Bachelor Degree Project

Factors influencing tourism sustainability

The case of the World Heritage Falun Great Copper Mountain

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on identifying hindrances of achieving a sustainable tourism development on a base of a World Heritage Site. Using a case study of the World Heritage Site Falun Great Copper Mountain, the thesis assesses the situational context by using qualitative methods. Five semi-structured interviews with influential stakeholders were conducted to get an inside view of the current situation and to identify site-specific issues. The thesis identifies a number of factors that determine the successful implementation of measures leading towards sustainable tourism in the long-run; the most important being the lack of clear guidelines for the whole destination and no holistic planning approach within the municipality. The thesis concludes that despite the increased pressures towards establishment of sustainable tourism, the concept remains challenging to operationalize for the World Heritage Site without frameworks and tools from UNESCO.

Keywords: sustainable tourism, World Heritage, stakeholder involvement, Falun Mine
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With this final work, a journey is coming to an end and after three years it is now time for me to move on to a new chapter in life. I would like to thank the tourism department at Dalarna University and in particular Helén Holmqvist, for all the opportunities I was given along the way.

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1. Introduction

With the increasing mobility of people and interest in heritage, tourism has become a management issue at World Heritage Sites (WHS). This has, rather recently, come to the attention of UNESCO and other international tourism bodies which, as a response, are formulating frameworks and strategies to assist the public and private tourism sector in managing tourism in a more sustainable way. Sustainable tourism encourages the development and promotion of appropriate forms of tourism which can enhance the environmental, social and cultural well-being of a destination and in addition increase its competitiveness and economic prosperity (Ritchie, Crouch, & Ritchie, 2005). The application of sustainable tourism on the destination level requires the involvement and cooperation between many stakeholders, which is both complicated and difficult to achieve since they have diverse interests and needs (Timur & Getz, 2008). Therefore, this thesis sets out to determine major barriers to the implementation of sustainable tourism based on the World Heritage Site Great Copper Mountain in Falun (WHS Falun).

Sustainable development includes principles such as inter and intra-generational equity, holistic planning and futurity (Sharpley, 2000). It is however a contested concept since it lacks a common definition. This makes sustainability challenging to operationalize in a tourism context. Having the ambiguity of the concept of sustainability in mind, it is not surprising that previous studies have identified a disconnect between the conceptual paradigm of sustainability and the implementation (Berry & Ladkin, 1997; Cole, 2004; Jansen-Verbeke & McKercher, 2010; Landorf, 2009b; Liburd, 2012). One reason for that is poor communication and conflicting interests of stakeholders at a destination, as Berry and Ladkin (1997) found. Their research indicates that trust, cooperation and coordination between public and private sectors are of great importance for the implementation of sustainable practices.

The thesis focuses on social sustainability, in terms of collaboration in the planning approach and management of the WHS Falun, although principles of environmental and economic sustainability are discussed when appropriate. In the context of this study, social sustainability is characterized by a tourism industry that recognizes and respects all stakeholders in the decision making process.
Very few studies have explored stakeholders perception of sustainable tourism, with those that do mainly focusing on the local community (Hardy & Beeton, 2001). Yet stakeholders from the tourism sector are the key actors in a destination who not only have their own subjective needs and requirements but also use and manage the resources tourism depends on differently.
1.1 Problem statement

World Heritage Sites have become important tourism destination with increasing visitor numbers. However, when the World Heritage Convention was ratified in 1972, the impacts of tourism have not been fully addressed. In order to preserve the resource base of the heritage destination, some attractions are dependent on visitors for financial support as the upkeep is very expensive.

Responsible managed tourism at WHS can contribute to the preservation and conservation of the unique value of the WHS and be a vehicle for sustainable development. It has also the ability to be an agent for economic revitalization of local community (Aas, Ladkin, & Fletcher, 2005). A prerequisite for economic sustainability is an attractive and competitive destination that is able to increase tourism spending, attract visitors and provide them with a satisfying experience at the same time as the well-being of the destinations residents and the preservation of the environment of the destination is guaranteed for future and current generations (Ritchie et al., 2005). This is only possible to achieve if stakeholders are aware of challenges and work together towards the shared goal of sustainability.

The WH status has impacted and changed the preconditions for tourism development at the WHS Falun and exposes it directly to a global level of competition. Whereas the nomination of WHS Falun became possible due to cooperation and mobilization of knowledge and resources in the region (Cassel & Pashkevich, 2013), it is uncertain if the same level of cooperation exists regarding the issue of sustainability.

1.2 Research Aim

The research aims to identify problems and hindrances of achieving a sustainable tourism development based on the views and perceptions of stakeholders in a site-specific context at the WHS Falun Great Copper Mountain. The study uses qualitative research methods to explore local stakeholder’s perceptions and to identify current issues.
1.3 Objectives and research questions

The objectives of this research are to:

- Explore the level of cooperation in the planning approach among stakeholders at the WHS Falun Great Copper Mountain
- Identify managerial factors that are affecting or might affect tourism sustainability at the WHS

Research questions:
The thesis is geared to answer the following questions:

RQ1. How do the stakeholders at the WHS collaborate?
RQ2. How do stakeholders at the WHS work with the issue of sustainability?
RQ3. Which managerial factors seem to be influencing the implementation of tourism sustainability at the WHS?

1.4 Significance

In order to expand the body of knowledge on the management of sustainable tourism, the study first assesses the situational context of the case study and further identifies current site-specific issues regarding the planning for sustainable tourism.

The concept of sustainability is of widespread interest not only in the academic literature but has also been increasingly adapted into tourism policies of the public and private sector (Hall, 2011). This study contributes to the understanding of the operationalization of sustainability, in particular the collaboration in the destination development process. Cole (2004) and Liu (2003) indicate the need for international knowledge-sharing among heritage places, especially those that utilize mining sites. The results of this study can contribute to the improvement of the management and long-term viability at the study side and other similar heritage places, extending beyond places inscribed on the WH list.
1.5 **Scope**

This research offers a case study which aims to identify barriers of achieving tourism sustainability at a WHS by taking into account the views and perceptions of stakeholders. It does not aim to measure quantifiable rates of sustainable practices. Instead, the case study focuses on practical issues that can be associated with the commutation of theoretical concepts into practice. Due to limited time and resources to write this thesis, not all stakeholders groups in the destination are included.

1.6 **Outline of the thesis**

The following chapters are guided by the research questions. Chapter Two provide the reader with a better understanding of the study site by giving background information on the WHS Falun. As the second part of the literature review, Chapter Three explores and summarizes relevant concepts and theoretical frameworks in the field of sustainability, World Heritage and heritage tourism. Chapter Four describes which methods where used and how the empirical data for this research was collected. Chapter Five presents and discusses the empirical findings and connects them with arguments and theories from the literature. The final Chapter Six concludes the entire investigation, acknowledges the limitations of the study and finally, gives recommendations for future research.
2. Background to the study case

Sweden is one of the world's most environmentally friendly countries and, according to the World Economic Forum, the country with the best conditions for sustainable development (Strategie 2020, 2010). Sweden's tourism industry’s national program “Strategy 2020” verifies the great potential Swedish destinations have but also recognizes the growing global competition. It also pinpoints that, in order for destinations to remain competitive, sustainability needs to be integrated in a more systematic way within tourism.

2.1 Study Area: WH Great Copper Mountain Falun

Sweden has currently fifteen WHS and one of them is Falun, a unique memorial to Sweden´s earliest history as an industrial nation. The Falun Mine, the town of Falun itself and parts of the industrial landscape called “Kopparbergsclasen” were inscribed on the World Heritage List in December 2001. The criteria under which it was inscribed can be found in the Appendix 1. The Great Copper Mountain is the oldest and most important mining enterprise in Sweden, dating back to the 8th century (UNESCO, 2001). During the 16th and 17th century, the mine was the backbone of the Swedish economy. In the mid-17th century, the Great Copper Mountain provided two-thirds of the Western world’s copper needs, thus exerting a strong influence on the technological, political and social development in Europe. “The kingdom stands and falls with the Copper Mountain”, proclaimed Queen Christina during the 17th century (Olsson, 2010, p. 36) and hereby gave a brilliant account of the importance of the mine during Sweden’s period as a great power. Mining activities were discontinued in December 1992 and only nine years later a joint effort of several large organizations made it possible for Falun to be inscribed on the World Heritage list.

The Great Copper Mountain left its imprints on the environment during more than 1000 years of active mining. The mine and its activities were early pinpointed as the single largest source of metal discharge in Sweden (Haglund & Hanæus, 2010). Large quantities of sulfur oxide (6.2 ton) from the copper production resigned into the air up until the beginning of the 19th century; enveloping the town in thick, black smoke (Lindeström, 2002). The fumes could be smelled from hundreds of kilometers away and visitors such as Carl von Linné in 1734, thought they had ended up in hell itself (Olsson, 2010).
From the mine there continually rose smoke, which together with the nature of the entire mine, led us to believe that every description of hell itself [...] must have been based on this mine. - Carl von Linné, 1734 in “The Dalarna journey together with Journeys to the mines and works” (Linné & Casson, 2007, p. 258)

The sulphure also made it impossible for any vegetation to grow within a proximity of 3- 4 km (Lineström, 2002). In the 16th century, it became necessary to start draining the water out of mine. The unfiltered water contained large amounts of heavy metals like copper, lead and zinc which leaked into the surrounding soil and other water bodies. Until the end of the 18th century, no fish or vegetation was able to survive in the nearby lake “Tisken” or any other streams where the contaminated water was let into. This short excursion into the environmental impacts of the mine, which are described in great detail in Lennarts Lineströms book “Falu gruvas miljöhistoria” (2003), makes it clear that industrial activities in Falun used to be everything but sustainable.

Especially since the nomination in 2001, the Great Copper Mountain has developed into an important tourism destination in the Dalarna region, attracting people from all over the world. The mine and the copper industry are a central theme for the destination. The UNESCO site is made up of three parts: the mine itself, parts of the town and the surrounding mining landscape. The mine area consists of facilities above and underground, the most striking feature being the open-cast mine Great Pit which was formed by a landslip in 1687. The Great Copper Mountain is the oldest tourist attraction in Sweden, the word “tourist” was first mentioned here in 1824 (UNESCO, 2001). The Visitor’s Mine was opened in 1970. The Copper Mine is now regarded as “the hub” of the WHS which also attracts most visitors.

The town of Falun also includes the mine workers neighborhoods Elsborg, Gamla Herrgården and Östanfors with their distinctive wooden houses. Within a 40 km radius from the mine, the industrial man-made landscape features mine owner’s homesteads such as Gamla Staberg and Svedens Gård, blast furnaces, waste products such as slag heaps, waterways and agrarian landscape.

The WH status has impacted and changed the preconditions for tourism development and the marketing of the destination. UNESCO’s framework for conservation and sustainable development as well as regulations from the national heritage institutions, have undoubtedly
A great number of stakeholders exist since ownership of the various parts of the WHS differs. Many stakeholders are cooperating in the “Falun World Heritage Council”. The council consists of representatives from the Dalarna Province Museum (Dalarna Museum), Falu Municipality, Dalarna University, Dalarna County Administrative Board, Great Copper Mountain Trust, the Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO) - “Visit Södra Dalarna AB” and “Friends of the Falun World Heritage Site” (Världsarvet Falun, 2013). It is beyond the scope of this paper to give a more detailed overview of all stakeholders within the site including the smaller tourism businesses.

The mine itself is since 2000 privately owned, managed and administrated by the cultural foundation named Great Copper Mountain Trust (“Stiftelsen Stora Kopparberget”). The upkeep of the mine site is very costly and the income is primarily generated from renting out estates and ticket sales for guided tours (Interview with the representative from the Great Copper Mountain Trust, 2014). The Trust runs also a Conference Center and a Visitors Center with a souvenir shop.
3. Literature Review

The literature review first introduces the concepts of sustainability and sustainable development, World Heritage and heritage with special reference to tourism in order to provide a general understanding of the field of study. Moreover, it connects the concepts and outlines the role and complexity between heritage tourism and sustainability.

3.1 Sustainability

This chapter starts with a short outline of the concept of sustainable development. It will further apply the concept of sustainability into a tourism context and highlight guiding principles as present in the relevant literature.

3.1.1 The concept of sustainability and sustainable development

Sustainable development is widely promoted, yet it remains a contentious concept which partly stems from the lack of a commonly agreed definition. This leaves a lot of room for circumstantial interpretation in different contexts and reduces its validity, which is the main reason for criticism (Landorf, 2009a; Sharpley, 2000).

The most commonly used definition was introduced in 1987 in the World Commission on Environment and Development’s Brundtland Report, also called Our Common Future report. It defines sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, p. 37). The report terms sustainability as an global issue (Byrd, 2007) and recognizes that sustainable development it is not a fixed state but a dynamic process (Liu, 2003). It further elaborated two key concepts (Bosselmann, 2008; Hardy & Beeton, 2001):

- The concept of subjective needs and well-being and an approach to distribute more evenly, particular between the poor and rich (social aspect)
- The realization of the finite capacity of the earth and limitations of the environments ability to meet the present and future needs of humans and nature (ecological aspect)

Three pillars of sustainability have been widely recognized. Delivering sustainable development strikes a balance between those interacting and sometimes conflicting interests:
- Economic sustainability: The ability to generate prosperity at different levels of society and addressing the cost effectiveness of all economic activity. Crucially, it is about the viability of enterprises and activities and their ability to be maintained in the long-term.

- Social sustainability: Respecting human rights and equal opportunity for all in society. It requires an equitable distribution of benefits. There is an emphasis on local communities, maintaining and strengthening their life support systems, recognizing and respecting different cultures and avoiding any form of exploitation.

- Environmental sustainability: Conserving and managing resources, especially of those that are non-renewable or are precious in terms of life supports. It requires action to minimize pollution of air, land and water to conserve biological diversity and natural heritage.

*Source: UNWTO (2005, p. 9)*

The concept of sustainable development is controversial and has been criticized, not only for its ambiguity but also its contradictory manner. Criticism relates often to the complexity of achieving a balance between the three dimensions and the difficulties of measuring performance, especially for socio-cultural sustainability (Landorf, 2009a). Due to its generality, it can easily be interpreted in ways that best fit the purpose, it “can mean all things to all people” (UNECE, 2004). The concept of sustainability has been regarded as an oxymoron by some as there is doubt about the compatibility of resource conservation and economic development (Sharpley, 2000). On the other hand, the paradoxical concept can also be seen as its strength where two polar positions mediate and leave room for different viewpoints (“adaptive paradigm”).

The following section sets out to describe how sustainable development was incorporated into the tourism industry to what has now become the concept of “sustainable tourism”.

### 3.1.2 Linking tourism and sustainable development

The negative effect of tourism on the destination together with the rise of environmentalism have led to a reassessment of the role and value of tourism in the mid-to-late 1980’s (Berry & Ladkin, 1997). One of the first researcher to identify the impacts of tourism development is McKercher (1993). He recognized “*fundamental truths about tourism*” (as summarized in
Table 1) and argues that the recognition and understanding of them does not only give insight into the underlying reasons of tourism impacts but also plays a fundamental role in developing future sustainable policies.

Table 1. Some fundamental truth about tourism

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>As an industrial activity, tourism consumes resources, creates waste and has specific infrastructure needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>As a consumer of resources, it has the ability to over consume resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tourism, as a resource dependent industry must compete for scarce resources for its own survival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tourism is a private sector dominated industry, with investment decisions based predominantly on profit maximization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tourism is a multi-faceted industry, and as such, it is almost impossible to control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tourists are consumers, not anthropologists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Tourism is entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Unlike other industrial activities, tourism generates income by importing clients rather than exporting its products</td>
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</table>

Source: McKercher (1993, p. 7)

Sustainable tourism implies an understanding of the impacts of tourism. The Brundtland report from 1987, which is seen as a pivotal point in the recognition of sustainable development did not mention any specific industries in its holistic approach. In 1996, the tourism and travel industry reacted and three international organizations- the World Travel& Tourism Council (WTTC), the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Earth Council- joined together and came up with a sustainable development program, called “Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism industry” (World Tourism Organization, 1997). In it, tourism is recognized as “a model form of economic development that should improve the quality of life for the host community, provide a high quality of experience for the visitor, and maintain the quality of the environment on which both the host community and visitor depend” (Liburd, 2012).
The definition of sustainable tourism has further developed into a more holistic concept that does not solely center on the economic benefits of tourism. A common definition was introduced in 1998 by the World Tourism Organization (World Tourism Organization, 2014):

*Sustainable tourism is envisaged as leading to management of all resources such that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems.*

The definition of sustainable tourism development adapts the early wording of the Brundtland report, it”’*meets the needs of present tourist and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future”* (Pedersen, 2002, p. 24). Several global tourism bodies have in the following years developed a definition of sustainable tourism, taking into consideration the need of the tourists, industry, environment and host communities (UNWTO, 2011).

In the context of this study, the definition of the UNWTO (2005) is adopted. Sustainable tourism should:

1) Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.

2) Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.

3) Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

This implies an understanding of the positive and negative impacts of tourism and finding a suitable balance between the needs of environmental, economic and socio-cultural dimensions. It also takes into consideration the limits of the destination in terms of carrying capacity (Hunter, 1997).
The tourism industry, public and private, is highly diversified and profit-driven (McKercher, 1993). The industry does not operate in isolation but within the global context with its power structure extending across national boundaries. The way the industry chooses to operate can either enhance or exploit the destination (Sharpley & Telfer, 2002). Tourism is an important part of the global economy and with growing numbers of international arrivals, the practice of sustainability is more important than ever (UNWTO, 2005). Despite the economically focused nature of tourism, there is growing awareness of the importance to operate in a way that sustains natural and cultural resources for the long term survival of the tourism industry, especially since tourism relies on high quality experiences and an attractive destination environment (Brooks, 2008; Hunter, 1997).

Tourism can and will evolve with or without planning, however sustainability depends on the management of the destination as well as the type and scale of tourism implemented (STCRC, 2010). Management involves establishing goals, making choices and balancing trade-offs with an overall long-term vision for the destination in mind (Ritchie et al., 2005). Ideally, all forms of tourism should be sustainable and not just certain forms such as ecotourism or alternative tourism (Hardy & Beeton, 2001; UNWTO, 2011). Table 2 summarized important principles that need to be taken in account in the discussion about sustainable tourism management.

Table 2. Principles behind the approach to sustainable tourism management

<table>
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<tr>
<td>1. The approach sees policy, planning and management as appropriate and, indeed, essential responses to the problem of natural and human resource misuse in tourism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The approach is generally not anti-growth, but it emphasizes that there are limitations to the growth and that tourism must be managed within these limits.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Long-term, rather than short-term thinking is necessary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The concerns of sustainable tourism management are not just environmental, but are also economic, social, cultural, political and managerial.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. The approach emphasizes the importance of satisfying human needs and aspirations, which entails a prominent concern for equity and fairness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. All stakeholders need to be consulted and empowered in tourism decision making, and they also need to be informed about sustainable development issues.</td>
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7. While sustainable development should be a goal for all policies and actions, putting the ideas of sustainable tourism into practice means recognizing that in reality there are often limits to what will be achieved in the short and medium term.

8. An understanding of how market economies operate, of the cultures and management procedures of private-sector businesses and of public- and voluntary-sector organisations, and of the value and attitudes of the public is necessary in order to turn good intentions into practical measures.

9. There are frequently conflicts of interest over the use of resources, which means that in practice trade-offs and compromises may be necessary.

10. The balancing of costs and benefits in decisions on different courses of action must extend to considering how much different individuals and groups will gain or lose.


Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and requires constant monitoring to be able to react whenever necessary (UNWTO, 2005). Pessimistic voices are present in the literature about the possibility to really achieve sustainable tourism. Some authors argue that ideally no aspect should dominate (Ritchie et al., 2005), whereas Hunter (1997) argues that the concept of balanced goals is unrealistic and trade-offs will occur as day-to-day decision in the management of shared resources will produce priorities in favor of certain aspects. The recognition of different interests is a key concept of sustainable tourism and will in the long run contribute to a better understanding and efficient management of competing interests (Hardy & Beeton, 2001).

Sustainable tourism has become a viable business model and marketable aspect of tourism but in reality it is hard to operationalize (Hardy & Beeton, 2001; Liu, 2003). In addition, the lack of a commonly agreed definition that can be applied to specific situations makes it nearly impossible to ascertain (in an objective manner) whether a tourism destination really is sustainable. However, it can be a useful concept in describing general concerns and objectives of moving towards a more sustainable tourism destination (NWHO, 1999). Criticism is also aimed towards the overemphasis of the developmental aspect of sustainable tourism as the focus is often on economic viability of tourism businesses and visitor satisfaction (Hardy & Beeton, 2001; Hunter, 1997).
Different perceptions of the concept of sustainability mark the literature and are also present in the operationalization of it in the tourism industry on all levels. This can ultimately affect the outcome and goals of tourism on the destination level depending on the management approach and the recognition of the interests and needs of stakeholders.

The following section sets out to establish a clearer picture of the implementation of sustainable tourism on the destination level with a focus on stakeholder involvement. A distinction between attractions and destinations should be made here. According to Prentice (as cited in Millar (1999), attractions are single sites or units whereas destinations are larger areas that include a number of individual attractions which are connected with each other. Successful tourism at a destination level relies on involvement and cooperation between a wide-range of stakeholders, not only during the planning phase but also throughout the entire destination management process (Sustainable Tourism Online, 2010).
3.1.3 Stakeholder involvement

The tourism debate is often a political subject and consequentially, it becomes easily a question about who has the power and how the power is used (Swarbrooke, 1998). Many times decisions are made “top-down”, meaning that experts or an established local “elite” makes decisions and impose them on others without regards to their interests (Aas et al., 2005).

One of the cornerstones of sustainable tourism development is the involvement of multiple stakeholders to eliminate power imbalance and to achieve partnerships and collaboration within tourism. A stakeholder in the tourism context can be defined as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected” by tourism (Byrd, 2007, p. 6). That includes those that live in the destination or outside, who have an interest or stake in a particular issue.

The understanding of stakeholder perception can be seen as one of the key factors that defines sustainable tourism in the long run (Hardy & Beeton, 2001) since stakeholders in the destination manage and use the resources. By being aware of their perception and requirements, sustainable management strategies can be operationalized and applied in a holistic and context-specific manner by taking into account the different stakeholders needs and perceptions and thus, reducing conflicts between them (Aas et al., 2005; Hardy & Beeton, 2001). Without a way to assess the stakeholder’s subjective needs; effective and relevant management plans cannot be implemented and thus hinders the goal of ultimately achieving sustainable tourism.

Successful tourism at a destination level requires the involvement and cooperation between many stakeholders which is both complicated and difficult to achieve since they have diverse interests and needs (Timur & Getz, 2008). Ritchie et al. (2005), propose that a destination’s ultimate goal is to increase the level of prosperity of its residents and other stakeholders through tourism development. It is thus vital for the whole destination to consider how to achieve and sustain that prosperity over the long term. Arguably, a destination cannot be competitive if it is not operating in a sustainable manner and can sustain its assets, as success and prosperity are built over a long time. Therefore, destinations should have a natural interest to be sustainable for their own survival as outlined in earlier chapters.
Collaborative planning is defined by Gray (1989) as cited in Araujo and Bramwell (1999, p. 357) as “a collective process for resolving conflicts and advancing shared visions involving a set of diverse stakeholder. It involves direct dialogue among a wide range of stakeholders and has the potential to lead to shared decision-making and consensus-building about planning goals and actions. This is an important approach for a destination when it comes to sustainable tourism planning. Byrd (2007) argues all stakeholders must not equally be involved in the decision making process but it is important that everyone’s interests are identified and understood.

In order to include stakeholders in the process of strategic management of a destination, they first need to be identified. Byrd (2007) identifies four distinctive stakeholder groups in the definition of sustainable tourism development: present visitors, the present host community, the future visitors and the future host community. Including the future residents and visitors in the planning requires a vision of the future and long-term planning which is connected to the principle of futurity and inter and intra-generational equity. To this definition, the tourism industry as a whole (operators and regulator) should be added. Regulators are those who contribute to the management of the area such as tourism organizations, councilors and government departments; operators can be defined as those operating businesses in the destination (Hardy & Beeton, 2001). Within this framework, all stakeholders concerns, goals and values in the present and past should be considered. It is important to note that stakeholder groups are not homogenous or independent. They interact with each other and are ultimately affected by each other’s perceptions and actions as Figure 1 illustrates.
Increased community participation has been widely discussed in the literature (Hardy & Beeton, 2001; Kaltenborn, Thomassen, Wold, Linnell, & Skar, 2012; Liu, 2003; McKercher, 1993; Ritchie et al., 2005; Timothy & Boyd, 2003). The host population which becomes part of the tourism “place” product (Liu, 2003) is an important stakeholder and may consist of residents, business owners and government officials. The host population has not just one generic opinion but contains of a deep diversion of interests and it might be challenging to find a consensus between all. Studies have found that the more residents gain from tourism, the more supportive they are of tourism development and the protection of the resources it is based on (Liu, 2003).

Sustainable tourism requires simultaneously meeting the need of the present and future host community, the present and future visitors, the tourism businesses and the needs for conservation and protection of natural and cultural resources (Liu, 2003). Arguably, understanding the perceptions of stakeholders can be seen as a prerequisite for sustainable tourism as it gives insights into the multiple opinions and views of those with a stake in tourism and makes it possible to include them in the planning and management of a destination.
3.2 World Heritage

3.2.1 The concept of World Heritage

World Heritage sites represent in a unique way a testimony of the past for future generations. In 1972, UNESCO adopted the “Convention on Protection of the World’s Cultural and Natural Heritage”, commonly known as the World Heritage Convention with the goal to establish a global system to identify and protect natural and cultural heritage. The World Heritage list (WH list) currently spotlights 981 unique and very diverse places in 160 countries; 759 of them are cultural, 193 natural and 29 mixed (UNESCO, 2014). According to the Convention, those sites are “of outstanding universal value [for mankind] and as such worthy of special protection”.

The inscribed properties commit to ensure the identification, protection, conservation and preservation of the heritage for future generations (UNESCO, 2013a). Sites are nominated by the State Party and must meet at least one of ten criteria’s, of which six are applicable for cultural sites. The prospected sites must also meet criteria of integrity and authenticity and since 2006, present a planning program for the site (UNESCO, 2013a). The underlying idea of the WH list is to encourage global responsibility on protecting the heritage of the world. However, the designation of the sites on the basis of “uniqueness” has been criticized for its subjective nature (Leask, 2006).

Today, nearly 1000 properties in the world are inscribed on the WH list. The motivation for nomination and inscription are varying, it might be for the opportunity to access international conservation expertise and knowledge exchange or for the perceived benefits such as economic growth, higher visitor number and global recognition (Landorf, 2009b; Leask, 2006). The World Heritage listing has many implications, positive and negative. It is clear that benefits to the resources are more likely to appear where a clear planning structure such as a site management plan is in place (Leask, 2006).

At the core of the WH inscription is the principle that the heritage should be accessible for visitors and remain a function in the current community life while being conserved for future generations. This however becomes challenging when increasing visitor numbers put high pressure on the resources (Landorf, 2009b). Therefore, tourism has been recently recognized by UNESCO as an activity that requires greater attention (UNESCO, 2013a). If a site no
longer meets the Convention’s requirements, the WH status can potentially be withdrawn. This has, until today, only happened twice (UNESCO, N.D.). The site’s obligation to promote the place in order to strengthen the identity of the heritage in the public mind and to protect it at the same time often becomes a struggle where protection must always take priority over promotion (Drost, 1996).

3.2.2 World Heritage and tourism

It is widely discussed in the literature that inscription onto the WH list does not automatically lead to higher visitation numbers (Fyall & Rakic, 2006; Jansen-Verbeke & McKercher, 2010; Landorf, 2009b). Yet, the WH status can be seen as an effective competitive advantage and opportunity to promote the place (Kaltenborn et al., 2012); though the fame of the site prior to inscription and spatial issues seems to play an important role (Drost, 1996; Jansen-Verbeke & McKercher, 2010). It can be said that the significance that allowed the site to be inscribed on the WH list becomes the reason why more tourists visit the place.

Those WHS that experience an increase in visitation levels face a set of serious problems and issues, mainly centered upon the dual need to balance the conservation role with the need to generate revenue and develop tourism activities (Shackley, 2006). In addition, social objectives and expectations of the local community play an important role for the sustainability of the place (Cole, 2004). Given an increasing number of tourists it is vital to implement a long-term strategy to sustain the integrity of the place and ensure that it will be protected and available for the future whilst being accessible and open to the current generation.

Although the primary role for inscription is not for tourism purposes, tourism might be a vital part to achieve the goals of conservation given the right condition (Drost, 1996; Leask, 2006). The notion is underlined by Jansen-Verbeke and McKercher (2010) who critic the common perception that tourism impacts are negative and highlight the multidimensional impact tourism can have.

UNESCO (2010) has defined the relationship between WH and tourism as “two-ways”: The WH is a resource for the tourism sector as it serves as a destination; while on the other hand tourism gives the WH the economic ability to meet the Conventions requirements and realize community benefits (UNESCO, 2010). du Cros (2001) includes the two-way relationship
between cultural heritage place and tourism potential in her model which was developed to assist in planning for cultural heritage tourism and describes them as ideally being in a mutually beneficial relationship whereas in practice, trade-offs often occur.

### 3.3 Cultural heritage tourism

#### 3.3.1 The concept of cultural heritage tourism

The term “heritage” is very complex and can be defined and assigned meanings in numerous ways (Firth, 2011; Timothy & Boyd, 2003). UNESCO (2008) describes the ideal of heritage as “our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to our future generations”. At the core it is something from the past that is selected in a contemporary context to be a resource worth protecting. This specifies that heritage is selective and is only assigned a value when it responds to current needs and has a utilitarian function (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). The definition by UNESCO states the ideal use of heritage, to protect it and pass it on to future generation but in reality, heritage is a narrative and therefore can change over time and might lose its value.

Heritage is not only a cultural resource but more so an economic and political one (Graham, Ashworth, & Tunbridge, 2000). Central to the idea of heritage is the concept of identity (Graham et al., 2000). The identity of places is to great extent influences by the ideological issues of those who have the political power to decide which social reality should be displayed and how heritage is interpreted and represented (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). This also implies an underlying concept of heritage- the division of people into “we” and “they” as heritage attractions aim to highlight the social and cultural differences to establish a contrast between groups and to create a distinctive heritage (Poria & Ashworth, 2009).

The interdependent relationship between tourism and cultural heritage resources has been documented by several researchers (Aas et al., 2005; Graham et al., 2000). The concept of heritage implies a focus on preservation and protection of resources whereas tourism in general is known to be a consumer and exploiter of resources (Brooks, 2008; Graham et al., 2000). In result, the relationship between them is often characterized by conflicting interests.

Nevertheless tourism and heritage are not inherently incompatible since heritage tourism can be seen as a type of tourism that is fundamentally different from that of general tourism and
is compromising conservation goals for the benefit of profit (Aas et al., 2005). This notion accepts that heritage can be given an economic value and that there are mutual benefits for both sectors.

Cultural differences have always fascinated people and the desire to experience the unfamiliar is the reason behind destinations promoting their heritage as a tourist attraction. Heritage can be a major economic resource when commoditized and used for commercial purposes. In a tourism context heritage can be defined as a (in)tangible resource that we inherit from the past and use in the present day for tourism purposes (D. J. Timothy, 2011). Heritage tourism is considered by Graham et al. (2000) as the most important single resource for international tourism and refers to travelers visiting and experiencing (in)tangible remains of the past (Firth, 2011; D. J. Timothy, 2011).

As Aas et al. (2005) point out, tourism is perceived to be the core income-generating activity for many heritage sites today which can be justified by the need to find sources of income to pay for the pricy upkeep of those sites. Well managed tourism has the ability to be an agent for economic revitalization of the local community and to contribute economically to the conservation of their heritage. It can even be argued that heritage tourism lends itself very well to sustainability as both share conservational goals and ideologies. Sustainability in the context of heritage conservation requires integral conservation policies which are able to control the rate of use of non-renewable heritage resources in the long-run (Graham et al., 2000). A prerequisite for economic sustainability is an attractive and competitive destination that is able to increase tourism spending, attract visitors and provide them with a satisfying experience at the same time as the well-being of the destinations residents and the preservation of the environment of the destination is guaranteed for future and current generations (Ritchie et al., 2005).

### 3.3.2 Industrial heritage tourism

Heritage attractions have a multitude of roles and functions apart from the most obvious one of conservation. Some of the most prominent ones are outlined by Timothy and Boyd (2003) as education of the visitors, recreational purposes, financial benefits, integration into the local community and providing quality experiences to the visitors.
There is an immense variety of heritage types; one of them is industrial heritage. Edwards and i Coit (1996, p. 342) define industrial heritage tourism as tourism being undertaken at “man-made sites, buildings and landscapes that originate with the industrial process from earlier times”. Mining sites fall within that category.

Mining tourism has been identified as a niche market within heritage tourism (Edwards & i Coit, 1996). Mines have been important industrial sites in the past but many have exhausted their primary purpose and have been forced to close in the past due to deindustrialization (Edwards & i Coit, 1996). This usually leaves negative economic impacts in the host community, but some have been able to transform themselves into tourism attractions, using their industrial, social and environmental heritage as valuable assets (Edwards & i Coit, 1996; M. Conlin & L. Jolliffe, 2010). Whilst there are positive economic and community effects that arise from the transformation of defunct mining sites into tourism attractions, they cannot replace the level of economic benefits made by mining (Cole, 2004; Edwards & i Coit, 1996; M. Conlin & L. Jolliffe, 2010; D. J. Timothy, 2011).

Cole (2004) points out that mining sites lend themselves very well to interesting interpretation as the community has been strongly influenced and shaped by the local industrial activities and museums can be located on site. This provides an opportunity for industrial heritage tourism which can provide a mean to preserve and celebrate the complex socio-cultural legacy.

Edwards and Llur dés (1996) and Conlin and Jolliffe (2010) recognize that there are difficulties that mining attractions have to overcome in order to develop themselves into attractive destinations. Firstly, the size of the site makes the upkeep and restoration very expensive and results in high fixed costs. Secondly, the surrounding environment has been degraded and abandoned over the year which makes it hard to attract new activities. Thirdly, many mining areas are located at less accessible places, often in the periphery afar from tourism streams. In most cases, the development process is aided by the creation of a museum (Conlin & Jolliffe, 2010). Edwards and Llur dés i Coit (1996) imply that mining attractions have a greater chance of survival when they are integrated in a wider range of tourism products in the locality which has been proven to be true in a research of 45 industrial heritage sites in the UK (Cole, 2004). Because of the outdoor nature of most places,
seasonality is another factor that mines need to overcome, especially since visitor numbers have been said to be low in comparison to other tourism attractions (Conlin & Jolliffe, 2010).
4. Methodology

4.1 Research approach

The focus of the research is to identify factors that influence the tourism sustainability of the WH Falun. This is done by understanding and acknowledging stakeholder perceptions from the public and private sector. The empirical data for this research was obtained using qualitative methods. Five semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders were conducted in May 2014.

The research first assesses the situational context and then identifies current site-specific practices and issues on sustainability, as suggested by Jansen-Verbeke and McKercher (2010). The first phase of the research consists of a review of literature to understand the relationship of the WH site and tourism, using background search in order to create a foundation for the second phase of the research. This also contributes to the analysis of the external environment and helps to identify stakeholders. For that, literature on the history of the site, academic research papers, planning documents, official printed material and the nomination file were used and analyzed.

The second phase consists of several semi-structured interviews with local stakeholders. This approach provides the researcher with a good understanding of the perceptions and challenges that are relevant in the discussion of sustainable tourism development at the destination.

By evaluating management plans of WH sites in the UK, studies have shown that sustainability is not fully integrated into heritage sites (Cole, 2004; Landorf, 2009a, 2009b). However what those studies fail to assess is the commutation of written-down objectives into implemented practices. There seems to be a need to study heritage tourism sites in the field in order to assess how stakeholders work with the issue of sustainability in practice. This can be explored by directly including the stakeholders.
4.2 Sampling

The literature suggests that perceptions and issues are contextual and perceived differently between people and locations (Hardy & Beeton, 2001). Similarly, stakeholder concerns are often contextual and localized, which justifies the use of a case study. The case study was purposively chosen because the tourism development at the WH Falun was identified to be able to illustrate a process which is relevant in the current discussion of sustainable tourism development. Other factors such as accessibility and personal interest played a role in the selection as well.

The purposive sample includes representatives from organization which are part of the World Heritage Council as the Council has been identified as a very influential body for the development and management of the destination. The sample also includes a smaller stakeholder which is not a member of the Council. As stakeholder perception have been identified to be heterogeneous and context specific (Hardy & Beeton, 2001), the inclusion of stakeholder with different roles makes it possible to compare perceptions and identify issues regarding communication and inclusion in the tourism development process.

Representatives from the following organizations and attractions have been interviewed: the Great Copper Mountain Trust, the Municipality of Falun, the Dalarna Museum, the County Administrative Board and Stabergs Master Miner’s Estate.

4.3 Data collection and analysis

As the concept of sustainability is known to be interpreted in different ways, the interview referred to sustainable tourism as: “Sustainable tourism emphasizes a development that ensures a balance between the environmental, socio-cultural and local economic at the destination in the long-term, so that tourism contributes positively to the destination and does not negatively affect the resource base it depends on.”

As noted in the literature, stakeholder concerns are often contextual and localized and therefore, conducting interviews seemed to be the only way to gather insights into the stakeholder’s individual work and perceptions. Semi-structured interviews have a
predetermined order but leave room for flexibility in the way issues are addressed and
discussed with the informant (Hay, 2005, p. 79).

The interview questions were broad in order to encourage the participants to express their
own perceptions of tourism, sustainability and collaboration in the WH destination. Depending on the role of the respondent and the organization he or she represented, the focus of the questions was adjusted. The Figure 2 presents the main themes of the interviews for this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Focus on</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Product</td>
<td>Relationship between tourism and the heritage site; tourism development since the nomination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>Importance of sustainability; current practices; involvement of local community, tourism sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>World Heritage Council/ VÄX; planning for the future</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Main themes of the interviews.

With the permission of the respondents the interviews were recorded in order to minimize the loss of any information. The interviews were conducted face- to face in Swedish and respondents were guaranteed confidentiality. After transcription, conceptual categories were formed from emergent themes and responses from the conducted interviews in order to analyze the gathered information.

4.3 Limitations

The thesis is based on five interviews with informants from organizations that have the ability to influence the management of the destination. It gives an insight into the current efforts and issues regarding the work towards an integrated and more sustainable WHS. However, as stressed in previous chapters, stakeholder groups are not homogenous as all stakeholders have different roles and needs. This means that whereas the thesis is able to represent the perceptions of those interviewed, their views cannot be generalized and have to be understood within the context of the case study.
The sample includes foremost stakeholders which have been identified to be of great importance for the WH destination in terms of influence. It is necessary to acknowledge the limitations of that selection as many smaller stakeholders are not included in the study. Yet, their behavior and collaboration is also of utmost importance for the sustainability of the WH destination. However, including more stakeholder groups, in particular operators (such as small tourism businesses) and the local community, is beyond the scope of this thesis due to time limitations and accessibility.
5. Findings and Discussion

As this research is concerned with stakeholder perceptions of tourism and sustainability in a site-specific context, the analysis will concentrate on the following key themes of the interviews:

- Collaboration and integration in the site development process
- Views and strategies of sustainability in a tourism context

On the basis of the findings from the interview, this chapter will conclude with a discussion concentrating on:

- Issues regarding sustainable tourism development

The Great Copper Mountain was added to the WH list in 2001 and has developed into an attractive tourist destination which has a direct influence on the growth of the tourism industry in Falun. It has nonetheless been recognized by the stakeholders that most domestic visitors are not aware of the WH title. It is therefore more seen as a bonus (“It is like a Michelin-Star”) that adds value to the site once visitors become aware of it. The nomination has also had a positive impact on smaller attractions which as a result got more attention and financial help in the development of tourism activities. The status brings the destination into an international context and adds a marketing advantage to the destination which is in particular used by the local DMO.

The importance of tourism is referred to in different ways- the mine depends on tourism as an important income generating activity for the upkeep of the site while other, smaller attractions which are primarily funded with public money see tourism as a welcoming activity but their main focus is to preserve the heritage as it and to be a recreational place for the local community. This brings inevitable challenges to the management of the WHS as some stakeholders commercialize the heritage and promote it as a tourist destination whereas others don’t have the need to do so. As a result, different priorities regarding the preservation and development of activities exist which has already been highlighted in the work from Cassel and Pashkevich (2013).
5.1. Collaboration in the site development process

It has been noted in the literature that successful tourism at a destination level relies on involvement and cooperation between a wide range of stakeholders, not only during the planning phase, but also throughout the entire destination management process (Sustainable Tourism Online, 2010). The WH nomination of the Great Copper Mountain became possible due to a joint effort of organizations in Falun (Cassel & Pashkevich, 2013) and still today, 13 years after the nomination, organizational arrangements make it possible for stakeholders to collaborate and network in the development process of the site.

The World Heritage Council consists of the four main stakeholders; namely the Dalarna Museum, Falu Municipality, Dalarna County Administrative Board and the Great Copper Mountain Trust as well as other interested parties, which are the local DMO “Visit Södra Dalarna”, Dalarna University and “Friends of the Falun World Heritage Site”. The mission of the council is to ensure that “the Falun World Heritage Site will fulfil UNESCO’s criteria and requirements for conservation, cultural development and sustainable development” (Världsarvet Falun, 2013). The council is made up of stakeholders with different resources and qualifications who coordinate issues such as care, preservation and information regarding the development of the WHS. The vision is to be "a role model among World Heritage Sites, a world class destination and a force for social progress” (Världsarvet Falun, 2013).

A closely linked organization is the executive committee of the World Heritage Council called “VÄX” which implements and coordinates the decisions made in the Council. VÄX consists of representatives of the organizations involved in the Council. Another important role in the management process is placed on the World Heritage Coordinator (Coordinator) which is since 2002 working with the administration and coordination of internal and external issues regarding the WH. Her role is referred to as very important as she is “like a spider in the net” (Interview with representative from the County Administration Board). The WH coordinator is employed by the local municipality. Overall, the organizational arrangements and cooperation is by the stakeholders regarded as one of the best in Sweden. However it has been acknowledged by one stakeholder that:

Information exchange can be an issue sometimes. The WHS is big and involves many stakeholders who have different roles but they are not always represented in the...
organizational arrangements [such as the World Heritage Council]. (Interview with representative from the Dalarna Museum)

The World Heritage Council is a platform for the main stakeholders to exchange ideas and discuss current development but the council itself has no executive power. Smaller attractions and stakeholders such as Gamla Staberg are not directly included but their interests are ideally represented by the involved parties.

In general is has been recognized by the respondents that the relationship between attractions has positively changed over the years and there is less competitive thinking as attractions have understood the value of cooperating with each other.

There is more cooperation now. We have understood that in the end the whole destination benefits, even if it might be someone else that earns revenue from the visitor. (Interview with the World Heritage Coordinator)

Nonetheless it has been pointed out by several stakeholders that there is too much focus on the mine as the main attraction. The WHS includes also the historic parts of town and the surrounding landscape and those parts need to be more integrated, the packaging of the tourism product is not satisfactory yet.

This can be exemplified through the following statement:

In the beginning, the mine got all the attention. We didn’t have any own information material and we were on the last page of the WH brochure because the mine was scared of competition. We have made a lot of effort to make it possible to integrate Gamla Staberg into the destination. Now, there is better co-operation thanks to the World Heritage Coordinator who brings bus tours out here which I think is really important. Even though it has improved, they [the mine] and we are two different things. I think it is important to collaborate, but it can be challenging. (Interview with the representative from Gamla Staberg)

It was also pointed out by the interviewee that the tourist experience could be improved but they do not have the same resources compared to the mine. The attraction is owned and run by the local history society and is to a great extent reliant on the County Administration Board for financial support to preserve the heritage as tourism is yet a very small financial contributor.
5.2. Views and strategies of sustainability in a tourism context

A major problem exists when it comes to urban planning and the identification of the value of the WHS in Falun. Many divisions within the municipality take decisions which directly or indirectly affect the heritage. The lack of a holistic planning approach and a low awareness of the site’s universal value are mirrored in the decisions which are taken by the municipality.

There is no holistic approach [to the development of the World Heritage Site] within the municipality. There are so many different administrations and some of them have never even thought about that. [...] And this is something that the World Heritage Council is now trying to integrate. We pointed out to them that they have a key role in the planning process of the town and that their planning is not always in favor for the WHS. (Interview with the representative from the County Administrative Board)

It has been acknowledged by the Council and VÄX that if the WHS is to be sustainable in the long run, the value of the site needs to be transmitted within all decisions and a holistic planning approach is vital to achieve this. In the fall of 2013, a seminar was held with the aim to educate the employees of the municipality in order to achieve the official goal, the towns being a “model for carefully considered town planning that focuses on the historical environment” (Världsarvet Falun, 2013). A positive change in the organizational arrangements is that the position of the World Heritage Coordinator has since the beginning of 2014 been moved to the municipality.

According to Ritchie et al. (2005) the environmental quality of a destination is becoming essential for its competitiveness, as visitors are turned off by places that have undergone degradation through over development or poor resource management. The Falu Mine has for many centuries been the main source for environmental destruction in the region. With that in mind, environmental questions are of great importance for the Great Copper Mountain Trust which is reflected in the current planning strategies.

It is said that the Falu Mine “discovered” environmental destruction. Because of that, questions regarding the environment are extremely important for us. That is foremost the draining of the mine and the filtering and cleaning of the water. It is important that we highlight how things have developed and what the current state of the research is. I would want that the restaurant and our conference had an environmental profile or certificate. (Interview with the representative from the Great Copper Mountain Trust)
In addition, a large safety program was carried out between 2012 and 2014 to ensure protection and safety in the visitors mine and the open pit until 2035 which implies a long-term perspective on tourism development. The program was mainly financed by the County Administrative Board and the former owner of the mine, Stora Enso. Further, the draining of the mine is an important requisite for its tourism utilization and the necessary cleaning of the water is carried out in cooperation with Stora Enso to eliminate negative impacts on the environment.

The official planning document for the mine includes goals such as a 30% increase of visitor numbers by 2015, which means an addition 65 000 visitors per year. This will without doubt put more pressure on the site and without careful planning; this can have a damaging effect on the environment and also on the quality of the visitor experience. From personal experience as a guide in the mine, the author can add that the size of the group does make a difference for both the tourists and the guide. Group size was also pointed out by (Wagner, 2012) as one of the most influential impacts on guided tours.

Managing sustainable tourism requires cooperation between the public sector, the private sector and also the local residents. (Timur & Getz, 2008). Overall, stakeholders are aware of the importance the place and heritage has for the local community and actively try to involve the locals to participate in the interpretation of their heritage by inviting them to events and using the site for recreation. However, the past has shown that the local community is very sensitive to changes that are made to the site and its accessibility (Interview with the representative from the Great Copper Mountain Trust). Here, the further development of appropriate communication channels between the local community and the main stakeholders might be appropriate.

A relevant economic aspect is that the Great Copper Mountain Trust acknowledges that the mine surroundings should be further developed to attract business activities that can contribute to the local economy. Interestingly, the informant from the County Administration Board points out that the investment of resources into heritage attractions and their development does not always yield a direct profit for the involved stakeholders but the regional economic impact of such investments should not be forgotten.
Sustainable tourism implies an understanding of the impacts of tourism. The Dalarna Museum is a vital resource and knowledge base for the WHS. The respondent from the museum is actively involved in the restoration of buildings and has therefore a good insight into the pressure tourism puts on the build resources.

There is a lot of wear and tear on the floor in Linnés Wedding Cottage and of course this is something we have to work with, otherwise we won’t have a WHS left at some point. (Interview with the representative from the Dalarna Museum)

Nevertheless, what became clear through the interviews is that the stakeholder’s work towards sustainability does not really include tourism and its impacts. For some stakeholders, this is not (yet) relevant. This is also highlighted by the World Heritage Coordinator in the following statement:

We work a lot with the protection of the built structures of the site but not within a tourism context. This is a different question and I cannot say that we have gotten far into that direction. (…) Of course it is important but there is no focus on it yet. (…) I miss that we do not integrate sustainable aspects more. (Interview with the World Heritage Coordinator)

To protect and conserve the site is seen as a matter of course, but no written down objectives or policies exist that apply to all stakeholders that operate within the WHS. Instead, attractions and businesses are supposed to integrate sustainable aspects in their own operational work. What this will lead to is that some businesses might emphasize those aspects more than others and the ambiguous nature of the concept of sustainability does not help matter especially since some stakeholders are more dependent on the financial contribution of tourists than others. What is needed here is a clear guideline from an authority that aids tourism stakeholders to implement sustainable strategies in their day-to-day work as well as in their long-term planning. The need to integrate sustainability in a more systematic way within the tourism industry has already been recognized by the Swedish Tourism Industry (Strategie 2020, 2010). In the context of this case study, the Coordinator points out that “what is missing at the moment is a common ground weather sustainable tourism development is an important issue or not. I think it is inevitable that something has to be discussed and decided in that matter.”
As WHS are becoming important travel destinations, UNESCO has also recognized the issue of tourism impacts on WHS and has started to work actively with those questions. The initiated “World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Program” is in the middle of its first phase right now (2013-2015). The program’s objectives are to integrate sustainable tourism policies into the mechanisms of the World Heritage Convention and to strengthen stakeholders work by advocating policies, strategies, frameworks and tools that support sustainable tourism (UNESCO, 2013b). In line with UNESCO’s efforts, the “Nordic Heritage network” is holding a conference with representatives from UNESCO in September this year. During the “Nordic and Baltic World Heritage Conference 2014”, strategies for sustainable tourism and the implementation of it at WHS will be discussed. The World Heritage Coordinator describes the conference as an awaited “turning point” and key tool for the work with sustainable tourism in the future:

I hope that with the help of UNESCO the issue of tourism sustainability will get more attention. I think at this point it is needed that some higher authority points out that “This is something you have to work with!”, so the whole issue becomes more legitimate and important to us. (Interview with the World Heritage Coordinator)
5.3. Issues regarding sustainable tourism development

Despite numerous attempts and contacts with the DMO, the researcher was not able to get insights into their destination development work in Falun. This is due to the fact that no strategy exists yet regarding the work with the WHS since the World Heritage Coordinator has been employed by the DMO until the end of 2013 and the situation is still very new in May 2014. (Conversation with employee from Visit Södra Dalarna).

What this research can confirm is that there is an obvious gap between the theoretical concept of sustainability and its implementations. This notion has been consistently highlighted in the literature (Berry & Ladkin, 1997; Cole, 2004; Hardy & Beeton, 2001; Jansen-Verbeke & McKercher, 2010; Landorf, 2009a; Liburd, 2012). All interviewees agreed that sustainability is relevant to their work and the WHS but there is a perceived lack of advice and knowledge on how to work with tourism sustainability and maybe therefore, stakeholders put too little emphasizes on that matter. This goes hand in hand with the fact that for some stakeholders, the financial contribution of tourism is more important than for others.

Interestingly, the mission and vision statement of the Council includes the words “sustainable development” and “world class destination” which should imply a deeper acknowledgement of the impacts of tourism and a sustainable development of the attractions which takes into account the limits of the site. Hopefully, a stronger focus on that will be implemented with the help of guidelines and tools from UNESCO as a result of the upcoming conference on sustainable tourism strategies. What will ultimately influence the sustainability of the WHS in the long run is how those strategies are implemented and enforced. It has been noted in the literature that at many destinations, sustainable principles and guidelines have not been successful implemented and the discussion remains primarily on the theoretical level (Liu, 2003). It needs to be decided upon who should implement those over-achieving guidelines for all tourism stakeholders within the WHS. It is supported by Berry and Ladkin (1997) that sustainable practices need to be decided upon and coordinated at the regional level with a single clear contact point for advice and supports. Would it be most appropriate for the DMO to take a leading role or the municipality? It is beyond the scope if this research to answer that question but the enforcement of those guidelines will have a direct influence on the destination.
Sustainability is a process, not a final product, were all major stakeholders should participate as equals. A formal collaboration, such as the World Heritage Council, will ensure that one perspective does not completely dominate the discourse of planning or policy-making (Timur & Getz, 2008). The Council is a communication platform for the main stakeholders but excludes smaller stakeholders which have to rely on other parties to represent their interest. As a result, information exchange between stakeholders becomes complicated and seems to result in a lack of knowledge, especially when it comes to sustainable aspects. This can be exemplified by the following statement, where one stakeholder expresses that “of course, this place needs to be preserved for the future and since it is a cultural reserve, it will be. I mean, tourists visit, they do. [...] We get funding so that this can be transferred to the future, and that is sustainable tourism - that things don’t deteriorate and the heritage continues to exist.” (Interview with the representative from Gamla Staberg)

The lack of a holistic planning approach on the municipality level has been repeatedly pointed out by the interviewees. Holistic-planning within the destination is of great importance and further resources need to be mobilized to assure an urban planning that takes into account the value of the WHS and its vulnerability.

As a result of this research, the following factors have been identified to be influential for the sustainability at the WHS and they are presented in Table 3.
Table 3: Factors influencing tourism sustainability of the WHS Falun

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influencing factors</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of guiding principles</td>
<td>Sustainability “can mean all things to all people” (UNECE, 2004) and is therefore hard to operationalize</td>
<td>Establish guidelines and monitoring systems with the help of UNESCO at the destination level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holistic urban planning</td>
<td>Without a shared vision, the Unique Value of the WHS is endangered</td>
<td>Continue educating administrations within the municipality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of knowledge about tourism sustainability</td>
<td>It can’t be implemented successfully if stakeholders don’t know what it means</td>
<td>Educate all stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Stakeholders must understand their responsibility towards the environment, local community and the tourist</td>
<td>Inform about the importance and benefits of tourism sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Cooperation has the potential to lead to shared decision- making and consensus- building about sustainable planning goals and actions</td>
<td>Encourage a dialogue among all stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of information about the destination development process</td>
<td>All stakeholder should be involved in the destination development process but information exchange is difficult with many stakeholders</td>
<td>Establish better communication channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Due to different resources, attractions can’t provide the same level of tourism experience</td>
<td>Develop tourism product and find ways to earn money from tourism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: own research (2014)*
6. Conclusion

The study has focused on the identification of problems and hindrances of achieving a sustainable tourism development in a site-specific context. To be able to do so, the study sought to understand how stakeholders at the WH Falun collaborate and work with the issue of sustainability.

It was found that even though there are different organizational arrangements which allow a range of stakeholders to collaborate in the destination development process, the principles of sustainable tourism have not been fully addressed and communicated to all stakeholders. The interviewed stakeholders emphasize the importance of preserving the heritage and put great effort into the conservation of the build heritage but the impacts and limitations of tourism are not yet sufficiently acknowledged. The World Heritage Coordinator agrees that currently, tourism sustainability is not seen as a priority amongst all stakeholders. Nonetheless, they are expected to integrate sustainable aspects in their own operational work. No written-down objectives or guidelines for the whole destination exist from any institution or organization. Having the ambiguity of the concept of sustainability in mind, together with the different resources and priorities each stakeholder has, this is a problem and will affect the sustainability of the site in the long-run.

Another main finding of the study is that a holistic planning approach is extremely important. At the moment, this approach does not exist within the municipalities’ administration. The problem has been acknowledged by the stakeholders and efforts have been made to educate the administration about the unique value of the WHS Falun. The municipality has a direct role in the planned of the destination and the authority to influence and monitor the tourism sector.

The World Heritage Coordinator, who has a key function in the development of the WHS, acknowledges that more work towards the integration of tourism sustainability is required. But there is a perceived lack of information on what is important and how to achieve the goal. In the absence of official guidelines from UNESCO, active work towards a more integrated approach has not taken place yet and is hampering the development of sustainable tourism. In the future, the process will be aided by a conference focusing on sustainable tourism at WHSs
in Denmark later in the year. There are high hopes on the outcome of this conference which will ideally provide the destination with tools and guidelines on how to integrate sustainable tourism principles within all levels and gives the idea and importance of it more credibility. This makes it clear that the concept of sustainable tourism is extremely hard to operationalize and authorities and organizations such as the UNESCO need to provide frameworks and tools for the private and public tourism sector so the concept can be implemented successfully.

Overall, the study can confirm that there is an obvious gap between the theoretical concept of sustainability and its operationalization. Whereas stakeholder collaboration and cooperation has been identified to be of great important in the implementation of sustainable tourism, even more vital is the recognition of the importance of it by all stakeholders.

The research has offered a case study which focuses on issues that can be associated with the commutation of the theoretical concept of sustainability into practice. It was conducted at the WH Falun through semi-structured interviews with a limited number of stakeholders. As a direct consequence, the results and findings can only be generalized to a certain degree as some of the identified factors might be case-specific. Nevertheless, this study contributes to the literature by identifying underlying processes that hamper the ultimate goal of sustainability at any tourism destination and gives feedback to tourism bodies as it acknowledges the importance of guiding frameworks.

This research leaves room for further studies. Of particular interest would be a follow-up study with the same objectives to see how sustainable tourism aspects have been integrated at the WHS Falun after the conference. It would also be important to get a better insight into how the DMO has started to include the WH Falun in their work.
7. References


STCRC. (2010). Sustainable regional tourism destinations: best practice for management, development and marketing


UNESCO. (2010). Recommendations of the international workshop on Advancing Sustainable Tourism at Natural and Cultural Heritage Sites


Appendix A

The Committee inscribed The Mining Area of the Great Copper Mountain in Falun on the World Heritage List under the following criteria:

- Criterion (ii): Copper mining at Falun was influenced by German technology, but this was to become the major producer of copper in the 17th century and exercised a profound influence on mining technology in all parts of the world for two centuries.
- Criterion (iii): The entire Falun landscape is dominated by the remains of copper mining and production, which began as early as the 9th century and came to an end in the closing years of the 20th century.
- Criterion (v): The successive stages in the economic and social evolution of the copper industry in the Falun region, from a form of "cottage industry" to full industrial production, can be seen in the abundant industrial, urban, and domestic remains characteristic of this industry that still survive.

Source: (UNESCO (2001))