to gather the empirical data, which in this case was collected through semi-structured interviews. Lastly, the selection of participants and the used interview guide will be presented.

4.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

The primary data for this thesis was collected through interviews, which Lind (2014) defines as a conversation with a purpose. An interview can have different structures depending on how much time there is for flexibility. A semi-structured interview allows more flexibility, even though a list of questions and subjects is still present. However, the interviewer is not obligated to follow a strict order of issues to cover and the respondent is able to speak more freely and detailed about his or her thoughts. Moreover, with semi-structured interviews, questions used in one interview can be changed and developed further for the next ones and there is room for follow up questions (Denscombe, 2016). For these reasons, semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data for this research.

4.3.2 Participant selection

When it comes to retail agglomeration attributes, no previous studies have, to the best of our knowledge, focused on interviewing representing leaders of retail agglomerations and receiving their perceptions of specific retail agglomeration attributes. Several studies have however used quantitative methods where consumers have been interviewed in order to get the consumer perception of these attributes. Therefore, this thesis will fill this research gap by examining how leading representatives from different organizations perceive retail agglomeration attributes and based on their answers, the study intends to identify how the trading venues are able to complement each other. Furthermore, the leading people of the organizations have the best information on existing collaboration as well as how further collaboration could occur between the three trading destinations. For this reason, participants and representatives from different organizations with contrasting roles were interviewed. This was done to receive as many perspectives as possible and to ensure that the relevant data was acquired. Participants were selected through purposive sampling as we purposely choose interviewees who seemed significant to the research and whom we thought would be able to contribute to the theoretical understanding of the subject. Snowball sampling was also used as one respondent recommended two other people who could be relevant to the research topic. Snowball sampling is described as a way of convenience sampling, were researchers contact a small group of people who in turn help the researchers contact other people relevant for the study (Bell et al., 2019). Six people with different roles were interviewed and they are further presented in table 4.1. One representative from each retail agglomeration was interviewed in order to receive their individual perception of each agglomeration. Besides this, three people from the Business Development sector of the local authorities were interviewed. These participants were mainly chosen to get a deeper insight on the possibilities for collaboration between the three trading venues as one of the main functions of the Business Development department is to strengthen the positive collaboration between local authorities, organizations and local businesses in Kristianstad.

The first interview, which took place on the 15th of April 2019, was with Andreas Nilsson, who is the chairman of Handelsföreningen Kristianstad Väst. As a Chairman, his main role is to function as a coordinator for the different stakeholders who are involved in Handelsföreningen Kristianstad Väst. Handelsföreningen Kristianstad Väst is an organisation that works to strengthen the commerce of Härlöv. Their goal is to enhance the attractiveness of the trading destination for visitors from Kristianstad as well as visitors from other regions and cities. Härlöv consists of national big box firms, such as Biltema, Jula, Mio and Elgiganten. Besides these firms, there are also smaller local firms that are specialized in their own industries.

The second interview took place on the 25th of April 2019, with Daniel Eklund, who is the Center Manager of C4 Shopping. He acts as a real estate manager and takes care of that the tenants are thriving and developing, that they pay their rent and follow fire safety regulations. He works with a market coordinator, and together they work to create collective marketing for C4 Shopping. C4 Shopping consists of four properties that offer different supplies. The first one is a big box building, containing conventional stores and restaurants, such as H&M, Dressman, Kicks and Burger King. The second one is a City Gross store, which mostly sells groceries. The third and fourth properties will host Hornbach, Dollarstore and Leo's lekland.

The third and fourth interviews took place on the 26th of April 2019, with Charlotte Svärd and Cecilia Isberg. This was a group interview as both interviewees felt that it would offer a broader spectrum of viewpoints and opinions. In contrast to personal interviews, group interviews provide a bigger variation of experiences and opinions in the research and allows the interviewees to listen to alternative viewpoints (Denscombe, 2016). Charlotte Svärd is the Executive Director of Handelsstaden Kristianstad. Her role is both strategic and operational as she manages the communication of most activities in Handelsstaden Kristianstad. Cecilia Isberg is a Business Developer for the local authorities and she mainly works with providing help for companies that need construction permits or alcohol licenses. Besides this, she also works with a town center development program, where the vision is to create a more lively and thriving town center. Handelsstaden Kristianstad is a limited company that aims to enhance the attractiveness of the town center, to make people move to the town center and create a tenant mix that appeals to everyone.

The fifth and sixth interviews were conducted with two people from the business development sector of the local authorities. These were the interviews that were sampled through snowball sampling as Andreas Nilsson recommended that they could be valuable to the research. The fifth interview with Pernilla Blixt, who is Head of Business Development, took place on the 7th of May 2019. She is in charge of all questions regarding business development, tourism, events and exploitation. The sixth interview with Nikolas Larsson, who is President of the business development sector, took place on the 8th of May 2019. His role is to drive the sector towards a positive development, and he also functions as support for Pernilla Blixt. The main responsibility for the business development sector is to enhance the attractiveness of Kristianstad as trading destination and to strengthen the positive collaboration between local authorities, organizations and local businesses in the city.

Table 4.1 Summary of participants

Date	Participant	Role	Time
15th April	Andreas Nilsson	President of Handelsföreningen Kristianstad Väst	45 minutes
25th April	Daniel Eklund	Center Manager for C4 Shopping	45 minutes
26th April	Charlotte Svärd	Executive Director for Handelsstaden Kristianstad	40 minutes
26th April	Cecilia Isberg	Business Developer for the local authorities	40 minutes
7th May	Pernilla Blixt	Head of Business Development	40 minutes
8th May	Nikolas Larsson	President of Business Development	60 minutes

4.3.3 Interview guide

During the six interviews an interview guide was used, see Appendix 1. All interviews were based on the same interview guide, yet they were customized to suit each respondent's role and retail agglomeration. The interview guide consists of 24 questions that are divided into an introduction of the respondents and their role, the five chosen retail agglomeration attributes and the collaboration between the chosen retail agglomerations.

The first questions asked in the interviews regarded the respondents' role at the retail agglomeration and their perception about eventual advantages and disadvantages for consumers related to the retail agglomeration they were representing. There was also a question about current collaborations between the three established retail agglomerations. The questions regarding the retail agglomeration attributes were divided into the five chosen attributes.

The first attribute, tenant mix, referred to the variety of stores and restaurants that exist in each retail agglomeration. The second attribute, accessibility, considered the level of ease to reach the agglomeration and the possibilities to integrate the created agglomerations into the city center. The third attribute, parking conditions, concerned the available parking facilities and if there are enough spaces to provide all the visiting customers. The questions about the retail agglomerations' atmosphere involved the physical environment and necessary facilities needed for customers to stay at the agglomeration. The last attribute, entertainment, involved questions such as the number of events arranged and the importance of events for the retail agglomerations' attractiveness. The respondents were also asked about the number of anchor stores at the different retail agglomerations and how big influence they thought the anchor stores have on the attractiveness of the retail agglomeration. Lastly, questions about the perceived competition between the three retail agglomerations were asked and how the respondents thought a collaboration could be implemented and managed.

The same interview guide was used for the interviews with respondents from local authorities. However, they were designed to describe the attractiveness of Kristianstad as a trading destination.

4.3.4 Secondary data

The data collected in this study is mainly primary data, which was gathered through semi-structured interviews. The primary data is complemented with secondary data, such as articles from local newspapers and trade magazines. This to provide additional information of the chosen retail agglomerations' background and history as well as current strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, the articles are also valuable to the study as they, in some cases, are used to strengthen the statements expressed by the interviewees, which consequently enhances the credibility of the participant's opinions. In the collection of secondary data, the authority issues were taken into account due to the possibilities of biased authors of the articles. The authority issues are related to if the author or publisher are in a position of which may affect the opinions stated in the articles (Bell et al., 2019). Besides this, a document was provided by Charlotte Svärd after the interview, that shows the number of stores and restaurants that are establish in both the city center and C4 Shopping as well as the number of stores that are relocating from the city center to the external shopping mall, see Appendix 3. This is valuable to the discussion of how the retail agglomerations are still able to complement each other even though they share multiple tenants. However, the document is currently outdated and the number of stores could in the present be different.

4.4 Data analysis

In order to analyze how the three retail agglomerations complement each other and are able to coexist, a swot analysis was implemented. A swot analysis highlights and summarizes the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of an organization (Fahy & Jobber, 2015). This study will therefore present a swot analysis of each retail agglomeration and Kristianstad as a whole. The swot analysis are based on the conducted interviews which may cause biased results. In addition, the retail agglomeration attributes were positioned in the swot analysis.

Besides the swot analysis, a thematic analysis was carried out. A thematic analysis is a search for themes in the collected, qualitative data. The themes can be repetitions, local typologies, metaphors or changes in the topics in the collected data. A theme is a categorization of the gathered data and can be based on the research aim. The objective with a thematic analysis is to gain a theoretical knowledge about the received information, which in turn may lead to contributions in the research field (Bell et al., 2018).

The analysis will contain and be supported by secondary data in form of articles from local newspapers and trade magazines, which will be analyzed with a thematic analysis as well. The opinions stated in the articles are often biased due to the authors' position or the type of article, but will be used in order to show the local responsiveness of current changes in Kristianstad (Bell et al., 2018). The chosen articles are presented in table 4.2, which shows the magazine, name of article, date and author of each article.

Table 4.2 Summary of chosen articles

Magazine	Name of article	Date	Author
Fastighetssverige	Etapp två av Galleria Boulevard i Kristianstad har öppnat	2015-03-27	Henrik Ekberg
Fastighetssverige	Boulevard-Steen & Ströms nya galleria i Kristianstad	2013-01-28	Nicklas Tollesson
Fastighetssverige	Handelsfastigheter vill utveckla Härlöv	2017-01-12	Nicklas Tollesson
Fastighetssverige	Coop till Svenska Handelsfastigheter i Kristianstad	2018-02-28	Maria Olsson Äärlaht
Kristianstadsbladet	Ja till levande innerstad, men utan protektionism	2019-01-28	Roger Hildebrand
Kristianstadsbladet	Privatpersoner har köpt Hammarshus	2006-01-03	Clifford Johansen
Kristianstadsbladet	Butikslokaler i centrum fortsätter att tömmas	2018-12-18	Matti Stenrosen
Kristianstadsbladet	Smyckesbutik lämnar galleria för C4 Shopping	2017-02-28	Robin Nilsson
Kristianstadsbladet	Dressman XL stänger i Galleria Boulevard	2019-01-07	Lukas Ernryd
Kristianstadsbladet	Storsatsning på Härlövs handelsområde planeras	2017-01-12	Cecilia Isberg
Market	Här finns Sveriges bästa cityhandel: ”Vi har en välkomnande atmosfär”	2018-05-08	Lars Welin
24Kristianstad.se	EXTRA: Kristianstad centrum topprankat ”Unika butiker”	2018-05-08	Henrik Nordell
24Kristianstad.se	KLART: Lämnar Härlöv för C4 Shopping	2017-05-17	Robert Rosén

4.5 Credibility and transferability

When evaluating qualitative research, it is crucial to evaluate the credibility and transferability of the study. Credibility is very important for qualitative studies as it ensures that readers believe what they are reading. This can be achieved by using triangulation, respondent validation or transparency (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015; Bell et al., 2019). Triangulation refers to using several methods to conduct research on a certain phenomenon (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015). The analysis of this thesis was complemented with secondary data in form of news articles in order to complement the primary data with additional information on the background and history as well as strengths and weaknesses of each retail agglomeration. The secondary data is also used to highlight the fact that some of the statements expressed during the interviews are included in certain articles, which subsequently gives more credibility to the study. Furthermore, Charlotte Svärd provided documents with information of stores that have left the city center and companies that are established in both the city center and C4 Shopping. Transparency can be reached by having a study that can be criticized, it is important for the researchers to demonstrate the research process in details so that readers can get an understanding of chosen methods. Respondent validation involves contacting the respondents who were involved in the study and giving them feedback on the results (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015). The conducted swot analyses were validated by Andreas Nilsson, Daniel Eklund and Charlotte Svärd to ensure that the current situation of each retail agglomeration was interpreted correctly. The three respondents gave valuable insights and suggestions on improvements for the analyses. Transferability entails the possibility of applying the results and findings to other contexts (Bell et al., 2019). Even though the study is restricted to retail agglomerations in Sweden, the research will provide useful information on how trading destination can coexist and collaborate instead of working against each other.

5. Retail agglomerations - The case of Kristianstad

This chapter presents an introduction of Kristianstad and the three cases: the city center of Kristianstad, C4 Shopping and Härlöv. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of each case are summarized in swot analyses in order to determine how they can complement each other. Furthermore, the current situation, current challenges and future of the retail agglomerations are analyzed.

5.1 An introduction of Kristianstad

Kristianstad City was built by the Danish King, Christian IV, in 1614. At the time, Skåne County belonged to Denmark, and due to the troubled circumstances at the time, Kristianstad was built as a fortress. Kristianstad belonged to Denmark during the majority of the 1600s, but was lost to Sweden in 1658. The city of Kristianstad continued to develop during the 1700s and had at the time big influence as a city due to the seafaring and later on, as a military town (Kristianstad kommun, 2019).

Today, Kristianstad is, to the surface, the biggest municipality in Skåne and has around 86 000 inhabitants, of which 40 000 inhabitants live in the city of Kristianstad. The city has grown into an enterprising city with a great number of grocery and provision companies which supplies Sweden with their services and products. The profile of Kristianstad has since 2003 been "Spirit of Food", which refers to the many grocery companies established in the city (Kristianstad kommun, 2018; Kristianstad kommun, 2019). One third of the companies in Kristianstad have some sort of connections to food or brewery. The city does also offer the best educational programs for chefs and confectioners in Sweden (Kristianstad kommun, 2019).

Kristianstad is located close to the nature, one example of this is Kristianstad Vattenriket, which is the first biosphere reserve in Sweden designated by UNESCO (Unesco, 2015). Vattenriket is a model area which shows how the resources of the nature can be preserved and developed in a sustainable way. Kristianstad is located in the northeast Skåne and is the biggest trading destination in the area. This due to the three established retail agglomerations in Kristianstad which are the city center of Kristianstad, the external shopping mall C4 Shopping and Härlöv, which consists of big box retailers (Kristianstad kommun, 2019).

5.2 City center of Kristianstad

This sections will present the background of the city center of Kristianstad followed by an analysis of the current situation, current challenges and the future of the retail agglomeration. The analysis will be based on the interviews with Charlotte Svärd, Cecilia Isberg, Nikolas Larsson and secondary data. The gathered information is based on the participants' perceptions and opinions, which may cause biased answers and interpretations of the current situation and challenges. The chapter will be concluded with a swot analysis which presents the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the city center.

5.2.1 Background

Kristianstad City is the town center of Kristianstad in which over 200 stores and restaurants are located. Charlotte Svärd describes the city center of Kristianstad in the interview as: "*We have a unique preserved city center with a lot of history. It is not many cities that manage to remain their history like Kristianstad has. We are an old trade city that still lives on."* She further explained the advantages with visiting the city center: *"The advantages with the city center is the unique stores and experienced retailers. It is also close to the nature, you can find everything on a short distance. You will find both the culture, the nature, restaurants and shopping in a proximity to each other."* Besides the unique tenant mix, the city center does also offer entertainment that no other retail agglomeration in the municipality can, such as a theatre, a culture district, bars and clubs. According to Cecilia Isberg, the city center of Kristianstad provides the visitors with unique experiences and offers more than shopping: "*If you chose to visit Kristianstad for shopping you will get more than just a sweater, you will also get the experience of the city that is not possible in big shopping malls."* In 2014, Kristianstad was titled as "The city center of the year", due to the increased attractiveness of the city and growing trade indexes, as well as the creation of new jobs and meeting points (Svenska stadskärnor, 2018). Additionally, in 2018, Kristianstad was certified with the "Purple Flag", which is a project to increase and ensure the security in the town center at night. For the city center, it has been an important task to attract more customers at night in order to make it appealing for retailers to establish and run their business in the city in the evening hours (Kristianstad Handelsstaden, 2018).

Galleria Boulevard is a shopping center established in the city center that opened in 2015. The shopping center consists of 31 stores, restaurants and cafés. Besides this, Galleria Boulevard has a cinema and soon to be established Laserdome. The shopping center does also contain a car park, which contributes to the parking facilities in the city with over 1000 parking lots (Fastighetssverige, 2015-03-27 n.p.; Fastighetssverige, 2013-01-28 n.p.; Galleria Boulevard, n.d.)

5.2.2 Current situation

Charlotte Svärd and Cecilia Isberg explained that the current tenant mix in the city center of Kristianstad is unique. Cecilia Isberg explains the tenant mix: *"A majority of unique retailers in a combination with the big chain stores, the architecture of the city and its proximity to the water makes Kristianstad unique."* According to Teller and Elms (2010), a diversified tenant mix is important in order to attract various consumer groups and is therefore seen as one of the town center's strengths. The location of the city center is also quite unique since the town is close to the nature and the biosphere area. This enable consumers to both experience the nature and the city life when visiting the town center. Kristianstad city is a town center with a lot of history and consists of well preserved, historical buildings which enhance the attractiveness and experience of the city center. The town center of Kristianstad is the only retail agglomeration that can offer Systembolaget in their tenant mix. This is due to regulations set by the board of Systembolaget (Systembolaget, 2017). Systembolaget is located in Galleria Boulevard and is the anchor store of the city center, the store is an important tenant to possess due to the generated footfall. However, Charlotte Svärd expressed that the city center lacks sufficient number of public toilets, an opportunity is therefore to include additional ones.

In 2018, the Swedish trade magazine, Market, ranked Kristianstad city center as the third best city center in Sweden. The analysis was made of 300 retail agglomerations in Sweden including around 40 city centers. Kristianstad city center received the ranking spot due to the tenant mix and the city center's closeness to everything, such as the nature, culture and the sport arena (24Kristianstad.se, 2018-05-08 n.p; Market, 2018-05-08 n.p.).

According to Charlotte Svärd, the city center has had a troubled time due to the increase of e-commerce and the fact that the media highlights how C4 Shopping has caused store vacancies, which consequently has led to a negative perception of the city center. Both Charlotte Svärd and Cecilia Isberg expressed that the local newspapers have written negatively about the store vacancies and the increased competition, which also has affected the reputation of the city center's current situation.

The city has an insufficient infrastructure regarding the traffic situation, which affects the accessibility to reach the town center. In the conducted interviews, the city center's infrastructure has been discussed as an obstacle in the perspective of the consumers. Charlotte Svärd said: *"Locals might perceive the city unavailable, that it is problematic to visit the city center."* The traffic situation, together with the discussion of the parking conditions in the city center, deters consumers from visiting the town center. Teller and Elms (2010), state that the convenience of reaching the trading venue is an important factor for the perceived attractiveness, which thereby implies that the accessibility of the city center is one of its weaknesses. The city center of Kristianstad is conveniently reachable by public transportation which is thereby one of their strengths. This is supported by Riviezzo et al. (2009), who claim that accessibility is also related to the ease of reaching the retail agglomeration by public transportation. The parking facilities available in the city are, according to the local newspaper and locals, inadequate. However, Handelsstaden Kristianstad and the local authorities expressed in the interviews that there are enough parking spaces to provide visitors of the city center who travel by car. Cecilia Isberg stated that: *"There is a lot of complains about the parking situation, but there are parking lots if you do not mind walking for five minutes."* Besides the parking areas provided by the local authorities, Galleria Boulevard has over 1000 parking spots in their car park. However, the complications with the car park are, according to locals, the narrow entrance which intersects with a sidewalk and the fact that the car park feels too tight (Kristianstadbladet, 2019-01-28 n.p.). This is supported by Cecilia Isberg who said that: *"A lot of people find it scary to drive into the car park."* Charlotte Svärd responded to this with: *"For those who dares to park in the car park, there is one. We do not lack parking lots but there is a psychological perception that we do."* According to Hart et al. (2013), it is important for city centers to provide comfortable parking facilities in order to be competitive against external retail agglomerations, who often have pleasant and free parking conditions. Since this is not met by the city center, this attribute is insufficient and thereby a weakness.

The city center of Kristianstad hosts around 30 events a year to attract consumers to the town center. The events are a combination of big and small happenings, such as city festivals, Kulturnatten, and evening activities like shopping nights. According to Charlotte Svärd, events are important for the development of the trade in the city center since the increase of visitors have a positive effect on the local businesses. Cecilia Isberg claims that for every Swedish Krona spent by tourists, 49% goes to the local trade.

5.2.3 Current challenges

The city center is currently going through multiple challenges related to the changing buying behavior of consumers, store vacancies and the newly established shopping mall, C4 Shopping. The changing buying behavior is related to various factors, such as the increase of e-commerce and the shift from traditional consumption towards an experienced and socialized based consumption. The challenge is to create a city center that offers consumers more experiences than classic retail stores. Another challenge for the city center is the debate regarding the number of parking lots available and if there is a sufficient number of them. This challenge is by Cecilia Isberg not a real issue: *"To focus on insufficient parking lots is an easy issue to address, but where we are right now will not be solved by an easy issue because it is about a society in change. It is easier for retailers to blame the store vacancies on the lack of parking spots than the increasing competition from the e-commerce."* According to a report from HUI (2011), the accessibility by car is of big importance in the choice of retail agglomeration. It is not only whether there are parking spaces available, but also where they are located that is of importance. Consumers require parking lots that feels safe and are easy to access and it is important that the retail agglomeration is aware of that the parking facilities are the first impression of the retail agglomeration (HUI Research, 2011). This is supported by El- Adly (2007), who states that the parking facilities are related to the comfort of visit the retail agglomeration and that it is important to provide consumers with convenient and safe parking conditions.

The store vacancies are partly due to the increased e-commerce, and partly due to the establishment of the shopping mall, C4 shopping. Since C4 Shopping opened in the autumn of 2018, the city center has faced challenges with preventing tenants from leaving the town center in order to relocate to the shopping mall. This has created discussions in the local newspaper, Kristianstadbladet, where local residents and retailers located in the city center have debated about the establishment of C4 Shopping and its effect on the town center. The published debate articles blame the external shopping mall and the township for the store vacancies. Cecilia Isberg explained how the local newspapers affect the retailers in the city center: *"The* *consumers reads articles in the local newspaper that addresses store vacancies and an empty city center, which leads to that the consumers refrain from visiting the city center. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy."* The challenge for the city center of Kristianstad is to restore the attractiveness and reputation of the town center in order to make it appealing for retailers to establish or relocate. Cecilia Isberg stated: *"The city center is not dead, it is just resting."*

5.2.4 Future

The future of the city center of Kristianstad is to manage the challenges which they are currently facing. The city center needs to strengthen its competitiveness against other retail agglomerations and e-commerce, and increase their attractiveness in order to appeal new tenants to establish. Charlotte Svärd pronounced in the interview that there are new establishments planning to open in the city center, one of these new establishments are Laserdome. The opening of a Laserdome in the city center would increase the supply of entertainment and could function as a meeting place for several occasions. The creation of social meeting points is a crucial competitive factor for retail agglomerations, this stated by Nicolas Larsson who claims that: *"The future of trading venues is more about the experience than just shopping."* The strategy to involve additional entertainment in the town center is supported by Hart et al. (2013), who describes non-retail activities as an important factor for the attractiveness of the city center. The limited company in the town center, Handelsstaden Kristianstad, is planning on further developing the activities and events in the city in order to enhance the perception of the city and attract consumers.

5.2.5 Swot analysis

In table 5.1, the swot analysis of the city center of Kristianstad is presented and contains the identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The swot analysis functions as a summary of the perceptions and opinions stated by Charlotte Svärd, Cecilia Isberg and Nikolas Larsson during the interviews. Therefore, the table highlights what previously has been stated in in the case of Kristianstad City. The city center has numerous strengths which are related to the uniqueness of the retail agglomeration and include the tenant mix, architecture, public transportation facilities and its anchor stores. The weaknesses found are associated with the accessibility to reach the city center by car as well as the parking conditions. During the interview with Charlotte Svärd and Cecilia Isberg they stated that the inaccessibility with car is merely psychological for consumers and that enough parking spaces exists. They further explained that due to the old habits the consumers have, they tend to avoid car parks. Here, it is important to note that the answers are based on the perceptions and opinions of the interviewees and that there is a possibility that the answers are biased. The various opening hours are an additional weakness in the city center, this since the tenants have different property owners. This differs from shopping malls where the established tenants have same opening hours, due to the same property owner who decides the opening hours. The city center has opportunities in forms of establishments of new tenants and an increase of events and happenings. Furthermore, some tenants in the city center are always open, which enhance the attractiveness and accessibility in the city center. The threats faced by the town center are store vacancies and the growth of e-commerce, as well as the media. The local newspaper and its pessimistic articles about the city center harms the reputation of the town center since the articles spreads to branch magazines and bigger newspapers.

Table 5.1 Swot analysis of Kristianstad City Center

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
• Unique, diverse and experienced stores • "Close to everything" • A preserved and historical city center • Access to public transportation • Anchor stores (Systembolaget)	• Infrastructure • Psychologically inaccessible by car • Parking conditions • Due to different property owners, the tenants in the city center has different opening hours	• New tenants (restaurants and entertainment facilities) • Additional events and happenings • There are tenants in the city center that are always open • More niche stores	• Store vacancies • E-commerce • Media

5.3 C4 Shopping

The history, an analysis of the current situation, current challenges, future and swot analysis of C4 Shopping will be presented in this section. The analysis will be done by using secondary data and the data acquired from the interview with Daniel Eklund. Furthermore, it is important to note that the data and answers gathered from the interview are based on Daniel Eklund's opinions and perceptions.

5.3.1 Background

C4 Shopping is a shopping center in the outskirts of Kristianstad that was established in 2017. In the mid-2000s, a group of traders in Kristianstad joined in a consortium and bought the land that C4 Shopping now stands on, which included 95 hectares of land (Kristianstadbladet, 2006-01-03 n.p; Kristianstad kommun, 2019). The plan with the purchase was to create a trading destination and at the time, a large furniture company showed interest in building a new department store in the area. However, a department store was not established but the location was identified as favorably located for commerce (Kristianstad kommun, 2019).

Later on, the local authorities had suggested that the area was suitable for expansion and for building new residences and roads. In 2006, an agreement was made between the traders and the local authorities. The agreement meant that the local authorities would buy the land and start a detailed development plan for the location. When the detailed development plan would be completed, the group of traders were allowed to buy back the part of land that could be used for commerce (Kristianstad kommun, 2019).

The mentality towards the external shopping mall has not always been positive. In 2013, several protests were made against the establishment of a new shopping center (Kristianstad kommun, 2019). Several local newspapers also continuously reported on store vacancies and the migration of stores from Kristianstad City to C4 Shopping. In 2018, a total of 28 stores and restaurants left their premises in the town center (Kristianstadbladet, 2018-12-18 n.p.). An example of this is a jewelry store that moved from the city center to the shopping mall. The reason for the relocation was that they wanted to be positioned in the newly established shopping mall and take part of the upcoming sales (Kristianstadbladet, 2017-02-28 n.p.). A clothing store from the town center also migrated for similar reasons, giving the explanation that the external shopping mall has better accessibility and everything is located under the same roof (Kristianstadbladet, 2019-01-07 n.p.).

5.3.2 Current situation

When it comes to the tenant mix of C4 Shopping, the Center Manager, Daniel Eklund, said: *"C4 Shopping currently has a wide diversity of tenants with around 100 stores and restaurants. We try to offer something for every customer group as we have clothing stores, shoe stores, electronic stores, pharmacies, grocery stores and restaurants."* This goes in line with Teller

& Elms' (2010) research, where it is stated that the tenant mix is one of the main factors that contributes to the attractiveness of an agglomeration. When asked about the existence of anchor stores, he responded: "*We do of course also offer exclusive stores that do not exist anywhere else in the region, like the Danish chain store "Normal" or City Gross. We are also expecting to open a Leos Lekland and Hornbach store. These will complement the supply in the city as the other retail agglomerations do not offer them. "*Consequently, Daniel Eklund explained that the shopping mall has several chain stores and a wide tenant mix in order to generate traffic to the location, especially consumers from other cities. According to Daniel Eklund this is because visitors from other regions tend to travel to shopping destinations that are easy to reach and have wide tenant mixes. This is also supported in the research of Konishi and Sandfort (2003), who explain that anchor stores increase the traffic of shoppers at or near its location.

Even though C4 Shopping has a good variety of tenants, Daniel Eklund stated that there is still a demand for certain specific anchor stores and described it in the following way:

> Even though we strive for having a good tenant mix people still want stores like Zara, Systembolaget or stores that specifically sell lingerie. It becomes hard to satisfy everybody, but it is truly important to offer something for every customer group. This is why we also have pharmacies and stores where you can pick up packages. Afound is another store that we offer which in Sweden only exists in Stockholm, Göteborg, Malmö and here in Kristianstad.

Consequently, even though they may never be able to satisfy everybody, the shopping mall still offer exclusive anchor stores that make people visit the location. The Center Manager further explained that Afound is one of their biggest anchor stores as it offers premium products and has a supply that constantly changes and generates a lot of traffic to the shopping mall. This is supported by Konishi & Sandfort (2003), as they state that anchor stores generate traffic to the location through their name's reputation.

Daniel Eklund further stated that the accessibility to C4 Shopping is very convenient when traveling by car as it is located near a freeway. Consumers from other cities are thus more likely to favor the shopping mall, which also relates to the statement of Chebat et al. (2010), that visitors patronize with shopping malls that are conveniently accessible. When asked about the existence of public transportation he responded: *"There is bus line that takes you here which makes it easy for customers who are not car-borne to visit the shopping mall. "*However, an important fact that was not mentioned in the interview is that the bus line is restricted and it is hard for consumers who are not located in the city center to travel to the shopping mall with public transportation. It is therefore important to note that the answers are solely the perceptions and opinions of the representatives and could be biased. Daniel Eklund further expressed that the access to the different retailers and restaurants is also comfortable as most of them are located under the same roof, which attracts more families with children as there is no need to cross dangerous roads, especially during rush hour.

Even though C4 Shopping is external, the Center Manager stressed that there is also a big possibility that the shopping mall will become more integrated with the city center in the long term and stated: *"New residences are constantly being constructed between us, making us more connected to each other. Currently, the three trading destinations are seen as single infrastructural cells, but with time they will be seen as a single cell. However, until that happens it is important to collaborate, instead of working against each other."* Thufvesson (2009) also mentions the importance of collaboration in order to coexist.

The parking conditions at C4 Shopping were explained by the Center Manager to be very convenient as they offer free parking and family parking spots. He gave the following explanation: *"This is maybe a little ridiculous but the parking spots here are 2.7 meters wide, in contrast to the average parking spots in Sweden of 2.3 meters. We do this to make it easy for costumers to park here and we also strive for making it easy to reach the shopping mall."* He further explained that the vision of the management at C4 Shopping is that the last steps before entering the shopping destination, accessibility and parking conditions, should be convenient and comfortable in order to make the visitors stay longer and return more frequently. This is supported in the research of El-Adly (2007), where it is stressed out that ample parking contributes to consumers wanting to spend more time and socialize in the mall.

In regards to the atmosphere of C4 Shopping, Daniel Eklund explained that is something the management is constantly trying to improve by saying: *"We offer charging stations for electric cars, free Wi-Fi and power outlets. Beside this, we have family rooms where people can go with their babies to sit down in peace and quiet, play games, heat up gruel and change diapers."* He further said that a big priority for the managers at C4 Shopping is also to actively work against crime and make people feel safe when shopping and that they achieve this by having security guards present in the shopping mall. In order to avoid a noisy and stressful atmosphere Daniel Eklund explained: *"We made the decision to exclude food courts from the* *tenant mix because I absolutely hate them. Instead, the customers can sit down in one of the many restaurants or cafés where the atmosphere is calmer."* All of these initiatives can be related to the research of Chebat et al (2010), who explain that arousing atmospheres are more likely to be preferred by the consumers.

The physical atmosphere was expressed by the Center Manager to be rather unique and beautiful as he said: *"The premises at C4 Shopping are newly constructed and have a modern look to them, but are designed to represent the city of Kristianstad. There are unique colors and wave patterns on the facade to represent the closeness to "Vattenriket."* Even so, the shopping mall lacks the traditional and cozy atmosphere like Kristianstad City and you could therefore ask the question of whether the answer was biased or not. However, it is clear that the management in C4 Shopping puts much effort into enhancing the physical atmosphere as Daniel Eklund stressed out that the shopping mall offers 26 toilets in order to facilitate for the consumers and avoid queues, which according to him is a hygiene factor that must exist to satisfy the visitors. Besides the tenant mix, Teller and Elms (2010) explain that the atmosphere of an agglomeration is one of the major antecedents of attractiveness.

According to Daniel Eklund, C4 Shopping include as many events as they can and strive for holding an event at least once a week. He explained that the events are sometimes not marketed as they occasionally want visitors to be surprised when entering the shopping mall. The Center Manager said: *"The surprise factor is very important to engage and stimulate the visitors and contributes to their overall enjoyment here. An example of this is that a famous artist came to paint our trailer truck with graffiti. This attracted several customers that took pictures of themselves with the trailer truck."* However, he further explained that other times it is important to market events in order to attract masses. For example, the shopping mall held an event where 25 different associations were invited that offered people the possibility to try fencing, bowling and shooting with a rifle.

5.3.3 Current challenges

Currently, C4 Shopping does not have many weaknesses and threats as Daniel Eklund explained that they are the only established shopping mall in eastern Skåne. He said: *"It is the biggest shopping mall in this region and it is well protected from competition in this sense. But most of the competition comes from the west side of Skåne from big cities like Helsingborg,* *Malmö and Lund."* He further clarified that C4 Shopping will never be as big as the shopping malls with over 200 stores and restaurants and in order to compete with the west of Skåne, the shopping mall has to live up to expectations and standards that are provided by its competitors. On top of that, there are constantly new trends and lifestyles and a challenge is to keep up with these. To compete and avoid losing customers to other major shopping malls, the management at C4 Shopping try to deliver several different experiences, which is the reason for establishing Leos lekland and Hornbach. When asked about major anchor stores that they are currently missing, like Systembolaget, he responded*: "Opening a Systembolaget store in C4 Shopping would truly be beneficial for us but even so, there is one in the city center."* This indicates that the different retail agglomerations are able to complement each other, which furthermore can be related to Rajagopal's (2010) research, where it is explained that shopping malls and town centers complement each other through their competitive advantages.

Besides the physical competition, Daniel Eklund strongly stressed out that biggest threat the shopping mall currently faces comes from e-commerce and a challenge for the retail agglomeration is to make consumer prioritize physical stores. He stated: *"What people do not understand is that the real threat comes from the e-commerce"*. He further said that the best way to counter this threat is to offer things that can only be experienced by visiting the shopping mall, such as certain events or stores that exclusively sell their products in physical stores. Physical stores should offer something more than just products in order to increase the value of the experience (Björn, 2018).

Another challenge for C4 Shopping is according to the Center Managers to change the negative perception people may have of the shopping mall. As previously mentioned, the media has had a contribution in highlighting a lot of negativity and the bad effects that the external shopping destination may have on the city center. For example, several articles have written about the relocation of stores from the city center to the shopping mall (Kristianstadbladet, 2018-12-18 n.p.; Kristianstadbladet, 2017-02-28 n.p.; Kristianstadbladet, 2019-01-07 n.p.). During the interview with Daniel Eklund, he mentioned that people often neglect and disregard change and only focus on the negativity. He explained: *"It takes a couple of years for a new trading destination to settle down and the market to stabilize."* Here it was indicated that the only weakness the shopping mall faces comes from the fact that it is newly established. As the answers are based on the opinions and perceptions of Daniel Eklund, it is important to remark that additional weaknesses could potentially exist and could have been left out during the interview.

5.3.4 Future

At the moment there are two empty premises in C4 Shopping and Daniel Eklund clarified that they are planned to stay that way until a new interesting store concept arrives. The Center Manager pointed out that they do not want to lease 100 percent of the existing premises as there is risk of losing mobility and missing out on new concepts. As previously mentioned Leos lekland and Hornbach are also expected to be established in the near future, generating more traffic to the location and creating more footfall for both the retailers within C4 Shopping and the other retail agglomerations. It can therefore be concluded that it leads to the shopping mall complementing the supply in the entire city as it offers exclusive stores.

Daniel Eklund further explained that even though C4 Shopping has many restaurants and cafés, there is still an opportunity to include more in the tenant tix. He gave the example: *"We are seeing a higher demand for restaurants and cafés, especially ones that offer vegetarian and vegan food."* In the future they could increase the number of restaurants as he explained that about 12 percent of the real estates in C4 Shopping are restaurants and there is a possibility to increase this to 17 percent in the long-term.

5.3.5 Swot analysis

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of C4 Shopping have been placed in a swot analysis and are presented in table 5.2. The swot analysis merely functions as a summary of the perceptions and opinions stated by Daniel Eklund during the interview. Consequently, what has previously been presented in the case presentation of C4 Shopping is summarized in the table and is solely based on the perceptions and opinions of Daniel Eklund. Firstly, the shopping mall has several strengths, such as the tenant mix, accessibility, parking conditions, atmosphere and held events. Secondly, the weaknesses are not many and include the fact that they are newly established and that it takes several years for a newly established shopping destination to stabilize the market. It is important to note that several other weaknesses could potentially exist but were not mentioned during the interview and that the interviewee was more defensive and less open to state all the facts. This is explained by Denscombe (2016), that one of disadvantages with interviews is that you often only get the perceptions and opinions of the participants. Thirdly, three major opportunities exist for C4 Shopping. They can include more anchor stores which there is high demand for, like Zara, increase the number of restaurants and cafés and include more vegetarian and vegan alternatives. Lastly, the biggest threat they currently are facing comes from larger shopping malls in western Skåne and the e-commerce. The negative perception of the shopping mall is also a threat that the media has had a contribution to.

Table 5.2 Swot analysis of C4 Shopping

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
• Wide and diverse tenant mix with several exclusive anchor stores • Good accessibility with car and public transportation • Convenient and free parking • Unique atmosphere • Includes many events	• Newly established	• Include more anchor stores which there is a high demand for • Increase the number of restaurants and cafés • Include more vegetarian and vegan supply	• Larger shopping malls in west of Skåne • E-commerce • Negative perception of the shopping mall due to the media

5.4 Härlöv

This section will present the history, an analysis of the current situation, current challenges, future and lastly, a swot analysis of Härlöv. The analysis will be done with the aid of secondary data and data gathered from the interview with Andreas Nilsson. Therefore, the information in this section is based on the perceptions and opinions of Andreas Nilsson.

5.4.1 Background

Härlöv is a retail agglomeration located outside of Kristianstad which offers big box consumption. Andreas Nilsson describes the tenant mix at Härlöv as unique with diverse retailers that focus on durable goods and services. Härlöv is a scattered agglomeration and is spread out over a big area, which requires the consumers to have access to cars. Because of this, several initiatives have been taken in order to improve the infrastructure. The trade association of Härlöv is Handelsföreningen Kristianstad Väst, which was founded in 2014 in order to develop and increase the trade in Härlöv and Vilan. The members of the trade association are retailers established at the retail agglomeration and are ideally working and managing the association.

In contrast to Kristianstad City, C4 Shopping has not had as much impact on the viability and vitality of Härlöv. This is because they have contrasting target audiences and retailers that are specialized in different industries. Härlöv is the only retail agglomeration in the city that offers volume retailing and therefore complements the region. Even so, an outlet store, called Sportringen, moved its business from Härlöv to C4 Shopping in conjunction with the establishment of the shopping mall. The owner of the store stated that the decision to relocate was easy to make due to C4 Shopping being an attractive trading destination (24Kristianstad.se, 2017-05-17 n.p.).

5.4.2 Current situation

Härlöv is the only retail agglomeration consisting of big box retailing in Kristianstad, which means that it does not compete with other retail agglomerations in the region. Andreas Nilsson stated: *"We have a pretty unique tenant mix with stores that focus on big box retailing. There are big national chain stores like Biltema, Jula, Elgiganten and Mio. We also have smaller, niched and local companies that are specialized in their own industries, such as fishing companies."* Consequently, he explained that these companies attract visitors from different parts of the region. Other firms that were mentioned during the interview and contribute to the unique tenant mix are retailers that sell kitchen products, like HTH Kök and Kvik, and big outlet stores.

However, during the interview with Andreas Nilsson, he mentioned that Härlöv is missing something that attracts consumers on a daily basis, like a major grocery store. He said *"We are missing things that make consumers stay at the location and visit us more often."* For this reason, he explained that Coop is expected to be established in the near future and will function as an anchor store for the retail agglomeration. In addition to this, Härlöv lacks places where people can sit down and eat and an opportunity is to include restaurants or cafés in the tenant mix. Andreas Nilsson explained: *"The main thing that Härlöv is missing right now is restaurants and cafés."* Restaurants, food courts and cafés grant visitors the possibility to have breaks from hours of shopping and overall attract more visitors (Wakefield & Baker, 1998). When it comes to the anchor stores Andreas Nilsson explained that Lager 157 is an exclusive anchor store that contributes to the overall perceived attractiveness. Other big anchor stores that were mentioned by him and that generate a lot of traffic to the location are the bigger companies like Elgiganten, Biltema, Mediamarkt and Mio.

When asked about the accessibility to the retail agglomeration Andreas Nilsson explained*: "It is no coincidence that the retail agglomeration was chosen to be placed at the outskirt of Kristianstad. The highway allows people to easily reach Härlöv with car."* Since Härlöv is located outside of Kristianstad it can be concluded that consumers mostly need to have access to cars and according to Andreas Nilsson, this create demands on functioning and sufficient number of parking spaces, which is one of the strengths of the retail agglomeration. Härlöv offers free parking spots outside of every established retailer which eases for the consumers to visit the different retailers. He explained: *"As most of the customers are car-borne it is important to offer comfortable parking conditions."* This is important for Härlöv, as traveling to the retail agglomeration and parking are seen as the last steps that consumers take before entering a shopping destination (Teller & Elms, 2010).

Andreas Nilsson stated that several events are held in Härlöv in order to attract more visitors, especially during major holidays like Christmas and Black Friday. He further explained that because of the retail agglomeration being very scattered, it becomes hard to implement events in all the stores and is therefore essential to have all the involved retailers participate in the events. Andreas Nilsson said: *"We try to implement events as much as we can but it is hard to implement one major event for all our retailers".* Even so, they host some events as for example in 2018, an agility world championship was held in Kristianstad and during the event people were allowed to bring their dogs in to the different stores in Härlöv. Here it becomes essential to contemplate on how beneficial a minor event like this can be and how much attraction it draws to the location. El-Adly (2007) states that many consumers, particularly younger ones, tend to spend their leisure time in shopping centers, seeking entertainment. Therefore, it becomes important to consider if the trade association could implement further events that also attract younger audiences or engage more people.

5.4.3 Current challenges

Härlöv does not face any physical competition in the region, they face other challenges related to the attractiveness of the retail agglomeration. Andreas Nilsson explained that even though the accessibility to reach the retail agglomeration by car is convenient, the infrastructure of Härlöv is inadequate. In his own words he said: *"The traffic situation is not ideal at Härlöv today and the infrastructure need to be improved."* He further explained that due to the number of consumers visiting or passing Härlöv, the traffic situation becomes unsatisfactory because of long queues and traffic jams. These are factors that Teller and Elms (2010) explain as important to consider when evaluating the accessibility of a retail agglomeration. Andreas Nilsson expressed that this also affects the visits between the stores within the retail agglomeration since Härlöv is a scattered agglomeration that requires the customers to drive between the different retailers. He said: *"This customer behaviour is an existing challenge for us as everything is not located under the same roof."* Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a need to create a more attractive retail agglomeration where people can walk between the stores in a safe and secure way. According to Andreas Nilsson this is not the case today and people tend to avoid walking between the retailers due to traffic and dangerous roads. If the traffic is too troubling, it may deter the consumers from visiting additional retailers. When asked about the solution for this he responded*: "Härlöv needs to rebuild the infrastructure and become a meeting place."* He further suggested that the existing public transportation to the retail agglomeration is not ideal and can also be improved. The buses to Härlöv arrive much less frequently than the buses within the city center. This is something that Andreas Nilsson stated affects the city as whole because people are not able to travel between the retail agglomerations efficiently with public transportation.

Härlöv also lacks a unique atmosphere that contributes to the overall perceived attractiveness. Andreas Nilsson explained that the reason for this is because the retail agglomeration is missing factors that make consumers stay and return more frequently, like toilets and defibrillators. He said: *"When people visit with a family of children or elderly, it becomes essential to include these as you never know when the need emerges."* Teller and Elms (2010) state that infrastructural facilities, like public toilets, are elements that influence the overall atmosphere of an agglomeration. Nonetheless, the President of Handelsföreningen Väst stated that several initiatives have been taken to increase the security and prevent theft at the retail agglomeration. For example, an agreement was made with Securitas to have guards patrolling the area. These guards are also CPR trained and are equipped with defibrillators.

5.4.4 Future

Härlöv is a retail agglomeration that is currently becoming more attractive for investors and retailers. The increased interest is partly due to the location of the agglomeration, and partly because it is the biggest retail agglomeration in the northeast Skåne. The real estate company, Svenska Handelsfastigheter, who owns several properties at Härlöv, is planning an expansion of the agglomeration and want to further diverse the tenant mix (Fastighetssverige, 2017-01-12 n.p.). The planned development of Härlöv is to offer the consumers a more holistic experience with tenants such as fast food restaurants, grocery stores and retailers that yet are not established in Kristianstad (Kristianstadbladet, 2017-01-12 n.p.). Even though Härlöv currently have several anchor stores, another one is expected to establish in 2020. The new tenant is Coop, a big grocery retailer, which will function as an anchor store and contributes to the diversity of the established tenants (Fastighetssverige, 2018-02-28 n.p.).

The infrastructure at Härlöv is today insufficient and creates traffic jams and irritation among consumers. In conjunction with the expansion of the agglomeration, the local authorities have decided to improve the infrastructure in order to create a better flow in the traffic at Härlöv (Fastighetssverige, 2018-02-28 n.p.). A new circulation site is currently being built to replace an old intersection that has for long period of time caused both queues and traffic incidents. Additionally, the local government is planning on moving pedestrian crossings further away from intersections in order to increase the safety for both pedestrians and cyclists. A new parking facility, with up to 200 parking spots, is also being built to facilitate for the visitors (Kristianstad kommun, 2019).

5.4.5 Swot analysis

Table 5.3 presents the swot analysis of Härlöv and includes the existing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the retail agglomeration. The swot analysis functions as a summary of the perceptions and opinions stated by Andreas Nilsson during the interview. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for Härlöv that have been discussed in the case presentation of Härlöv are summarized in the swot analysis and are solely based on the opinions and perceptions of Andreas Nilsson. The strengths include the fact that Härlöv has a unique tenant mix with several exclusive anchor stores, like Biltema and Elgiganten, it is easily accessible with car, the parking conditions are convenient and comfortable and multiple events are held here. Even so, several weaknesses exist and concern the lack of restaurants and cafés, inadequate infrastructure, scattered retail agglomeration, insufficient public transportation and nonexistent unique atmosphere. Therefore, to improve the attractiveness of Härlöv, the managers can include restaurants and cafés in the tenant mix, improve and rebuild the infrastructure and include more anchor stores, like Dormy, in the retail agglomeration. During the interview with Andreas Nilsson he was open to discuss all the weaknesses of Härlöv. Furthermore, he was willing to highlight several aspects and was not defensive in this sense. It is therefore essential to note that there is a possibility that he was more willing to share and discuss the weaknesses of the retail agglomeration in contrast to other participants. Even so, the summarized swot analysis is still based on the opinions and perceptions of one representing leader of Handelsföreningen Väst and if more people of the trade association were interviewed, the analysis could potentially have looked differently. Since Härlöv is a big box retail agglomeration which is located in the outskirt of Kristianstad, there are major opportunities to expand the agglomeration and establish additional real estates. Lastly, the major threat they are facing comes from other shopping destinations in western Skåne that are able to provide a broader tenant mix with anchor stores like Dormy.

Table 5.3 Swot analysis of Härlöv

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
• Unique tenant mix with several exclusive anchor stores • Good accessibility with car • Convenient and free parking • Includes some events	• Lacks restaurants and cafés • Inadequate infrastructure • Scattered retail agglomeration • Insufficient public transportation • Lacks a unique atmosphere	• Include restaurants and cafés in the tenant mix • Improve and rebuild the infrastructure • Include more anchor stores, like Dormy • Possibilities for further exploitation of the land	• Retail agglomerations in west of Skåne with more diverse tenant mixes

6. A discussion of coexistence and collaboration

In this chapter we discuss the coexistence and collaborations between retail agglomerations. It will present how the trading venues are able to collaborate and complement each other to enhance the attractiveness of Kristianstad as a trading destination and the discussion is based on data acquired from the conducted interviews. The data is based on the perceptions and opinions of all six participants.

6.1 Coexistence between retail agglomerations

The strength of Kristianstad was described by the interviewees to be a city that has a diverse supply of tenant mixes where the different retail agglomerations complement each other. Andreas Nilsson described this: *"I would not say that there are any advantages of shopping at Härlöv instead of the other shopping destinations, which maybe sounds a bit sounds contradictory. I think that the biggest advantage with shopping in Kristianstad is that consumers can find most of the things they are looking for within the three trading destinations and they complement each other."* This indicates that Kristianstad is a complete trading destination where the major benefit for consumers who shop in Kristianstad is that they can find everything they are looking for in the three established retail agglomerations. According to Daniel Eklund the city has approximately over 500 tenants in total and attracts visitors from several neighboring cities because of this. He further stated that they complement each other by delivering different experiences and he explained that C4 Shopping attracts people that the city center would not otherwise attract. He said: *"People from cities like Karlshamn who want to do shopping trips with their cars do not tend to travel to Kristianstad city or other city centers, like Hässleholm city. They travel to places that offer experiences for the whole family and are easy to reach."* Both Pernilla Blixt and Nikolas Larsson also stated that the trading destinations within the city offer different experiences that allow them to coexist by reaching contrasting customer groups and needs.

When it comes to the tenant mixes of each trading venue, the representing leaders of the organizations all stated that they have unique tenant mixes that allow them to reach different customer groups, thus complementing each other. According to Charlotte Svärd and Cecilia Isberg, the city center of Kristianstad has a tenant mix that consists of local, niched retailers, chain stores and various restaurants, cafés and recreational facilities. Daniel Eklund explained that C4 Shopping has everything under the same roof and offers exclusive stores that do not exist anywhere else in the region, like Leos lekland, Hornbach and Afound. Lastly, Andreas Nilsson stated that Härlöv complements the city by providing durable goods and major big box retailers. Even so, it is important to consider that Härlöv still lacks restaurants, cafés and entertainment facilities, which could potentially generate more visitors to the location.

The accessibility by car between the three retail agglomerations is described by Andreas Nilsson as convenient, since they are located within a short distance of each other. The availability of public transportation also allows consumers to travel between them to a certain extent. However, the existing bus lines both to Härlöv from City and between Härlöv and C4 Shopping are, according to Andreas Nilsson, insufficient. This is due to limited bus lines and bus stops that are located far from the retail agglomerations. Since Härlöv is a scattered retail agglomeration visitors tend to prioritize traveling there by car because of the infrastructure and traffic situation. As gathered from the interviews with Daniel Eklund and Andreas Nilsson, visitors from neighboring cities are mostly restricted to cars when they visit C4 Shopping and Härlöv as they are located in proximity to freeways and offer convenient parking facilities.

When it comes to the parking conditions in the city center, a disagreement existed between the participants. Daniel Eklund tended to be more critical against the city center as he explained that in contrast to C4 Shopping and Härlöv, car-borne consumers tend to avoid the town center because of the inadequate parking conditions and infrastructure. He explained: *"You have store owners who complain about the lack of parking spots, while they are the ones who park their cars outside of their stores the entire day. At the same time you have people who live there who also park there."* However, Charlotte Svärd and Cecilia Isberg stated that the inaccessibility of parking spaces is merely psychological and that sufficient number of parking spaces exist. Cecilia Isberg said: *"There are enough parking spaces, it is just about finding them. A car park exists in Galleria Boulevard but people refuse to use it due to their habits so they try to find parking spots outside of the stores."* This is also confirmed by Nikolas Larsson to some degree as he said: *"There are enough parking spots in city now due to the car park but the entrance to it is bad"*. Here, Nikolas Larsson explained that the entrance to the car park is insufficient due to its location and structure. Pernilla Blixt described that the biggest problem with parking conditions in the city center is that the parking spots are mostly occupied by the residents who live there. However, she continued to explain that the parking conditions is not a crucial problem in discussion of the viability of the town center. Pernilla Blixt also explained that when consumers from other cities travel to Kristianstad by public transportation, such as with buses and trains, they directly arrive at the city center and in this sense they attract a different target audience. She further said that the town center can therefore complement the other retail agglomeration by attracting people from other cities that prioritize public transportation and C4 Shopping and Härlöv complement the city by attracting car-borne visitors.

As previously mentioned, Daniel Eklund stated that due to the location and infrastructure of C4 Shopping, they also attract people who would not otherwise visit Kristianstad and the city center. Therefore, the shopping mall attracts people from other cities that could potentially also visit City and Härlöv, generating profit for all retail agglomerations. Daniel Eklund gave the explanation: *"There is a reason that electronic stores often place their businesses close to each other, it is because it generates more visitors. It is the same with commerce, having a shopping mall and a town center in the same city means that they generate footfall for each other and overall attract more visitors to the entire city. "*Here it is indicated that retail agglomerations in the same city are not necessarily in competition with each other, instead they generate more consumer traffic to each other, thus complementing each other.

Pernilla Blixt and Nikolas Larsson further explained that Kristianstad in general has a unique and historical atmosphere due to the proximity to the nature. This is represented in some of the retail agglomerations, such as the architecture in C4 Shopping and Kristianstad Vattenriket in City. Pernilla Blixt further stated that it is important for C4 Shopping and the city center to differentiate themselves as they have similar retailers. She said: *"Even if city and C4 share several stores people visit them for different reasons. They offer different experiences and they have different atmospheres."* Cecilia Isberg and Charlotte Svärd mentioned that the atmosphere in the city center is satisfactory due to the traditional and historical buildings, such as the Trinity Church and the City Hall of Kristianstad, which enhance the attractiveness of the town center. Daniel Eklund explained that since C4 Shopping is a newly established shopping mall, the premises are modern and adapted to the customers' needs and thereby complement the city center as they offer a different atmosphere. Andreas Nilsson mentioned that Härlöv does not have a unique atmosphere, which is not essential as the retail agglomeration targets a different consumer group and is the only one in the region that provides big box retailers. Even so, it could be argued that creating more infrastructural facilities, like toilets, would benefit Härlöv by attracting more consumers.

The city of Kristianstad has hosted several major events, like Melodifestivalen, the agility world championship and O-ringen, which, according to Andreas Nilsson, Cecilia Isberg and Charlotte Svärd, have attracted visitors from all over the world. Cecilia Isberg stated: *"Regardless of which event is hosted in Kristianstad, it is something positive for the commerce of the entire city."* She further explained that the three trading venues also arrange their own, individual events that are based on their capabilities, which makes them complement each other as they offer different and unique experiences for the consumers. According to Cecilia Isberg and Charlotte Svärd, the city center of Kristianstad hosts bigger events, such as Kulturnatten, as well as other smaller events, like shopping nights. The major benefit for hosting events in city centers are that they can be reinforced by the local heritage of the town, which enhances the competitiveness and vitality of the city center (Hart et al., 2013). Daniel Eklund stressed out that C4 Shopping regularly has exhibition events, activities and performances. Lastly, Andreas Nilsson mentioned that Härlöv hosts events, such as go-kart events, which is possible due to the available space.

Consequently, based on the perceptions and opinions of the interviewees, from a holistic perspective the three retail agglomerations are able to coexist and enhance the attractiveness of Kristianstad as a trading destination by offering different experiences. Even though, C4 Shopping and the city center share multiple tenants, see Appendix 3, they complement each other through their strengths and exclusive anchor stores. Cecilia Isberg and Charlotte Svärd explained that people will always visit the town center for the existing atmosphere, anchor stores, such as Systembolaget and niched retailers, availability of public transportation and individual events. Daniel Eklund further said that the shopping mall at the outskirt of the city will be favored by their convenient accessibility and parking conditions as well as their recreational facilities. This is also shown in the findings of Rajagopal (2010) and Ozuduru et al. (2014), who state that shopping malls and town centers are able to coexist if they offer complementary offerings. The two trading venues have competitive advantages that allow them to complement each other (Rajagopal, 2010), and the establishment of a new external shopping mall can work as a catalyst for a positive changing process for both retail agglomerations (HUI Research, 2011). Therefore, it is important to market the entirety of the city as it has a lot to offer. Andreas Nilsson gave the following example: *"It is important to package the entirety of the city. Kristianstad has a lot to offer, the city does not really compete with other cities in the east. The major benefit for consumer who shop at Kristianstad is that you can find everything you are looking for within a short distance."* A common obstacle with collaboration between retailers are free-riders who do not contribute to the other retailers in the agglomeration (Forsberg et al, 1999). When examining the three retail agglomerations in Kristianstad, none of them can be seen as free-riders, due to them complementing each other.

Currently, based on the statement from Andreas Nilsson, Kristianstad as a whole does not compete with other cities in the east of Skåne, but faces competition from the west. Major cities like Malmö, Helsingborg and Lund attract several visitors due to their shopping malls and city centers. An important remark Andreas Nilsson also made was that there is an over establishment of tenants in Kristianstad and that the city relies on customers from neighboring cities. He said: *"It is important for Kristianstad to attract customers from other cities as well, due to the over establishment of stores, this will be done by collaborating and seeing each other as partners."* Consequently, in order to compete with the west and not lose market share, the three retail agglomerations need to collaborate. Another major threat that was expressed by all the participants of the interviews is the e-commerce. During the interview with Cecilia Isberg and Charlotte Svärd, they both claimed that the biggest threat the city center currently faces comes from e-commerce. This view is shared by Daniel Eklund, who clarified that C4 Shopping constantly tries to remain competitive against the raising threat of e-commerce. As physical stores have limitations that do not exist for online stores (Johansson, 2018), it is important to offer something more than just products, such as experiences (Björn, 2018).

6.1.1 Swot analysis of Kristianstad

The swot analysis of Kristianstad is presented in table 6.1 and includes the current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. These are solely based on the perceptions and opinions of all the six interviewees. Therefore, the swot analysis could potentially have been different if more people were interviewed and if other perspectives had been taken into account. Furthermore, the swot analysis functions as a summary of the interviews and perceptions and opinions that were described by the participants. Firstly, the strengths concern the fact that when analyzing from a holistic perspective, Kristianstad is a historical city and a complete trading destination that consists of three major retail agglomerations that offer different experiences. Moreover, they are located within a short distance of each other and often host several events. Secondly, the weaknesses for the city is that it depends on consumers from other cities and the insufficient public transportation between C4 Shopping and Härlöv as well as

City and Härlöv. Thirdly, the main opportunities for Kristianstad are to have a collaboration between its retail agglomerations, market the entirety of the city and attract new tenants. Lastly, the biggest threats the city faces come from the increase of e-commerce, competition from west of Skåne and the local newspapers.

Table 6.1 Swot analysis of Kristianstad

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
• Offers three major different retail agglomerations • Short distance between the retail agglomerations • As a whole has a good variation of tenants • Historical city • Hosts several major events • Offers several experiences	• Dependent on consumers from other cities • Insufficient public transportation between some retail agglomerations	• Collaboration between the retail agglomerations • Market the entirety of the city • New tenants	• E-commerce • Retail agglomerations in west of Skåne • Media

6.2 Collaboration between retail agglomerations

During the interviews, the possibilities for collaboration between the retail agglomerations were discussed. The participants agreed on that a collaboration would have positive outcomes for all of them, and that it would be harmful to work against each other. This is because a collaboration enables an increase of customer traffic to the entire city. Recently, the three retail agglomerations had their first collaboration together through shared marketing. They jointly advertised their individual offerings and used Kristianstadsbladet as a platform for this. All three representatives from the three retail agglomerations, Daniel Eklund, Andreas Nilsson and Charlotte Svärd expressed that the collaboration was the result of a maturing process that took several years to implement. There have been differences and a competitive situation between the three trading destinations, which has complicated the discussions. Andreas Nilsson explained: *"It is a maturing process to collaborate. A couple of years ago this was not the case, but it is happening now."* He further explained that they realized that if they do not implement collective marketing and collaborate, they will not be able to reach consumers from other countries and cities. Daniel Eklund also gave the following example: *"If we all brag about our individual offerings and experiences and market ourselves individually, it automatically leads us to becoming competitors. But if we market ourselves collectively and show people from other cities all that Kristianstad has to offer, it benefits all of us."* Prior to the collaboration, the three trading venues focused on their individual marketing strategies, which is similar to the influential model, “The prisoner’s dilemma game”, presented by Ostrom (1990). This due to that they all implemented their own superior strategy, which resulted in negative outcomes for the three parties as they were not able to market the entire city’s supply.

Besides the shared marketing, several other possibilities for collaboration were also discussed. For example, Pernilla Blixt mentioned that a collaboration can occur by implementing free shuttle buses that travel between the trading venues. Her reasoning for this is that it could generate a higher customer flow and in overall attract more visitors to the entire city. Andreas Nilsson also gave the same suggestion and said: *“If you come from Blekinge you could for example place your car in C4 Shopping, start your shopping there, and then take the bus to city and experience the fantastic atmosphere there. You can then take the bus to Härlöv and make your outlet shopping or visit the other local firms and after that take the bus back to C4 to the car.”* He further explained that this would facilitate the accessibility for visitors that travel with public transportation as it decreases the psychological distance between them. Car-borne customers will also be able to park their cars in one of the retail agglomerations, and there on take the shuttle bus to the others.

All the respondents also expressed that collective events is another way to have a collaboration. As mentioned, Härlöv, C4 Shopping and the City center often host their individual events that attract consumers to their location. However, in order to attract more visitors from other cities, the three retail agglomerations can also implement collective events that all of them host simultaneously, for example, major seasonal events like Christmas or Easter. Nikolas Larsson pointed out: *“The trading destinations need to become meeting places that attract external visitors. One way to do this is to create appealing events.”* According to Nikolas Larsson, the events should also be marketed collectively to encourage customers to visit the different trading destination and to enhance the attractiveness of the whole town. Daniel Eklund further explained that during the events, collective gift cards can be introduced that are eligible to use in any of the three retail agglomerations.

7. Thesis conclusion

This chapter begins with a summary of the thesis, which consists of the most essential components of this study. Furthermore, the findings of the research and the possibilities for coexistence and collaboration between the retail agglomerations are presented. Lastly, the practical contributions to the study field and the limitations and suggestions for future research are highlighted.

7.1 Thesis summary

This thesis investigated how established retail agglomerations can coexist and the possibilities for them to collaborate in order to increase the attractiveness of cities as trading destinations. Five retail agglomeration attributes were implemented to identify the existing strengths and weaknesses for the chosen trading venues. The examined attributes involved the tenant mix, accessibility, parking conditions, atmosphere and entertainment. The literature review highlighted the two main factors that have contributed to the changes of retail, which are the expansion of external trade and e-commerce. Furthermore, the coexistence within retail agglomerations were discussed in order to receive an understanding of how they can function as quasi-organizations, even though the involved retailers operate individually.

This study implemented a constructivist and interpretivistic point of view due to the need of comprehending individuals' behavior and its impact on social actions and later on, how the actions are related to the coexistence between the three retail venues. It is also of importance for this research to understand how actions of meaning are related to collaboration. The analytical strategy is abductive since theory of attributes where implemented in the empirical method. Finally, a qualitative method was used as six semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants that had diverse roles and represented different authorities. Due to their insights and knowledge, we received a better understanding of the current situation of each retail agglomeration and Kristianstad as a whole.

The four cases analyzed in this study were Kristianstad, the city center of Kristianstad, C4 Shopping and Härlöv. The analysis was thematic and considered the background, current situation, current challenges and the future of each case. A swot analysis was also implemented to identify the individual strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This allowed us to determine where and how the retail agglomerations complement each other and are able to coexist. An analysis of possibilities for further collaboration between the trading destinations was also conducted.

7.2 Thesis findings

The findings of this thesis show that, based on the perceptions and opinions of the representatives from the different organizations, the city center, Härlöv and C4 Shopping complement each other through their unique offerings and experiences. This corresponds with the findings of Ozuduru et al. (2014), that external shopping centers and shopping streets can coexist. Based on the empirical data and the perceptions and opinions stated by the interviewees, Kristianstad is a complete trading destination that is able to attract visitors and various target groups from other cities. Even though the city center and C4 Shopping have similar retailers, they distinguish themselves through their individual strengths and attributes.

The three different cases: the city center of Kristianstad, C4 Shopping and Härlöv all highlight how the representatives perceive the retail agglomeration attributes for each trading venue. Furthermore, several attributes are regarded as strengths that allow the retail agglomerations to consequently coexist and complement each other. This further correlates to the research of Rajagopal (2010) and Ozuduru et al. (2014), who claim that shopping malls and town centers are able to coexist if they offer complementary offerings. The findings of this thesis show that the city center of Kristianstad complements the city with a tenant mix that consists of local, niched retailers, a unique and historical atmosphere, unique events and good accessibility to reach the trading venue with public transportation from other cities. The case also demonstrates that several weaknesses exists, such as the infrastructure and parking conditions. However, the parking conditions were described by Cecilia Isberg and Charlotte Svärd to be merely psychological, which differed from other respondent's answers. Therefore, it is important to note that biased answers could potentially exist. Even so, the findings also show that even if these weaknesses exist, the other retail agglomerations are able to complement the region by attracting car-borne visitors. The case of C4 Shopping highlights the fact that the shopping mall is able to complement the city with a wide tenant mix with several exclusive stores, good accessibility with car and special events. The only weakness described by Daniel Eklund is that the shopping mall is newly established. This could also be criticized as there is a possibility that several other weaknesses still exist and there is a possibility that Daniel Eklund was less open to share these. Nevertheless, the findings show that the shopping mall still complements the region and is able to attract customers that would otherwise not visit the city, even if C4 Shopping and Kristianstad City share multiple tenants with each other. The case of Härlöv showed that Härlöv is the only retail agglomeration that provides big box retailing in the city, thus complementing the city. During the interview, Andreas Nilsson was open to discuss the weaknesses of the trading venue and explained that several initiatives must be taken in order for the retail agglomeration to attract additional visitors from neighboring cities.

Another finding of this thesis is that the retail agglomerations do not necessarily view each other as competitors. This was not the case a couple of years ago but the implementation of the collective marketing allowed them to collaborate, instead of seeing each other as competitors. All the representatives agreed that collaboration between the three retail agglomerations is essential for enhancing the attractiveness of Kristianstad as a trading destination. This is due to the fact that Kristianstad as a whole is dependent on visitors from neighboring cities, since there is an over establishment of retailers within the city. Currently, the city center, C4 Shopping and Härlöv have implemented their first collaboration through shared marketing. Besides this, the three representatives, Andreas Nilsson, Daniel Eklund, Charlotte Svärd, of each retail agglomeration have discussed possibilities for further collaboration. The collaboration could occur by implementing shuttle buses, collective events and shared gift cards to enhance the attractiveness of Kristianstad as a trading destination.

A surprising finding of this research is that the three retail agglomerations do not consider the competition between them to be the biggest threat. According to Teller et al. (2016), created agglomerations are more preferred by consumers than evolved agglomeration formats, which results in an increased competition between them. However, in the case of Kristianstad the biggest threat encountered by the different trading venues comes from e-commerce. In order to stay competitive against e-commerce, Daniel Eklund explained that it is of importance for the individual retail agglomerations to enhance their attributes and improve their weaknesses. On the same note, they should offer unique experiences in the physical stores, such as competent personnel and events. This is also supported by Björn (2018) and WSP (2018), who state that today's consumers seek experiences and social meeting points, that only the physical stores can provide.

7.3 Practical contributions

This thesis has shown that it is possible for retail agglomerations to coexist and complement each other. This due to their individual strengths and weaknesses that allow them to provide different experiences for the consumers. According to our research, city centers that are similar to Kristianstad, are preferred for their historical atmosphere, niched stores and recreational facilities, like bars and clubs. Shopping malls are favored for their convenient accessibility and parking conditions and the fact that the tenants are located under the same roof. Big box retail agglomerations do not necessarily target the same customer groups as city centers and shopping malls and therefore complement cities with their unique offerings. For medium sized cities such as Kristianstad, it is essential to market the city as a complete trading destination to avoid losing consumers to other major cities with greater supplies.

Even though these types of trading venues complement each other, it is still of importance to increase their attractiveness and enhance their individual attributes in order to remain competitive against e-commerce. The attributes used in this study were collected from previous research within the study field. However, these attributes were limited for specific retail agglomeration formats, such as town centers and shopping malls. In this research, the selection of attributes was applied on retail agglomerations in general, and can therefore be implemented to analyze the attractiveness of other trading destinations. To the best of our knowledge, previous research has not investigated the possibilities for collaboration between retail agglomerations and this thesis fills a research gap by doing this.

7.4 Limitations and future research

One of the limitations of this research is that it was only conducted in one medium sized city, namely Kristianstad. Due to this, only three unique retail agglomerations were examined, which did not face direct competition from the same agglomeration format. Future research could investigate larger cities with additional trading venues of the same type, or focus on several cities and their individual offerings. Another limitation is the choice of participants for the interviews, which did not include consumers or store owners. This could have provided another perspective on the existing strengths and weaknesses and the selected attributes for the retail agglomerations. A suggestion for future research is to consider the consumers’ and store owners’ viewpoints in order to receive a deeper understanding of what makes a trading destination attractive

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Appendix 1: English interview guide

Introduction:

1. Can you describe your role?
2. What does your organization work with?
3. What are the benefits for the consumers to shop in the different retail agglomerations?
4. What are the disadvantages for consumers to shop in the different retail agglomerations?
5. What is unique with Kristianstad as a trading destination?
6. Are there any current collaborations between City, C4 Shopping and Härlöv?

Tenant mix:

1. How does the mix of stores and restaurants look in City, Härlöv and C4 Shopping?
2. Is there a good mix of stores and restaurants that attract different customers?
    a. If not: What is missing to attract consumers?

Accessibility:

1. How is the accessibility between City, Härlöv and C4 Shopping?
2. How does the traffic affect the accessibility to the different retail agglomerations?
    a. Would additional bus lines to the different retail agglomerations generate more consumers?
3. How can Härlöv and C4 Shopping be integrated better?

Parking conditions:

1. How do the parking conditions look in City, Härlöv and C4 Shopping?
2. In order to attract consumers to the three retail agglomerations, how important are the parking conditions?

Atmosphere:

1. How does the physical environment look in City, Härlöv and C4 Shopping? (Architecture and toilets).
2. How important is the physical environment for the attractiveness of the three retail agglomerations?

Events:

1. How important are events to attract consumers to the retail agglomerations?
2. How can City, Härlöv and C4 Shopping collaborate through collective events?

Anchor stores:

1. Are there any anchor stores in City, Härlöv and C4 Shopping?
2. How much do they contribute to consumers choosing a retail agglomeration?

Retail agglomerations:

1. Do you believe that City, Härlöv and C4 Shopping considers each other as competitors?
2. How can the three retail agglomerations collaborate?
3. What are the main threats for City, Härlöv and C4 Shopping?

Appendix 2: Swedish interview guide

Introduktion:

1. Kan du beskriva din roll?
2. Hur jobbar er organisation?
3. Vilka är fördelarna för konsumenterna med att handla i de olika handelsområdena?
4. Vilka är nackdelarna för konsumenterna med att handla i de olika handelsområdena?
5. Vad är unikt med Kristianstad som handelsdestination?
6. Finns befintliga samarbeten mellan City, Härlöv och C4 Shopping?

Butiksmix:

1. Hur ser mixen av butiker och restauranger ut i city, Härlöv och C4 Shopping?
2. Är det en bra variation av butiker och restauranger som lockar olika konsumenter?
    a) Om inte: Vad saknas för att locka konsumenter?

Tillgänglighet:

1. Hur är tillgängligheten att ta sig mellan City, Härlöv och C4 Shopping?
2. Hur är framkomligheten trafikmässigt till de olika handelsområden?
    a) Skulle t.ex. fler busslinjer till de olika handelsområdena generera fler konsumenter?
3. Hur kan man integrera Härlöv och C4 Shopping bättre?

Parkeringsmöjligheter:

1. Hur ser parkeringsmöjligheterna ut i City, Härlöv och C4 Shopping?
2. För att locka kunder till de tre enskilda handelsområdena, hur stor påverkan har parkeringsmöjligheterna?

Atmosfär:

1. Hur ser den fysiska omgivningen ut i City, Härlöv och C4 Shopping? (Arkitektur och toaletter)
2. Hur stor påverkan har den fysiska omgivningen på attraktiviteten för de tre handelsområdena?

Evenemang:

1. Hur viktigt är det med events för att locka konsumenter till ett handelsområde?
2. Hur kan City, Härlöv och C4 Shopping samarbeta genom att samköra events?

Ankarbutiker:

1. Finns det en/flera ankarbutiker i City, Härlöv och C4 Shopping?
2. Hur mycket bidrar det till att konsumenter väljer den platsen?

Handelsområden:

1. Tror du att City, Härlöv och C4 Shopping ser varandra som konkurrenter?
2. Hur kan de tre handelsområdena samverka?
3. Vilka är de största hoten för City, Härlöv och C4 Shopping?

Appendix 3: Double establishments of tenants in City and C4 Shopping

Dubbeletableringar

C4 shopping BUTIKER	**Kristianstad City**
Akademibokhandeln	Finns i city
Apoteket	Finns i city
BikBok	Finns i city
BR Leksaker	Finns i city
Brothers	Flyttar från City
Carlings	Finns i city
Cubus	Finns i city
Deichmann	ny
Dimoda	Flyttar från City
Dressman	Finns 2 st i city
Ecco	Finns i city
Elgiganten/The Phone House	Finns i city
Euro Nails	ny
Feet First	Finns i city
Gerdas Te & Kaffehandel	Finns i city
Gina Tricot	Finns i city
H&M	Finns i city
Hallbergs Guld	Flyttar från City
Hemmakväll	Finns i city
Hemtex	Finns i city
Hälsoteket	Finns i city
Jack & Jones	ny
Jidi Spel & Tobak	ny
JOY	Finns i city
KappAhl	Finns i city
Kicks	Finns i city
Kjell & Co	Finns i city
Lindex	Finns i city
Lu Blommor	Finns i city
MQ	Finns i city
New Yorker	ny
Rituals	Finns i city
Partyland	ny
Sandelins	Finns i city
Scorett	Finns i city
Skult	ny
Sportringen	Flyttar från city
Stadium	Finns i city
Synoptik	Finns i city
Synsam	Finns i city
Vacker	ny
Vero Moda	Finns i city
Volt	ny
Önska	ny

C4 shopping RESTAURANGER	**Kristianstad City**
Baked & Grill	ny
Burger King	Finns i city
Chili Wok	ny
Espresso House	Finns i city
Hanotts Caffebar & Bistro	ny
Happy Italy	ny
Le Croissant	Finns i city
Sumo Sushi	Finns i city

SUMMERING
43 butiker - 33 finns i city, 13 st i Galleria B.
8 restauranger - 4 finns i city
4 lämnar för C4 shopping (nuläge)

2018-03-12