Regional Destination Branding
- A Qualitative Study of the Branding Practices in Three Swedish Regions

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Abstract

During the last decades, the tourism industry has become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. The growth has in turn led to traditional marketing techniques such as branding being applied to places and destinations. The concept of destination branding is concerned with creating an image which positively can influence consumer’s choice of destinations. Conditions surrounding organizations working with destination branding, so called destination marketing organizations is very complex.

This highlights a need for effective management, leading to managerial activities such as stakeholder management, partnership creation and brand architecture being key factors in destination branding success. The purpose of this study is consequently to investigate the antecedents of successful destination marketing focusing on stakeholder management, partnerships and brand architecture. Based on a literature review, three research questions were created.

A case study has been carried out in the form of semi-structured interviews with destination marketing organization from three Swedish regions.

This study reveals that stakeholders are vital for the destination marketing organizations (DMOs) and their businesses. Therefore they have a clear understanding of which groups and individuals are stakeholders to their brand. The focus lies on the primary stakeholders and the DMOs are taking a motivating and caring role of the stakeholders, treating them with respect and appreciation.

Collaborating within partnerships constitutes a large part of the daily work of the regional DMO’s activities, and is often based on a need or possibility of creating an activity or product to improve the destination brand. Important factors to consider when creating partnerships have been identified, as well as ingredients for a successful partnership and what DMOs are expecting from their partnerships in terms of outcomes.

Finally this study concludes that the regional destination marketing organizations are not fully applying any classic brand architecture strategies. Instead they are adopting a mix of umbrella brand and endorsed brand with selective communication of the brands in the region where they choose which brand should be communicated depending on which customer group is being targeted.

Keywords: Destination Branding, Stakeholder Management, Partnerships, Brand Architecture.
Acknowledgements

This study was performed as our bachelor thesis during our last semester at the Marketing programme in the spring 2012. The process of writing the thesis has been a very improving and valuable experience where we have had the chance to further deepen our knowledge in marketing and in the for us new subject destination branding. By choosing a qualitative research approach we also got the possibility to gain practical insight and knowledge about how professionals are working with destination branding. The insight given from the respondents has given us inspiration and made us even more confident that marketing is what we want to work with. The independent thesis writing has also given us the experience of managing a large project within a limited amount of time. This assignment could not have been managable without the help and support from a number of people we would like to thank.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide
1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the development of tourism during the last decades as well as the potential of future destination branding efforts in Sweden. In a concise literature review destination branding is presented and defined. It also identifies a research gap leading to the purpose of the study. Finally, the delimitations are presented, and the chapter concludes with an overview of the outline of the thesis.

1.1 Background

World-wide the tourism industry is growing. In fact, during the last decades it has become one of the fastest growing economic sectors. At the moment the business volume of tourism can be compared to that of car manufacturing, oil exports and food production (UNTWO1). During 2011, international tourist arrivals increased with over four percent from 2010 in which visitors generated as much as € 693 billion. As the tourism sector grows, an intensified competition and demand for differentiation among destinations follows. The growth is expected to continue, with an increase of three to four percent during 2012 and the World Tourism Organization forecast that 1.8 billion international tourist arrivals will be reached in 2030 (UNWTO2).
Chapter One

During the last years, the growth of international tourist arrivals has been especially large in the European countries (UNWTO\(^2\)). This has reflected on the tourism industry in Sweden. In 2011 Sweden was ranked at place five out of 139 in the World Economic Forums index of countries tourism competitiveness (World Economic Forum 2011). Since the year of 2000, the total tourism consumption in Sweden has increased by 70 percent leading to a gained employment within the sector of 24 percent. Worth noticing is that during that same period, the total employment in Sweden only grew with five percent (Tillväxtverket/SCB 2010). Despite Sweden’s relatively high competitiveness as a destination the national strategy for tourism shows potential for improvements. The strategy document stretches over ten years and is based on the vision to double the Swedish tourism as well as turning Sweden into the primary choice of destination for the global traveller in 2020 (Strategi2020).

1.2 Problem Discussion

With tourism developing into a major industry (UNWTO\(^1\)), and with the turnover (UNWTO\(^2\)) and employment (Tillväxtverket/SCB 2010) it generates, it is not surprising that efforts to stay competitive have led to traditional marketing techniques such as branding being applied to places (Baker & Cameron 2008). This application of classic branding has attracted attention from the researchers leading to the concept of destination branding appearing more frequently in the literature during the last ten years (Pike 2009). Destination branding is concerned with creating an image which positively can influence consumer’s choice of destinations (places to visit) (Blain et al. 2005; Qu et al. 2011). But the conditions surrounding organizations working with destination branding, so called destination marketing organizations (DMOs) is very complex (Hankinson 2001; 2009, Wheeler et al. 2011). The possibility of places being sold for different purposes, difficulty defining the destination product and potential conflicts between the many different stakeholders are only examples of factors resulting in complexity (Hankinson 2001; Wheeler et al. 2011). In addition to that, possible misfits between geographical and jurisdictional areas and diverse landscape are other aggravating elements, which are also found to be especially
intense when it comes to branding regions as destinations (Hankinson 2009; Wheeler et al. 2011). This complexity highlights a need for effective management, leading to managerial activities such as stakeholder management and brand architecture being key success factors in destination branding (Hankinson 2009; 2010; Hanna & Rowley 2011).

The strategy for how to improve tourism in Sweden with its optimistic and large objectives shows unexploited potential to live up to (Strategi2020). This puts pressure on DMO’s in Sweden to take actions towards developing more attractive destinations. Both in order to contribute to reach the goals for year 2020 but also to stay competitive on the market. The literature suggests destination branding to be a suitable tool to use as a mean for this (Hankinson 2010) and the strategy 2020 indicates the same, as it presents tools for developing destinations and encourages companies and regions to get to know their products and how to sell them in a sustainable way (Strategi2020).

Posing that DMOs in Sweden are to succeed with their potential destination branding efforts, a need for guidance on destination brand management emerge. To date a number of studies, both conceptual and empirical, have contributed to a more immersed and developed understanding of the managerial perspective of destination branding. Researchers have used different theoretical paradigms to approach the issue such as corporate branding (e.g. Hankinson 2007) and place branding (e.g. Campelo et al 2011). According to Hankinson (2010) the majority of the focus on destination branding literature has been on creating and communicating destination image. Even so, studies have contributed to the field variously by showing connections between corporate branding and destination branding (e.g. Kavaratzis 2004), testing those connections (Hankinson 2009; 2010), as well as analysed destination branding performance (Wheeler et al. 2011).

A review of the literature showed that many of the studies on destination brand management concludes some guiding principles, factors of importance or critical
activities when it comes to managing destination brands (Buhalis 2000; Hankinson 2001; 2004; 2007; Baker & Cameron 2008; Hankinson 2009; 2010; Hanna & Rowley 2011). However, they do not give each factor much attention individually, testing them or investigating them further. Of six factors appearing as unanimously accepted as critical ones, three of the factors were found to be especially interesting and in need of additional research: stakeholder management (Hankinson 2010), partnerships (Wang & Pizam 2011) and brand architecture (Hankinson 2009; 2010).

The gap in the research field and the potential destination branding efforts from Swedish DMOs, highlight the demand for a study investigating DMO managers’ practical approach towards stakeholder management, partnerships and brand architecture when branding their destinations. Such investigation could give much needed additional insight into successful destination brand management.

To lay the foundation of a deeper understanding of the success factors of destination brand management the purpose of this study is to:

**Investigate the antecedents of successful destination marketing focusing on stakeholder management, partnerships and brand architecture.**

### 1.3 Delimitations

The current research does not intend to study all of the six identified success factors of destination branding. Instead it focuses on three, acknowledged to be in need of further investigation (Hankinson 2009; 2010; Wang & Pizam 2011). Consequently stakeholder management, partnerships and brand architecture are the only factors investigated in this study.

Further, this research is delimited to only study destination marketing organizations working with destination branding at a regional level. This since the destination branding complexity appears to be especially intense at a regional level (Hankinson
Introduction

2009; Wheeler et al. 2011).

Finally, since the managerial perspective on destination branding stands out to be an important part of the current research field, this study adopts that perspective.

1.4 Outline of Thesis

The study, which in total is divided into seven chapters, is structured as follows:

1. Chapter one discusses the development of tourism during the last decades as well as the potential of future destination branding efforts in Sweden. A research gap leading to the purpose of the study is also presented and followed by the chosen delimitations.

2. Chapter two presents a literature review of existing literature addressing destination branding. The chapter also further explains the research gap that is the centre of this study.

3. In chapter three, a proposed research model as well as the research questions serving as basis for the current investigation are presented.

4. Chapter four presents and justifies for the chosen methodological stand points taken for this qualitative research.

5. In chapter five, the empirical data gathered from the three cases is displayed. The data for each case is presented in accordance with the research model, which focuses on three factors critical to destination branding.

6. Chapter six presents a cross-case analysis of the empirical data. Which compares the data from the cases as well as discusses these findings relation to previous studies.

7. Chapter seven presents the conclusions of the study by answering the research questions. In addition to that, theoretical and managerial implications as well as limitations of the study are given together with suggestions for future research.
2. Literature review

In this chapter a review of existing literature on destination branding is presented. It provides definitions, an overview of which research have previously been done. It finally identifies a gap in the research area.

2.1 Brands

The American Marketing Association defines a brand as “a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of these, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors” (AMA). Other definitions additionally include internal and organizational processes as being parts of a brand (Heding et al. 2009). According to Kotler and Gertner (2002); Nadan (2005) Kapferer (2012) are brands intangible assets providing companies with benefits, equity and value.

When a brand is strong, it has intense emotional components (Kapferer 2012) which creates social and emotional values for the consumer and helps companies to differentiate (Kotler & Gertner 2002; Nadan 2005). Thus many companies are striving
towards strengthening their brand due to the many positive possibilities it generates (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000). Originally brands were applied to physical products (Armstrong et al. 2009), but nowadays brands can also appear in other forms, such as corporate, service (Kapferer 2012) and destination brands (Hankinson 2001).

2.1.1 Destination Brands

Ooi (2004) assigns destination brands the function of providing stories to tourists around which they can build their experience. But this might be easier said than done. Just as it has been recognised that branding is a technique applicable to marketing destinations (Caldwell & Freire 2004; Hankinson 2010), it has also been proposed that there is a significant difference between branding products and branding places. According to Florek (2005) one major difference between products and destinations are that destinations, as opposed to a physical offerings, are large entities containing various elements. Thus it is not easily changed. Important to understand is that a destination includes both tangible attributes such as buildings and nature as well as intangible attributes such as history and culture (Qu et al. 2011).

Other differentiating factors are derived from the environment in which DMOs act (Baker & Cameron 2008). The possibility of places being sold for different purposes, difficulties with defining the destination product, potential conflicts between the many different stakeholders and possible misfits between geographical and jurisdictional areas are only examples of factors resulting in destination brands being very complex (Hankinson 2001; Wheeler et al. 2011). Being such multi-faceted product as destinations are, means they are consumed simultaneously by several market segments and stakeholders. It also means they are consumed in different ways as each consumer assembles its own unique product from all the services offered within the destination product (Hankinson 2009; Wheeler et al. 2011). Marketers of mainstream brands thus have more control over its brand and products than destination marketers have (Hankinson 2009). With its multi-dimensions and complex stakeholder structure, destination brands are more suitable to compare with
corporate brands than with product brands (Hankinson 2007; 2009).

### 2.1.2 Regional Brands

A variety of places such as cities, regions, and countries can be branded as destinations (Caldwell & Freire 2004). The complexity of destination products and destination branding is found to be extra intense when it comes to branding regions (Hankinson 2009; Wheeler et al. 2011). This is explained by the diverse landscape and often large geographical areas which might include several local communities and tourism operators. That gives the implication that it is both extra hard and extra necessary to find an overarching brand which can be agreed upon by all the individual cities, sub-areas and tourist organizations within the region. Especially when remembering that they potentially have strong brands of their own (Hankinson 2009; Wheeler et al. 2011).

This challenge shows clearly in Hankinson’s (2009) study when he interviewed DMO managers at different levels in the UK about their destination marketing efforts. The result showed that the regional tourist boards due to the wider geographical responsibility and work with several government authorities experienced a need to compromise, slow implementation and more often got in political conflicts than city level organizations did. It also showed that regional brands had to develop more complex brand architectures in order to act and communicate effectively.

### 2.2 Destination Branding

Increased transactions over international borders have led to the tourism industry growing rapidly and a rise in tourism income. As the global environment is becoming more and more competitive, destinations such as cities, regions and countries are left in need of differentiating themselves. Thus applying traditional marketing techniques on places have become more and more popular (Baker & Cameron 2008). One of those techniques, recognised widespread to be appropriate when promoting places is classic branding (Caldwell & Freire 2004; Hankinson 2010). In tourism context, the
branding of places is referred to as destination branding (Hankinson 2007), since a destination is a place intended to be visited (NE).

Destination branding can be seen as a set of marketing activities concerned with creating an image of a place that positively can influence consumer's choice of destination. Those activities serve to identify and differentiate a destination. It is also concerned with strengthening and reinforcing an emotional connection between a visitor and the destination. Finally it should help to reduce consumers' search costs and perceived risks (Blain et al. 2005; Qu et al. 2011). Morgan and Pritchard (2004, p. 69) establish five phases current in that branding process: 1) market investigation analysis and strategic investigations 2) brand identity development 3) brand launch and communication of vision 4) brand implementation and 5) monitoring, evaluation and reviewing.

The area of destination branding is receiving an increasing level of attention (Pike 2009; Hanna & Rowley 2011) and it has been doing so for the last 10 years (Pike 2009). The first journal issue specialising in destination branding was published in 1999 and according to Pike (2009) the subject begun to appear in literature at first in this millennium. A number of studies, both conceptual and empirical, have contributed to a more immersed and developed understanding of the managerial perspective of destination branding. Researchers have used different theoretical paradigms to approach the issue, such as corporate branding (Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2008; Hankinson 2009) classical branding (Blain et al. 2005; Hosany et al. 2006; Hankinson 2010;) place branding (Hankinson 2007; Campelo et al. 2011) and brand identity and image (Qu et al. 2010; Wheeler et al. 2011). From a tourism perspective much of the work to date has been focusing on destination image and identity (Hankinson 2010).

Conceptual studies have contributed to the field of research by developing new models helping to define place brands (Hankinson 2004), showing connections between corporate branding and destination branding (Rainisto 2003; Kavaratzis
Literature Review

2004; Trueman et al. 2004; Hankinson 2007), developed models for managing place brands strategically (Hanna & Rowley 2011), and identified guiding principles and success factors for destination branding management (Hankinson 2007; Baker & Cameron 2008). Additionally empirical studies have identified characteristics of destination brands (Hankinson 2001), tested corporate branding management factors on destination branding (Hankinson 2009; 2010), compared it with recent research agendas (Hankinson 2010) and analysed destination branding performance (Wheeler et al. 2011).

A majority of these studies concludes some guiding principles, factors of importance or critical activities when it comes to managing destination brands (Buhalis 2000; Hankinson 2001; 2004; 2007; Baker & Cameron 2008; Hankinson 2009; 2010; Hanna & Rowley 2011). What they do not do are investigating these factors further, testing the performance of practitioners against the available findings. Since the key success factors of destination branding will be treated subsequently they will not be given further attention in this section. A review of the field has also shown that many of the empirical studies have been carried out in the UK (Hankinson 2001; Muzellec & Lambkin 2008; Hankinson 2009; 2010) Australia (Pike 2009; Jenkins 2003) and New Zealand (Morgan et al. 2002; Morgan et al. 2003, Aitken & Campelo 2011). Less focus has been given to the area of Scandinavia and the few Scandinavian studies found lack a DMO management perspective (Flagestad & Hope 2001; Rainisto 2003).

2.3 Success Factors in Destination Branding

A literature review on the managerial perspective of destination branding has resulted in a number of critical factors, important for managers to handle effectively in order to succeed with their destination branding efforts. There are mainly six factors appearing as being unanimously accepted as critical ones; stakeholder management (e.g. Baker & Cameron 2008), partnerships (e.g. Hanna & Rowley 2011), brand architecture (e.g. Hankinson 2009), brand leadership (e.g. Baker & Cameron 2008), brand reality (e.g. Hankinson 2010) and brand culture and image (e.g.
Chapter Two

Hankinson 2007).

Studies resulting in specific success factors or key activities are subsequently presented along with those factors in Table 1. As can be seen, only two of the studies (Hankinson 2009; Hanna & Rowley 2011) suggest all six factors to be critical ones. But among the eight studies presented (Buhalis 2000; Hankinson 2001; 2004; Baker & Cameron 2008; Hankinson 2007; 2009; 2010; Hanna & Rowley 2011), at least four of them are agreeing with every critical factor. This shows the true importance of them when it comes to successfully branding destinations. The factor most studies agree on to be important is stakeholder management (Buhalis 2000; Hankinson 2004; Baker & Cameron 2008; Hankinson 2009; 2010; Hanna & Rowley 2011).

Table 1. Critical factors of destination branding

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2.3.1 Stakeholder Management

Properly managed stakeholders are fundamental for successful destination branding (Baker & Cameron 2008). The complex situation with various stakeholders their interests and needs demands good understanding and management from managers in
destination branding organizations and companies (Hankinson 2010). Stakeholder management gives directions about how to treat stakeholders (Freeman 1984), prevent conflicts and build long term relationships (Hankinson 2010).

2.3.2 Partnerships

Because of the complexity of the destination products offered, it is suggested that places are marketed through both formal and informal partnerships between both private and public sector organizations involved in the delivery of the offer (Warnaby et al 2002). According to Hankinson's (2001) study it is problematic or impracticable for local authorities to develop and communicate destination brands without the commitment of other organizations included in the geographical area being the place. Most important are the support from the private sector. Poorly managed partnerships or a lack of them can result in abandonment or refusal of effective brand strategies and a low attention given to logotypes, identity and brand culture (Hankinson 2007).

2.3.3 Brand Architecture

Brand architecture in destination branding has been found to be particularly important. The management of the many brands and the attempt to avoid conflicts were identified as critical factors by Hankinson (2009). Regional brands often consist of sub brands as cities and brands within the cities, making regional branding even more in need of careful and well measured brand architecture (Hankinson 2009; Hanna & Rowley 2011). The brand architecture in regional branding also fills the role as mediator and conflict handler as it needs to pay attention to all stakeholders’ needs and interests (Hanna & Rowley 2011). House-of-brands, sub brands, endorsed brands and umbrella brands are examples of brands that research proposes to be (Laforet & Saunders 1999; Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000; Kapferer 2012) tools for handling and arranging the brand portfolio.
Chapter Two

2.3.4 Brand Leadership

In the creation and implementation of a destination brand identity, strong leadership is essential. It is up to the management to engage stakeholders at all levels (Hankinson 2007; 2009; Hanna & Rowley 2011). Often it is organizations located in the public sector which are responsible for the development of destination brands. But without the support of the private sector no brand strategy will live up to its potential. A clear vision and a set of core values communicated by a charismatic leader is a much needed help to motivate and engage the private sector (Hankinson 2007; 2009). The motivation techniques are appropriate since one thus can avoid the feeling of coercion and instead work through cooperation and partnerships (Hankinson 2007; 2009; Hanna and Rowley 2011).

2.3.5 Brand Culture and Identity

To be able to deliver a joined picture of a destination brand, an established organizational culture (Hankinson 2009) and a clear identity (Baker & Cameron 2008) is essential. The responsibility lies at the managers to make the corporate culture align with the brand values and communicate it through the employees to create a coherent image for the customers (Hankinson 2007). The complex situation in destination branding, where destination managers need to take in account more than one brand and service (Hankinson 2009) complicates the delivery of a unified organizational culture (Hankinson 2001). In a tourist context the identity becomes hard to handle since it is reflected by the brand infrastructure, brand experience and the conflicting organizations affecting the identity (Hankinson 2010; Hanna & Rowley 2011).

2.3.6 Brand Reality

The focus in the literature has up to recently been on the creation and communication of destination brands (Hankinson 2009; 2010). But this is now changing. With the understanding of the importance of the brand performance, the reality experienced
by the customer and how this affects the brand identity and brand image (Hanna & Rowley 2011) brand reality becomes considered to be one of the key factors of success. When studying UK DMO managers Hankinson (2009) discovered that the delivering of brand reality were "...identified with the quality of the destination's buildings, infrastructure and support services as well as the collection of retail, leisure and special interest services offered." (p. 108). In other words, one can not only communicate a promise of a specific destination experience, it needs to be fulfilled as well. Otherwise the destination brand's image and identity is in danger, threatening the entire destination brand strategy (Hankinson 2009; Hanna & Rowley 2011)

2.4 Need for Further Investigation

The literature review on destination branding showed that there is a research gap existent in the area of managing destination branding. The literature is showing which factors and activities are critical for DMOs to manage in order to succeed with branding places as destinations. Missing is empirical studies investigating these factors more individually and testing the performance of practitioners. There is also a need for carrying out studies on DMOs in the area of Scandinavia, focusing on the managerial perspective of destination branding.

Most of the key management activities in destination branding presented in Table 1 (stakeholder management, partnerships, brand architecture, brand leadership, brand reality) appear to be related to phase tree and four of Morgan et al.’s (2004, p. 69) five phases of destination branding. It is also in these phases that important gaps in the research area can be found.

Hankinson (2009) discovered that brand architecture was a factor important for destination branding but not addressed as crucial in the closely related corporate branding literature. In 2010 Hankinson further stresses the importance of this factor, but at the same time he concludes that there is a need for it to be subject to further investigation.
Other critical factors lacking adequate examination is stakeholder management in the context of destination branding (Hankinson 2010), and collaborative destination marketing in the form of tourism partnerships from both practical and theoretical perspective (Wang & Pizam 2011). Thus a less extensive literature review deepening the understanding of the area of stakeholder management, partnerships in tourism and brand architecture is presented in the following paragraphs.

2.4.1 Stakeholder Management

The classic definition of a stakeholder is “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives” (Freeman 1984 p.46). The interests of all stakeholders are of intrinsic value (Donaldson and Preston 1999), which means that each group of stakeholders should gain its own compensation and not only because of its ability to further the interests of some other group, such as the share owner (Donaldson and Preston 1999).

Identification of Stakeholders and Interests

Sautter and Leisen (1999) conceptualize how the stakeholder theory by Freeman (1984) can be used as a tourism planning tool and promotes collaboration among the key stakeholders. According to (Freeman 1984) managers need to have full appreciation of all the persons or groups who have interests in the delivery and the outcome of the tourism service. According to Buhalis (2000) the main stakeholders of tourism destinations and organizations are tourists, host population, public sector and government, tour operators and tourism enterprises.

Freeman (1984) also states three key concepts that need to be understood to effectively manage stakeholders. Firstly and also supported by Donaldson and Preston (1995); Hankinson (2010) is to identify the stakeholders interest. Secondly to understand the relationship between the organization and the stakeholder and thirdly to map the management of exchange between the involved stakeholders. Stakeholders can be considered as primary and secondary (Clarkson 1995). Primary
stakeholders are those which the organization is dependent on for its survival, and vice versa. A well-functioning relationship between the organization and the stakeholders is therefore crucial for both parts. Primary stakeholders are normally shareholders, investors, employees, customers and suppliers, together with public stakeholders as government and communities. Secondary stakeholders are defined as those who effects and is affected by the organization but are not essential for the survival of the company (Clarkson 1995).

**Treatment of Different Stakeholders**

Place or destination brands are often controlled and owned by many different stakeholders (Jamal & Getz 1995). Thus one of the fundamental questions for managers is to understand how to handle relations and establish long-term relationships in the network of stakeholders, especially among those who possesses key roles (Baker & Cameron 2007; Hankinson 2010). The many different stakeholders involved and the confusion about the ownership is an important factor to consider in tourism planning. The various involved parts also make the stakeholder management in destination branding a complex situation (Jamal & Getz 1995).

Freeman (1984) promotes managers to treat every stakeholder as an end in itself and not as dependent to others. To prevent any of the stakeholders feeling neglected or used, managers are suggested to include the stakeholders in the planning process and let them be a part of the determination of their future (Freeman 1984). Of big importance is to ensure not to discriminate smaller firms compared to larger ones. The dialogue between the organization and the stakeholders should be part of the organizations routine (Donaldson and Preston 1995). Buhalis (2000) emphasizes the importance of treating the stakeholders similarly and ensuring that benefits from the tourism activities are shared fairly. Failing to create a balance between the stakeholders threatens the success of the strategic objectives and the long-term competitiveness of the destination.
Management Responsibility

Kavaratzis and Ashwort (2008) consider it essential to create a specific group responsible for the management of the stakeholders and actions surrounding them. Jamal & Getz (1995) promotes the collaboration as a way to create and increase the feeling of community among the stakeholders. Donaldson and Preston (1995) puts all the responsibility on the managers regarding the stakeholder coordination, and according to them managers should select the right activities and direct the resources to obtain benefits for legitimate stakeholders.

2.4.2 Partnerships in destination branding

In the tourism context, collaborations in the form of partnerships means that a number of different stakeholders within both the private and public sector are working together through a process of exchange and pooling of resources (Selin & Chavez 1995). When concluding what existing literature describes partnerships to be (Palmer & Bejou 1995; Selin & Chavez 1995; Wang & Xiang 2007; Selin 2009), following definition can be proposed; 'A mutual agreement between two or more otherwise independent parts operating in conjunction, pooling or sharing resources as a mean to solve problems, accomplish common goals or create opportunities'. When reviewing the literature addressing partnerships in the tourism sector, it is found that authors also use terms such as strategic alliances (Palmer & Bejou 1995) and collaborations (Wang & Xiang 2007) when referring to what is here called partnerships.

Underlying Reasons for Creation of Partnerships

Research on the area gives a uniform picture of partnerships being a both critical and popular part of tourism marketing in general (Palmer & Bejou 1995; Selin & Chavez 1995; Augustyn & Knowles 2000; Wang & Xiang 2007; Selin 2009) and in destination branding in particular (Palmer & Bijous 1995; Hankinson 2001; Prideaux & Cooper 2002; Hankinson 2007; Baker & Cameron 2008; Hanna & Rowley 2011). And as the definition above indicates, partnerships usually are created out of organizations’ free
will, even though they otherwise are independent of each other. Answers to why collaborations occur can be found partially in the complex situation that tourism organizations operate (Hankinson 2001; 2009; Wheeler et al. 2011). Additionally, more specific factors are presented as well (Terpstra & Simonin 1993; Selin & Chavez 1995; Wang & Xiang 2007).

In an evolutionary model of tourism partnerships Selin and Chavez (1995) presents the first and initial stage of collaborations being created. In that stage environmental forces influencing tourism organizations’ decisions to collaborate with others are presented. These forces are economical, technological, political, social and competitive ones leading to organizations not being able to compete successfully alone. Other factors addressed are crises of some sort which might direct potential partners' efforts toward a mutual problem. Common visions, strong leadership and existing networks which often work as mediators of contacts and attract attention from potential partners are also affecting. Wang & Xiang (2007 p. 79), inspired by Selin and Chavez (1995 p. 848), have incorporated these factors in their framework of destination marketing alliances, giving them the same role of initial forces. Further it is suggested that organizations motivate themselves to enter partnerships with strategy oriented, transaction cost oriented or learning oriented incentives.

**Forms of Partnerships**

Another characteristic of partnerships, also indicated in the definition, is that it can take many various forms (Palmer & Bejou 1995; Selin 2009). There are four dimensions distinguishing different types of collaborations: form, mode, coverage and motive (Terpstra & Simonin 1993). The form of an alliance represents a number of levels of development ranging from less developed forms of contractual agreements to more developed forms such as joint ventures (Terpstra & Simonin 1993). Wang and Xiang (2007) also sort forms of alliances from less to more formal ones as follows: affiliation, cooperation, coordination, collaboration and finally strategic networks. The next dimension, which according to Terpstra and Simonin (1993) distinguish partnerships, is mode, representing types of relationships between members.
Chapter Two

Coverage refers to which geographical and functional coverage of markets is considered for the alliance’s output. The final one, motives, is referring to the underlying reasons of creation of partnerships described earlier.

Palmer and Bejou's (1995) case study of UK and US tourism alliances shows that there is no unique approach for creating tourism partnerships. Instead they vary much with the situation and environment. Known is also that the final form of an alliance often is a reflection of the environment surrounding the current partners (Palmer & Bejou 1995; Wang & Xiang 2007).

The Partnership Process

Tourism partnerships can be seen as dynamic evolutionary processes, beginning the time that underlying reasons triggers potential partner's actions and ending as it results in an outcome of some sort. This shows in both Selin and Chavez (1995 p. 848) and Wang and Xiang's (2007 p. 79) models. During this process common issues are identified, relationships are established and roles assigned. When interdependence and common problems have been agreed upon and partners are selected, legitimate stakeholders as well as expected benefits are identified. Then the exact goals and programs of the collaboration are set, sub-groups being divided and roles distributed. Decisions regarding form and governance structure are taken as well (Selin & Chavez 1995; Wang & Xiang 2007). Wang & Xiang (2007) point out that although evolutionary; this process is not always sequential. There are times when phases overlap and there is a need to go back and deal with issues which have been left unaddressed.

Wang and Xiang (2007) highlights that conflicts will inevitably occur somewhere during the process. Examples of conflicts given are dilemmas such as cooperation vs. competition. In tourism it is recommended to take a cooperation-conflict-compromise approach to solving conflicts. Rather than using formal procedures which forces partners to sticking to terms and agreements it is common to rely on trust and more informal ways of handling conflicted situations (Wang & Xiang 2007).
The final step in the partnership process is the outcome itself. The same way partnerships can have different goals and forms the same way the outcome vary (Selin & Chavez 1995; Wang & Xiang 2007). Selin & Chavez (1995) proposes the outcomes being some kinds of benefits derived, tangible products and/or the positive impact a work well done gives. The outcomes specified by Wang & Xiang (2007) are more closely connected to the motivations they present. They separate the types of outcome according to those motivations, proposing it to be benefits in the form of strategy realization, organizational learning or social capital building.

Strategy realization refers to the greater competitive advantage a marketing organization have gained through the partnership process such as shared costs, competitive brand and image building and improved product portfolio. Secondly, organizational learning outcomes are when the organization has gained new knowledge from the other parties in the collaboration, leading to for example innovation or people- and communication skills. Finally Social capital building is concerned with outcomes related to the resources available through different networks, both personal and business ones. For example “… information, ideas, leads, business opportunities, power and influence, emotional support, good will, trust, and the spirit of cooperation.” (Wang & Xiang 2007 p. 83)

**Success factors in Tourism Partnerships**

In an article addressing partnership performance, Augustyn and Knowles (2000) specifies a number of categories of individual factors which are critical to the success of tourism partnerships. When it comes to the planning and preparations of the partnership, it is important to establish some official body responsible for the joint efforts. It is also good if the partnership is initiated by either private or public sector, but involves both of them.

According to Augustyn and Knowles’ (2000) research, the objectives of the partnership should be well thought through, informed and seen as long term. Critical is also that those objectives are common to all parts and that it is a balance and
understanding between them with regards to diverse interests and identities. Continuing, the structure of the partnership ideally enables pooling of resources and costs as well as clearly specifies each partner's responsibilities. An effective coordination will also create a link between the public and private areas actions, preventing duplicate work.

Finally, in order preserve sustainability in the collaboration it is good to constantly allow for and consider feedback given, and if necessary reshape the objectives of the partnerships before the collaboration loses its meaning for the participants. (Augustyn & Knowles, 2000)

2.4.3 Brand Architecture

Before discussing the specific aspects and details of brand architecture some definitions of the concept as a whole may be in order. According to Hanna & Rowley (2011 p. 468) “Brand architecture is the component that focuses on the process of designing and managing brand portfolios”. Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000 p. 102) complement with the definition; "Brand architecture is an organizing structure of the brand portfolio that specifies the brand roles and the relationships among brands and different product-market brand context”.

The intensifying competition, growing markets and the constant need for differentiation forces companies to take control of their different brands in their portfolios and learn how to manage them and their identities correctly (Laforet & Saunders 1999). The brand architecture is constantly mirroring the company's structure (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000) and has a strong influence on the company's function (Kapferer 2012). An addition of brands can strengthen a portfolio, but bears a risk of creating confusion among the customers. Each brand requires brand-building resources and an overload of brand extensions can ruin the portfolio and in the end the company (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000).
Architecture in Destination Brands

In the context of tourism and destination branding, the design of the brand architecture is one of the most critical factors to pay attention to, (Hankinson 2001; 2009; 2010, Hanna & Rowley 2011) especially when branding regions (Hankinson 2009; Hanna & Rowley 2011). Places are composed of sub-brands linked to or owned by communities and cities in the area to be branded. The brands can be owned by local authorities, tourists, organizations, public and private businesses and entities. This makes brand architecture in destination branding a mediator and negotiator for internal conflicts within the brand portfolio (Hanna & Rowley 2011). Conflicts easily occur between the region and the cities and towns as all concerned are competing (Hankinson 2009) for its own interest and protection of its own brand, growth and profit (Kapferer 2012).

The literature contributes with different meanings and suggestions of solutions of the interest problem and confusion of the many brands. Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) proposes an over bridging brand as an umbrella branding as key and the umbrella brand becomes the primary indicator of the offering. Kapferer (2012) identifies two modes of umbrella brand strategies. The first strategy is on a single brand level where the advantage is to offer one brand representing a highly diversified range of products. The second strategy is based on a master brand and everything created should be reflected and follow the characteristics of the parent brand (Kapferer 2012).

The Brand Relationship Spectrum

Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) present an additional approach to handle brand architecture, the brand relationship spectrum. The spectrum consists of four categories; House-of-brands, Endorsed Brands, Branded House and Sub-Brands. House-of-brands, a strategy which involves an independent set of brands where each brand contributes to the market impact (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000). The strategy of Branded house (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000; Kapferer 2012) or House brands as Laforet and Saunders, (1999) names it, consists of one master brand that overarches...
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and mirrors all the activities and offerings the company performs (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000). House of brands often uses the corporate name to all its products (Laforet & Saunders 1999; Hanna & Rowley 2011; Kapferer 2012). Endorsed brands are the third architectural strategy, where one brand is created or adopted with the attempt to provide credibility to the brand portfolio and offering (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000).

The last of the four strategies proposed by Aaker and Joachimsthaler, (2000) is sub brands. Sub brands are brands that are independent from the parent brand but have a stronger link to the parent brand than the endorsed brand, this gives the sub brand less freedom to create its own distinct brand image than the endorsed brand (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000). The sub brand sometimes adapts the name of the parent brand to some extent with the possibility of bringing former associations to the sub brand from the parent brand, both positive and negative (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000; Hanna & Rowley 2011).

Choosing Brand Architecture Strategies

The literature presents one factor that needs to be considered when evaluating which strategy is most suitable for the company. Hanna and Rowley (2011) propose companies to evaluate their sets of brands, their effect on the target group and the roles they fill in the portfolio before taking a decision. Kapferer (2012) suggests a broader and deeper approach when evaluating the choice of strategy. The strategy needs to align with a number of factors to ensure not to change or disturb the growth and future evolution. The corporate strategy, the business model, cultural parameters, the rhythm of innovation, the addition of value, the resources of the firm, and vision of the brands are parameters Kapferer (2012) suggests to be taken into account when choosing which branding strategy is the most suitable.
2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented definitions and reviewed existing literature on destination branding in general as well as stakeholder management, partnerships and brand architecture in particular.

The literature review on destination branding showed that there is a research gap existent in the area of managing destination branding. Showing is a number of critical factors, important for managers to handle effectively in order to succeed with their destination branding efforts. There are mainly six factors appearing as being unanimously accepted as critical ones; stakeholder management, partnerships, brand architecture, brand leadership, brand reality and brand culture and image. Missing is empirical studies investigating these factors further, testing the performance of practitioners against the available findings. Three of the factors were found to be in need of additional research; stakeholder management (Hankinson 2010), partnerships (Wang & Pizam 2011) and brand architecture (Hankinson 2009; 2010). The review also revealed that the complexity of destination branding appears to be especially intense when it comes to branding regions, making it interesting to investigate these three factors from a regional perspective.
3. Research Model and Research Questions

When it comes to branding destinations, the literature review in the previous chapter showed that there are mainly six factors critical to success. It also showed three of the factors' need of further investigation as well as raised interest in the regional level of destination branding. In this chapter a proposed research model and research questions serving as the basis for such an investigation are presented.

3.1 Proposed Research Model

The purpose of this study is to gain deeper understanding of the antecedents of successful destination marketing, focusing on stakeholder management, partnerships and brand architecture. The relationship between these three factors and successful destination branding was revealed in the literature review in the previous chapter. Figure 1 illustrates the proposed research model.

Firstly, the model shows which aspects of each factor the literature mainly emphasize. For stakeholder management the identification of the stakeholders and their interests as well as how they were treated by the company/organization appeared to be the
Chapter Three

main aspects constituting the concept. The literature on partnerships focused on collaborations being viewed as processes. Beginning at one point, including certain phases and ending in an outcome of some sort, the processes are seen as both dynamic and evolutionary. When it comes to brand architecture, the different strategies identified and treated in the literature are perceived as the main aspects.

Secondly, the model illustrates the underlying hypothesis that stakeholder management, partnerships and brand architecture are factors affecting the level of success in destination branding. In other words, properly managed stakeholders, well conducted partnerships and the use of a suitable strategy for brand architecture all appears to be leading to successful destination branding.

Figure 1. Proposed Research Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Management</th>
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<tr>
<td>Treatment of stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identification of stakeholders and interests</td>
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<th>Partnerships in Destination Branding</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dynamic and evolutionary process of partnerships</td>
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| Successful Destination Branding |

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Brand Architecture</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand architecture strategy</td>
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3.2 Research Questions

Founded in the purpose of this study and developed through the literature review, a number of research questions have been stated. The objectives of this study are to gain deeper understanding of three different factors of regional destination branding:
stakeholder management, partnerships and brand architecture. Thus one question was formulated for each factor. Each question in turn represents the main aspects of the current factor, which is also shown in the proposed research model.

- **RQ1**: How are regional destination marketing organizations managing their stakeholders in terms of identification and treatment?
- **RQ2**: How are regional destination marketing organizations carrying out the process of collaborating through partnerships?
- **RQ3**: Which brand architecture strategies are destination marketing organizations applying for regional destination brands?

### 3.3 Chapter Summary

In this chapter a research model, derived from the literature review in chapter two, were proposed. From that model three research questions were developed. These questions enable the subsequent investigation and thus allow for the purpose of the study to be met.
4. Methodology

This chapter argues for and justifies the chosen approaches in the present study. A discussion about inductive and deductive research and why a qualitative approach is more suitable for the research is given. Following is a description of the method used to collect data, a presentation of the case organizations and respondents as well as a discussion regarding the appropriate method for the data analysis.

4.1 Research approach

4.1.1 Inductive vs. Deductive Research

There are mainly two philosophical approaches in research methodology, inductive and deductive. The inductive approach is a way of drawing conclusions and forming new theoretical frameworks from collected data. A deductive approach on the other hand means that already existing theories lay ground for formulating hypotheses or for research questions to be tested using empirical data (Bryman & Bell 2005). The deductive approach represents the most common one to use as it explains the relationship between theory and research (Dhawan 2010).

Consequently this research will be exclusively deductive. In order to contribute to filling the existing research gap, this study needs to take a deductive approach. Also,
the research questions are formulated and derived from theories presented in the literature review giving the study a deductive nature.

4.1.2 Qualitative vs. Quantitative Research

Choosing between a quantitative and qualitative research approach clearly defines how a study will be carried out. According to Bryman and Bell (2005), the two are classifying the different methodologies and approaches within business science.

Quantitative research strategy can be seen as emphasizing a quantification of analysed data in forms of numbers (Bryman & Bell 2005). Quantitative data is often collected in forms of surveys, interviews or from archives (Eriksson & Widersheim-Paul 2011). Qualitative research is interpretive and puts focus on words when collecting and analysing the data (Bryman & Bell 2005). The data is often collected verbally (Eriksson & Widerheim-Paul 2011), through observations or interviews (Eliasson 2010). The main emphasis in qualitative research lies within the understanding of the social reality (Bryman & Bell 2005). The differences between qualitative and quantitative research when it comes to types of data collected, purpose with the data collected and which method used when collecting the data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Characteristics of Qualitative and Quantitative Research
(Adapted from Eriksson & Widerheim Paul 2011 p. 87)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Numbers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Terms</td>
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Considering the previously presented facts and the differences displayed in Table 2, it is indicated that this study is exclusively qualitative in its approach. Since the current study aims to gain deep understanding of a certain phenomenon through respondents, the perspective becomes holistic (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2005). It also focuses on words instead of numbers, ruling out a quantitative approach. The given nature of the study thus matches the characteristics of a qualitative research approach and it was consequently found to be the most appropriate one for this study.

4.2 Research Design

The research design helps the researcher to make the right design for a current study and its purpose. It is much more than a description of the work to be done. It seeks to make sure the empirical data collected in the study can help to answer the research question (Yin, 2007). According to Robson (2002) there are three possible forms of study: descriptive, exploratory and explanatory.

Descriptive research methodology focuses on finding facts about a subject under interest. It is useful for collecting and assessing opinions, behaviours and features of a population or for investigating the state of affairs. In descriptive research the researchers need to be able to specifically define what he or she is measuring and what population is investigated (Dhawan 2010). This methodology also brings the respondent and researcher together in to conversation. Descriptive research has become popular in modern times and is used extensively (Bryman & Bell 2005).

Exploratory research design is a research design where the major emphasis is to observe what is already existent (Phopalia 2010), and to gain or achieve new insight and ideas about an unknown process (Dhawan 2010). To make it feasible, the research idea needs to be flexible to make it possible to observe all the many different aspects appearing (Phopalia 2010).

Explanatory research design aims to explain and account for descriptive information, explaining 'why' something is as it is. Explanatory studies are sometimes correlative
in nature. The focus is specifically on discovering causal relationships between different pre-determined variables (Gray 2009). To find these relationships means to see if and how one variable is dependent on, and determinant of, another variable (Eliasson 2010).

Since the present study aims to gain understanding about specific facts within Swedish destination marketing organizations’ activities, those organizations’ actions and behaviour are of interest. Given the previous discussion about different research designs and the aim and nature of the study, both exploratory and explanatory were excluded, leaving descriptive research design as most appropriate form for this study.

4.3 Data Sources

The data current for an investigation can be collected from either existing or induced data. The already existing sources are also called secondary data. Such information is created by e.g. researchers, market analysers or professional organizations (Bryman & Bell 2005). Such data has been collected for a purpose another than the actual study, making it more complicated to apply. Eliasson (2010) considers a follow up on an earlier study being the only time secondary data is the perfect choice. The induced data on the other hand is data created and collected specifically for the purpose of the actual study (Eliasson 2010)

Because of the qualitative nature of the study and the lack of previous studies addressing the three factors under investigation in the current context, primary data will be collected and used for this research. The aim of gaining deep understanding further reduces the possibilities of using data collected for other purposes.

4.4 Research Strategy

A well-considered and appropriate research strategy will help a researcher in the process of collecting relevant data and allowing for the research questions to be able
to answer. To make sure such decision is made correctly, some specific features are to be considerate (Yin 2009). Yin (2009) presents three main conditions helping to evaluate what kind of strategy is most suitable for a study. Table 2 shows these conditions: 1) Form of research question 2) requires control of behavioural events 3) Focus on contemporary events. The conditions in the model are connected to five research strategies; experiment, survey, archival analysis, history and case study (Yin 2009).

Table 3. Relevant situations for different research strategies
(Adapted from Yin 2009 p. 8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Form of research question</th>
<th>Requires control over behavioural events?</th>
<th>Focuses on contemporary events?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiment</td>
<td>How, Why?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Who, What, Where, How many, How much?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival Analysis</td>
<td>Who, What, Where, How many, How much?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>How, Why?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>How, Why?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By following the table, the researcher can determine which research strategy is the most appropriate one. For example, if the research question consists of how or why, is in need of the control of behavioural events and does not focus on contemporary events, experiments could be the most suitable research strategy (Yin 2009).

Since this study’s research questions are formulated as how and in which way destination marketing organizations are working and acting only experiment, history and case studies are possible choices. But, there is no need for control over behavioural events in the study excluding experiments and there is a focus on contemporary events which excludes history and leaves case study as the only possible choice for the study.
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Case studies can be descriptive or exploratory and often deductive. This type of studies is useful in business studies where the phenomena often are hard to quantify because of its many variables to measure. Cases in business studies are also complicated or even impossible to observe from the outside making case studies the most suitable method (Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005). These prior arguments justify former decisions made regarding methodology structure and approach.

Case Studies become more credible as they consist of multiple cases (Yin 2009), which motivates the authors to study more than one destination marketing organization in order to create deeper and better understanding about the phenomena. The study will not be comparative and the answers will not be compared between the organizations investigated (Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005).

4.5 Data Collection Method

When deciding which method to use when collecting the data necessary for a study there are a large variety to choose from. Researchers appear to agree on five main methods. They are observations, surveys, interviews, focus groups (Bryman & Bell 2005; Ghauri & Grønhaug 2005; Bell 2005; Yin 2007) and content analyses (Bryman & Bell 2005; Bell 2005). Surveys, structured interviews, structured observations and content analysis are mainly used when collecting data for studies with a quantitative approach (Bryman & Bell 2005). In-depth/qualitative interviews, participating observations and focus groups are then the most important methods when it comes to qualitative studies (Ritchie & Lewis 2003; Bryman & Bell 2005). As this research employs a qualitative approach, the three latter methods were the ones current to this study.

In-depth interviews are one of the main methods of qualitative research and it is often described as a conversation with a purpose (Kvale 1997; Ritchie & Lewis 2003). Formally, an interview is referred to as a situation where a person (the interviewer) asks another person (the interviewee) questions (Eriksson & Wiederheim-Paul
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2011). The method is derived from the importance of talking to people in order to more fully grasp their point as well as the descriptive power inherent in languages (Ritchie & Lewis 2003).

Interviews can be conducted in person or by telephone. Making interviews over telephone has both advantages when the respondent is located far away and the interviewer wants to avoid putting time and money into travelling. Another positive advantage is that the reliability of the answers increases as the interviewer does not affect the respondent with its personal characteristics as sex, professional position or background (Bryman and Bell 2005). To take into account is that the interviewer has no control over the respondent’s body language or facial expressions during the interview and limits the interviewer from showing the respondent pictures or diagrams to explain himself (Bryman and Bell 2005).

Focus groups are sessions where a group of about seven people (Ritchie & Lewis 2003) discuss with each other. In that way researchers can get valuable information about thoughts and motives (Bell 2005). It differs from the in-depth interview in the sense that the discussion is not between the interviewee and interviewer (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2005).

Finally, participating observations are when the researcher participates in an everyday situation of a current individual or organization, observing and listening in order to understand people’s behaviour (Bryman & Bell 2005; Bell 2005).

The limited number of DMO managers available to investigate in each case eliminated the possibility of using focus groups as data collection method. Deciding between observations and interviews, in-depth interviews were chosen as the method to be used. This after considering the purpose of this study, which is to gain deeper knowledge about organizations’ certain activities. Observations were excluded due to that the time and recourse consuming nature of the method did not fit this study. According to Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005 (p. 133), in-depth interviews allow the researcher to gain “… a more accurate and clear picture of a respondent’s position or
behaviour.” Another advantage of interviews is the possibility for the researcher to be flexible and probe until the desired information is revealed (Ritchie & Lewis 2003). Yin (2007) also contributes to the discussion by saying that interviews are one of the most important data collection methods when it comes to conducting case studies. As this description of in-depth interviews seemed to correspond well with the aim and nature of the study, the method was found to be suitable. Because of the great distance between the location of the interviewers and the low financial sources three of four interviews were conducted over telephone. One of the interviews was made in person.

4.6 Data Collection Instrument

4.6.1 Operationalization and Measurement of Variables

Operationalization means turning specific concepts from theory into easy, understandable words possible to measure (Bryman & Bell 2005; Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005; Eliasson 2010; Eriksson & Widerheim-Paul 2011). The operationalized concepts should come from the theoretical framework and be significant for the purpose and research question. When the concepts are translated into ordinary words they can be used in surveys or interview guides. Essential is to make sure the words means the same thing for the authors and the respondents to prevent any misunderstandings leading to false answers (Eliasson 2010).

Eliasson (2010) presents some requirements helping to make sure the variables are really operationalized during the process. According to her, the questions in the survey or interview guide need to be relevant for the research questions and only measure what is meant to be measured. The variables must have coverage in the research question and be applicable in relation to the purpose of the study. Finally, she means that the variables must together cover the whole research question (Ibid). These requirements of Eliasson (2010) have been taken in to consideration and when conducting the operationalization, the researchers of this study and made sure they were followed.
Methodology

The main concepts found in the literature review, also highlighted in the proposed research model (see Figure 1), have served as the basis for the operationalization scheme. Theoretical concepts from stakeholder management, partnerships and brand architecture provided the foundation for the interview questions. Since the research questions of this study are derived from the proposed research model, this procedure was a way to make sure all the interview questions were, in accordance with (Eliasson 2010), relevant and compatible with them.

The theoretical concepts were operationalized into workable concepts with easily understandable words. The questions were allowed to include some terms connected to destination marketing and branding theory, since the interviewees were expected to have a certain pre-understanding about destination branding and its concepts.

To facilitate the understanding of the link between the theoretical concepts and the interview questions, three operationalization schemes (see Table 4 - 6) visualize this. The schemes show how the three factors stakeholder management, partnerships and brand architecture. Further it demonstrates the aspects of each factor which are to be investigated.
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Table 4. Operationalization stakeholder management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT</th>
<th>Theoretical construct</th>
<th>Question no. (see appendix A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identification of stakeholders and their interests</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Main stakeholders of tourism destinations and organizations (Buhalis 2000)</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Primary and secondary stakeholders (Clarkson 1995)</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Need of identifying and mapping stakeholders (Freeman 1984; Donaldson &amp; Preston 1995; Hankinson 2010)</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Treatment of stakeholders</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Let stakeholders be part of determining the future (Freeman 1984)</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dialogue important (Donaldson &amp; Preston 1995)</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Treat stakeholders individually and fairly (Freeman 1984; Buhalis 2000)</td>
<td>1.3, 1.3.1, 1.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Well functioning, long-term relationships with stakeholders (Clarkson 1995; Baker &amp; Cameron 2007; Hankinson 2010)</td>
<td>1.6, 1.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Responsible for stakeholder management (Donaldson &amp; Preston 1995; Kawaratzi &amp; Ashworth 2008)</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Operationalization partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTNERSHIPS IN DESTINATION BRANDING</th>
<th>Theoretical construct</th>
<th>Question no. (see appendix A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dynamic and evolutionary process of partnerships</strong></td>
<td>2.1, 2.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underlying reasons for creating partnerships (Selin &amp; Chavez 1995; Wang &amp; Xiang 2007)</td>
<td>2.2.1, 2.2.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underlying motives for creating partnerships (Terpstra &amp; Simonin 1993; Wang &amp; Xiang 2007)</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forms of partnerships</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ranging from affiliation to collaboration (Wang &amp; Xiang 2007)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process phases</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Literature proposes different activities to be carried out when creating and working within partnerships</td>
<td>2.5.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Different outcomes (Selin &amp; Chavez 1995; Wang &amp; Xiang 2007)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success factors of partnerships (Augustyn &amp; Knowles 2000)</td>
<td>2.5, 2.5.1, 2.5.2</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 6. Operationalization brand architecture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRAND ARCHITECTURE</th>
<th>Question no.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical construct</td>
<td>(see appendix A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Potential different owners (Hanna &amp; Rowley 2011)</td>
<td>3.1, 3.2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-brands:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Different sub-brands compose the place (Hanna &amp; Rowley 2011)</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identity and image (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000)</td>
<td>3.3, 3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts (Hankinson 2009; Kapferer 2012)</td>
<td>3.5, 3.5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Choosing strategy (Hanna &amp; Rowely 2011; Kapferer 2012)</td>
<td>3.3, 3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Umbrella brands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Branded house (Aaker &amp; Joachimsthaler 2000; Kapferer 2012)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Endorsed brands (Aaker &amp; Joachimsthaler 2000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6.2 Interview Guide

The interview guide is where the subjects and topics of the conversation are specified. It shows in which order these topics are intended to be addressed during the interview and they can either be described in general terms or consist of well formulated questions (Kvale 1997). Such guide helps the researchers to enhance the consistency of the data and makes sure that all the relevant issues are covered during the interview. Important is thus that it at the same time allows for flexibility when it comes to the individual interviewee (Ritchie & Lewis 2003).

The qualitative, in-depth interview can either be unstructured or semi-structured (Kvale 1997; Ritchie & Lewis 2003; Bell 2005; Bryman & Bell 2005). When using an unstructured interview approach the researcher do not have a complete guide with questions to ask. Instead some themes or a guide of topics to cover during the interview may be loosely drawn up (Ritchie & Lewis 2003). This leaves the interviewee with a lot of freedom to answer the questions, but it also demands great
skills from the interviewer (Ritchie & Lewis 2003; Ghauri & Grønhaug 2005; Eriksson & Wiederheim-Paul 2011).

The other approach, the semi-structured or focused interview, is a mixture between the unstructured interview and the structured quantitative interview. It has more specifically formulated questions than the unstructured one, but it still leaves the dialogue open for the respondent to answer freely (Yin 2007). Such approach allows a slightly less experienced and skilled interviewer, since the bias in the interview is minimized through the careful planning of the technique rather than during the session (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2005). The semi-structured interview also “...allow for probing of views and opinions where it is desirable for respondents to expand on their answers” (Gray 2009 p. 373).

The researchers of this study have a clear picture of the topics to be addressed during the interviews as well as which factors to investigate within these topics. In combination with the recognition of restricted experience of carrying out in-depth interviews, this lead to semi-structured interviews being chosen as the most suitable interviewing approach to use in this study.

Thus a semi-structured interview guide (see appendix A) was developed. It includes a mixture of introducing, specified, direct and indirect (Kvale 1997) questions which are addressing each of the three concepts; stakeholder management, partnerships and brand architecture. The guide also includes the current aspects of the topic which the individual question aims to collect data about, giving guidance to eventual probing questions. This type of interview guide was regarded the most appropriate in order to collect the data desired for this study.

**4.6.3 Pre-testing**

According to Ghauri and Grønhaug (2005) as well as Yin (2007), a pilot study or pre-testing of the current technique is a good way of preparing the actual data collection. That way the researcher can find out whether the questions are for example
understandable, difficult or too sensitive (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2005). This can significantly contribute to the interview guide being more refined and improved than it would without any such preparations (Yin 2007).

Aiming for both a refined and improved interview guide the researchers of this study tested their interview questions on two persons. These persons were not experienced specifically within the field of destination branding but they both had basic knowledge about marketing as a whole. In that way the researchers could get a hint about whether the language used to state the question were appropriate, if the questions were understandable as well as whether they had managed to operationalize the theoretical concepts in a comprehensive way. The uses of test-respondents not having the same knowledge within the current field as the actual respondents were expected to have been a conscious choice. If they understood and were content with the questions and the way they were asked, the actual respondents were likely to fully understand as well. The setting in which these tests were carried out were attempted to resemble the expected setting of the actual interviews as far as possible.

4.6.4 Data Collection Procedure

Before conducting the interviews, the interview guide was sent to the respondents before the time and day for the meeting was set. This was done to give the respondents time to reflect over the questions and give them the possibility to react if any of the questions were impossible to answer, questions arose or if some of the questions were outside their area of knowledge.

To guarantee no answers were missed or misunderstood the whole interview was recorded (Yin 2007; Gray 2009) from the help of a smartphone, in total agreement with the respondent. That gave the interviewee the freedom to focus on the respondents answers and could during the personal interview, unhindered pay attention to the respondents and probe questions if needed.
Definitions of the different concepts were given if the respondent at any time became unsure about the actual meaning. The questions in the interview guide had open endings, inviting the respondent to talk about the subjects. The authors were also prepared with probing questions. Probing is following up questions helping the interviewer to go deeper in to the subject and to make sure the desired response to the question is given. The questions were still open and not leading and connected to operationalization (Gray, 2009).

4.7 Sampling

When choosing sampling strategy, one first has to decide between probability sampling and non-probability sampling. The first alternative, probability sampling, is described as “…largely inappropriate for qualitative research” (Ritchie & Lewis 2003 p. 78). With regard to this and the prior standpoints taken regarding research approach, these strategies will not be given any further attention in this study. Instead non-probability sample strategies are the ones regarded as relevant. Such strategies focus on deliberately selecting units well suited for the current in-depth study. No focus is given to statistical representation (Ritchie & Lewis 2003; Ghauri & Grønhaug 2005).

Gray (2009) expresses that when it comes to qualitative case studies, a combination of purposive, non-probability sample methods are often used as a multiple case sampling. Purposive sampling means that a case is chosen because it has certain characteristics or experiences that enable understanding of the themes central to the study (Ritchie & Lewis 2003). This study, being a multiple case study, will consequently use this multiple case sampling. Miles and Huberman's (1994) recommendations to initially target the cases most likely to contribute with rich data were also followed.
4.7.1 Sampling frame

Important when using a multiple case sample is to have a clear and explicit sampling frame guiding the sampling and making sure that all cases are related to the issues investigated in the study (Miles & Huberman 1994; Gray 2009). Such frame should be derived from the purpose, theories and research questions of the study (Miles & Huberman 1994).

Given that, the frame from which the sample of this investigation is drawn, became Swedish destination marketing organizations, working with branding a region as a destination. This frame clearly appeared when reviewing the three research questions stated for this study. Common for all the research questions are that they investigate these destination marketing organizations. Thus the sample frame was evident.

The organizations meeting the criteria of the sample frame were identified with the help of Visit Sweden, since Visit Sweden provide information regarding all Swedish destinations.

4.7.2 Sample selection

According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003) qualitative samples are usually small in size. For this there are several reasons. One of the reasons is that each phenomenon only needs to appear once to be part of the analysis. There is also no need for incidence and statistical representation. Finally, and one of the main reasons, is the nature of the data collected being very rich in details, a lot of effort need to be put in doing these justice (Ibid). Consequently the size of the sample within a qualitative study carrying out in-depth interviews needs to be kept small. Miles and Huberman (1994) continue by suggesting the number of cases in a multiple case study being related to the complexity of the within-case sampling (the factors and activities under investigation within each case). A high within-case sampling will consequently mean a smaller sample size.

With the pre-set of carrying out a thorough analysis and to really do the collected data
justice, the researchers considered the restrictions of the sample size presented above. They also estimated the time and resources available for them to accomplish the interviews and process the data. After these deliberations, and given the several research questions within each case, the researchers decided on three cases being an appropriate sample size.

**The Sample**

The organizations chosen as sample for this investigation were Tourism in Skåne (TiS), Jämtland Härjedalen Turism (JHT) and West Sweden Tourist Board (WSTB). The four respondents from the three cases were all in a managing position of the branding work. Each organization had the opportunity to nominate the person most suitable for the interviews with regards to the subjects being addressed. Consequently the respondents were selected according to their broad experience, knowledge and understanding of the organization’s work with destination branding. This in order to make sure the desired data was gathered, enabling answering the research questions.

The respondents of Tourism in Skåne were the CEO Pia Rajgård-Jönsson who was interviewed in person in Malmö on March 15 2012, and the marketing manager Helene Östberg who was interviewed by telephone in April, 2012. From Jämtland Härjedalen Tourism the Tourism developer Anne Adsten was interviewed by telephone in April 17 2012. From West Sweden Tourist Board, Jonas Dahl, strategic advisor for corporate communication was interviewed by telephone in April, 2012. Jonas Dahl is working as consultant for an international PR agency and is the representative for WSTB with the destination branding work as a mission.

In addition to these interviews, two respondents from another Swedish DMO were interviewed. The data collected from that interview was however excluded from this study since the authors felt that at the moment that organization was not working with regional destination branding in the way the study required. Thus, when being assessed, the answers given were not perceived as fully trustworthy and honest. This
was despite the fact that the questions were sent in advance and that the respondents had agreed to the interview being conducted.

### 4.8 Data analysis method

A key characteristic of qualitative studies are the overwhelming mass of collected data. This results in a large need for bringing order, structure and meaning to this mass. So when carrying out an analysis in a qualitative, case study project as this, the most appropriate approach to use is data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman 1994).

The three stages of the approach presented above are in accordance to Miles and Huberman (1994) referring to the following processes:

1. **Data reduction**: The process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the data. It is an ongoing part of the analysis which “sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards and organizes data in a way that 'final' conclusions can be drawn and verified” (Miles and Huberman 1994 p. 11)

2. **Data Display**: the process of where the data is displayed in an organized and compressed assembly, instead of the otherwise often highly intertwined mass of information. Instead of only using extended text, it is recommended to also apply matrices, graphs, charts and networks in order to display the data in a compact form.

3. **Conclusion Drawing and Verification**: The process of noting for example patterns, regularities and causal flows in order to be able to begin decide what things really mean.

(Miles & Huberman 1994)

The three step approach to analysis of qualitative data has been the basis of this study’s data analysis. Since the purpose of the study is gaining deep understanding of and investigating three theoretical factors, the analysis is relying on theoretical
propositions. This means that the theoretical proposition which led to this study also have been used as guidance in the data analysis (Yin 2007).

Other standpoints taken are to carry out a cross-case analysis, which enhances generalizability and deepen understanding and explanation by, in a comparative way, analysing the data from multiple cases (Miles and Huberman 1994) and, due to the theoretical proposition, be variable oriented in our analysis and thus focus on the theoretical variables and their relationship (Ibid).

The data collected from the in-depth interviews have been transcribed verbatim and those transcribes have constituted the empirical data in this study. To be able to reduce that data, Ritchie and Lewis (2003) recommend that the text is tagged according to some form of index. This will help to get to know the data and to sort it in accordance with theoretical constructs. In accordance to Ritchie’s and Lewis’ (2003) recommendations the transcribed interviews were thoroughly read and tagged with the help of the operationlization scheme, which offered a connection between the data collected and the current theories.

Continuing, the tagged data were additionally comprised and focused, and the facts representing the relevant empirical data in the best way were presented in text format in accordance with the theoretical framework of the study (see chapter five). In order to effectively carry out the cross-case analysis, and with regards to Miles and Huberman (1994) suggesting the use of other displays than text, the empirical data were also summarized and presented in tables.

When the data were reduced and displayed, the noting of patterns, themes and clustering as well as comparisons between the cases were the techniques used to draw conclusions and to answer the three research questions of this study.
4.9 Quality Criteria

When conducting a research, it is important to ensure it being reliable and solid. The quality of a research can be measured by the concepts of validity and reliability. The two concepts are derived from natural science and are aiming to define the level of strengths and credibility the study has (Ritchie & Lewis 2003; Yin 2007). Validity measures the degree of which the study investigates what it intends to investigate. Reliability refers to the stability of the measurement instrument (Bryman and Bell 2011). Both in quantitative and qualitative research the findings and sayings needs to be covered with reliable and validated sources to become credible (Silverman 2005). In this qualitative study, content, construct and external validity as well as reliability is used and presented to ensure the quality of the study.

4.9.1 Content Validity

Content validity, also known as face validity, refers to the concept of how the measures of the study measure what is intended to be measuring. One way to raise the content validity is to let a person with knowledge about the subject review the interview guide (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2005).

To ensure content validity of our research and not to risk being questioned about the face validity, the operationalization scheme and interview guide with interview questions were sent to an expert in the field of business research. The feedback and critique helped to raise the quality of the interview questions and the content validity of the study.

4.9.2 Construct validity

Construct validity is an important factor when conducting “meaningful and interpretive research findings and can be assessed in various ways” (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2005 p.83). To ensure the construct validity one must make sure adequate measures are created (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2005).
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The validity of the construct of the study has been maximized through pre testing of the interview guide (for more information, see 4.6.3). The draft of the paper has been reviewed by our supervisor and fellow students who have given constructive feedback on our procedures several times. The interview questions were sent to the interviewees prior to the interview session, to make sure they could answer the questions and possible ambiguities and questions could be dealt with before the meeting. All interviews were recorded to give the authors the possibility to go back and listen to the answered during the transcription sessions and when analysing the data. All these actions were made in order to raise the construct validity and avoid errors affecting the result of the study.

4.9.3 External Validity

External validity refers to if the study and result can be generalized and tested in another context or another group within the population or not (Ritchie & Lewis 2003; Yin 2007).

Generalizability is not the goal of a qualitative study (Ritchie & Lewis 2003), and thus not the objective of this study. According to Yin (2007) is it necessary for a case study to be repeated multiple times to be generalizable. There are even so some approaches that can contribute to qualitative studies’ results to some extent being applicable beyond the setting of an individual case. One of those approaches is according to Miles and Huberman (1994) the cross case-analysis.

Consequently, the use of multiple cases and the cross-case analysis of the empirical data carried out in this study, are factors strengthening the external validity of the results. Additionally, the same interview guide has been used for all the interviews, enabling a replica of the investigation, which according to Yin (2007) also can enhance the generalizability of a study.
4.9.4 Reliability

Reliability means that another researcher can repeat the actual study all over again and still conduct the equal result. It does not mean that the study should be replicated as when testing the external validity and the replication logic. The purpose of ensuring the reliability is to make sure to minimize false and skew answers. In order to make a reliable study the multiple procedures needs to be documented for a possible researcher interested in recreating the exact same study at another time (Yin 2007).

Throughout the methodology chapter all stand points taken and choices made have been justified and argued for in each sub chapter. This together with the interview questions being available for the reader in appendix A, the actual interviews being recorded and transcribed will according to the authors of this study make it possible to replicate the study at any time as suggested by Yin (2007).

4.10 Chapter Summary

In this chapter choices regarding the methodology have been presented and motivated. The stand points taken throughout the chapter have been made to increase the ability to meet the purpose and answer the research questions of the study. In summary the research has a deductive and qualitative approach and the research design is descriptive. Further this is a case study, collecting data through in-depth semi-structured interviews. The data analysis methods used are data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing approach. Table 7 shows all the choices made, from research approach to quality criteria.
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Table 7. Research methodology summary

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<th>Research Methodology</th>
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<td><strong>Data Collection Instrument</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Multiple case sampling, Three cases, Swedish destination branding organizations working with branding a region</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Analysis Method</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Validity, Reliability</strong></td>
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5. Empirical Data Presentation

In this chapter, the empirical data gathered from the three cases is presented. The organizations investigated are briefly introduced and is followed by a presentation of the data for each case. It will be presented in accordance with the study's theoretical framework, which focuses on three factors critical to destination branding: Stakeholder management, Partnerships and Brand architecture.

5.1 Case one – Tourism in Skåne (TiS)

Tourism in Skåne is a corporation owned by the region Skåne and Skåne's municipalities. Its purpose is to, as a marketing corporation, foster tourism in the region of Skåne. It is also meant to contribute to an increasing regional growth. The organization got its current constellation in the late 2008. The organization is currently working with turning Skåne into a stronger regional destination brand and making a reposition of the brand image from "rapeseed fields and flat landscape" to a more active, interesting and sustainable Skåne.
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5.1.1 Stakeholder Management

Identification of Stakeholders

Tourism in Skåne has a clear picture of which groups and individuals are considered stakeholders to the destination brand Skåne. The CEO explains: "They are the ones we have a relationship with" and the marketing manager contributes with: "The people that in some way are part of what we are doing". The municipal organizations, the businesses and the tourism industry within the region are the ones being listed as the main stakeholders current for the organization. But within these large stakeholder groups, other important actors are found as well. For example the municipalities' specific tourism organizations and the networks of tourism enterprises working across municipal borders.

The visitors are also identified as one of the actors being affected by and affecting the brand and the organization working with the brand. According to the CEO, the visitors are identified as one of the main stakeholders. The marketing manager recognizes visitors as a group meeting the criteria of being stakeholders as well, but chooses not to view them as such. She explains: "If our goal is to influence people’s way of viewing Skåne, then our organization are affecting them through for example our campaigns. But then they are not our stakeholders, then they are our target group. They are the ones we are targeting our marketing activities at". Consequently TiS is treating the visitors as a one of the most important actors, but it is not exclusively denominating them stakeholders.

Beyond these groups presented TiS also identifies several other groups and individuals viewed as stakeholders, but which are not working as closely to the organization. Politicians, journalists, national/international carriers and travel bureaus are examples given.

The organization has the attitude of no one stakeholder being more important than the other. Instead the stakeholders differ from each other according to the relationship they have to TiS. It can be the visitor’s advocacy relationship, where the
visitors are affecting the brand through consumption and demand. It can also be more of a business relationship which the organization has to the municipality, the local tourism organizations and the tourism industry. The marketing manager explains the type of relationship existing between the municipalities and TiS: “They are important to us since we together with them are working for the entire Skåne. Since we are only eleven employees we need all tentacles reaching for the industry and to different parts of Skåne. Therefore they are very important as an extension of us and us as an extension of them”.

**Treatment of the Stakeholders**

When it comes to communicating with, paying attention to and including stakeholders in the organization’s work, TiS is using a number of tools and channels. The ways in which this is done vary both with time and with the type of relationship existent between TiS and the stakeholder.

Through marketing campaigns (including various channels such as media and personal meeting), web pages and a Facebook discussion group TiS are now communicating with the visitors and also allow for them to give feedback and get in touch with the organization. Until recently, much of the tourism products available in Skåne were communicated through a paper, published a few times a year, containing ads put together by the individual enterprises. But the organization felt that the enterprises marketing budgets were tied up in the ad system and that some changes were much needed. Thus the journal is now disused and the organization is working with motivating the enterprises to join the alternative channels of communication.

Much of the efforts and communication is also directed to the municipalities and the industry. For example, the organization invites these stakeholder groups to seminars and large meetings, educating the industry and encouraging discussions about the present as well as the future of the destination Skåne. The seminars and meetings are of varying size ranging from the entire region to only including one of the destinations. In common for all of them are the idea of enriching, and educating the
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industry, trying to collectively become better and wiser.

Everyone within the organization is responsible for the communication with stakeholders but with individual areas of responsibility. The intensity in the communication varies but there is always a certain amount of routine. The marketing manager explains: "There is regularity but it becomes more intense during early spring and during the autumn. It is sparser during high season".

5.1.2 Partnerships in Destination Branding

TiS is working within different partnerships constantly. At the time of the interview the organization was involved in partnerships which included local tourist organizations, the tourism industry and other organizations wanting to associate themselves with the brand Skåne. The partnerships existing within the region were both geographical and thematic ones.

Underlying Reasons for Partnerships

Describing the factors and reasons underlying the creation and joining of a partnership TiS distinguishes between their own reasons and the enterprises reasons. For TiS it is much about the basic understanding that one is stronger together, and is accomplishing more collectively. And since the purpose of the organization is to foster tourism and regional growth, the working within partnerships thereby comes natural. It has also to do it with the objective of improving the sustainability in the region, which is important for the organization.

When it comes to getting individual enterprises to join partnerships, collaborating with other organizations and enterprises, both the CEO and the marketing manager expresses an existing resistance. They talk about an immature industry. The CEO describes: "Many enterprises are keeping to one and are scared of losing customers to one another. It is an enormous uphill trying to get them to work together." The short-term vision, the thought of 'what is in it for me?' intrinsic in a majority of the tourism enterprises needs processing. TiS is thus not only involved as partners in
partnerships, it also functions as a catalyst, presenting examples of successful collaboration, trying to get the industry to collaborate internally before a partnership between TiS and the industry are initiated.

Forms of Partnerships

As mentioned earlier, the partnerships within Skåne are of different geographical or thematic coverage. Geographical partnerships concerns tourism industry within a specific geographical area in Skåne, and thematic partnerships can for example be collaborations around golf, with golf enterprises in the region wanting to participate.

The formality of the collaborations and to which extent the parts are bound to perform within the project also vary. The Marketing Manager explains: "We have some formal agreements, for example when it comes to economic commitments. If one enterprise is to be part of all the marketing efforts TiS is making during a year, then it cost a certain amount of money. Then one is signing an agreement saying one is bound to that and also what expected work wise is." In common for most of the partnerships is that there are some kind of documentation of what is agreed upon, which period during it will be valid, the price tag and the commitments expected, as far as possible.

Otherwise each partner in the collaboration is responsible for pulling its own weight. If one are presenting an offer, a print or something else which is not in line with the current project, it is not appreciated. The consequence then becomes less scope and attention given to that enterprise and someone else’s offer being displayed instead. Instead of set up fixed requirements, the projects are demanding certain components and premier those performing in a way that suits the campaign or brand.

The Partnership Process

The phases and processes involved when TiS are working with and within partnerships are most clearly mapped at the initiation stage. At the beginning some types of need are recognized, which triggers actions for motivating and processing
potential partners. At that time TiS plays an essential role. When the form and place for the partnership has been sold into the industry in question, the marketing actions helping to reach the objectives of the collaboration are planned. The final phase is seen as the implementation of the planned marketing activities.

Success Factors of Partnerships

Ingredients for a partnership successfully completed is according to TiS ranging from openness in communication to the right product introduced at the right time. Factors considered to be needed are as follows. Open, two-way communications in which every part is participating on a voluntary basis are fundamentally. Also pulling in the same direction, and a mutual understanding of each other and what is expected with regards to effort and reward. Finally, a close dialogue is helping the understanding and the creation of relationships.

Outcomes of Partnerships

To collectively achieve something, to learn from each other and to develop personal relations to each other are some of the outcomes given as examples by TiS. Other important results of a successful partnership are stronger and better offers, products and campaigns leading to increased holidaying in Skåne and to a repositioning of the brand image. The CEO gives a concrete example: "During the last year a collective booking platform was introduced. A big gamble, but it has proven to be pure luck creating lots of sales."

5.1.3 Brand architecture

The destination brand Skåne is owned by no one and everyone. It is not something considered to belong to someone. It is merely a phenomenon, an image that different groups and individuals have the power to affect. The same goes for many of the other destination brands within the region. Malmö, Österlen, Kivik and Båstad are the other destination brands considered to be especially strong within Skåne.
When it comes to handling these other destination brands, to handle the other signals sent out which might affect the supposedly overarching brand Skåne, TiS has no explicit strategy. It is found to be particularly hard to formulate a brand architecture strategy of such since there are no owners and one can only affect, not control the brands and their images.

To have the planned and desired influence on the brand and its image, TiS is using a form of strategy though. The organization is selectively choosing which other brands and which offers they are communicating in the context of the destination Skåne. The Marketing Manager elaborate: "At the time we are highlighting special products and offers communicating a certain message, but everything else is still there as well. It is a process of selection. In that way one can still influence people's view of the brand."

TiS is also working with communicating a brand image which is modern, current and not clashing with the wide range of products and stimuli present in the region. It is not experiencing any problems with the other brands within the region sometimes communicating their message instead of Skåne's. The Marketing Manager expresses her feelings as follows: "It is one destination, one province, it is many cities and it cannot be standardized. There is no reason for that, it would only be boring. As long as one is not contradicting the brand Skåne I think it is only strengthening." Instead of competing with each other within the region TiS is thus confident in the regional brand and experiences other strong brands as complements enhancing the collective message.

But the lack of control over any destination brand and the fact that the enterprises constituting the industry cannot be forced to develop, deliver or communicate anything, TiS has also developed a kind of system for achieving the components desired. By disusing the journal containing the enterprise's yearly ads, TiS have gained more control over the communication from industry to target group. If the individual enterprise are not delivering the material and offers needed to be represented though the new communication channels (campaigns and the booking
portal) they cannot get their message spread. The Marketing Manager further explains: "If we are to highlight a product, for example a link on our web page, then that link has to function, as well as the information need to exist. Otherwise we are not doing it. In that way we are motivating the delivery of high quality products."

5.2 Case two – Jämtland Härjedalen Tourism (JHT)

Jämtland Härjedalen Tourism (JHT) is an economic association formed in 1995. JHT has three main members, the 17 destinations of Jämtland Härjedalen, Jämtlands County’s Administration and Jämtland Regional Association. The tourism operators are connected to JHT through membership of the destination organizations and are the ones responsible for the customer communication.

The purpose of the organization is to promote the basic industry and tourism in Jämtland Härjedalen and to create opportunities for development and growth for JTH’s stakeholders. JHT is working for the development of the brand Jämtland Härjedalen on a local, regional and national level, with a core business financed by its members. JHT is also carrying out projects for county joint efforts, financed by project funding. Today the core business employ three employees and project funds employs 14 employees. To take part of the activities by JHT, membership of JHT required. The vision of the organization is to be the European leader of nature-based experiences.

5.2.1 Stakeholder Management

Identification of Stakeholders and Interests

JHT makes a distinction between the stakeholders of the organization and the stakeholders of the brand Jämtland Härjedalen. The stakeholders of the organization are the members of JHT and a current reference group. That reference group is composed of representatives from the 17 member destinations in Jämtland Härjedalen, representatives from the transportation industry, Swedish tourist association and other local businesses interested in the work of JHT. The members are
collaborating with JHT in different ways depending on the purpose and need of support.

The stakeholders of the brand are everyone who is living and working and being affected by Jämtland Härjedalen. For JHT it is important how the target group experiences the brand and classifies the target group as the main stakeholders. The target group is differing over the season and is divided into spring, summer, autumn and winter.

**Treatment of stakeholders**

JHT is communicating with their stakeholders through emails, via internal newsletters, telephone meetings, conferences, study trips and in meetings with the reference group which takes place six times per year. Except from the reference group's meetings, the stakeholders involved in partnerships are continuously meeting about projects created to develop the destination. The reference group was also participating in the development of the brand book that JHT today is using in their work. The main purpose of the brand book is for everyone to strive towards the same goal, which is to become the leading European organization in nature-based experiences.

The communication to the stakeholders of JHT comes from all employees in the organization and is most often carried out by emails.

JHT considers the members as being constantly involved in the design and development of the brand Jämtland Härjedalen. The respondent tells us: “They were involved in the creation of the brand book. And they are all the time shaping what Jämtland Härjedalen should be. Together we are Jämtland Härjedalen”. Working for and improving their own companies or destinations are other ways for their stakeholders to become part of the branding efforts.
Chapter Five

5.2.2 Partnerships in Destination Branding

Underlying Reasons for Partnerships

Partnerships are for JHT the projects it has to develop the brand Jämtland Härjedalen and the destinations in the region. The reasons for creating partnerships are thus to be able to develop and strengthen the destinations, influence and reach the target groups and to make sure to not become an isolated business. The respondent explains: “Since we are not an isolated island, we have to be involved in partnerships to be able to influence and develop and to reach out.” The same goes for the individual destinations within the branded region.

Initiatives to form partnerships can come from a variety of sources. For example where someone identifies a need for something to be developed or investigated and starts a process that might lead to an actual partnership. The respondent gave an example of a flagship project that resulted in the need for further development in forms of a partnership: “...we had a pre-project that focused on strengthening the destinations. From there it became very clear that we must work towards increasing the exports and number of guest nights. Thus, we wanted to form an export project together to do so”.

Another example given was the food project JHT is carrying out during 2009-2012 called Food trips. JHT had identified a national interest in food craftsmanship, and with plenty of educated food craftsmen in the region, they saw an opportunity in using that fact to strengthen the region and the food business. The problem was that there was a lack of collaboration between the tourism operators and the food craftsmen. So, to become a destination with good food in the region, and to differentiate the region from others, the current partnership was created.

Forms of Partnerships

During the interview it stood clear that JHT are working in partnerships at both regional and national levels, as well as in partnerships with different themes. For example the food trips.
JHT always maintains a certain level of formality when it comes to collaboration within partnerships. For example, the partners have obligations as being a part of the projects. The respondent explains the procedure: “We have had it so that you may sign an agreement that you put in a certain amount of money and a certain amount of work hours”. In addition to that, the organization has limited amount of money for strategic marketing which they chose to invest in larger events. In those cases, agreements are put up, defining sums of money in exchange for constant communication about the event taking place in Jämtland Härjedalen. That is, according to JHT, a better way to reach out instead of investing the money in a traditional ad campaign.

The Partnership Process

The respondent explains building partnerships as being a process. It starts with an idea of how the destination can be strengthened. It then continues with an application proposal that is sent out to the destinations for referrals and inputs. Financial support from financiers is then needed and after that the project has to be approved. When that process has been carried out, the actual partnership process can begin. The respondent also explains that most projects hire project managers and include working and steering groups. Finally all projects are always evaluated.

Success Factors of Partnerships

To be able to carry out successful partnerships financial resources and time is needed as well as the involved partners must be given mandate to act. According to JHT relevant knowledge must be available at the same time as there is a desire to learn more.

Outcomes of partnerships

JHT wants the partnerships not only to result in the individual goals and objectives of the project but also to result in holistic advantages, financial gains and sustainability within the region. It is important that no project is carried through at the expense of
another investment or any other actor.

5.2.3 Brand Architecture

JHT considers everyone who has an interest in Jämtland Härjedalen to be an owner of the brand. But still there is no definitive ownership of the brand, since no specific person has invented it. The respondent explains that JHT have chosen to see Jämtland Härjedalen as an umbrella brand. That brand architecture strategy is a result of processes and the fact that no one can decide upon the current brands in the region.

Further the brand book serves as the basis for how to handle the brand and other brands in the region. This is something that becomes easier as the brand book is based on what the destinations in Jämtland Härjedalen stand for and offer. JHT tries to use the brand book as much as they can when they are collaborating within the region. The respondent explains: “The brand book is not about the font or colour and design. It is more an idea about how we should be together.”

The brand Jämtland Härjedalen is accompanied by six other strong destination brands in the region. They are the destinations Åre, Östersund, Funäsfjällen, Lofsdalen, Vemdalen and Jämtlandsfjällen. Those destinations, constituted by those living and working there, are together with JHT owners of the six destination brands. The respondent explains the importance of having solid destination organizations representing each destination within the region: “The destinations are what are most important. No one travels to a hotel. That makes it incredibly important for the destinations to be strong and to have a well-functioning destination organization that can take care of, shape and develop the destinations.”

To treat the destinations within the region fairly can be problematic for JHT. This since the different destinations, which individually attract different target groups and travellers, sometimes must step back and let another more suitable brand be in the front for a specific campaign. The respondent explains: “Sometimes Åre might be a stronger brand than Jämtland Härjedalen. That makes it a balancing act against the
other destinations participating about how to say we are about to promote Åre because it will strengthen everyone. In that, we from JHT might have a more sober view in comparison to the representatives of the destinations. The destination representatives do not always support such things. They work for their own brand. Even if the truth is that they might earn from letting another brand take the lead and just follow with the flow.”

5.3 Case three – West Sweden Tourist Board (WSTB)

WSTB is a corporation fully owned by the regional association of Västra Götaland. Being sorted under the regional development committee, the focus of the organization is strategic development and marketing communication. It is also working with encouragement of entrepreneurship and economic growth in Västra Götaland (Västsverige1).

Recently, the work developing a brand platform for the regional place brand West Sweden, representing the region Västra Götaland, was finished (Västsverige2). Now it is the work of WSTB to implement this platform from a destination brand perspective, trying to get the local tourist organizations and the tourism industry to join this new way of portraying West Sweden.

5.3.1 Stakeholder Management

The groups and individuals crucial for reaching the goal of becoming as strong destination brand as possible are also the ones being considered to be stakeholders, according to WSTB. The more crucial the actor is for reaching the objectives, the more importance is also given to it as a stakeholder.

WSTB differentiates the stakeholders of the brand West Sweden depending on them being either internal or external ones. The internal ones are the ones constituting the organization. They are destinations within the region, with local tourism organizations. They are also the municipalities’ tourism organizations as well as local
politicians. They and the individual tourism enterprises are the internal stakeholders to the brand. The enterprises are very important to the organization. The respondent expresses: “They are the ones delivering the brand promise.”

The most important external stakeholder presented is Visit Sweden. Together with them WSTB is working on the foreign markets. The importance is also derived from the longing of West Sweden wanting to be a strong part of Sweden as a large destination. Other external stakeholders are regional actors working with aspects of the place brand West Sweden other than tourism, for example to attract new businesses and residents.

When it comes to the tourists, WSTB do not consider them to be stakeholders of the brand West Sweden. They recognize that the tourists are influencing the brand and that it is towards them much of the activity is directed. But they are not directly considered as stakeholders of the brand.

WSTB also recognizes that there additionally are many more stakeholders to the destination brand West Sweden. But they mean they have to draw a line and define which they can work with and treat as their stakeholders.

**Treatment of Stakeholders**

When it comes to communicating with, paying attention to and including stakeholders in the organization’s work, WSTB is using different tools and channels. Sometimes this is done through the local tourist organizations. But most often it is done through WSTB’s own networks, constituted by different parts of the tourism industry. Such networks exist for all the geographical areas and all the parts of the tourism industry. Additionally, WSTB is connected to the enterprises in the tourism industry through a web-based communication tool. That is the main tool for development. Available on that portal is two-way communication, educations of different sorts and various types of information such as background material and reports from meetings.
The communication in all the networks are also two-way. This allows for all the stakeholders to express their point of view and making it possible for them to be a part of determining the future work with the brand. The communication is constant but there is no routine set for when and how it will be carried through. The respondent ads: “One cannot plan for everything.” The different business developers within WSTB are responsible for managing the communication in their area and within their networks. So there is someone responsible for every network.

5.3.2 Partnerships in destination branding

Underlying Reasons for Partnerships

WSTB is constantly involved in partnerships with other tourism organizations and finds many reasons for working in that way. The main motivation is the strive to reach the objectives of the organization's operation. The respondent explains how this strive leads to partnerships: “No one owns a destination. It consists of everyone constituting it, at place. And besides the regional tourist organization, there are other lubricants in the form of the 30-40 local tourist organizations having great relations with the local industry. Therefore the WSTB must work with all of them in order to work with the destination brand West Sweden. ”The other main reason is the opportunity to more and better business.

WSTB’s attitudes towards partnerships collaborations is then that it is favourable, necessary and that they have no choice but to work with and in them. The respondents summarize: “To take control over a destination is near to impossible. But we all know that destinations develop though networks. So taking control over the networks is to develop the destinations.”

Forms of Partnerships

WSTB is part of and is working with different types of partnerships. The partnerships involving the enterprises in the tourism industry, having the purpose of developing the tourism in the region, are highly informal in their composition. WSTB sees it as
their job to attract the partners and convince them that it is viable for them to join the activities and go to the meetings. It is also up to each partner to decide which effort to put into the collaboration and how long they want to be part of it. The respondent explains the reasons for the optional terms: “It is not possible to force people to do something. One cannot force a family business to commit to something they do not perceive as profitable.”

But there are still some obligations the partners of the partnerships are expected to perform when entering and working in the collaboration. These include mutual understanding and to always work for the best of the collaboration. WSTB thinks it is very important that each part really makes an effort to understand each other, understand every partner's situation and driving force. Also the possibilities and strengths each partner brings to the collaboration. When one has entered the partnership everything one does related to it should give the best result of the partnership. Otherwise WSTB do not want them collaborating at all.

The parts then also are expected to keep their promises made and perform what has been agreed upon. But this is something WSTB finds to elementary to even discuss further.

The other forms of partnerships WSTB is involved in are the ones including more public sector organizations such as Göteborg & Co and the Culture Secretariat. Then there are more formalized contracts dealing with the amount of money being invested in the project, which staff resource are to be put in, what should be accomplished and who will do what. To sum up the partnerships with other tourism organizations are more formalized than the partnerships with the tourism industry.

**Success Factors of Partnerships**

Ingredients for a partnership successfully completed are according to WSTB closely connected to the efforts expected to be made from each partner. Mutual understanding between the parts, a clear goal and commitment from all parts are
keys to success. They also feel it is important that every single partner tries to contribute to the fulfilling of the goal, emanating from their own ability and vision.

**Outcomes**

The goals of the tourism partnerships and what they result in are for WSTB physical outcomes such as new products, development of existing products and new packaging of offers. They also describe the new knowledge parts can gain from the interaction with each other as a desired and occurring outcome. The respondent says: “Better single products, better collaborations and a stronger marketing within the region.”

**5.3.3 Brand Architecture**

WSTB does not consider the destination brand West Sweden to belong to any single owner, making it hard to control it. And since it does not own any of the other destination brands within the region either, brand architecture is hard to implement.

The strong destination brands existing within the region and current for the organization to manager are many. Göteborg and Bohuslän are two of the large ones. But within Bohuslän one can also find strong brands such as Smögen and Strömstad. Additionally the respondent describes how destination brands that no one is even working with also are circulating within the region: “And then there are lots of single brands that people puts on us but we are not actually working with ourselves. Take Västkusten as an example, that is a really strong brand, but no one here is working with or running it.”

The plan for the destination brand West Sweden (the work has only recently begun with the new brand platform) is that it will function as an overarching brand for the region, communicating a feeling of “west Swedish”. But WSTB also recognizes that there will be times where parts of the regional tourism will have the need to communicate themselves without taking the detour around West Sweden. As long as such communication is functioning as a clarification and enhancing of the brand promise for that place and as long as it is not contradicting the brand West Sweden
and all it stands for, then such activities will not be opposed. The respondent explain why WSTB does not see other destination brands' communication as a problem: “There is no large discrepancy between West Sweden and the others. But of course if we are looking at Göteborg and Skaraborg there are a difference in the promise of the experiences. But West Sweden as an overarching brand must be able to embrace both of those promises.

As mentioned before WSTB has the understanding and attitude that one cannot force any individual enterprise or organization to do something they do not believe in. Their strategy for getting the industry to join the brand platform is thus to, as the respondent says: “shine as a bright lighthouse”, and hope for as many as possible to follow. This is done by presenting examples of similar works done, which ended with a successful outcome. In that they are working with a number of companies as a frame of reference. They are also creating incitements for enterprises through the regional marketing activities, where the ones living up to the brand in the best way will be given the role of representing the region.

5.4 Chapter Summary

Chapter five presented the relevant empirical data resulting from the interviews. The data from the three organizations: Tourism in Skåne, Jämtland Härjedalen Turism and West Sweden Tourist Board were presented individually and in accordance with the theoretical constructs found in the literature review. The empirical data presented here in chapter five have also been summarized and put in tables to enable the data analysis in chapter six.
6. Data Analysis

This chapter partly presents a cross-case analysis of the data presented in the previous chapter. The analysis is based on the three factors found in the theoretical framework of this study: Stakeholder Management, Partnerships and Brand Architecture. In addition to comparing the data across the cases, the analysis also matches and discusses the empirical data with the components of the theoretical framework. The analysis presented in this chapter finally function as the basis for the answering of the research questions.

6.1 Presentation of organizational facts

Firstly, in order to enable and enrich the cross-case approach to the analysis, a summary of the organizational facts of each case organization might be appropriate. In Table 8, a summary regarding the current brand, the purpose of the organization, year of establishment, ownership of the organization, number of employees and geographical area of responsibility is thus presented. This table can be used to readily see the organizational differences and similarities of the studied cases, which may be
Chapter Six

interesting to know of when proceeding to the actual cross-case analysis.

Table 8. Organizational facts about the studied cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facts</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Destination brand</td>
<td>Tourism in Skåne AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Swedish Tourist Board AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jämtland Härjedalen Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Skåne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Sweden /Västsverige</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jämtland Härjedalen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Established (year)</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td>Constitute one fourth of 'Business Region Skåne' which is owned to 85% by Region Skåne and to 15% by Skåne's municipalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100% owned by Region Västra Götaland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economic association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Members:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The 17 destinations in the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Jämtland's County Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Jämtland Regional Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of employees</td>
<td>11 employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23 employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three permanent and 14 project employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographical area</td>
<td>The provinces of Skåne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Västra Götaland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The provinces of Jämtland and Härjedalen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2 Stakeholder Management

Findings in existing research have established that handling relations and establish long term relationships in a network of stakeholders is a fundamental question for destination brand managers to understand. This is especially true among those stakeholders who possesses key roles (Hankinson 2010, Baker & Cameron 2007). The identification and treatment of stakeholders are examples of factors highlighted as
Data Analysis

important to manage in order to achieve the balance needed to reach the strategic objectives of the brand, as well as strengthening the long-term competitiveness of the destination (Freeman 1984).

6.2.1 Identification of stakeholders

To begin with, when it comes to identification, all of the studied organizations has a clear perception of which groups and individuals they consider being stakeholders of the current destination brands. Another similarity found in the gathered data was that all three cases presented a number of four to five stakeholders each. Those stakeholders were the ones viewed as their main ones. In Table 9 these main stakeholders, presented by each organization, are found. Additionally both TiS and WSTB showed clear awareness and understanding of other stakeholders existing within the region as well. However, current limitations of the organizations ment that a line has had to be drawn for which stakeholder groups the organizations can and cannot actively work with.

Table 9. Summary of empirical data regarding main stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tourism in Skåne AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Swedish Tourist Board AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jämtland Härjedalen Turism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Stakeholders</td>
<td>- Visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- municipalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- municipalities tourism organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Tourism industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Network of tourism enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Visit Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Organizations working with West Sweden as a place brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Tourism organizations within the region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Tourism industry within the region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For the brand:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Visitors (autumn, winter, spring and summer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Citizens and workers in Jämtland Härjedalen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For the organization:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The reference group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Members of JHT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in the Table 9, the municipal organizations, as well as the enterprises
constituting the tourism industry within the regions, were the only stakeholder groups identified by all three organizations. The ones being presented in addition to that appears to be more case individual in the way that they closely relate to the way each of the organizations are working. For example, JHT is working with a reference group in order to reach all of the destinations within the region. Therefore, that reference group were one of the main stakeholder presented by JHT. Further, WSTB presented that organizations working with other aspects of the place brand West Sweden is included among their main stakeholders, a liable consequence of their destination branding efforts taking its start in that overarching place brand.

When it comes to the visitors, the approach varied among the cases. JHT considers the tourists and visitors to be stakeholders only to the brand, TiS is divided in the opinion regarding them being stakeholders or not, whilst WSTB chooses to not entitle them stakeholders at all.

The finding that all the organizations are identifying their stakeholders in some way is supporting the suggestions given by Freeman (1984) in his stakeholder theory. But, the overall findings regarding stakeholder management, is not as strongly supporting the stakeholder theory being applied in detail by the studied organizations. Freeman (1984) means that it is important for managers to identify and have full appreciation of everyone with an interest in the organization. Our findings however indicates that such full appreciation is not occurring in the studied organizations. The deviation from the theory is proven partly by the respondents only presenting a few groups as being the 'main' stakeholders of the brands. Moreover, the stakeholders which are not being considered to be such appears to be given less consideration and attention from the DMOs, which is not in accordance with Freeman’s (1984) suggestions.

According to Buhalis (2000), the main stakeholders of tourism destinations usually are: tourists, host population, public sector, government, tour operators and tourism enterprises. Our study findings indicate that these groups are being viewed as the main ones in the studied organizations as well, supporting Buhalis’ (2000) proposal.
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When viewing the combined data, all six stakeholder groups concerned were represented by at least one of the organizations’ responses. The public sector, governmental actors and the tourism enterprises were the stakeholders especially connecting the empirical data and the theoretical proposals since all three cases presented these.

On the other hand, the suggestion that tourists are one of the obvious main stakeholder groups (Buhalis 2000) is not correlating with the result of this study. This since only one organization exclusively views visitors as main stakeholders to their brand, while the other two are divided in their opinions.

Another finding, when it comes to the identification of stakeholder, is an emerging pattern regarding the organizations approaches. The pattern concerns the labelling and categorizing of stakeholders depending on different criteria. It is found that all three organizations are categorizing their stakeholders, and that they are dealing with them differently depending on category affiliation. The criteria used as differentiators are however found to be unique for each organization. JHT distinguishes between organizational stakeholders and stakeholders of the destination brand, TiS makes distinctions depending on the relationship the stakeholder has to the organization and lastly, WSTB speaks in terms of their internal and external stakeholder groups.

This managerial behaviour is the only indication found for stakeholders’ interests in the organization being given any special attention in the process of stakeholder management. Consequently the studied organizations seem to not be applying the first key concept of stakeholder management presented by Freeman (1984) and supported by Donaldson and Preston (1995) and Hankinson (2010).

Factors of Identification

Both TiS and WSTB stated that the actors important to the fulfilment of their organization goals are the ones given their main attention. The DMOs’ interests consequently appear to be the decisive factor when it comes to determining the levels
of importance stakeholders are given. In Table 10, the factors of identification presented by the organizations are found. As can be seen, JHT did not confirm this way of viewing the stakeholders since the respondent did not account for its factors of identification.

Table 10. Summary of empirical data regarding factors of identification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factors of identification</td>
<td>Tourism in Skåne AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Actors having a relationship with TiS</td>
<td>West Swedish Tourist Board AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The ones working with TiS towards</td>
<td>Jämtland Härjedalen Turism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>making Skåne a better destination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If it is a unit or an organization that are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vital for the achievement of WSTB’s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>objectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Information not revealed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Clarkson (1995), stakeholders can be either primary or secondary to the current organization. Correlating well with that is that all three organizations have identified stakeholders with the same characteristics as primary ones as their main ones. Two of the organizations explicitly explained why these primary stakeholders are given much of the organizations focus. It is also found that the line, which had to be drawn regarding which stakeholders are to be given the DMOs’ serious consideration, separated just the primary and secondary stakeholders from each other.

6.2.2 Treatment of stakeholders

When it comes to treatment of and building relationships with main stakeholders, this study have found strong evidence of all three organizations working in a similar way as recommended in existing theory. A close, regular dialogue between the DMOs and their stakeholders (Donaldson & Preston 1995), where the stakeholders have the opportunity to influence the future of the destination brand (Freeman 1984), are
factors that could lead to the establishment of a good, long-term relationship (Cameron & Baker 2007; Hankinson 2010).

All three of the organizations have multiple channels for communicating and creating relationships with their main stakeholders. The identified ways of communicating are presented in Table 11. This communication shows that there is an open dialogue between the DMOs and the main stakeholders. In addition to the communication between them, all organizations are encouraging their stakeholders to communicate and establish relationships between each other as well. This is in accordance with Freeman’s (1984); Donaldson and Preston’s (1994) and Hankinson’s (2010) recommendations to map and work with such horizontal relationships.

Table 11. Summary of empirical data regarding ways of communicating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tourism in Skåne AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>- Written communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Personal meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Media channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Seminars and meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Web page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- B2B web page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Facebook group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Swedish Tourist Board AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Networks constituting parts of the regional tourism industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Internal communication platform 'Basetool', which enables two-way communication with enterprises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jämtland Härjedalen Turism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Written communication/e-mail/newsletters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Study trips</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is also a routine in the way of working with the stakeholders. JHT differs regarding that, in the way that it has established a fixed schedule of meeting some of its stakeholders. The other two organizations have regularity too, but not equally determined. It was also found that the routine and dialogue between the tourists and the DMOs were not as regular and planned as the management of for example the enterprises and the municipality organizations.
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Another way of establishing a healthy relationship in which the stakeholders feel like they are treated as an end itself and not discriminated or left outside, which Freeman (1984) considers to be a major part of stakeholder management, is to let them be part of the organizations planning and activities. In Table 12 a summary of the current organizations’ stakeholders’ possibilities to be involved are presented. It is found that all three organizations are working hard with initiating discussion and inviting their stakeholders to be a part of determining the future of the destination brand and the work surrounding it. This seemed to be a natural way of working for these organizations, since the primary stakeholders identified as their main ones, also are the actors the organizations are working for and closely with.

Table 12. Summary of empirical data regarding stakeholder involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tourism in Skåne AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Swedish Tourist Board AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jämtland Härjedalen Turism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder Involvement</td>
<td>Involved in the development and future of the brand through seminars and meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Possible to make an impact on the future of the brand through existing networks, the communication platform and by joining partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Involved in the development and future of the brand through partnerships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was also found that the relationship between the organizations and the stakeholders were similar in all three organizations. The organizations have the role of supporting, mentoring and also motivating their stakeholders in the daily work with developing and improving the offers and destinations.

Management Responsibility

With regards to Kavaratzis and Asworth’s (2008) opinions of it being essential to create specific groups that manages and have responsible for the organizations stakeholders and their actions, this study found little support. The same applies for Donaldson and Preston (1995) who are putting all that responsibility on managers.
None of the organizations described any such allocation of responsibility. Instead it seemed natural to them that the departments and people working closely with or within projects with a specific stakeholder also were responsible for the management. This can also be seen in Table 13, which shows the respondents answers regarding management responsibility.

Table 13. Summary of empirical data regarding management responsibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Tourism in Skåne AB</th>
<th>West Swedish Tourist Board</th>
<th>Jämtland Härjedalen Turism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management responsibility</td>
<td>Everyone within the organization. Different areas of responsibility</td>
<td>No single department or person. Varying with the different networks and projects</td>
<td>Everyone within the organizations. Different areas of responsibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3 Partnerships in Destination Branding

This study finds strong support for Hankinson's (2001) findings, which states that it is near to impossible to develop and communicate destination brands without the support of other organizations within the current geographical areas. This study also confirms that working with and within partnerships are these organizations' way of trying to overcome that obstacle. All three organizations investigated report that they are constantly working with partnership within the regions, both as initiators and as partners. Partnerships, often with stakeholders involved are seen as the natural way of reaching these organizations objectives.

6.3.1 Underlying Reasons for Partnerships

Existing theory present several, detailed underlying reasons for why organizations are joining partnerships instead of continue to work on their own (Terpstra & Simonin 1993; Selin & Chavez 1995; Wang & Xiang 2007). Little evidence has been found for some of these underlying reasons. Instead, there seem to be mainly one
large underlying factor in common for all three organizations. That is the purpose of the organizations’ activities which are basically also why they exist. In common for all of them are the purpose of fostering, promoting and stimulate growth in current regions and their tourism industries. The gathered data shows that all the reasons presented by the organizations can be traced to this main underlying reason. A summary of the underlying reasons presented by the organizations are shown in Table 14.

To collaborate and always strive for stronger brands, growth and better business within the regions seem thus to be the underlying reasons for all the individual partnerships being created. This large underlying reason is however found to be able to take the form of both the economic, political and competitive environmental forces presented by Selin and Chavez (1995). Consequently little or no evidence were found to support the other underlying factors presented in the theoretical framework.

One of the organizations also contributes with two factors not found in existing literature, which are additionally explaining the creation of partnerships. It is demand and possibilities. For example the increased interest in food craftsmanship have provided the opportunity of a partnership developing food trips being created. And the demand for recording films within the current geographical region have led to the joint effort of enabling and allowing such projects.

Table 14. Summary of empirical data regarding underlying reasons for partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Tourism in Skåne AB</th>
<th>West Swedish Tourist Board</th>
<th>Jämtland Härjedalen Turism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Underlying reasons     | - Create long-term relations and branding  
                         - Basic thought of being stronger and accomplishing more together |
|                        | - More and better business  
                         - More reach  
                         - Achieve objectives |
|                        | - Development  
                         - Influence and reach the target groups  
                         - Demand |
6.3.2 Forms of Partnerships

In common for the partnerships, within all three of the studied regions, is that they take various forms. This finding supports Palmer's and Bijou's (1995) and Selin's (2009) conclusions. In Table 15, the forms and formalities of the partnerships explained by the organizations are presented. The forms vary both by theme and by formality. Both TiS and JHT are working with some types of written agreements or documentation of the current partnerships. The agreements often regards financial input, time and personnel resources given to the project, as well as expected goals and outcomes for both of the organizations.

WSTB on the other hand stands out in the way that its partnerships involving the private sector, always are highly informal. The private actor partners are not bound to the collaboration in the same way as TiS and JHT presents. The variety of formality found in the partnerships supports Terpstra's and Simonin's (1993) findings. But this investigation could not distinguish the four specific forms of alliances presented Wang and Xiang (2007), since the formality of the partnerships within the investigated regions appeared to be somewhat individual for each project.

Another dimension distinguishing types of partnerships is according to Terpstra and Simonin (1993) the coverage. In two of the organizations, evidence was found for both functional and geographical coverage being applied for different partnerships. In Skåne, partnerships working with golf are example of functional coverage, and projects regarding development of North Western Skåne are example of geographical coverage. Similar examples can be given when it comes to JHT. Differing from the other two, when it comes to the coverage of partnerships, is WSTB which did not account for the different partnerships in detail.
Table 15. Summary of empirical data regarding forms of partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourism in Skåne AB</td>
<td>West Swedish Tourist Board AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forms of/Formalities</td>
<td>Jämtland Härjedalen Turism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Some kind of documentation of agreements made</td>
<td>- Informal when it comes to the development of the industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Financial investments are made in the partnership project</td>
<td>- Formal when it comes to other, more financially involving partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Each part responsible for contributing</td>
<td>Formal agreements binding the parts to their financial investment and the efforts put in to the project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3.3 The Partnership Process

When it comes to the different phases undergone when working within partnerships, this study found varying evidence for the existing theory. The respondent from JHT stood out as the one being able to explain the way in which the organization was working in a more detailed way than the other respondents were. The respondent from WSTB was on the contrary not able to describe this process at all. TiS, with its two respondents, presented some activities present in the partnership process but were neither they as detailed as JHT. But even though the current respondents from TiS and WSTB were diverse in its ability to describe the process, they indicated that the knowledge was available within the organizations though in another department. This is seen as a sign of the way of working within partnerships is such large and important part of the organizations activities, that there are employees outside the marketing departments specializing on working with those questions.

Despite the varying depth available in the organizations' data, the different stages in the partnership process presented by Selin and Chavez (1995) and Wang and Xiang (2007) have to a certain extent been supported by this study. In Table 16, the phases described by the investigated organizations are presented. As can be seen, there are several similarities found in the data gathered from JHT and TiS. In addition to the
explicit presentation of these phases, both WSTB and TiS presents other, more obvious and for the organizations’ fundamental building blocks of partnerships as well. Even though not presented as parts of the process by the respondents, this data can be seen as supporting the existing theory. For example TiS presents the understanding of common goals and expected efforts as important. These are both parts of the stages described by Selin and Chavez (1995) and Wang and Xiang (2007).

Table 16. Summary of empirical data regarding parts of the partnership process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tourism in Skåne AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parts of the process</td>
<td>Need recognition within a thematic or geographic region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Information not revealed

Outcomes of partnerships

The final stage of the partnership process is according to Selin and Chavez (1995) and Wang and Xiang (2007) the outcome. Wang and Xiang (2007) propose there are three types of outcomes: social capital building, organizational learning and strategy realization.

In Table 17 the outcomes identified by the studied organizations are presented. Even though not all found in every organization, combined the gathered data found support for tangible and intangible as well as all three types of outcomes. TiS was the only organization that identified the social capital building as a type of outcome. They
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described the building of relationships and collective achievements as benefits not to be forgotten. The other types, organizational learning and strategy realization are represented by for example stronger collaborations and sustainability within the region. As seen regarding the underlying reasons for creating partnership, also most of the presented outcomes are closely connected to the purpose of these organizations. The fact that they should foster tourism and growth and better business within the region seems to lead to the outcomes often being better products, stronger destinations and better marketing campaigns.

Table 17. Summary of empirical data regarding outcomes of partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tourism in Skåne AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Swedish Tourist Board AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jämtland Härjedalen Turism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>- Collective achievements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Reach expected goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Stronger or repositioned brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Enhanced products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Relationship development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- New Products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Improved quality of products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- New packaging of existing products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Stronger collaborations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Stronger marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Holistic advantages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Financial gains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Sustainability within the region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Vary with each project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Success Factors of Partnerships

When it comes to ingredients leading to successful partnership collaborations, all the organizations identified several. In Table 18 these identified success factors are presented. The gathered data indicates that support is found for several of Augustyn’s and Knowles’ (2000) suggested factors. The initiation of the partnerships within the regions often comes from the studied organizations, where they try to sell the concept of collaborating to the private tourism industry. Thus the recommendation of the initiation for partnerships should come from either public or private sector (Augustyn & Knowles 2000) is supported. The same goes for the special body responsible for planning and preparation (Ibid) that can be supported by the special partnership
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departments and project employees managing those activities.

Continuing, the factors of success were found to be closely linked to the different parts of the process discussed earlier. For example clarity about the expected effort inputs and the benefit outputs of the collaboration, which according to Selin and Chavez (1995) and Wang and Xiang (2007) should be determined in the beginning of the process. Regarding one factor though, little evidence were found. That is the opinion of receiving feedback and allowing for changes and reshaping of the partnership if needed (Augustyn & Knowles 2000). None of the organizations’ presented data supported this specific ingredient as being one of the most important.

Table 18. Summary of empirical data regarding success factors of partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Tourism in Skåne AB</th>
<th>West Swedish Tourist Board AB</th>
<th>Jämtland Härjedalen Turism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Success factors of partnerships</td>
<td>- Clear, open two-way communication</td>
<td>- Mutual respect and understanding</td>
<td>- All parts are given mandate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Clarity in allocation and expectation</td>
<td>- Clear goals</td>
<td>- Relevant knowledge available but also a desire to learn more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Understanding of each other</td>
<td>- Strong commitment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Common goal</td>
<td>- Everyone engaging and contributing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.4 Brand Architecture

The design of the brand architecture is according to existing literature one of the most critical factors to pay attention to in regional destination branding (e.g. Hankinson 2010; Hanna & Rowley 2011). One of the main concerns and factors making this design very complex is the ownership of the brands (Hanna & Rowley 2011).

The information gathered in this study acknowledge the complexity of the ownership of destination brands, but do not as strongly support designing of a brand architecture being one of the most critical factors. When discussing brand
architecture, all of the organizations had the opinion that the strategies described by Aaker and Joachimsthaaler (2000) and Kapferer (2012), which is usually applied in corporate environments, were not fully applicable in the destination branding context. This was due to the complexity of the ownership, since no one and everyone owns destination brands. In Table 19 the consistency in the organizations opinions regarding this is shown. Consequently, this study found no evidence of any of the strategies presented in the literature review, were either applicable or applied entirely.

Table 19. Summary of empirical data regarding brand ownership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tourism in Skåne AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination brand ownership</td>
<td>No one and every one</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In common for the organizations was also the attitude of other brands existing within the region not being considered very problematic. Instead, all three expressed their responsibility of working with and respecting them. As regional destination brands, they have to be able to cover the identity and image of the other large destinations and cities. TiS was the one organization very clear with seeing the variety within the region as strength. WSTB and JHT saw it more as something to handle, but not especially problematic.

Weak evidence was found of any of the strategies presented in existing literature were being fully applied in the studied organizations and their current regions. Despite that, the study shows that all of the organizations are applying some kind of overarching brand. Two of the organizations, JHT and WSTB expressed this more clearly than TiS. In Table 20 the strategies expressed by the organizations are presented.
Data Analysis

Table 20. Summary of empirical data regarding brand architecture strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tourism in Skåne AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Swedish Tourist Board AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jämtland Härjedalen Turism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>No explicit strategy for brand architecture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instead communicating offers and destinations selectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Sweden as an overarching brand, but also gives the other destination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>brands the opportunity to stand alone in their communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Umbrella brand strategy. Jämtland Härjedalen as the umbrella brand but</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>they also give other destination brands the opportunity to stand alone in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>their communication.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was found that strategies resembling umbrella branding or branded house strategy (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000) are used. But traits of endorsed brand strategy were also found, since all of the brands customize their communicated profile depending on whom they are targeting. Such selective communication regards partly lifting different destinations within the region depending on the target group, as explained by all of the organizations. But it also concerns a selective communication of offers and businesses which influences people’s view of the brand without hindering the existence of other businesses and offers. This is mainly explained by TiS’s marketing manager.

Thus the strategy, for managing the multiple brands within the region, used by these organizations could be described as a mix between umbrella and endorsed branding in combination with selective communication of different kinds.

Even though competition within the region was not found to be a large problem by the studied organizations, another challenge was recognized by all of them. That is the strive towards building a strong regional destination brand and the fact that they need other organizations and the industry on board with that work. Again, it is the lack of ownership that creates the challenge. Even though strong evidence was found for these problems, they are not recognized in existing brand architecture literature.
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Thus it is a contribution of this study, showing the differences between corporate and destination branding.

In order to establish the desired brand image and brand promise, the region must be able to perform the offers and communication, living up to that image and promise. In common for all organizations are that they are working with establishing, updating and somewhat changing the image of the current brands. TiS is working with repositioning the brand Skåne to become more active, JHT is implementing a brand book published in 2010 (jamtland.se), and WSTB is adjusting and implementing the place brand West Sweden on the tourism industry. In order to get organizations and enterprises within the region to join the work towards strengthening the regional brand, all of the organizations have developed their own way of motivating. In Table 21 these ways are presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to get other brands and organizations to join the regional efforts</td>
<td>Tourism in Skåne AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Swedish Tourist Board AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jämtland Härjedalen Turism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Continuously convince and process the other brands and the enterprises about advantages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Rewards those working in a way that suits the regional branding efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Show good examples by using certain companies as frames of references</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Let the ones working in a way that suits the regional branding efforts represent West Sweden in marketing activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Membership in the association formally bind other destinations and enterprises to the regional branding efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Rewards by including the members in the marketing projects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, a common trait of all these strategies are that the studied organizations in some way reward those actors that contribute with material and offers representing the brands in a good way. Two of the organizations also presented a very similar tactic in that they constantly are processing, persuading and showing
good examples to individual actors to get them to understand the advantages available in joining the work. JHT were the one organization which did not work directly towards the individual actor, but rather towards the representatives from each destination within the region. Those representatives in turn, are then motivating the individual actors.

To sum up, when it comes to managing the many brands within the region, both challenges and solutions to those challenges were identified. Although different in detail, the organizations’ ways of handling the complex situations were in many aspects similar.

### 6.5 Chapter Summary

Chapter six has presented a cross-case comparison of the empirical data gathered from the three investigated organizations. Additionally, the data has been compared against the theories found when reviewing the existing literature. This two-part analysis has resulted in previous studies being both supported and questioned, and new patterns regarding branding practices have been revealed. In the next chapter, the main findings from this chapter is used to answer the research questions.
7. Conclusions and Contributions

In this final chapter, the main findings and conclusions from the analysis and discussion in chapter six are presented. The three research questions are answered individually in separate sections. The chapter ends with a presentation of the managerial implications and theoretical contributions this study has resulted in as well as a discussion regarding the limitations of the research. Worth to note before reading this chapter is that the rather limited sample and the qualitative nature of the study means that the findings cannot be considered generalizable.

7.1 Conclusions

This study has focused on investigating the complex situation current for organizations working with branding regions as tourist destinations. The purpose of the research was thus to: Investigate the antecedents of successful destination marketing focusing on stakeholder management, partnerships and brand architecture.
Chapter Seven

Based on a review of the existing research addressing destination branding and these antecedents, following three research questions were formulated:

- RQ1: How are regional destination marketing organizations managing their stakeholders in terms of identification and treatment?
- RQ2: How are regional destination marketing organizations carrying out the process of collaborating through partnerships?
- RQ3: Which brand architecture strategies are destination marketing organizations applying for regional destination brands?

In section 7.1.1-7.1.3 the conclusions of this thesis are given in the form of the research questions being answered.

7.1.1 Stakeholder Management

This research shows that Swedish regional DMOs have a clear perception of which groups and actors are stakeholders of their organizations and brands.

They have a precise understanding about how the different stakeholders can affect the organization and the regional brand, and categorize and deal with them differently depending on their criteria. The stakeholders, which are in close relationship to the DMOs and in the position of impacting the fulfilment of the organizations purpose, are seen as the main stakeholders of the organizations. The main stakeholders are given the most attention and are classified as the primary stakeholders. Another finding is that the other stakeholders than the primary, being the secondary stakeholders, are known by the organizations but given less attention by the DMOs.

Regarding the treatment, it is found that the stakeholders are of big importance for the organizations and strong relationships exist between them. The DMOs are taking on a supporting and nurturing role where they are caring for their stakeholders and treating them with respect in order to establish well working relationships and create stronger destinations.
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What characterises the treatment of the stakeholders are that the DMOs involve them in the planning of activities and development regarding the destination brands and its future. Frequent communication between the DMOs and the stakeholders as well as the DMOs encouraging the stakeholders to communicate with each other is also part of the treatment. The allocation of responsibility for the communication and management of the stakeholders comes naturally as it depends on each situation and project, where the person or group working with the stakeholder becomes responsible for that management.

7.1.2 Partnerships

Our research shows that working with and within partnership collaborations constitutes a large part of the Swedish regional DMO’s daily activities. It is their way of reaching the objectives of the organization and develop the tourism sector within the region. It also shows that the DMOs often are the driving force in and initiators of these collaborations.

The process begins with a need or opportunity, usually derived from competitiveness and from the purpose of the organizations, being recognized. In addition to that, demand and possibilities are other factors leading to partnerships being created. The next step in the process is in which the DMOs play a vital role of promoting and assembling the collaborations. The identification of suitable partners, as well as the arrangement of financial funding, are considered to be crucial for the future of the partnerships. Following are phases where the specific activities current in the partnerships are planned, and where they are actually implemented. The types of collaborations existing among tourism organizations and enterprises within the regions are found to be thematic or geographic as well as differing in the formality used in the arrangements.

When it comes to carrying through the actual process of implementing the partnerships, the DMOs consider following factors to be important; understanding of
all the partners’ preconditions and abilities to contribute, openness in the dialogue between all the partners and clarity regarding the common goals set. Awareness about the expected input from partner and the benefits to be received at the end of the collaboration is also crucial. Finally, the research shows that the benefits and outcomes successful partnerships result in are usually connected to the longing for competitive advantages and stronger destinations. However, qualitative benefits such as organizational learning and stronger relationships are also occurring.

### 7.1.3 Brand Architecture

The study of the three regional DMOs can reveal that none of them are consistent in using any classic brand architecture strategy when managing their destination brands. The theories regarding brand architecture strategies derived from corporate branding theory can therefore not be applied to destination brands which have been seen as a result of the complexity about the ownership of the brands. The study also shows that working with a brand architecture in destination branding is not about applying a common name for the brands or to create a hierarchy among the different brands within the region. Instead, the many brands within the regions are seen as assets for the region all contributing to a stronger regional brand.

Additionally this study has identified alternative strategies for handling the multiplicity of brands within the regions. The way the Swedish DMOs are working can be described as a mix between umbrella and endorsed branding in combination with selective communication of the brands. Depending on which target group to be reached, the organizations choose between communicating the regional destination brand or other strong brands within the region, making the communication customized to the target group and purpose.

Thus it has been found that other destination brands within the region sometimes are more suitable to communicate in order to create strong regional destination brands.

The destination marketing organizations are constantly working with motivating and
Conclusions and Contributions

inspiring other brands and organizations to join the branding efforts. By showing successful results and benefits with being part of and help to communicate and strengthen the regional destination brands, the organizations can get the actors involved in the branding work. The participation and contribution from the tourism enterprises and brands is also somehow rewarded by the organizations, creating incentives for joint efforts.

7.3 Theoretical Contributions

This study has aimed for gaining deep understanding regarding three of the factors leading to successful destination branding. Since this understanding has been gained with the help of theories proposed by previous studies, it can be said that our study makes a contribution to those theories by testing them in a new context, from a new perspective.

As can be seen in the analysis in chapter six, some of the theories presented in the literature review are proven to correlate well with the results of our study. Especially the literature and theoretical proposals regarding partnerships are found, to a large extent, to be applicable to regional destination branding practice in Sweden. Also Baker’s and Cameron's (2007) and Hankinson’s (2010) statements, about the management of stakeholders being very important, is a theory this study finds correlating well with the investigated situation.

Other theoretical contributions that can be made are related to the fact that some of the theories presented in previous studies are not applicable with the context investigated. The main contribution of such is that the brand architecture strategies presented by Laforet and Saunders (1999); Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000 and Kapferer 2012, is not fully applicable to regional destination brand portfolios. Additionally, Freeman's stakeholder theory is found to not be fully applied by Swedish regional DMOs.
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7.4 Managerial Implications

Based on the findings of this study, a number of managerial recommendations can be given. We suggest regional destination marketing managers to use this study and these recommendations for achieving better understanding of the complexity surrounding their work and how other organizations handle this complexity. By doing so, they can be able to make more valid decisions regarding the destination branding practice used in their own organizations.

- Firstly, managers are advised to be fully aware of the groups and individuals surrounding them, and to carefully identify the impact those groups or individuals can have on the organization and its results. Such understanding and insight provide a solid ground on which to base decisions regarding management and treatment of the stakeholders.

- Further, it is recommended to work hard with establishing and creating long-term, solid, healthy relationships with those stakeholders most critical for the success of your organizations activities. This in order to reach the objectives of the branding efforts and be able to keep control of the region.

- Also, in order to achieve the goals of the DMO’s work, it is suggested to collaborate with other brands, organizations and enterprises within the region, and not only within the tourism industry. It is recommended this is done through partnerships of different kinds. Which partners to collaborate with and what goals to set should be based not only on needs, but also on demand and opportunities. Thus a pro-active approach to the creation of partnerships is suggested.

- A clear allocation of responsibility and careful management during the partnership process in combination with an open dialogue between all partners is suggested in order to receive the best benefits and outcomes of a partnership.

- With regards to the management of different brands within the region, it is
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advised that the regional DMOs should not try to apply a governing hand in order to achieve the desired behaviour. Instead, an inside-out perspective embracing the different features within the region is suitable. Motivating, showing understanding and educating is techniques recommended to apply in order to avoid disruption among the many different actors.

Since it is found that the lack of brand ownership hinders the application of classic brand architecture strategies, it is suggested to instead make use of selective communication. By selectively choosing which offers or brands to communicate depending on the situation, the message sent out can still be consistent and communicate the wished for brand image.

Finally it is recommended to be very adjustable in the management of the regional destination branding process. To constantly evaluate what to communicate and whom to collaborate with, and to be the actor with a sober view of what is best for the region at the time and long-term, is responsibilities the regional DMOs should take on.

7.5 Limitations

The major limitations of this study are related to the scope and qualitative approach of it. Due to limited time and resources and certain challenges during the data collection process, the number of cases are rather small. It also turned out to be few persons within every organization who were in the position of being suitable respondents with the pre-knowledge required. In addition to the number being low both the possible case organizations and the respondents were hard to get in touch with and to borrow time from. Thus the number of respondents from each case is defined to one or two. A small sample size in combination with a qualitative research approach restricts the generalizability of the findings to organizations and situations other than the one studied.

In order to somewhat compensate for that limitation, the research aims for breadth
Chapter Seven

rather than depth in the case study. Such decision enabled a cross-case approach to the analysis, which according to Miles and Huberman (1994) can help enhance the generalizability and deepen the understanding of the findings.

Other limitations of this study are connected to the theoretical perspective. To begin with, it only investigates three of the six success factors of destination branding. This has naturally affected the result by it becoming limited to those three. The literature review and investigation have also taken a managerial perspective leading to other perspectives not being taken into account. Finally, the absence of previous research addressing some of the investigated factors from a tourism perspective might be a limitation.

Despite several precautions, some of the concepts and theories investigated, mostly brand architecture seemed unnatural for the respondent to apply to the tourism context. For example a thorough operationalization as well as a pre-test were made, in order to avoid misunderstandings during the interviews. In addition to that, the questions were sent to the respondents in advance so they could notify us about any problems with answering them.

This may have affected the results by the respondents not being able to answer as natural as they did when the subject were more known to them.

7.5 Suggestions for further research

For those who would like to further investigate the area of destination branding, we present a number of interesting suggestions:

- With the limitations of this study in mind, we initially suggest that a similar research is carried out using a larger sample of cases as well as more respondents within each organization being spoken to. This would try the accuracy of and possibly enhance the generalizability of this study's findings.

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Further, we suggest that the findings of this study are reformulated as hypothesis and consequently tested quantitatively in order for them to be rejected or supported. This would also possibly make the result generalizable.

This study has taken a managerial approach, which naturally has affected the result. However, since the factors investigated to a high degree also concerns smaller tourism organizations and individual enterprises, it would be interesting to investigate stakeholder management, partnerships and brand architecture from their point of view. Until this is done, full understanding about the current factors cannot be gained.

Finally, this study have only investigated three of the six factors critical to successful destination branding found in the literature review. Therefore we suggest that the remaining three factors are investigated with a similar qualitative approach, complementing the deeper understanding of destination branding.

7.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, answers to the research questions of this study have been presented and discussed with regards to its possible limitations. Managerial and theoretical implications have also been addressed. The study contributes by testing previous theoretical propositions in a new context and by providing managers with a deeper understanding for regional destination branding practice. Finally, suggestions for further research, such as testing the results quantitatively, were made.
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APPENDIX A. Interview Guide

General Information
Name of the organization: 
Name and position of respondent: 
Years of employment: 
Business mission: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 1</th>
<th>Stakeholder Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>How do you identify the stakeholders to your brand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Who are the stakeholders of your brand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Which of your stakeholders do you consider most important?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.1</td>
<td>How do you make distinctions between your stakeholders?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Tell us a bit about the communication between you and your stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>In what way are your stakeholders participating in your branding efforts?</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>In what way are your stakeholders supporting your branding efforts?</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>How do you motivate the stakeholders to support your work?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 2</th>
<th>Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Are you at the moment involved in, or have you previously been involved in any collaboration (partnership) with other tourist organizations within the region?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>What reasons can you see for entering such collaboration?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1</td>
<td>What positive effects are you hoping your organization obtain through such collaboration?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2</td>
<td>What reasons can you see for avoiding collaborations with other tourism organizations within the same region as yours?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Describe as closely as you can the phases that a usual partnership collaboration go through, from the beginning to the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>What obligations have one got as a partner within partnership collaborations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>What factors could lead to failed partnership collaboration in your opinion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.1</td>
<td>What factors do you believe contribute to successful partnership collaboration?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.2</td>
<td>What does successful partnership collaboration result in according to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 3:</td>
<td>Brand architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Who is the owner of your brand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>What other strong destination brands except from yours are there in the region?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1</td>
<td>Who owns those destination brands?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Please visualise/draw for us on a paper how your destination brand relates to those other brands?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Tell us about what differences there are between what your brand stands for and what the other brands stands for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Tell us about eventual problems occurred in the relationship between yours and other brands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.1</td>
<td>How have you handled such problems or conflicts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>What is your strategy for handling the different brands in the region?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.1</td>
<td>How come you are using that kind of strategy?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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On 1 January 2010 Växjö University and the University of Kalmar merged to form Linnaeus University. This new university is the product of a will to improve the quality, enhance the appeal and boost the development potential of teaching and research, at the same time as it plays a prominent role in working closely together with local society. Linnaeus University offers an attractive knowledge environment characterised by high quality and a competitive portfolio of skills.

Linnaeus University is a modern, international university with the emphasis on the desire for knowledge, creative thinking and practical innovations. For us, the focus is on proximity to our students, but also on the world around us and the future ahead.

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