Branding Nyköping

A Qualitative Study on the Integration of Place Branding, Multiple Stakeholders and Infrastructure

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Abstract

Place branding has in previous research been studied mostly from the perspective of an individual stakeholder, for example the tourism sector or the state authority. Furthermore, there is a limited amount of prior studies concerning the potential effect infrastructure improvements have on place branding. This thesis aims to address these research gaps and make a theoretical contribution to research on place branding.

The purpose of this thesis is to develop a deeper understanding about how different stakeholders perceive the place brand identity of Nyköping as well as how they collaborate within the place branding process. This understanding will be viewed in the context of future improvements of infrastructure, more specifically the construction of Ostlänken.

The findings of this thesis are based upon a theoretical framework consisting of four foundations, place branding and its conceptualisations, place brand identity, multiple stakeholders, and place brand management and infrastructure. The theoretical framework includes general theories as well as more elaborate models specific to research on place branding.

In order to fulfil the purpose of this thesis, organisations belonging to different stakeholder groups with interests within a specific place have been interviewed. By adopting an inductive approach of the study, the interviews have been held using a semi-structured interview technique with the intention to gain elaborated data. A thematic network analysis has been applied for analysing the collected data. The data have been coded resulting in four global themes: place brand identity, multiple stakeholders, infrastructure and place brand management. By applying these themes to the empirical data and previous research, the findings of the study have been developed.

A new conceptual model has been designed by the authors of this thesis, where important components of infrastructure have been integrated into the place branding process. The proposed model further highlights the importance of coordinating multiple stakeholders’ individual place brand identities within the place branding process in order to reach a harmonised place brand.

The proposed model has relevant implications for the place branding process of Nyköping. The municipality of Nyköping should be responsible of coordinating multiple stakeholders, which have an interest in Nyköping. The reason behind this proposition is that the municipality has a more centralized focus upon Nyköping in comparison to regional organisations. Furthermore, the proposed model could be adopted by organisations with the intention of highlighting the importance that infrastructure has upon place branding.
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1. Introduction

1.1 Personal Interest

We belong to a generation that is used to progress. Being born in the end of the 1980’s we have seen the development from vinyl records to MP3-files. We have been around to watch the European Union develop and boarders open up. We have experienced the PCB and DDT chemicals harm the environment extensively around the Baltic Sea and we have seen the progress of environmental work in order to extinguish the chemicals in the production process.

The truth is that we have grown up in a world that is in constant change and fast progress. Therefore the research topic in our thesis will concern development and progress. In addition, this thesis will focus on two areas which are closely related to our perception of the world today, infrastructure and branding. Mobility is an important part of the future since boarders are opening up resulting in shrinking distances. Because of the increased competition, branding is becoming more and more important for companies in order to differentiate themselves from competitors. The fact is that branding is as important for cities and places as it is for companies.

The context of this thesis will concern the region of Nyköping and the building of the railway Ostlänken. The reason for this choice is personal. Karin comes from Nyköping and has grown up with the discussion about a new potential railway network connecting the region with Stockholm. Both of us have an interest in branding as a research area, and driven by this interest we have decided to focus on place branding in Nyköping.

We believe that this thesis will highlight some of the questions we have encountered regarding the place brand management process of cities and destinations. Having characteristics of high differentiation is highly important in a world that is consistently growing smaller. A distinctive brand can help create a buzz and interest towards a city or destination among different stakeholders such as residents, businesses, and tourists among others.

1.2 Problem Background

The modern Swedish society is characterized by extensive crisscross travelling throughout the whole country by boat, car, plane and train. From the introduction of the railway in the mid-19th century the Swedish railway system has been of importance for transportation of goods, citizens and tourists (Trafikverket 2012). Nyköping, and its close regional attributes, are when it comes to transportation possibilities and the kinds of infrastructure present, a Sweden in miniature. With a deep-water harbour, an important highway connecting Nyköping to the continent, an international airport and a future high-speed railway all four major transportation systems are united in a geographical favourable position. (Nyköping 2013)

Today the capacity on the Swedish railways is full and it is from that background a decision has been taken in order to build a new double file railway. This new railway will be named Ostlänken, and will when it has been constructed in 2028 connect Linköping with Stockholm. (Ostlänken 2013) The purpose with Ostlänken is to connect two major regions, Linköping/Norrköping, and the region of Sörmland, with the Greater Stockholm region with a new fast railway infrastructure (Ostlänken 2013). The capacity on the railway will be doubled in these areas were the railway existing today lack capacity. Furthermore it is the belief of the leading politicians and the companies behind
Ostlänken, that these three regions will grow both economically and culturally by connecting them with a sustainable and environmentally friendly transportation system (Ostlänken 2013).

With this new infrastructure investment, the regions and the cities connected by the railway will face new and challenging ways of differentiating themselves in the future (Hanna & Rowley 2011). Hanna and Rowley (2011) propose that with improvement of public transportation, places will be facing increased competition and must therefore create an environment that satisfies needs of residents, visitors, and existing economic entities. In order for cities, destinations and regions to differentiate themselves, a strong brand must be built or a concept of branding must be developed in consideration of interests to different stakeholders.

In order to understand why the focus lay on a specific area of branding and not on general principles of marketing in this thesis, the definitions of marketing and branding must be clarified. Grönroos (1989 p.57) states that marketing aims: “to establish, develop and commercialise long-term relationships, so that the objectives of the parties involved are met. This is done by mutual exchange and keeping of promises.” In comparison Wood (2000 p.666) defines brand as: “A mechanism for achieving competitive advantage for firms, through differentiation (purpose). The attributes that differentiate a brand provide the customer with satisfaction and benefits for which they are willing to pay (mechanism).” Overall, general principles of marketing focus on developing a relationship between the customer and the seller. Whereas branding specifically focus on the attributes making a company more special and different in the competitive environment.

Whereas marketing has been a field of research for many years, place branding is a relatively new research area defined “as a network of associations in the consumers’ mind based on the visual, verbal and behavioural expressions of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communications, values and the general culture of the place’s stakeholders and the overall place design” (Kavaratzis & Hatch 2013 p.70). Place branding was first introduced in the 1990s when researchers started to use the concept more widely (Moilanen & Rainisto 2009 p.4). Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005) state that even though specific areas where marketing can be applied to have expanded overtime, not much focus has been laid on how places can successfully brand themselves in order to be differentiated from one another.

The advantages of place branding have been acknowledged during the past years and now the question does not seem to be whether to brand, but rather how to brand a place (Hanna & Rowley 2011). As a consequence, the complexity and dynamics of place branding need to be recognized as well as their considerations in the place brand management process. However, since place branding is a relatively new concept the prior research performed in order to discover the impact of complexity and high dynamics on the place branding process has not been extensive.

Moilanen and Rainisto (2009) discuss how place branding can be developed and use the city of Copenhagen with its slogan Wonderful Copenhagen as an example. With this development work they emphasise that the core of the place brand should be “a simple but bold idea that many stakeholders could use” (Moilanen & Rainisto 2009 p.88). According to Moilanen and Rainisto (2009 pp.3-15) place branding can have several advantages but that in the end those advantages could be combined into one, which is, to ensure that different stakeholders within the place region will feel an emotion of attachment to the brand and what it stands for. “This is done successfully when the
brand has been developed with a clear statement and with the target groups in mind” (Moilanen & Rainisto 2009 p.13). This quote summarises what modern place branding is about and how important it is for a city, a region or other places to be able to differentiate themselves.

Furthermore, several of the theories used in place branding research are adopted from other research fields. For example, corporate branding has been used in order to understand how the complexity of place branding influences the management process. One example of this is Hankinson’s five guiding principles (2007), which shows the process of how place branding should be managed.

These models adopted from similar research fields, have helped to develop theories concerning place branding. However, there are still research gaps to fill. For example, at present there is still little research that has been carried out to determine relationships between different stakeholders, such as residents, tourists and businesses affecting the place branding (Merrilees et al.2012; Hanna & Rowley 2011; Hankinson 2007). However, the consideration of multiple stakeholders has increasingly been integrated within the literature on corporate branding during the last two years. Although this research successfully has shown the challenges that the management of multiple stakeholders contains, the actual aim of the management process has not yet been explicitly clarified. Currently these models aims to reach cohesiveness among multiple stakeholders, whether or not this aim is suited for a place branding process have not yet been explored.

Furthermore, a research gap concerning the interaction between different stakeholders within the place brand management process is notable. As it is today, different stakeholders’ perceptions concerning a place’s brand identity within the place branding process is little discussed. Eventually, if all these areas are to be put into the context of infrastructure, no previous research concerning such topics was found by the authors of this thesis. In conclusion, this thesis will focus upon a rather new research field of place branding, still containing several research gaps, combining three important areas related to it: place brand identity, multiple stakeholders and infrastructure.

1.3 Research Question
How do different stakeholders interact and perceive their positions within the place branding process and evaluate the potential impact a new infrastructure has on a place brand?

1.4 Purpose
The purpose of this thesis is to develop a deeper understanding about how different stakeholders perceive the place brand identity of Nyköping as well as how they collaborate within the place branding process. This understanding will be viewed in the context of future improvements of infrastructure.
2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework will include a literature review of articles and books of interest regarding the concept of place branding. At the end of this chapter the reader will be given a coherent view of what branding is and how it is different from marketing. The concept of place branding will be discussed by using the work of several other researchers’ previous studies as well as their presented models regarding place branding. These models will lay foundation for the empirical data as well as how the multiple stakeholders’ interest is facilitated.

2.1 Place Branding and its Conceptualisations

The concept of place branding calls for an explanation that is more extensive than perhaps is expected at first. There are several different varieties of how the concept of place branding can be interpreted depending upon the researcher’s view. When reviewing prior research on place branding there are a number of concepts that if the reader is not being aware about, could be considered as synonymous to place branding. Therefore it is important to clearly define what place branding is as well as to clarify some concepts closely related to place branding. The different concepts discussed in this thesis will be those which are the most repeatedly addressed in previous studies such as, place branding, place marketing, destination branding and regional branding.

Place branding is a concept which has emerged during the last decade and during this time gained importance in academic research (Hankinson 2007; Hankinson 2010; Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2005). As Hanna and Rowley (2011 p.459) argue “it seems that the question facing place is not whether to brand but how to brand”. Some authors state that place branding was derived from the tourism sector and thereafter spread to include several different stakeholders such as urban policy planners and mainstream brand managers (Hanna & Rowley 2011). However it is not unusual that the research concerning place branding is focused upon only one group of stakeholders at the time (Hanna & Rowley 2011; Hankinson 2003).

Compared to other streams of research in marketing, place branding can be considered as a relatively new and evolving area. One reason for a lack of contribution to this research area can be that each researcher has often his or her own view of what is to be included or excluded in the definition of place branding. Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013 p.2) defines place branding as “A Network of associations in the consumers’ mind based on the visual, verbal and behavioural expression of a place…” At the same time, Hanna and Rowley (2011 p.459) states that place branding is “the practice of applying brand strategy and other marketing techniques to the economic and socio-political development of towns, cities, regions and countries.” In this thesis place branding will be regarded as a process in which places use different marketing techniques in order to create a place brand identity as well as place brand image with the aim of differentiating themselves.

Place branding and place marketing are two expressions which could be complicated to distinguish from one another since they are sometimes defined in a similar way and closely associated with each other depending on which article that has been reviewed. However, there are significant differences between place branding and place marketing which needs to be further discussed.

The reality is that the roots of place marketing can be traced back to at least the nineteenth century (Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2005; Kavaratzis & Hatch 2013) when
places consciously started to compete for advantages in a world that rapidly were growing smaller (Hankinson 2010). Even though Kotler and Levy (1969) proposed that marketing could be used as a tool outside the world of products already in the late 1960s, it was not until the early 1990s that the first attempts to create a distinctive place marketing approach were performed by researchers (Kavaratzis & Ashwood 2005).

As expressed, place marketing could be considered as a discipline, which have been present for a long time but have slowly grown into a common practice for cities, regions and nations in the last decades (Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2005; Kavaratzis & Hatch 2013). Furthermore, place marketing can be regarded as the predecessor to place branding (Kavaratzis & Hatch 2013). Hankinson (2010) states that place marketing can be considered as the end product produced by place branding while Kotler considers ‘branding as an array of marketing tool’ (Kavaratzis & Hatch 2013 p.70). However these two views do not specify how place marketing and place branding can actually be performed. In order to find a clear suggestion about this matter, there must be a return to a general definition of marketing and branding strategy. Varadarajan (2009 p.119) describes marketing as:

“An organization’s integrated pattern of decisions that specify its crucial choices concerning products, markets, marketing activities and marketing resources in the creation, communication and/or delivery of products that offer value to customers in exchanges with the organization and thereby enables the organization to achieve specific objectives.”

In comparison Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005 p.508) define branding as “a product or service made distinctive by its positioning relative to the competition and by its personality, which comprises a unique combination of functional attributes and symbolic values. Branding is a deliberate process of selecting and associating these value attributes because they are assumed to add value to the basic value or service.”

At the same time, Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) confirms that the distinction between place marketing and place branding is not clear and depends on the researchers own perception. In this thesis place branding will be regarded as a general strategic guideline for place marketing (Hankinson 2010). These two concepts will therefore not be regarded as synonymous to each other.

Other two concepts similar to the concept of place branding are destination branding and regional branding. A destination brand can be developed in a variety of ways but it is most commonly done so with the help of a destination-marketing organisation (DMO) (Morgan et al. 2004; Pike 2005). Destination and regions are not seen as a product and can therefore not be marketed and branded in a similar way, creating a need for a distinctive and supplemental branding process linked to the concept of corporate branding, which is discussed later on (Morgan et al. 2004). Morgan et al. (2004) and Messely et al. (2009) emphasises that destination and regional branding are aimed to make a distinctive image or reputation with the creation of unique characteristics with added values to the destination and region. This goal can be achieved by conceptualising the place branding process by communicating, provide value enhancers and relationships and also show the advantages with branding the destination or region with connection to the qualities of the area (Morgan et al. 2004 pp.60-61; Messely et al. 2009). Caldwell and Freire (2004) define destination brands as something that are satisfying basic and self-actualisation needs. For regional branding, Caldwell and Freire (2004) state that it could be branded as a functional facet.
Traditionally, destination branding has been associated with the tourism sector, while regional branding usually has been connected to urban policy planning (Hankinson 2003; Hankinson 2010). Therefore, these two different research areas could be considered as sub-branches to place branding. In this thesis, the similarity and complementary of different models focusing on place branding, destination branding and regional branding is observed. The three different concepts will be considered in relation to each other and the models developed in one research branch will be considered as compatible to use in another branch. In this thesis the terminology will be used in a consistent way and its focus will be on place branding.

2.2 Place Brand Identity

The objectives of place branding can have both an internal focus and an external focus. Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005), Hankinson (2010) as well as Hanna and Rowley (2011) all argue that place branding needs to have an internal objective as well as an external objective. The objectives should be managed by the management within each different organisation. The internal objective should focus upon place brand identity, while the external objective should address place brand image.

Hankinson (2010 p.303) proposed the following view on place brand identity, “knowing what the brand stands for from the company’s perspective”. At the same time Govers and Go (2009 p.17) argues that “place identities are constructed through historical, political, religious and cultural discourses; through local knowledge, and influenced by power struggle”.

Place brand image on the other hand is dealing with perceptions of the place brand. Hankinson (2010 p.303-304) defines brand image as “knowing how the brand is perceived from an external perspective”. The relationship between the two areas is of a dependent sort, the place brand identity affects the place brand image and vice versa (Hankinson 2010).

Both place brand identity and place brand image are core concepts within the place branding process and many of the models focus on producing a cohesive identity of the place brand (Hanna & Rowley 2011; Hankinson 2003). The advantages with a well-functioning place identity is explained by Messely et al. (2009 p.5) stating that “When a region marks itself internally, a stronger sense of shared identity emerges which foster trust and cooperation that can be mobilized for developmental benefits”.

In this thesis, the focus will be on place brand identity and the place brand management concerned with creating a clear identification. However, Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) argue that place brand identity is a dynamic process, which is both internal and external, and that it is the interaction between the two that creates a place’s identity. This view about place identity opens up a discussion regarding what the main identities of a place contain.

Hanna and Rowley (2011) argue that a place brand identity contains both tangible and intangible attributes. This proposition was further developed by Kalandides’ (2011), suggesting five elements of place identity which are: (1) place image, (2) materiality, (3) institutions, (4) relations and (5) people and practices. Furthermore Kalandides (2011) just as Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) highlights that place brand identity is a dynamic process rather than an outcome composed by managers in order to improve the promotional tool.

The discussion about elements constituting a place brand is further enhanced by Merrilees et al. (2012) whose research is not focused upon place brand identity, but
rather on multiple stakeholders and their perceptions about attributes of a place brand. The study by Merrilees et al. (2012) applies a quantitative method and presents empirical evidence about attributes of a place brand. Kalandides (2011) uses a qualitative method and presents a model, which is more open to interpretations (see Table 1).

In this thesis, the model of Merrilees et al. (2012) will be used to analyse the material on different stakeholders’ perceptions of the place brand identity of Nyköping. The reason for this choice is that the model by Merrilees et al. (2012) contains several different sub-attributes, which are easier to acknowledge over the spread of several stakeholders. Within this thesis, the model of Merrilees et al. (2012) will be used in order to categorise various attributes mentioned by different stakeholders during the interviews. The aim is to explore each stakeholder’s perception about Nyköping’s place brand identity in order to develop an overall place brand identity of Nyköping based upon the stakeholder’s individual perceptions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business opportunities</th>
<th>Nature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovative business</td>
<td>Access to clean outdoor recreational areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed opportunities</td>
<td>Many parks, BBQ and picnic facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good place to do business</td>
<td>Green belt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thriving local business</td>
<td>Natural wonders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social bonding</td>
<td>Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good for families</td>
<td>Roads well maintained and repaired quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural diversity</td>
<td>Roadwork’s do not inconvenience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to make friends</td>
<td>Road network adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and friends enjoying visiting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural activities</td>
<td>Brand attitude to doing business in the city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural events and festivals</td>
<td>Attitude to the Gold Coast as a brand for business is positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live shows and performing art</td>
<td>Overall evaluation of the Gold Coast as a brand for business is positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern design and appeal</td>
<td>The Gold Coast has a good reputation among businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosmopolitan and sophisticated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide range of leisure activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Brand attribute to living in the city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful business networks are available</td>
<td>Proud to live at the Gold Coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It easy to network</td>
<td>Overall lifestyle is good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful social networks are available</td>
<td>Good reputation among residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources are available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial support services are good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply chain needs are easily met</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Attributes of place brand identity (Merrilees et al. 2012 p. 1039)
2.3 Multiple Stakeholders

Stakeholder theory as a concept can be widely used and alters from situation to situation. Freeman (1984 p.52-53) regards the stakeholder theory concept as specific to groups and individuals. These specific groups and individuals are called stakeholders when they can affect or are affected by organisations and by the decisions and actions of these organisations.

Furthermore, when discussing the complexities of multiple stakeholders in the place branding process the key notions of classical stakeholder theory also have to be presented. Even though stakeholder theory per se does not directly involve place branding, it clearly portrays the challenges managements face concerning stakeholder interactions. The discussion concerning multiple stakeholders is divided into two sections. The first section discusses classical stakeholder theory which enables organisations to position themselves against their stakeholders. The second section concerns questions regarding multiple stakeholders’ complexity and collaboration.

There are several different branches of stakeholder theory, which have various focus and objectives. Overall, this research field could be divided into three main categories: descriptive, normative and instrumental. Descriptive stakeholder theory discusses how organisations manage different stakeholders. Normative stakeholder theory displays how organisations should treat different stakeholders, while instrumental stakeholder theory presents stakeholder theory as a mean which to be used in order to add value to shareholders. In this thesis the focus will be on descriptive stakeholder theory since this is the approach most closely concerned with the place brand management process. (Freeman 1999)

Furthermore, Payne et al. (2004) discuss that the aim of these branches of stakeholder theory could be different. Either they focus on providing the highest amount of financial benefit or on maximizing the social welfare. Which aim the stakeholder theory attempts to achieve depends upon the organisation. The aim of each organisation within this thesis will differ since the interviewees consist of both profit and non-profit organisations. (Payne et al. 2004)

When discussing stakeholder theory one also has to decide which stakeholder segments that should be included. Parmar et al. (2010 p.405) define stakeholders as “a set of relationships among groups which have a stake in the activities that make up the business.” At the same time, Payne et al. (2004 p.856) describe stakeholders as “all of those groups and individuals that can affect or are affected by, the accomplishment of organisational purpose.” Some examples of such groups and individuals are employees, customers, suppliers and lenders (Payne et al. 2004). In this thesis stakeholders will be limited to an amount of selected organisations within the region, which have an interest of the building of Ostlänken.

When presenting different stakeholders it is important to define how these different stakeholders will be treated and prioritized. Parmar et al. (2010) conclude that all stakeholders must be treated equally while Payne et al. (2004) discuss that not all stakeholder groups need the same attention and that stakeholder groups should be prioritized depending upon which value the stakeholder add to the organisation. Furthermore, Payne et al. (2004 p.856) state that organisations have to ask themselves “whom you are connected to- and why.” This approach opens up a possibility for management to be able to affect how the stakeholders of the organisations are managed. This view is compatible with descriptive stakeholder theory.
The research of stakeholder theory has opened up to stakeholder research performed within other research fields, research which focus upon multiple stakeholders and branding at the same time. One example of this integration is corporate branding.

In this thesis the influence of corporate branding on place branding is closely related to the understanding of how different stakeholders affect and interact with each other. Meaning that the place brand and its complexity will be considered as something that stems from what has been jointly determined by all stakeholders by using corporate branding for all levels of the place brand. Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005) describes place branding as qualities of the corporate brand, which is used to affiliate all stakeholders interests within the same proximity of the city or place.

Hankinson (2007) has developed five guiding principles to how corporate branding can be incorporated to place branding in order to gain a stronger place brand identity among several different stakeholders. The five principles are (1) strong visionary leadership, (2) a brand-oriented organisational culture, (3) departmental co-ordination and process alignment, (4) consistent communications across a wide range of stakeholders, and (5) strong compatible partnership. The aim of these principles is to create a dynamic organisation which is able to transfer information, values and beliefs and mission aims top-down as well as bottom-up. (Hankinson 2007) These organizational features are of extra importance to organisations involved with place branding, since dealing with a lot of different stakeholders as well as customer segments are a dynamic and complex process (Hanna & Rowley 2011; Morgan et al. 2004 p. 60). Hankinson’s principles are utilised in order to “represent a holistic model of the destination brand management process” (2007 pp. 240-254). In this thesis the model by Hankinson (2007) will be used as a supportive tool in order to analyse the data collection.

In place branding, which is a rather new evolving research area, there are only a few available articles discussing place branding and the challenges dealing with multiple stakeholders (Hankinson 2003; Hanna & Rowley 2011). The focus on only one stakeholder group at the time has its advantages, for example it is possible to get a more in depth result and at the same avoid a lot of the complexity that place branding is associated with (Hanna & Rowley 2011). Unfortunately, by only exploring one stakeholder at the time a lot of the challenges within the place branding process is lost.

The complexity of place branding is the major difference between product branding and place branding (Messely et al 2009). Hankinson (2007) discusses that the complexity of place branding derives from six distinctive product factors, those are; (1) the co-production of the place product, (2) the co-consumption of the place product, (3) the variability of place product, (4) the legal definition of place boundaries, (5) administrative overlap and (6) political accountability. These six factors could be divided into internal and external complexities. When discussing internal complexities the problem arising are those of co-production, administrative overlap, political accountability and the legal definition of a place’s boundaries (Hankinson 2007). External complexities deal with co-consumption and variability. When discussing co-production the main focus is on the challenge of co-producing for example a sport centre, which will contain several organisations with different interest, for example sport events and music events. Co-production concerns both private and public organisations. The administrative overlap on the other hand concentrates on the difficulty to integrate small place brands within a big picture, for example city brand management and regional branding. When it comes to external branding the reviewed literature shows that the complexity is created by the high variation of consumers and
services, which target several types of segments at the same time. (Hankinson 2007; Kavaratzis & Hatch 2013, Hanna & Rowley 2011)

The aim of Hankinson’s (2007) six product factors is to create cohesiveness and consistency between brand values. In opposition, Merrilees et al. (2012) discuss that perhaps consistency is not the goal to strive for. Furthermore, Merrilees et al. (2012 p.1036) express that “there are inherent structural differences in the way different stakeholders approach the purpose (objective) of the brand. No amount of negotiation can eliminate these differences across stakeholders.” Instead Merrilees et al. (2012) suggest that each stakeholder’s objectives should be seen as a filter of how each individual stakeholder perceives the brand’s purpose. For example the filter of residents is ‘city as a place to live’ while the business sector have a filter of ‘a city to do business in’ (Merrilees et al. 2012). A further complexity is that different stakeholder may belong to more than one filter, for example both as a resident and businessman.

Merrilees et al. (2012) argue that the challenge of place brand management is to obtain harmony in a process involving multiple meanings and priorities. The need of each stakeholder group has to be taken into consideration even though the weight between the different groups does not have to be equal (Merrilees et al. 2012).

When analysing the data collection in this thesis, both approaches will be taken into consideration. By recognising the possibility that cohesiveness might not be possible to achieve, the aim of Hankinson’s (2007) six product factors could be changed from consistency to harmony. Furthermore, Hankinson’s (2007) five principles will be used in order to discuss how harmony can be achieved across multiple stakeholders.
2.4 Place Brand Management and Infrastructure

The strategic place brand-management model (SPBM) is designed and developed by Hanna and Rowley (2011). This model is an initial attempt to create a holistic model, which concerns the process of place brand management. The model consists of several different components and displays the interaction between them (see Figure 1). The aim of the model is to produce an ongoing brand evaluation in order to improve and strengthen the place brand image (Hanna & Rowley 2011).

![Diagram of the Strategic Place Brand-Management Model](image)

Figure 1. The Strategic Place Brand-management Model (Hanna & Rowley 2011 p.463)

The component of brand infrastructure, relationships and leadership is the starting point for the model. This is the component where the brand identity and brand architecture are developed. Stakeholder management is defined by Hanna and Rowley (2011 p.465) as “the component that embraces the processes whereby stakeholders are identified, their interests surfaced, and interactions managed.” This component covers a lot of the stakeholder complexity that this thesis focuses on. Therefore, this component will be considered as particularly important when analysing the data in this thesis (Hanna & Rowley 2011).

Together the stakeholder management and infrastructure components will result in a brand architecture, brand articulation, brand communications, brand experience and word of mouth (Hanna & Rowley 2011). These components will not be given any major attention within the analysis but rather be mentioned as an end product of the two first components.

Within the SPBM-model there is an extra focus upon the infrastructure component containing tangible and intangible properties (Hanna & Rowley 2011). The tangible properties have subordinate areas of infrastructure strategies and landscape strategies, which both are part of the functional attributes in this model (see figure 3). Hanna and Rowley (2011) state that it is the functional attributes, supporting the communication, in an infrastructural way that portrays the stakeholder impact in the SPBM-model. The
intangible properties have a subordinate property of symbolic traits in this model with characteristics like culture and services and have greater experiential attributes connected to it (Hanna & Rowley 2011).

The intangible process is easily linked to how different infrastructure constructions are associated with cities, destinations and places around the world, for example the Golden Gate Bridge and Öresundbron. The infrastructure investment of Ostlänken will have an impact on future infrastructure strategies and landscape strategies as well. This part of the SPBM-model is therefore of theoretical importance for the upcoming parts in this thesis.

![Diagram of Infrastructure Model](image)

**Figure 2.** Infrastructure (Regeneration) (Hanna & Rowley 2011 p. 463)

Hanna and Rowley (2011 p.466) continue their reasoning by stating, “delivery of the brand experience requires investment”, and this is related to how the place brand can grow and expand with the help of infrastructural investments. There is another approach of how infrastructure can be used to create associations and connections with a city, destination or other places as a brand. Normally, this kind of infrastructure construction is associated with the beauty, boldness or sheer magnificence of a construction that cannot easily be linked to railways. At both an international and domestic level it is possible to find some examples of where the city or regional branding has had considerable use of the infrastructure within or close to a particular city or region. A city like San Francisco is for example closely associated with the Golden Gate Bridge, and it is hard to imagine the bridge without San Francisco and vice versa.

Another example is Öresundbron and the associations it has with the region of Öresund and its two cities, Malmö and Copenhagen. Öresundbron has had a major impact on the region on both sides of the strait since it opened for traffic in 2000 (Öresundbron 2013). It has made it easier for travellers to travel from and to Copenhagen International Airport, increased the commuter possibilities for both Danes and Swedes, who are living and working on either side of the strait. It has also improved many other
interactions between businesses in south of Sweden and the area surrounding Copenhagen. (Öresundsbron 2013)

Furthermore, the characteristic construction has had a positive place brand process creating a unique symbolic value, which marketing experts’ highlights (Moilanen & Rainisto 2009; Morgan et al. 2004). It is now barely possible not to associate Copenhagen, Malmö and the Öresund region without the famous bridge connecting east of Denmark to the south of Sweden.

As mentioned earlier, it is difficult for a railway to gain the same social traits as a bridge. A bridge has by nature a symbolic value of connecting places and at the same time it possesses a beauty, which is hard for a railway to reach. However, the construction of Ostlänken might create further investments that will create other intangible properties and symbolic traits. These symbolic traits might instead be the building of a new railway station that could represent the symbolic trait that the actual railway does not possess.

The SPBM model by Hanna and Rowley (2011) has the benefit of showing the overall process from place brand identity to place brand image. However, since the main focus of this thesis concerns place brand identity, place brand management, multiple stakeholders and infrastructure the SPBM-model can serve as a valuable basis for understanding this research phenomenon. Although, it is important to acknowledge that this model covers even a broader spectrum of concepts on place branding, which are beyond the scope of this study.

Another model developed with the ambition to connect place brand identity with place brand management is proposed by Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) (see Figure 3). This model stresses the fact that place brand identity is an ongoing process, and therefore has to interact with the place brand management process. Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) refer to this process as the identity-based place branding.

![Identity-based Place Branding](image)

Figure 3. Identity-based Place Branding (Kavaratzis & Hatch 2013 p. 9)
The model consists of three main processes, those are: place identity, place culture and place image. The connections between the three processes are explained by Hatch and Schultz (2002 p.991): “culture is the context of internal definitions of identity while image is the site of external definitions of identity and how these two definitions influence each other is the process of identity.” The connections between the three processes are not linear but repetitive, therefore a place can never settle for one single identity (Kavaratzis & Hatch 2013). Furthermore, since the model stresses the issue that place identity is a process rather than an outcome, this fact must be valid for the place brand management as well.

According to Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013), there are four sub-processes connecting place culture, place identity and place image. Even though these sub-processes take place simultaneously the first sub-process is called expressing. This process is the procedure where the internal stakeholders express their view of the place brand to external stakeholders (Kavaratzis & Hatch 2013). The following sub-process is called impression and it is covering the perception external stakeholders’ receive of the place brand identity communicated by internal stakeholders (Kavaratzis & Hatch 2013). This process results in a place brand image. The third link is called mirroring and shows the internal stakeholders how the external stakeholders perceived the place identity (Kavaratzis & Hatch 2013). By reflection the identity is brought back to the place culture process where a new internal viewpoint based upon the external stakeholders’ view of the place brand is formed and thereafter once again expressed to external stakeholders. (Kavaratzis & Hatch 2013; Hatch & Schultz 2002)

There are several advantages with this model. First of all, it manages to incorporate place brand identity into the place brand management process. At the same time, it highlights the fact that the process of place branding is dynamic and continuously. At last it is also a model, which could incorporate the complexity of multiple stakeholders in the place brand management process. This thesis will assess how the place identity-based branding model by Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) can be enhanced by connecting it to the infrastructural part of the SPBM model by Hanna and Rowley (2011). This could be done in order to understand how the infrastructure affects the dynamic process of place branding. Furthermore it would explore the perception multiple stakeholders have concerning the place brand management process.

Based on the literature review a fundamental understanding about the research topic has been developed and led to an overall picture of the chosen topic. The theoretical framework also highlights four key models and theories, which will be used in order to analyse the collected data. Those models and theories are: the attributes of place brand identity (Merrilees et al. 2012), the SPBM-model (Hanna & Rowley 2011), Hankinson’s five principles (2007) and the identity-based place branding model (Kavaratzis & Hatch 2013). The different models cover relevant topics on place branding and are therefore the essential base for analysing the empiric material. This thesis will aim to incorporate the key notions of the SPBM-model (Hanna & Rowley 2011) with the identity-based place branding model (Kavaratzis & Hatch 2013). As a result the thesis will help to answer to the question of how place branding can be jointly developed by multiple stakeholders. The incorporation of the two models will target a narrower topic focusing upon the link between place brand management and infrastructure with consideration of the areas of interest to the multiple stakeholders.
3. Methodology

The methodology covers the philosophical approach of this thesis and a discussion of the research approach. The purpose of the thesis has been the base when deciding what methodology that would be appropriate for this thesis. The reader will get a fundamental understanding of why a certain method was chosen and also a presentation of the chosen analytical method.

3.1 Ontology

Guba and Lincoln (1994 p.108) describe the ontological question as: “What is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it?” In addition Bryman and Bell (2011 p.20) expresses that ontology has two positions, either an objective entity approach or an approach of social construction formed from the perceptions and actions of social actors. These two positions are called objectivism and constructivism (Bryman & Bell 2011 pp.20-21). Objectivism asserts social phenomena as having an existence that is independent of social actors. This means that objectivism describes a social phenomenon where people are faced with external facts beyond peoples reach (Bryman & Bell 2011 p.21). An alternative to objectivism is constructivism, which asserts that social phenomenon are continuously revised and produced by social actors (Bryman & Bell 2011 p.22). Easily described, objectivism treats information as given and that any alternations to social settings will not change the outcome. Contrary, constructivism treats information as continuously affected by social settings.

When conducting interviews in qualitative research these two ontological positions is of importance due to how they differ in their approach to the reality. Interviews are interactive processes between, in this case, two interviewers and the lone interviewee. Since the interviews are ongoing processes the approach to the interviews will be from a constructivist approach continuously alternated by the social actors. This alternation occurs since every new question and answer will change the social setting of the interview. Furthermore, constructivism is the idea that the world consists of something that is internal to the partners of the interaction. These ideas are then built and changed through interaction (Bryman & Bell 2011 p.22). The information needed to develop the analysis of this thesis is gathered exclusively through oral interviews. Therefore, it is important to describe the ontological view of the method used in this thesis.

The social constructions and the spoken language are of high importance when conducting the interviews. Due to these conclusions the ontological approach of constructivism will be used throughout this thesis.

3.2 Epistemology

Gummesson (2000 pp.18-19) describes the branch of epistemological science as something that states the question of, “can knowledge exist?” Bryman and Bell (2011 p.15) further develops this reasoning by explaining epistemology as what is regarded as acceptable knowledge or what should be regarded as acceptable knowledge in a certain discipline.

Epistemology can be divided into two key concepts: positivism and interpretivism (Saunders et al. 2012 pp.134-137). Positivism uses a foundation stating that the social world shall be studied according to the same principles and procedures as the world of natural science (Bryman & Bell 2011 p.15). A contrast to positivism is interpretivism,
an approach that differentiates between the world of social studies and that of natural science (Bryman & Bell 2011 p.16). Gummesson (2000 pp.18-19) expresses the concept of hermeneutics as synonymous to the concept of interpretivism and describes it as a shift in paradigms from the scientific world to a consultant paradigm of how the subjective meaning of social actions is interpreted (Bryman & Bell 2011 p.17). Furthermore, Gummesson (2000 p.71) discuss that the concept of hermeneutics forms a spiral in which there must be a pre-understanding of a question before an understanding of the same question is developed. The spiral shows the essentialness of a pre-understanding before knowledge can be interpreted.

Since this thesis has an inductive approach based on data collected from oral interviews the epistemology of this thesis is interpretivism. Adopting the approach of interpretivism to this thesis will open up for interpretations not possible to make with a positivistic approach.

Both the chosen epistemological approach of interpretivism and the ontological approach of constructivism are related to each other. Due to this relationship, they have been applied for this thesis. They are both well suited for the interpretation of what is answered to the questions asked in the interviews.

3.3 Inductive Approach
According to Patton (1980 p.40), “a qualitative research strategy is inductive in that the researcher attempts to make sense of the situation without imposing pre-existing expectations on the research setting.” The chosen practice of this thesis is an inductive approach to the research. This choice means that the observations and findings within the research will lay ground to the theory (Bryman & Bell 2011 p.13). This inductive approach will result in an analysis containing patterns, themes and other data collected in the interviews (Patton 1980 p.306).

By choosing an inductive approach there will be a process of tracking back and forth in order to create general conclusions about the research area (Bryman & Bell 2011 p.573). This approach will enable the search for an understanding that has its foundation in the interviewees’ spoken language. One drawback by using an inductive research theory is that it might be hard to replicate the research and the result may be difficult to follow. The conclusions drawn from the research should also be seen as strictly probable in the sense that other researchers could interpret them differently.

3.4 Qualitative Research Approach
As it was previously discussed, this thesis follows the constructivism and applies an interpretive approach. Bryman (1984) clarifies that these two choices of ontology and epistemology often result in a qualitative research. Since the aim of this research is to develop a deeper understanding of the link between different stakeholders place brand identities in a place brand management setting and the role of infrastructure, a qualitative research is favoured. The research will be conducted through interviews embracing the concept of meaning making. Potter (1996 p.67) express that “meaning making by humans, and this meaning, is seen best through examining the symbols and language.” Meaning making can be very complex, hard to grasp and recognise, leading to a qualitative research appropriate for this thesis (Bryman 1984). Potter (1996 p.68) continues this reasoning by describing the meaning making as a phenomenon that can be seen from different perspectives making it crucial to get a good understanding of what has been said in a qualitative research.
Some of the differences between qualitative research and quantitative research are: the focus upon words rather than numbers, the closeness of the researchers contra the researcher being distant, the research being a process and the research being of smaller scale compared to the often-larger scale of quantitative researches (Bryman & Bell 2011 pp.410-412). This thesis favours a qualitative research due to the wish of the authors’ to reach a deeper understanding of the chosen research topic. The qualitative research approach will furthermore, address a smaller more precise picture of the situation while a quantitative research would give the authors a bigger overall picture, however not as clear as that of the smaller picture.

To fulfil the purpose of this thesis, the characteristics of the questions that will be asked will encourage the interviewees to develop and elaborate their answers. Furthermore, because of the characteristics of the questions the approach of the research must be qualitative. Essentially, the main focus in this thesis will be on how different organisations try to incorporate different stakeholders in their place branding. It is the authors’ belief that the answers need to be gathered by conducting a qualitative research and that a quantitative research will not be appropriate for this research.

3.5 Pre-understanding

Stenbacka (2001 p.553) highlights the importance of pre-understanding as: ”The most basic insight is that the researcher is always part of the study. Only when accepting this fact to the fullest we can make us of it.” Furthermore she concludes that the concept of pre-understanding consists of: understood knowledge, insights and experiences, which accompany the researchers when entering their study (Stenbacka 2001). This definition regarding pre-understanding is supported by Gummesson (2000 p.60), who expresses that pre-understanding consists of a researcher’ attitudes, commitments and personal experiences. Furthermore both Stenbacka (2001) and Gummesson (2000 p.67-71) divide pre-understanding into first-hand understanding and second-hand understanding. First-hand understanding is understanding created from own personal experiences while second-hand understanding is understanding gained from other people or sources (Gummesson 2000 p.67-71).

3.5.1 Pre-understanding of Karin Frändberg

Since I have grown up in Nyköping I have many first- and second-hand experiences concerning the construction of Ostlänken as well as the place branding of Nyköping. However, many concepts and models from research on branding are new to me making my pre-understanding well developed within this specific case, but rather moderate when it comes to specific models and theories.

My mother, Catharina Frändberg works with questions regarding regional development. For her, Ostlänken is a project that has been ongoing for several years. During this time she has continuously brought the discussion to the dinner table. Therefore, I already have some understanding of the challenges concerning Ostlänken.

Furthermore, I have over the years gained some insight about the different organisations that are to be studied in this thesis. Some of the insights derive from my own interests and experiences, while some have been given to me from my mother. For example, I performed my high school mini-internship at Regionförbundet Sörmland, one of the organisations contributing to this thesis.

Moreover, the place branding of Nyköping is something that I have seen being developed and expanded during the last 13 years. My perception of Nyköping’s brand is
mostly constituted by the municipality’s promotion campaign “Bo I Nyköping” which has been visible at subway stations and along the highway during the last ten years.

Concerning the topic in general, I have always had an interest in regional development and therefore read and listened carefully to subjects relating to this. Sometimes place branding is included within the topic of regional development. However, that is the only pre-understanding I have gained concerning this research topic.

3.5.2 Pre-understanding of Filip Ingelström
I am born and have grown up in a different geographical area in Sweden with the result that I have no previous experiences of Ostlänken and Nyköping. The only relation that I have to the region of Sörmland is that I have travelled through it a couple of times on my way up to Stockholm and further north, either by car or train. I have however spent three and half weeks in northwest of Sörmland during one summer but that was in an area that is not so much related to Ostlänken. This experience has resulted in me having no first hand experiences of the southeast part of Sörmland and Nyköping.

Nevertheless, one thing that I can relate to is the construction of Ostlänken. Not far away from where I have grown up in Skåne lies Hallandsåsen and the construction site of the Hallandsås-tunnel. Along with this construction are all the problems related to the building of the tunnel, creating an understanding of the potential problems that might appear with the up-coming construction of Ostlänken.

The concept of branding is something that I previously experienced sewn onto apparel, etched on a car or pasted on some sport products. All concepts and definitions are new to me in the sense that I only had a moderate pre-understanding of branding and especially the process of city or place branding. Other than that, everything is new to me and I can only imagine the challenges related to the place and brand development and construction of a railway.

3.6 Source Criticism
In the mind of the authors of this thesis, source criticism is an important aspect of creating credibility. The critic concerns primary sources and secondary sources. Both these sources have to be reviewed in the context of which contributions they deliver to the thesis. In general, the primary sources of this thesis will contribute with in-depth knowledge of the actual study. This in-depth knowledge originates from experiences rather than academic research. On the other hand the secondary sources presented in the thesis will deliver the academic value in form of theories, models and conclusion made of the research field in general.

Both the primary and secondary sources within this thesis will be analysed based upon four criteria’s presented by Edvardson (2003 pp.190-195):

1. Is the material genuine or falsified in whole or in part?
2. Is the material from a contemporary or present source or do it origins from an earlier source?
3. Is the material tendentious, biased or objective? If, is there a skewed sample or withholds?
4. Are there dependencies between materials, such so that one or more sources are taken from another?

The secondary sources of this thesis consist of books, articles and Internet sites, with the majority of information extracted from articles.
Peers have revised all articles used for this thesis and therefore one could argue that experts within the research area have criticised the articles. This does not mean that all sources automatically pass the four criteria’s presented above, but it is to some extent a guarantee of the quality of the articles. Therefore, we assume that the material of selected articles and books is genuine as a whole. The information extracted from Internet sources is about the region and the organisations relevant to the case of the thesis.

Furthermore all secondary sources are published during the last part of the last century up to the present. The exception are some seminal studies which are generally accepted by the academia such as widely recognised researchers for example Kotler within marketing and Patton within methodology. These sources are also strengthened in the thesis by the review of later sources covering the same topics.

The third and fourth criterion needs to be discussed more carefully. Since this is a rather new research area, it consists of a few studies with a strong influence on the development of the topic. This situation could possibly create a research that is perhaps not fully objective. However, several researchers quote one another within their research, this could create dependencies between the different articles and in the long-run results in a bias of the research area. Unfortunately, this limitation in credibility of our sources is difficult to evade since it stretches over the research area in general. Therefore, it also has to be kept in mind of the reader throughout this thesis.

The primary sources of the thesis are chosen because of their expertise within the specific case and for these sources criteria three and four are of most importance. Of course the primary sources of this thesis will be subjective since they are a part of the organisations explored. However, the authors of this thesis believe the impact of subjectivity is possible to decrease by interviewing several sources, which is the approach of this thesis.

Furthermore, Nyköping is a small city where all organisations and individuals are well aware of another and were dependencies exist throughout all the primary sources. This could create an environment during interviews where some information is withheld in order not to criticise another organisation or colleague. To solve this issue the interviewer has to be sensitive enough to pick up the nuances of the interview as well as skilled enough to ask the right questions. (Giacalone et al. 1997)

3.7 Presentation of Chosen Organisations and Region
Within this section of the thesis some basic knowledge of the region itself as well as the organisations, which have been interviewed, will be presented. This information is given so that the reader of the thesis is able to interpret the data collection within its context.

Nyköping is a city with about 30 000 residents, however Nyköping as a region is bigger and include around 52 000 people (Regionförbundet Sörmland 2013). Nyköping is located approximately one hour south of Stockholm and one hour north of Linköping. The infrastructure between these cities today is not able to provide service to the increasing amount of commuters. The infrastructure on a more general basis is well structured with a highway passing by the city, an international airport as well as a well-functioning harbour both for merchant ships as well as tourists. (Nyköping 2013)

Nyköping is a city with an old history and there are several sites left, which are potential tourist attractions. Furthermore, the culture of the city is expanding with the outdoor
theatrical play “Nyköping’s Banquet” performed every summer as the main act. (Nyköping 2013)

Starting in 2000, the municipally of the region have been running the promotion campaign “Bo I Nyköping” in order to attract new residents to the city (Nyköping 2013). They have been running this campaign with success and as Dyhre and Parment (2013 p.36) expresses:

“Nyköping is a good example of a town which during a long time has been branding themselves in order to attract new residents and preferably those in the right age. Many other municipalities’ emphasis is on couples in early middle age with children. Something Nyköping have been successful in recruiting. In this situation the migration contributes with an injection to the local labour market.”

The interviews in this thesis will consist of seven different organisations. The presentation of the organisations will be short, revealing the size, aim and customer segment of each organisation.

Almi
Almi is an organisation, which aims to improve the business innovation sector within Sweden. The focus is concentrated upon four different core areas, those are; business consulting, loans, venture capital and innovation. The state and regional public sector owns Almi. Almi Sörmland’s regional head office is in Nyköping where the majority of their personnel work but there are offices on several places across Sörmland as well. (Almi 2013)

County Administration of Sörmland
County administration of Sörmland is a state regulatory agency, which acts as the government’s representative within the region of Sörmland. At the county administration in Sörmland there are 200 employees and the aim of the organisation is to create a sustainable development within the region. (Länsstyrelsen 2013)

Municipality, Community planning department
The municipally of Nyköping is at present represented by Socialdemokraterna. The employees at the community-planning department to some extent answer to the requests of the local politicians. The work assignments for the community-planning department concern the construction and designing of buildings and infrastructure within Nyköping. (Nyköping 2013)

Nyköping-Östgötalänken AB
Nyköping-Östgötalänken AB is an association of interest created by stakeholders keen to see the building of Ostlänken come through. The association performs different assignments concerning Ostlänken and is lobbying for the construction of Ostlänken in general. The owners of the association consists of six municipalises as well as two regionförbund from Sörmland and Östergötland. (Ostlänken 2013)

Regionförbundet Sörmland
Regionförbundet Sörmland is a political organisation, which both have a commission given by the county council as well as a commission from the state. Furthermore it is a member organisation, which is working to please its members. The aim of the organisation is to achieve regional growth. Regionförbundet Sörmland consists of 17 employees. (Regionförbundet Sörmland 2013)

Sörmlands Turismutveckling AB
Sörmlands turismutveckling AB is a public member company with four employees. 35
percent of the company is owned by several county authorities and 65 percent by private owners. The organisation works toward businesses involved in the tourism sector mainly within the region of Sörmland. (Sörmlands Turismutveckling AB 2013)

Östsvenska Handelskammaren
Östsvenska Handelskammaren is one of 11 chambers of commerce within the Swedish boarders. Furthermore, Östsvenska Handelskammaren is a private and political unconnected member organisation for the regional business sector in Östergötland, Sörmland and Gotland. Through Östsvenska Handelskammaren the voice of private companies is channelled through to politicians and decision-makers. The organisation is mainly working to create a better business climate for its members and to help them develop their businesses, locally, regionally and internationally. (Östsvenska Handelskammaren 2013)

3.8 Interview Design
3.8.1 Sampling Process
As expressed by Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) sampling is an as essential step in the qualitative research as in the quantitative research. Therefore, it is important to define a sampling process suited for the type of research design and method conducted within this thesis. A general acceptance is that purposeful sample techniques are the most acceptable approach when conducting a qualitative research (Onwuegbuzie & Leech 2007; Patton, 1990). In a purposeful sampling technique interviewees are deliberately chosen with a specific purpose, for example they might possess specific information relevant to the thesis (Potter 1996). A purposeful sampling technique is used in this thesis.

In order to be able to conduct a purposeful sampling technique one has first to decide upon a sampling scheme as well as a sample size (Onwuegbuzie & Leech 2007). There are several different types of sample schemes, however not all of them are appropriate to apply to a qualitative research design. There are three different sample schemes, which are most commonly used for qualitative research designs, those are; critical case sampling schemes, typical case sampling schemes as well as maximum variation sampling schemes (Onwuegbuzie & Leech 2007; Potter 1996). The objectives between the different schemes are not the same and therefore there is a need to discuss each of the individual schemes before selecting one of them.

The objective of critical case sampling is to collect a small sample that "yield the most information and have the greatest impact on the development of knowledge" (Patton 1990 p.174). Furthermore, critical case sampling is adaptable to a qualitative research design (Onwuegbuzie & Leech 2007), since the sample size required for an accurate result is low (Sandelowski 1995). The objectivity of typical case sampling is concerned with the process of creating a sample as similar as possible to the overall population (Potter 1996). This is not the same process as that of a random sample but rather based on assumptions of the behaviour of the population and an attempt to copy those behaviours. However, this sample scheme is not perfectly suited for this thesis since the definition of the population is complex. The last sample scheme is that of maximum variation which is focused upon finding a high variety of interviewees in order to utilize the maximum amount of different experiences that the sample could consist of (Patton, 1990; Potter 1996). A drawback with this sample scheme is that it would require some basic knowledge about the interviewees before the sample is selected.

Based on the categorisation above, a critical case sample scheme was chosen in this thesis, but with the intention to create as high variation in the sample as possible.
However, if a decision has to be made between variation and value of the source, the amount of information possible to extract from the source will prevail variation.

As stated before, when applying a critical case sampling scheme the size of the sample could be kept rather low without losing its credibility (Sandelowski 1995). Sandelowski (1995) furthermore mentions ten as a critical number where other sources state that the size of the sample is dependent upon which type of research that is conducted (Onwuegbuzie & Leech 2007; Potter 1996). In regard to this information, a sample size of ten was chosen. However the respondent sample size eventually ended up consisting of seven interviewees from seven different organisations.

The sampling technique of this thesis originates from a quota sampling technique where interviewees are chosen based upon different criteria (Potter 1996; Bryman & Bell 2011). The quota sampling technique will allow the combination of a critical case sample scheme and a maximum variation sample scheme (Potter 1996). Within this thesis the criteria of which stakeholder group the respondent belong to be important. The stakeholder groups are divided into tourism, business sector and state authorities.

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<th>Stakeholder Group</th>
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<td>County administration of Sörmland</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Regionförbundet Sörmland</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Municipality of Nyköping</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tourism organisations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sörmlands Turismutveckling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The business sector organisations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nyköping-Östgotalänken AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Almi</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Östsvenska Handelskammaren</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Organizational identification

Furthermore the aim of this thesis is to reach a sample with a variety of demographics. This aim has in some aspects been achieved. The sample contains interviewees with a high variation of age. However male interviewees are more representative in the sample then female. Unfortunately this is an outcome when applying the critical case scheme. The aim has been to select interviewees based on the information they have available before the demographics of the respondent. The final sample is presented below.
3.8.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

The research in question is of such character that a semi-structured interview process is favoured. Gillman (2005 p.72) describes one of the strengths of the process as “it facilitates a strong element of discovery, while its structured focus allows an analysis in terms of commonalities.” The research intends to develop an understanding of the collaboration between different organisations with stakeholders’ interest as foundation. Therefore, a decision has been made to use a semi-structured interview guide in order to create some leeway for both interviewer and interviewee during the interview.

What is important though, is that the process is flexible and that it contains the main questions asked (Bryman & Bell 2011 p.467). This further opens up the possibilities of asking follow-up questions that has not been thought upon when conducting the interview guide. Furthermore, this research is set to be carried out by two individuals making it even more appropriate with a semi-structured guide not ‘locking-up’ the interviewers to specific questions with the consequence of not going to much in-depth (Bryman & Bell 2011 p.473).

Gillham (2005 p.76-79) lists five phases of the interview; preparation, initial contact, orientation, substantive and closure. The first phase involves the first step of the interview where the interviewee receives information regarding the research and time and place of the interview is decided. The following two phases contain information about the researcher and small talk. The third and fourth phase explains how the interview will be carried and the actual interview. The finally phase of closure is where the respondent is asked if he or she might think of something that has been missed in the interview. (Gillham 2005 p.76-79)

During the transcribing process it will be possible to follow the thematic parts of the interviews carried out and easily organise them in the analysis (Gillham 2005 p.75). This will further enhance the possibilities for the analysis to be as good as possible.

3.8.3 The Interview Guide

In order to carry out an interview that is of as low cost as possible and not time consuming, an interview guide containing the main questions is preferred. Since the interviews are carried at the interviewees’ work and during their regular job-hours.

Table 3. Interview Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Location (Nyköping)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-04-29</td>
<td>31 minutes</td>
<td>Sörmlands Turismutveckling AB</td>
<td>Ola Nilsson</td>
<td>Telephone Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-05-06</td>
<td>61 minutes</td>
<td>Almi</td>
<td>PG Nyberg, Magnus Tegerup</td>
<td>Västra Kvarngatan 62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-05-06</td>
<td>49 minutes</td>
<td>County Administration of Sörmland</td>
<td>Peter Eklund</td>
<td>Stora Torget 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-05-06</td>
<td>68 minutes</td>
<td>Nyköping- Östgötalänken AB</td>
<td>Göran Forssberg</td>
<td>Västra Kvarngatan 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-05-07</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
<td>Municipality of Sörmland</td>
<td>Anders Svedberg</td>
<td>Stora Torget 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-05-07</td>
<td>41 minutes</td>
<td>Östsvenska Handelskammaren</td>
<td>Marina Andersson</td>
<td>Västra Kvarngatan 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-05-08</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
<td>Regionförbundet Sörmland</td>
<td>Carina Jönhill-Nord</td>
<td>Västra Kvarngatan 64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
organising the interview is key. One could argue that they are giving up 45-60 minutes of their working hours to participate in this research.

Even though the language and jargon of the chosen topic are of keen knowledge of the researchers this might not be true for the interviewees. By providing the interview guide to the chosen interviewees in advance misunderstandings can be avoided and also provide better answers due to that the interviewees have spent more time reflecting on the questions (Gillham 2005 p.18; Bryman & Bell 2011 p.473-475). However, one drawback with this approach might be the lack of spontaneity in the given answers.

The structure of the questions is also of great importance in order to minimise scenarios of where the respondent is answering with either yes or no. Answers of that kind are of no help and might also create an end to further discussions that could have been relevant for the research (Bryman & Bell 2011 pp.251-253). The interview guide should therefore be seen strictly as a guide and the need to probe the interviewees for further questions could be relevant (Gillham 2005 p.70). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) has discussed this issue and emphasises the need for the interviewees to fully answer the question with their own words and further probe them if the answer is not satisfying.

More time and focus can be laid upon discussions and to encourage the interviewees to lead the discussion. It is interviewees that have the knowledge and it is therefore essential for the research that they are not interrupted when liberating their answers. The questions will be asked in Swedish due to the fact that all the interviewees, except one, have Swedish as their native language. There is however a translated version of the interview guide in appendix 1. Another reason to why the questions are asked in Swedish is that the answers will be more elaborate and extensive when given in a language that is more familiar to the interviewee. This could be a threat to the validity of the research but it is the authors’ belief that the benefits will exceed the disadvantages (Kapborg & Berterö 2002).

3.8.4 Ethical Considerations
As Bryman and Bell (2011) expresses there are four ethical considerations to keep in mind when performing business research. Those are; whether there is harm to participants, whether there is a lack of informed consent, whether there is an invasion of privacy and whether deception is involved. (Bryman & Bell 2011 pp. 128-138)

Of course the aim of this research is to harm none of the interviewees. The research question of this thesis does not concern a topic delicate to the interviewees but rather an issue, which opens up for the interviewees to discuss future development. The interview guide will encourage interviewees to be self-critic but will not concern questions of delicate nature. However, all interviewees will be given the choice to be anonymous, private as well as organisational.

Furthermore the topic of research will openly be explained to the interviewees who also will be given the research question of the thesis as well as the purpose of the thesis. Since the approach of this thesis is to inform the interviewees about the research topic and provide the research guide before the interview there will not be any reason for the interviewees to feel deceived.

Concerning the possible invasion of privacy this is an issue that have to be treated carefully. The interviews will be held at the offices of the interviewees and during their working hours. Furthermore, the intention of the interview is to keep it rather formal and only concerning topics about the research. However, we have to be careful when expressing the scope of the study to the interviewees. Nyköping is a small town and the
probability is that interviewees know each other and the different organisations. The data and information given from each interviewee must be kept by the authors’ and not be given to other interviewees since it might harm their privacy as well as the result of the interview.

3.8.5 Transcribing and Analysing Interviews

The interviews will be recorded and transcribed in order to ease the analytic process of the gathered data. Since the interest is in what the interviewees says, it is important to fully understand what has been said in the interviews in order not to take the answers from its context. Due to the physical limitations that might occur from the researchers’ part during the interviews the recorded material can help correct these limitations and help provide a more in-depth understanding of what was said in the interviews (Heritage 1984 p.238; Bryman & Bell 2011 p.481).

In order to easier follow the questions asked by the interviewer only answers related to the questions asked will be transcribed. This will also be done in order to save time since transcribing is a time-consuming process. It is not suitable to let someone else other than the researchers transcribe the interviews due to the lack of context of the discussed materials in the interviews (Gillham 2005 p.123). Furthermore, the length of the transcribed material will be decreased making it easier to directly find the interesting points in the material gathered in the interviews (Bryman & Bell 2011 pp.483-485). This might result in the loss of some analytic parts since all the gathered data will not be transcribed. However, this is something that has been discussed between the authors that this loss will not be as significant since both has been present at the interview creating an understanding at that time as well.

When writing the transcripts, an initial first analysis is conducted creating an overall feeling of what the transcripts contains and what the interviewees has said (Gillham 2005 p.125). Gillham (2005 p.130) describes a process of editing the transcribed material as a thematic analysis creating a transcript that is clearer, faster to read and grasp and consist of the interviewees’ own words. This will enable the researchers to get a head start on the analytical part of the thesis and easier follow the gathered data that has been screened to make it easier to write the analysis.

3.9 Thematic Network Analysis of Qualitative Data

Traditionally, qualitative research analysis is associated with an inductive analysis approaches such as grounded theory and general inductive approach (Thomas 2006). The thematic analysis is also a research method closely related to qualitative research, however not as well investigated and used as the grounded theory approach (Attride-Stirling 2001; Marks & Yardley 2004).

The thematic analysis method is a practical way to analyse large amounts of text since it applies the method of coding and capturing the codes within the context of text (Attride-Stirling 2001; Marks & Yardley 2004). Or as Attride-Stirling (2001 p.388) expresses “the thematic analysing method provides a technique for breaking up text and finding within it explicit rationalizations and their implicit signification.”

The thematic model that will be used for this thesis is that of thematic networks. The reason is that the thematic networks model is designed in a non-hierarchal way which allows the researcher to observe the dynamics within the analysis (Attride-Stirling 2001).

The model is divided into six steps, which are conducted in order to create three different types of themes by using coding as a tool. The narrowest of the themes are
called basic themes and on their own they give little information about the text in general. However in interaction with other themes the basic themes show the nuances of the data. The organisational themes are the themes that connect the basic themes with each other and are usually defined as an attribute or category of some sort. An example of an organisational theme is cohesiveness or collaboration. The global themes are the most general and tell us what the text as a whole is about within the context of a given analysis. These three themes interact together displaying different depth of the analysis. A text can contain several networks whereas each global theme creates its own network. (Attride-Stirling 2001)

Figure 4. Thematic Network (Attride-Stirling 2001 p. 5)

The six steps within the analysis process are performed during the data analysis starting with the first step, which is coding (Attride-Stirling 2001). The coding process is conducted in order to limit the amount of text and should be based upon the research question (Marks & Yardley 2004). Furthermore, the aim of coding is to notice patterns in the text and to divide data into different categories (Mark & Yardley 2004). To view the codes of this thesis, see appendix 2.1.

The second step within the thematic network analysis concerns defining and refining basic themes based upon the extracted codes (Attride-Stirling 2001). Going through the amount of text belonging to each code should result in extracted themes, which are “specific enough to be discrete and broad enough to encapsulate a set of ideas contained in numerous text segments” (Attride-Stirling 2001 p.392).

The process of constructing and arranging the networks is the third process (Attride-Stirling 2001). The basic themes are to be arranged into cohesive groups. Each cohesive group will eventually end up being a separate network, but first the organisational themes have to be drawn up to find patterns in the basic themes (Attride-Stirling 2001).
In the fourth step each network should be described and explored within the analysis (Attride-Stirling 2001). In this step of the process the researcher should return to the data collection and try to connect the networks with examples from the empirical study (Attride-Stirling 2001).

The fifth and sixth step concerns summarizing the networks as well as interpret the networks. This part of the process concerns the final part of the analysis and should in short highlight the essential information given from the analysis (Attride-Stirling 2001).

The steps of the thematic network analysis will be followed in the analytical work. One of the challenges with adopting the thematic network analysis to this thesis will concern the coding of the transcribed material. The reason for this challenge to occur is that the interviewees of this thesis belong to different stakeholder groups and therefore perhaps will express the same things with different words as well as in different contexts.
4. Empirical Foundations

In this chapter, relevant information and extracts of importance for this thesis from the interviews will be presented. The information presented about each respondent will be given from a perspective which is aiming to answer the research question as specifically and extensively as possible.

4.1 Almi – PG Nyberg, Magnus Tegerup

PG Nyberg has been working at Almi since the middle of the 1980’s. He is set to retire from Almi in the near future and he has, from his own perspective, worked with almost all small- and medium-sized companies in Sörmland. The interview took place in one of Almi’s conference rooms at their Nyköping headquarter. About 45 minutes into the interview Magnus Tegerup, executive officer for Almi in Sörmland, walked in, contributed for the rest of the interview and presented his view on some of the questions. Whether or not the appearance of Magnus Tegerup have affected the quality of the data is difficult to evaluate. However, the atmosphere of the interview was changed. Other than that, the interview was not interfered during the session.

PG Nyberg starts out by presenting the work description of Almi and specifies the three areas they focus their organisational work on: business counselling and finance, innovation and special counselling for businesses started by immigrants. The intention of Almi is to, as PG Nyberg expresses: “create economic growth in small- to medium-sized businesses in Sörmland, that is our one and only goal”.

Almi in Sörmland only works with companies in that region, even though they are a part of Almi Stockholm in what PG Nyberg says is strictly philosophical. One of the financers of Almi in Sörmland is Regionförbundet Sörmland which is not interested to see their money being spent in Stockholm and vice versa. This fact has resulted in a good collaboration with Regionförbundet Sörmland. Furthermore, Almi’s only focus concerns the business sector, as PG Nyberg states: “more successful companies that is what we want”.

When asked what is important from a small business owners’ brand perspective PG Nyberg answers that there is differences between entrepreneurial traditions in this country depending on the entrepreneurial structure. He further explains that Nyköping has had a mixture of businesses as well as a tradition of white-collar workers at official institutions: “there has been a tradition of small businesses…it is important for a city’s brand that there is a good business culture, a spirit, a good business climate”.

This is more extensively explained when he says that it is important to have diversified businesses and “a mixture of the best fertilizes, that is, what I think makes a place attractive for occupancy.” PG Nyberg continues on this track by talking about the importance of having a pleasant city centre that is nice, since the younger generations of today is expecting so much more. PG Nyberg explains this reasoning by stating: “It is very important to have a nice environment and nature since the people of today has travelled so much more and therefore set demands on the place they call home.”

PG Nyberg further discuss the importance of having good communications to and from Nyköping, that it is only 100 km to Stockholm and the closeness to Skavsta. He reasons that these are advantages of Nyköping. However, PG Nyberg believes that the advantage of Skavsta has not been utilized to its fullest potential. He further elaborates his thoughts by saying that it is not Nyköping you fly to, but to Stockholm. PG Nyberg also express: “It is an advantage with an airport for Nyköping, of course, but not to the
**extent that it could be.**” Other advantages mentioned are the highway that goes through Nyköping, as well as the rich history of Nyköping with a famous castle and a rich nature with many manors throughout the region.

PG Nyberg answers that it is the closeness to Mälardalen and Stockholm Almi markets with Sörmland: “that is one hell of a strength.” He additionally discuss the advantage of being physically close to Stockholm and that he believes that advantage stretch to a 100 km limit. Nyköping lies within this limit giving the city an advantage against Norrköping that lays 50 km extra from Stockholm. “Then it is how you take advantage of this benefit that is another thing. They have tried to use this benefit with ads in the subway ‘live in Nyköping’. It is based on this principle of closeness, commuting is possible.” According to PG Nyberg this closeness has resulted in a higher amount of established white-collar businesses in Nyköping, which have their end-customers living in Stockholm and “there is no need to be in an expensive office in Stockholm”.

Since Almi is the only whole operator of business support in Sörmland, their brand has always been strong but only for those who has worked with them. PG Nyberg is however aware of the challenges and says that “we must always fight to keep our brand strong, we cannot relax and we must continuously work with it.”

Almi has not focused any attention to market Ostlänken since it is to unsecure. It has been up for discussion for so long. PG Nyberg is of the impression that since it is not decided where it shall be constructed, there are no arguments for marketing it. When Ostlänken is finished though, PG Nyberg says: “it will be an even greater argument to live in this area and work in Stockholm or in Linköping or Norrköping.” PG Nyberg and Magnus Tegerup further discuss the advantages and disadvantages with the airline Ryanair with the conclusion that there is an advantage being close to Skavsta, a transport hub.

When it comes to the current marketing effort of highlighting the archipelago and the nature performed by the municipality of Nyköping, PG Nyberg is not to positive, He expresses that: “Everyone says ‘come to Sörmland, it is so beautiful and we have an archipelago’. So do other places.”

The last 5-10 minutes of the interview went in a direction towards the benefits of living in an environment safe for children to grow up in. An issue that is highly important for families with children. PG Nyberg also says: “I cannot see any disadvantages with building Ostlänken, there are only benefits.” This goes along with Magnus Tegerup saying: “it is the closeness to Stockholm that is a strength.” However they both highlight that the ticket cost for travelling cannot be too expensive, since it would jeopardize the competitive advantage of Ostlänken. Furthermore, both PG Nyberg and Magnus Tegerup finish with stating that it is important to find out what Ostlänken means for each target group in the region. Since each target group in the region is attractive from their own perspective.
4.2 County Administration of Sörmland – Peter Eklund

Peter Eklund works for the county administration with question concerning regional development connected to the county council in Sörmland. Peter Eklund himself states that he has an academic knowledge about place branding and its components. The interview with Peter Eklund took place at his office at the county administration of Sörmlands building and was conducted without any disturbance.

Peter Eklund starts by discussing the history of selling a place and that Sweden in general was quite late with this concept: “The municipalities had almost nothing. It was the county administration that were in charge of developing the region.” Peter Eklund further discusses that as with everything else there are trends in branding. Peter Eklund also expresses that: “at the moment it is arenas, and you think that Bruce Springsteen will come and play every week at every place and that is a little bit doubtful.”

Peter Eklund connects his reasoning about trends with the new interest of building railways. In the early 1990’s Sweden had not built new railroads for almost a century and now suddenly, within a span of twenty years, there are two new railway systems, Svealands-banan and Botnia-banan. State authorities were not able to assess the need of travelling. An external consultant was asked to estimate the travelling volume with an efficient railroad between Eskilstuna and Stockholm, his estimation was 824 percent plus. The answer from the state authorities were ‘no way, that is impossible’: “the travelling volume increased by 860 percent with the impact that the traffic on the roads were less.” Peter Eklund further elaborate this discussion by saying: “when a region is getting closer through communication an interaction of closeness is created.”

Peter Eklund discusses, since less time is spent today on working and more on living, people have a tendency to be drawn towards an attractive environment. This tendency could be explained by having good infrastructure, but that in itself is not enough according to Peter Eklund: “It is not beneficiary to have a fast train if it is not running. There are other things to it as well, such as how many stops are there, how many travellers can you possibly attract, etc. But of course, it is positive to have good infrastructure.” A further problem with Ostlänken according to Peter Eklund is the long political decision process and that it has been up for discussion for such a long time that people have grown tired of it: “People have moved to Nyköping due to the railroad, but then it is not there.”

When asked about the benefits with Ostlänken Peter Eklund answers that it would provide Nyköping with a qualified market and that it will be good for the area, but that no one knows how good it will be. According to Peter Eklund: “it all depends on what is done here, if the opportunity is seized. Being fast is not enough, you have to deliver a good city or place as well.” This argument is further developed when Peter Eklund talks about whom Nyköping are trying to attract. Different segments demand different things and have different needs. He asks himself: “How complex can a place be?” Nowadays there are several comparisons in many fields making it important to know what you are providing as a place. Nyköping of today sells a “single beautiful portrait along the lake, the loneliness. They are not selling a normal life.” He continues with giving the advice that Nyköping must further define what characteristics they are selling.

Peter Eklund discuss the difficulty of branding: “I believe that you should not just sell yourself but also show what you got. Highlight your assets...show the dynamic.” One of the assets Nyköping has according to Peter Eklund is the closeness to Stockholm and Mälardalen and realise that we are a part of Stockholm. Furthermore, he says that you have to be sure that you provide things that you know are good, which are getting
increasingly more demanding all the time: “Skavsta has had a great impact, it shall not be minimised that within 10 minutes you can be on an airplane. Or that after 10 minutes you are home again.”

Since Peter Eklund is working for the county administration, he is well aware of the collaborative difficulties and challenges of the public sector: “Currently I experience that local and regional operators sometimes agree and sometimes goes different ways...It is not obvious that local and regional strategies are in line with each other.” This explanation originates from the conclusion that during the last 20 years he has been part of developing five different tourism strategies together with other regional operators. Every time they have all agreed and then in the end it has all been disintegrated.

Peter Eklund has been a part of the process of developing a strategy of how to measure the level of attraction for the region. Politicians argued that they wanted residents and only residents since it is from whom those taxes are generated. Peter Eklund argues that: “by focusing only on residents you are being vulnerable. The dynamic in Sörmland and Nyköping has changed and people commute to the more qualified jobs and that it is important to have a strategy for both the simple and qualified jobs.” When asked if Ostlänken will further enhance this strategy Peter Eklund answers that people will have access to a greater labour market which will make a winner out of Nyköping, but he is not sure what kind of winner: “it is not bad to have good communications, not at all. As long as the costs related are reasonable and that the trains are on time.”

The interview finish with Peter Eklund once again emphasising that it is important to make sure what context that is formulated and also to what extent a context can be formulated. Currently the focus of the promotional campaign is ‘live in Nyköping’: “It is difficult to sell a place since you are in a social setting. It is an interaction with the region and the municipality.” The last thing Peter Eklund says is that it is important to have a lot of contacts in different areas and places because they can be helpful.

4.3 Nyköping Municipality – Anders Svedberg

Anders Svedberg is working for the municipality of Nyköping as a strategic planner. His job is to do the strategic planning for housing, schools, play areas as well as dealing with civic strategic questions within the municipality. Anders Svedberg and his unit are also working with Ostlänken as a part of coordinating the project, producing statistics and conducting other intelligence that could be of interest for the municipality in their strategic projects. The interview took place in a conference room at the town hall without any distractions.

The day before the interview was conducted, a decision regarding an exhibit of the future of Nyköping had been taken in order to show the residents of Nyköping the local plan of the future including Ostlänken. Related to this new developed plan of Nyköping, Anders Svedberg is asked if the new plan will result in any conflicts of interest. He answers that “it is always, always a conflict”. However he further expresses that it is impossible for the municipality of Nyköping to satisfy everybody at the same time.

The aim of the plan “…is based on the fact that Ostlänken will be constructed, and all the effects that will follow with it, an increased appeal for Nyköping, that more people would want to move here.” Anders Svedberg bases this argument of an increased appeal by drawing a parallel to Västerås and their development with their fast railroad connection to Stockholm stating that: “you can see that the travelling and that the migratory streams have increased.” With increased opportunities for commuting the
conditions of living in Nyköping will expand, but not necessarily the conditions of working in Nyköping. It will only take about 40 minutes either way to Stockholm and Linköping creating an attractiveness to live in Nyköping. The housing need connected to these migratory streams will be followed with a need to construct around 450 houses per year. Anders Svedberg explains this growth as a consequence of Ostlänken:

“Ostlänken is such a powerful motor and it means so much for peoples ‘everyday life’ that it has a difference of how people behave and where they decide to settle.”

When Anders Svedberg is asked what kind of factors he believes will make Nyköping attractive, his immediate response is availability. He connects this reasoning with the fact that every citizen’s time is precious. In relation to the citizen’s economy every other practicality in the citizen’s life is also important. Anders Svedberg does not think that Nyköping is neither better nor worse than other cities with a similar distance to Stockholm and he further says that “Nyköping exist, where it is located, what it stands for. That is our brand.” He elaborate his answer by saying that Stockholm is the attracting force and that the ‘daily life’ is a part of the decision of where to settle. He associates this reasoning with a fruit basket and that everybody is not interested in apples and that some might want the bananas. Therefore, Nyköping is not competing with major cities like Stockholm, New York and London. Instead he say that some people want to move home to mom and are therefore choosing between Gnesta, Västerås and Nyköping.

Anders Svedberg is certain that the branding process is a long continuous process and that it is important how you foster your brand. He continues this argument by describing that the brand should be so established within the mind of the reader that the association should pop-up immediately. This association should be the factors that Nyköping communicates in their marketing, more specifically: “the communication between the nature and the human.” Anders Svedberg says that the current marketing is directed towards dynamic and active people and “that there should be something, something possible to compare against others with, Nyköping shall be an alternative.” Anders Svedberg connects this to trends in branding and he further says that it is difficult to do a correct assumption of the up-coming conditions.

During the interview a discussion regarding Ostlänken’s attraction as part of something bigger came up. Anders Svedberg argues that he could not see Ostlänken as a part of a social trait, created to be an attraction in itself. Ostlänken is only planned to be a tool of travel and commuting, connecting Skavsta with Landvetter and Arlanda. Ostlänken will only be attractive from a travelling perspective. The strength will lie in that Skavsta and Nyköping will be an inter-modal hub for travelling, creating: “a stronger brand. It is better for the brand that you are available. Live in Nyköping because you have everything 2-3 hours away.” Anders Svedberg is however clear with the fact that it is the need of the municipality’s vision, which is fundamental in the whole process, and that further expansions are planned but not accounted for at this time.
4.4 Nyköping-Östgötalänken AB – Göran Forssberg

Nyköping-Östgötalänken AB was represented by their chairman, Göran Forssberg, who previously was the councillor for the municipality of Nyköping for more than 15 years and has been advocating for the construction of Ostlänken for a long time. It was also Göran Forssberg who made sure Ryanair was established at Skavsta airport in the 1990’s. The interview with Göran Forssberg took place in a closed conference room without any distractions.

Göran Forssberg starts out by describing that Stockholm has been important for Nyköping during a long time. Furthermore, he explains that he was commuting to Stockholm in the early 1980’s and that he then bought a yearly travelling card for around 5-6000 SKR with SJ. During his years commuting, he had a more comfortable commute with a similar travelling time as his friends and colleagues who were living in Stockholm. When he entered the municipal politics he brought his experiences with him creating a vision where good communications would be great for Nyköping and be a “part of the place brand.” Göran Forssberg argues that Nyköping cannot use place brand associations which are not compatible with the actual features of the city. Instead the focus should be upon what attributes that could make Nyköping competitive. During the late 1980’s the traditional employers in Nyköping downsized, but Nyköping did not lose that many residents and many of them ended up working in new constellations.

Göran Forssberg explains that: “Despite all setbacks, Nyköping was quite strong in many positions...but we were not expanding in the pace that we needed.” Göran Forssberg elaborates this reasoning by saying that it was the lack of higher education and the fact that it was not as accessible. This was one of the problems for lack of expansion. He further says: “the future labour market was probably going to be in Stockholm and Linköping, so our ambition had to be to facilitate communications between Nyköping and these places...and that Nyköping has a lot to win on creating a lot of contacts.” Furthermore Göran Forssberg reflected that Skavsta, in the early 1990’s, could have been seen as a trait of advantage or as a load, but Nyköping decided to see it as a mean to “travel out in the world.”

Göran Forssberg further states the advantages of living in Nyköping by saying: “In Nyköping it is possible to combine the best and most of your life. Having the opportunity of being both locally close and being in that environment where most things are happening in Sweden and abroad, near you with the airport.” Connected to this philosophy of living in an area where there are many opportunities is an encouragement of working in Stockholm, but living in Nyköping with everything that is related with lower costs and a better social life.

The idea with Ostlänken is to connect the cities included in ‘the passage of knowledge’ which are Uppsala, Stockholm, Nyköping, Norrköping and Linköping due to the many universities in this area. The connection between these cities was further expanded with the establishment of Ryanair making it possible to connect the external environment with Nyköping by several communication systems. The idea behind Ostlänken is established regionally with collaboration between the different municipalities and the business sector with emphasises on the other available infrastructure systems such as the airport, highway and deep-water harbour. Göran Forssberg expresses: “The physical conditions that exist here are unique. There are not many municipalities that have all these infrastructural system such as, airport, harbour and highways. Here it all connects so it would be stupid not to use this possibility.”
Göran Forssberg finish the interview by discussing the opportunities that the region will have with Ostlänken and how “it enables a better future for us all.” He was clearly expressing that there were issues concerning collaboration but that no part had anything to gain by not collaborating.

4.5 Regionförbundet Sörmland – Carina Jönhill-Nord

Carina Jönhill Nord is mostly working with questions regarding infrastructure in the region making her well aware of the research question and the problems related to it. The interview with Carina Jönhill Nord took place in her office at Regionförbundet in Nyköping and it was conducted without any disturbance.

Carina Jönhill Nord starts out by briefly describing Regionförbundet Sörmland and their work in Sörmland. Regionförbundet Sörmland is a regional liaison organ consisting of the nine municipalities in Sörmland as well as the regional county council and has a strong political management. She clarifies that: “the goal with our organisation, is to make our work as focused as possible in the sense that we only work with questions regarding the business sector, infrastructure and communication.” Carina Jönhill Nord explains that Regionförbundet Sörmland only works with question of these matters, since it is the request of the political management of the members. She explains that: “it is regarding questions where the municipalities are too small. The single municipality is too small to discuss infrastructure since it often involves roads and railroads through several municipalities.” The overall goal with Regionförbundet Sörmland is to create an enhanced region or as Carina Jönhill Nord says a strong and good region. This goal can be hard to achieve in a region that is so geographically divided. Northeast of Sörmland is integrated with Stockholm, Southwest of Sörmland is linked to Norrköping and in the north Eskilstuna and Strängnäs see themselves as part of Västerås and Stockholm. This condition has resulted in a weak regional constellation.

When asked what it is that makes Nyköping stand out from similar cities with a similar distance from Stockholm, Carina Jönhill Nord says that all cities possessing a competitive advantage because of its location have this advantage due to the fact that its location connects it to another place. In the case of Nyköping, the place is Stockholm, as she phrases “it is Stockholm that is the hub in this country”. Furthermore she expresses that: “when it comes to its location, Nyköping has to create strength from within in order to be competitive.” Carina Jönhill Nord elaborates this reasoning by stating that Nyköping has a high potential of development due to its relative closeness to a great labour region. She further expresses that the closeness to a great labour region which is Nyköping’s competitiveness.”

Regionförbundet Sörmland does not highlight the nature and tourism in their place brand management. Instead their focus lies on strengthen the region and showing “the possibilities with transport, both for people and for goods.” Carina Jönhill Nord is convinced, from her opinion, that there is little that is making Nyköping more attractive than Eskilstuna and Strängnäs. However, discussing the construction of Ostlänken, she emphasises that there must be a purpose behind it: “It is not enough to say that we are next to the sea, there must be a labour market, there must be jobs.”

Furthermore, Carina Jönhill Nord says that the communication is something that must be solved “in order to find something that works in the everyday life that is what it is about.” When discussing communication she include the surroundings such as a good station area, kiosks, parking’s, etc. She however expresses that designing the surroundings of Ostlänken is the responsibility of the municipality of Nyköping. Carina Jönhill Nord is perhaps not as optimistic as other stakeholders in the region for how
Nyköping will benefit from Ostlänken. The main track of Ostlänken is planned to go through Skavsta and in this discussion Nyköping is considered secondary, which is not highlighted in the media discussion: “You have to see what is realistic, which is the national perspective since it is national money put in.”

Carina Jönhill Nord says that the current train traffic is not financially durable in Sörmland. It takes full trains at all times to make it financially durable, but the current mind-set in Sweden is that “the train is full when everybody has two seats for themselves. We need to reach a critical mass of travellers.” She continues discussing how Skavsta and Ostlänken could be developed in the future and the significance for Skavsta with a direct train connection: “You can never design a system of communication from the perspective of infrequent travellers. Communication systems are based from the daily life of commuters.” Since Skavsta is home of a low price air operator, Ryanair, the costs by travelling with the up-coming train will be a question as well: “In the end, the cost of the train ticket to Stockholm must not be more expensive than the plane ticket.”

When Carina Jönhill Nord is asked about the overall brand of the region she says that the brand is not that strong. She explains this reasoning by saying that the region is divided into three different labour markets resulting in a lack of coherence. She follows this argument by saying: “Work for a connection with the surrounding world. Our goal is to emphasise jobs and education. We talk about education, improvement of skills and the possibilities of travelling. That is our brand.” Since Skavsta is closely connected to Nyköping, Carina Jönhill Nord thinks that there should be a more distinctive use of Skavsta in the municipalities work: “Really focus on what Nyköping shall be, how you will strength it all and not get lost.”

Carina Jönhill Nord finishes the interview by saying that “infrastructure in itself is not enough, there must be something to interchange with”. This theme is followed throughout the interview with Carina Jönhill Nord. She is careful to highlight that there must be a sense of realism and that you do not get carried away with what she calls “...the romance of train.”

4.6 Sörmlands Turismutveckling – Ola Nilsson

Ola Nilsson have been the CEO of Sörmlands Turismutveckling for many years. The interview with Ola Nilsson was conducted by phone since he was going to be away in Germany on a business trip when the rest of the interviews were to be held in Nyköping. By holding the interview over phone it was possible to ensure that we were not interrupted. However, it also resulted in a shorter interview than the rest of the interviews with perhaps not as extensive answers.

Ola Nilsson starts by describing the organisational features of Sörmlands Turismutveckling and explains that 65 percent of the organisation is owned by the private economy in the region and 35 percent owned by different county authorities. He further explains that the goal with Sörmlands Turismutveckling is to be a “business development organisation, aiming to develop the companies in Sörmland to get better at meeting their customers.” Sörmlands Turismutveckling has a business-to-business approach and aims to “make sure that these companies earn money from the end consumer, the tourists.”

When asked about the factors making Nyköping attractive Ola Nilsson explains that there are mainly two things making Nyköping competitive. The first one is the position: “You are positioned in relation to railroads, airport and highways. You are located
very close to Stockholm, not just Stockholm. Nyköping is wedged in the ‘golden
triangle’, 30–45 minutes to the south are two big cities with university and other things,
Västerås to the northwest and Stockholm to the east.” The second thing in his opinion is
the water: “Think about the water from the perspective of transportation, the role in the
landscape and all the possibilities with a harbour, for example seaside restaurants. You
could live by the water, paddle, swim, fish, and it seems like everything is possible. In
the wintertime, there is ice-skating and ice sailing. The water and the location makes
Nyköping geographically competitive.”

Ola Nilsson further elaborates this reasoning by discussing Skavsta and the many
travellers of the airport. It has lots of potential, and it is “incredibly important to find
the tools to make the travellers stay.” Ola Nilsson further explains that Sörmlands
Turismutveckling work with the international market and especially two main countries,
Germany and Great Britain: “we talk about the location of Nyköping. That it is close to
Stockholm and that one hour from Stockholm’s city centre, there is the nature with
paddling, horseback riding, swimming, fishing, basically any outdoor activity.” The
whole concept of being close to the nature was something that Ola Nilsson emphasises a
lot.

Ola Nilsson explains that there previously has been a close collaboration in the region
and that the collaboration concerned questions regarding the place brand development
of the region. However, at present, Sörmlands Turismutveckling cooperate with
Regionförbundet Sörmland to create an expanded international destination to double
tourism within the next ten years. However Ola Nilsson wants an increased cooperation
in the future with the building of a strong place brand from an international perspective.
He expresses that there previously have been discussions about developing a stronger
place brand and that these discussions fell apart. He connects this reasoning by saying
“the identity is currently not that strong in this region, here is people from all over.”
Ola Nilsson express that it is Stockholm that is the pulling factor in the area “because it
is Stockholm people know about.”

Ola Nilsson thinks that Ostlänken will expand Sörmland’s geographical area. He further
believes that they will be able to offer tourist attractions like Göta Kanal and in the
long-run Gothenburg. He discuss the possibilities of integrating Gothenburg with
Stockholm and in between the whole region of Sörmland. According to Ola Nilsson this
is further connected to the fact that within an hour from Skavsta there are 300 million
possible tourists. Ola Nilsson finish by discussing the importance of using the
possibilities that will follow with Ostlänken: “I believe that east- and the middle of
Sweden shall grow together and we have to visionary describe what we want to do.”

4.7 Östsvenska Handelskammaren – Marina Andersson
Marina Andersson is employed by Östsvenska handelskammaren and is responsible for
several projects of development throughout the regions of Östergötland, Sörmland and
Gotland. The interview with Marina Andersson was conducted in her closed office and
the interview took place without any disturbances.

Marina Andersson starts by describing the work of Östsvenska Handelskammaren and
its structure. Östsvenska Handelskammaren is a political uncommitted organisation that
is owned by and working for its members’ interests. The members and thereby owners
are approximately 700 companies in Östergötland, Sörmland and Gotland. The
organisation works toward an international commerce and especially for and with
companies working with export and import.
Marina Andersson views Ostlänken as something that will benefit the whole region of Sörmland and not just Nyköping. She continues by expressing that it will be easier for young people to go and study in Linköping. This reasoning connected with the benefit of only being about an hour away from Stockholm makes it easy to commute and still live in Nyköping. Marina Andersson further discusses the nature, but express that the nature alone is not enough to make people move: “We have the nature, it is beautiful with the forest and open spaces, we have this. But we must also have accommodation, the schools must be good in order for young people with children to move here.” Furthermore, marina Andersson emphasise the importance of children’s happiness: “If the children are happy then the parents are happy.”

According to Marina Andersson, Nyköping’s advantage is that it has the ability to stand out on a personal level. Nyköping has the nature with the archipelago and the sailing possibilities in the summer. This geographical personality connected to the location of Nyköping creates a good place brand which is further enhanced with the construction of Ostlänken. It will only take 40 minutes to be either in Stockholm or Linköping, “the world is shrinking.” Marina Andersson argues that this is something used as an argument for companies to establish in the region. She emphasises that it is close to railroads, the harbour and Skavsta: “When I think about Skavsta and Ostlänken, then Skavsta is number one and Ostlänken is number two. Without Skavsta, Nyköping would never have experienced the growth it does.”

When asked if Östsvenska Handelskammaren cooperate with other organisations in the region, Marina Andersson express that there must be cooperation: “You have to cooperate, we live in a common world and we are all dependent on cooperation between each other.” Marina Andersson further express that when Östsvenska Handelskammaren promotes the region they emphasise infrastructure and the available communications. Additionally Marina Andersson expresses that she believes Östsvenska Handelskammaren has a strong brand.

The available communication will be increased since it will be 25 minutes less time of travel to Stockholm. Combining the fact that accommodation is cheaper in Nyköping with increased communications, will make people in their working age move to Nyköping in order to “see a future for their children’s growth.”

Marina Andersson finish the interview by discussing the importance of doing a proper segmentation and ensuring that the targeted customers have been approached in a good way. Today she is of the opinion that the present marketing campaign, conducted by the municipality, only focus on the nature and that this focus might not be right for everyone. Marina Andersson furthermore express that there is a need to “…market yourself much more modern.” In her opinion, this responsibility lays on the municipality and it is their job to ensure that every marketing campaign is performed cohesively throughout Nyköping to make sure that everybody is aligned.
5. Analysis and Discussion

This chapter will present the analysis based upon a thematic network method. The empirical data has been divided into four global themes: place brand identity, multiple stakeholders, physical function and place brand management. The outline of the chapter will be based upon these four global themes. The networks are displayed in appendix 2.1, where it is also possible to view the organisational and basic themes and their connections within each network. The basic themes of each organisational theme will be discussed within a context rather than being presented one by one.

5.1 Place Brand Identity

Based on the analysis of data, the first global theme is place brand identity. Place brand identity has four different organisational themes, which are geographical conditions, availability, drawbacks, and culture and history. All of these themes are closely connected to place brand identity and place brand image.

However, one important consideration related to this global theme is whether the basic themes of this network express a place brand identity or a place brand image. As it was defined within the theoretical framework, brand identity concerns the internal process of how a brand is perceived within an organisation or as in this case how a place brand is perceived (Hankinson 2010; Kavaratzis & Hatch 2013). At the same time, place brand image was defined as how a place brand was perceived from an external perspective (Hankinson 2010). A reflection to consider is whether the interviewees considered themselves to be part of an internal process of branding Nyköping or if they thought that the attributes of the city were something not controlled by the interviewees themselves or their organisations.

Since this reflection was not highlighted by the interviewees of this thesis, some assumptions have been made about it. The probability is high that the view upon place identity and place image varies between interviewees as well as between the discussed themes. Therefore, the conceptualisation of place identity presented by Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) as a dynamic process created by the interaction between internal and external views, has been adopted in order to analyse the basic themes.

The interviewees had a surprisingly cohesive view upon which attributes that was creating the greatest competitive advantage for Nyköping. This is notable when viewing the basic themes of the thematic network, since the network is constructed of repetitive patterns within the data. A cohesiveness concerning tangible attributes was to some extent expected, since many of them are inevitably obvious such as nature, history and location. An interesting question is how these attributes become so inevitably obvious among different stakeholders. Anders Svedberg gives an explanation to people’s perceptions of these attributes by concluding that branding is a long ongoing and continuous process, which if well performed should create strong associations that should occur immediately in the minds of people. This is further enhanced by Göran Forssberg who discusses that Nyköping’s location in relation to Stockholm has been of importance during a long time. The same situation is true for the history and nature of Nyköping, which are somewhat changeless attributes of a place. This discussion is also performed by Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013), who highlight the importance of having an ongoing process of place branding.

However, some of the interviewees gave contradictory answers resulting in contrasting basic themes as well, such as “in comparison to other places close to Stockholm the
position of Nyköping is nothing that affects the competitiveness of the place” and “a beautiful nature is not enough in itself to differentiate the place”. These basic themes highlight an important issue about place branding, namely branding is a process performed in order to gain competitive advantage against competitors (Wood 2000). There is no reason to use brand attributes that do not help a place to differentiate themselves against its competition. As Carina Jönhill-Nord expresses, “when it comes to its location Nyköping does not stand out, Nyköping has to create strength from within in order to be competitive”. Furthermore PG Nyberg expresses that “everyone says ‘come to Sörmland, it is so beautiful and we have an archipelago’ so do other places”.

These statements prove that the interviewees have a basic relevant awareness regarding the process of branding. However, the statements also highlight a dilemma in the place identity process of Nyköping. Even if nature and location are expressed as strengths of Nyköping, the same interviewees also question the relevance of these attributes. It leads to the question whether these attributes are inherited as important or if they are adopted upon old habits.

The intangible attributes including availability and social factors result in a rather cohesive overall place identity, even though the opinions varied among the individuals concerning the intangible attributes. Noteworthy, the fact was that different organisations prioritised attributes differently depending upon which stakeholder group they belonged to. For example, Anders Svedberg working for the municipality of Nyköping expressed that the most important attribute for Nyköping was too be attractive for its residents. PG Nyberg, representing Almi, on the other hand highlighted the business climate as one of the main factors for Nyköping’s competitive advantage. The data shows that place branding and place identity, even if they are very cohesive, always will contain differences between stakeholder groups. This finding corresponds to the result by Hankinson (2010), Hanna and Rowley (2011) and Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013).

By combining the interviewees’ attitudes toward the place brand of Nyköping, it was possible to design an overall place brand identity by using the model concerning attributes of brand identities developed by Merrilees et al. (2012). In this thesis, the original model had to be modified to present the most commonly expressed attitudes among the stakeholders toward the place brand of Nyköping (see Table 4). Three of the attributes has been modified in order to cover a broader area of interest. The changed attributes refer to nature, which has been modified into physical traits, transport has been modified into infrastructure and cultural activities has been modified into cultural traits.
Table 4. Attributes of Nyköping’s brand identity (modified model)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business opportunities</th>
<th>Physical traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good business climate</td>
<td>Attractive nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship opportunities</td>
<td>Natural wonders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good place to do business</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social bonding</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good for families</td>
<td>Diversity of communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural diversity</td>
<td>International airport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe environment</td>
<td>Road network adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasant environment</td>
<td>Deep water harbour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural traits</td>
<td>Brand attribute to living in the city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural events and festivals</td>
<td>Proud to live in Nyköping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich history</td>
<td>High lifestyle value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building cultural value</td>
<td>Good reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport complex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Brand attitude to doing business in the city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good business network</td>
<td>Nyköping has a good reputation among businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply chain needs are easily met</td>
<td>Attitude to Nyköping as a brand for business is positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources are available</td>
<td>Overall evaluation of Nyköping as a brand for business is good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One interesting notion to the developed place brand identity of Nyköping is that all the interviewees had a very positive view upon the place brand identity of Nyköping and the values of the place brand.

5.2 Multiple Stakeholders

The analysis show that the second global theme is multiple stakeholders. The intention with this section is to explore perceptions of different stakeholders’ position and to highlight complexities within the place branding process. This part of the thesis is strongly connected with collaboration and place brand management, which will be further developed within the place brand management part. The organisational themes related to multiple stakeholders are: tourism, the business sector and segmentation.

In general, the position of each stakeholder varies. Furthermore, each stakeholder’s position could be defined by formulating what segment each stakeholder targets, what kind of benefit the organisation aims to deliver to its own stakeholders and what view each stakeholder group has on its own brand.

Within this thesis three types of stakeholder groups have been analysed: tourism organisations, business organisations and state authorities. Which segment each stakeholder group target depends upon the organisation. The interviewees from the
tourism- and business organisations are mainly targeting business-to-business organisations, while the target segment of the state authorities is more complex. For example, the municipality of Nyköping works toward the local citizens and the county administration by commission of the government.

However, one similarity between the stakeholder groups is that they have a strong developed business-to-business structure within their organisations. This conclusion could become an advantage when trying to evaluate the connection between the different stakeholder groups.

As Payne et al. (2004) defines, organisations could have different purposes towards their stakeholders and segments. Payne et al. (2004) has divided the purposes into two core sections, either the organisations aim to increase the financial benefits for their stakeholders or they are aiming to maximize the social benefits for their stakeholders. The interviewees of this thesis have different aims, which are rather complex. First of all, Almi, Sörmlands Turismutveckling and Östsvenska Handelskammaren are kind of member organisations that aim to create financial benefits for their members. At the same time, Regionförbundet Sörmland is a member organisation as well, consisting of municipalities and counties. Consequently, their aim could be considered to be to maximise the social benefits for their members. The same aim could be said about Nyköping-Östgötalänken AB whose owners are consisting of several municipalities and regional councils. Furthermore, both the municipality of Nyköping and the county administration of Sörmland are political organisations whose aim is to maximise the social benefits of their residents. Furthermore, these different stakeholders might emphasise different aspects of the place brand.

In order to understand the position of each stakeholder, the view that stakeholders have upon themselves must be explored. In general, the stakeholders’ consider their brand to be strong, as Marina Andersson, expresses “I believe that Östsvenska Handelskammaren has a strong brand.” However, Ola Nilsson states that perhaps the overall tourist brand of the region is not as strong as it could be and that there is still room for improvements.

Understanding the position of each stakeholder is essential when exploring the complexities of dealing with multiple stakeholders in the process of place brand management. The high variation between the organisations’ segments and their aims could possibly make it troublesome to reach the cohesiveness within the place brand management proposed by Hankinson (2007). Therefore, the view by Merrilees et al. (2012) that harmony is to be strived for between multiple stakeholders, is adopted in this thesis.

The conclusion is that each stakeholder has their own individual position, which varies from other stakeholders. However, in order to create a place brand in harmony, these different stakeholders have to cooperate for developing harmonised brand attributes compatible with the overall place brand of Nyköping. This fact is something that the interviewees are aware of, as Anders Svedberg expresses “it is important to market the city from its context”. The interpretation this thesis has made about each stakeholder’s position is presented in Table 5.
Table 5. Elementary organisational positioning of multiple stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Stakeholder group</th>
<th>Target segment</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Perception of own brand</th>
<th>Open for cooperation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Almi</td>
<td>Business sector</td>
<td>Business-to-business</td>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County administration</td>
<td>State authorities</td>
<td>Citizens through state</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality of Nyköping</td>
<td>State authorities</td>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyköping-Östgötalänken AB</td>
<td>Business sector</td>
<td>Business-to-organisations/business</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regionförbundet Sörmland</td>
<td>State authorities</td>
<td>Organisation-to-organisations</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sörmlands Turismutveckling AB</td>
<td>Business sector</td>
<td>Business-to-business</td>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Öst-Svenska Handelskammaren</td>
<td>Business sector</td>
<td>Business-to-business</td>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3 Physical Function
The analysis showed that the third global theme concerns physical functions of the place. The theme, physical function, consists of four organisational themes, which are Ostlänken, Skavsta, infrastructure and communications. The basic themes concerning physical functions treat challenges and advantages related to infrastructural questions.

The infrastructural component of building a place brand is presented by Hanna and Rowley (2011) and highlights both tangible and intangible attributes connected to infrastructure. However, the interviewees did not find the intangible attributes of infrastructure as important as the tangible attributes of the new railway. As Anders Svedberg stated, Ostlänken is not planned to contain any social traits, but rather be a mean of transportation. However, Carina Jönhill-Nord expressed that the everyday life surrounding the railway is of high importance, but that she thought the consideration of social traits connected to the railway is the responsibility of the municipality. One reason for the lost focus of intangible traits could be that the project is still in its starting position and that the interviewees at present prioritise more practical questions such as the route of the railway.

All the interviewees considered infrastructure as an important part of a place brand. They mentioned infrastructural systems such as the highway and the harbour as attributes which strengthen the place brand of Nyköping. However, the two infrastructural systems that created the most discussion among the interviewees were those of Ostlänken and Skavsta. As Anders Svedberg expressed “the strength will lie in Skavsta.” Furthermore both Anders Svedberg and Carina Jönhill-Nord stress the importance for the place brand of Nyköping to connect the airport with the railway. This statement is clarified by the basic theme “To connect Ostlänken with Skavsta is of high importance in order to differentiate Nyköping’s brand.”
Furthermore, the general opinions of the interviewees was that a high variation of infrastructure creates a greater advantage to places like Nyköping and that the infrastructure in itself has a strong significance to places. However, Peter Eklund states “it is not beneficiary to have a fast train if it is not running.” This argument indicates that infrastructure has to be combined with communications in order to be beneficial. This is further developed by the basic theme “An efficient communication service provides improved opportunities of reach.” This theme enables to combine communication with availability.

The importance of availability in the eyes of the interviewees has already been discussed concerning place brand identity and can be summarised by the statement made by Anders Svedberg; “It is better for the brand that you are available. Live in Nyköping because you have everything 2-3 hours away.” Furthermore, the interviewees argue that the ticket cost for travellers should not be too expensive. If the costs are too high, travellers may perhaps choose to travel with other transportation system or even worse, choose not to settle in Nyköping, since the commuting facilities will be too expensive.

The importance of infrastructure is stressed both by previous studies, Hanna and Rowley (2011), as well as by the interviewees. However, the interviewees emphasise specific issues, which have to be managed in order for infrastructure to create competitive advantage. These issues are not compatible with the model of Hanna and Rowley (2011). Therefore, an alternative model has been created by the authors of this thesis as a result of the data analysis.

Figure 5. Attributes influencing Infrastructure (own model)
5.4 Place Brand Management
The fourth global theme established by the analysis is that of place brand management. Place brand management consists of three organisational themes, which are conflicts of interest, collaboration and place branding.

Within this thesis place brand management have been divided into two sections. The first section concerns how each individual organisation manages their own place brand. The second section concerns how different stakeholders collaborate in order to create a harmonised place brand of Nyköping. In order to create a harmonised place brand each stakeholder has to be aware of their own organisational position and place brand management. Furthermore, it is necessary to consider each organisation’s position in order to develop a place brand identity. An initial attempt to define each stakeholder’s organisational position has been performed in the global theme about multiple stakeholders. However this thesis will not cover the process of refining each stakeholder’s organisational position and therefore not their place brand identity.

The reason for this choice is that place brand identities and organisations positions’ are something that has to be performed within the organisation. As Hankinson (2010 p.303) expresses: “(Brand Identity is) knowing what the brand stands for from the company’s perspective.” However, an assumption has been made that each stakeholder has an individual organisational position as well as a place brand identity. Furthermore, there are differences and similarities between the different positions and identities and the aim should be to establish a harmony rather than cohesiveness among the different stakeholders.

An organisation’s place brand identity is an ongoing and dynamic process (Kavaratzis & Hatch 2013), which should be integrated in the place brand management process. This relationship is defined in the model by Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) showing how place branding shadows the identity process. The continuousness of the model is showed by the red infinite sign in the model in order to stress the importance to view branding as a never-ending and ongoing activity.

![Image of the model](image-url)

Figure 6. Identity-based Place Branding (Kavaratzis & Hatch 2013 p. 9) (own modification)
According to Kavaratzis and Hath (2013) this process consists of both internal and external forces. However, the complexity of place branding makes the line between internal and external forces difficult to define. Who are responsible for expressing the place brand? Which people and organisations are considered to be external? These types of questions are a part of what makes place branding such a complex process.

However, the complexity could be minimised by having each organisation responsible for creating their own individual place brand identity. By using this approach each place brand is internally expressed to impress external people and organisations specific to their individual place brand. Thereafter, a coordination of each organisation’s individual place brand identity could be performed in order to create a harmonised overall place brand.

To coordinate multiple stakeholders’ different perception of Nyköping’s place brand is a complex process. The stakeholders in this thesis are well aware about the challenges of cooperation, as Anders Svedberg expresses “it is always, always a conflict”. Furthermore, Göran Forssberg concludes that there is sometimes a conflict of interest between regional and local organisations. Something that is further developed by Ola Nilsson and Peter Eklund who argue that the difference in interests between regional and local organisations exists due to the fact that Sörmland as a region has a weak constellation with many collaborations across the county boarders.

All interviewees express that it is important for their organisations to collaborate with other organisations. The basic theme “We collaborate with other organisations” together with the collected data, indicate that there is already a close collaboration between the different stakeholders studied within this thesis. However, this collaboration does not stretch to include branding issues. On the other hand, the fact that there already is an existing collaboration between different organisations is positive, since it is probably easier to integrate the process of branding in an already existing network.

From the interviews, two important facts were extracted. First, the regional organisations do not believe that the marketing campaign of Nyköping, performed by the municipality, is cohesive with the picture of Nyköping that they think would create competitive advantage. Secondly, other organisations as well as the municipality themselves, believe that the municipality of Nyköping should be responsible for the place brand process of the city. As Marina Andersson expressed, this responsibility lies on the municipality and it is their job to ensure that every marketing campaign is done coherently among the stakeholders and ensure that everybody are aligned.

These two facts indicate two important issues. Firstly, there is a lack of communication, concerning place brand questions, between the municipality and the regional organisations. Secondly, there is cohesiveness in the opinion about which organisation that is responsible for the communication.

Based upon these facts it is possible to adapt Hankinson’s (2007) five principal factors to how a place brand should be managed. Those are (1) strong visionary leadership, (2) a brand-oriented organisational culture, (3) departmental co-ordination and process alignment, (4) consistent communications across a wide range of stakeholders, (5) strong compatible partnerships (Hankinson 2007).

As the interviews indicated, it is the municipality of Nyköping that shall be responsible for the process of coordinating the place brand. This is also the solution that would be the most appropriate, since the municipality of Nyköping has a more centralized focus of the place in comparison to the regional organisations whose focus is spread over
several municipalities. The principals of Hankinson (2007) should be kept in mind when designing the structure of the coordination. The interview with Göran Forssberg, former municipality councillor, indicates that the municipality of Nyköping already has a place brand-oriented organisational culture as well as a visionary leadership. Therefore the focus of the coordination would be to deliver these strengths to other stakeholders with interest in the place brand as well as integrate other organisations’ strengths and visions of interest to the municipality. The core focus should lie upon oral and written communication. There are several ways to strengthen this communication between the different organisations and the evaluation of the different approaches is not covered within this thesis. However it feels essential to highlight the importance of face-to-face contact when communicating visions and approaches to place brand management.
6. Conclusions
In this chapter the findings of this thesis will be presented and give the reader a coherent understanding of the research topic discussed throughout this thesis. A model combining the findings and reflections will also be presented in order to further enhance the results and provide the reader with a better overall picture of what has been found after conducting this study.

6.1 General Conclusions
The purpose of this thesis was to develop a deeper understanding about how different stakeholders perceive the place brand identity of Nyköping as well as how they collaborate within the place branding process. This understanding was viewed in the context of future improvements of infrastructure.

Furthermore, this thesis was written with the intention to explore three different core areas of place branding: place brand identity, multiple stakeholders and infrastructure. The topic of this thesis, combining three different components of place branding, had not yet been explored in previous research and opened up for new discoveries concerning the complexities of place branding.

In order to achieve the purpose of this thesis, a theoretical framework gave an overview of prior studies. The theoretical framework was divided into four sections discussing each element of the place branding process. Many of the findings from previous research have been possible to adapt to this study while some models had to be revised in order to explain the data collection. One example of such an alternation is the infrastructure model produced by Hanna and Rowley (2011), which did not conform to the statements made by the interviewees.

The findings of this thesis show that the brand identity of a place is more complex than that of an organisation. By using the attributes of place brand identity designed by Merrilees et al. (2012), it was possible to categorise the perceptions of each stakeholder and create an overview of the place brand identity of Nyköping. However, the data collected showed that each stakeholder had a different view upon what type of place brand identity Nyköping has. These findings show that the interaction between place brand identity and multiple stakeholders is a complex process.

Furthermore, when it comes to the challenges of coordinating multiple stakeholders within a place branding process, the positions of multiple stakeholders can be assessed by considering two areas. The first area concerns each stakeholder’s own position while the second area concerns how multiple stakeholders coordinate their organisations. The need to explore both areas was important since if an organisation does not know itself, it is not going to be able to cooperate with others within the place branding process.

In addition, the findings indicate that infrastructure is an important part of place branding. A view that all the interviewees agreed upon during the interviews. The thesis uncovered four additional core values of infrastructure, which were not presented by Hanna and Rowley (2011) in their infrastructure model. Therefore, an alternative model was designed by the authors of this thesis in order to explain the components of infrastructure. The model highlights the four components which are, variation, availability, communications and costs.

Finally the thesis had a specific focus upon multiple stakeholders in the place branding process. The most important theories presented within the theoretical framework were
the model concerning place brand identity and place branding by Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) as well as the five principals about corporate branding and place branding by Hankinson (2007). These two models discussed place brand management from an internal perspective. However, the findings of this thesis yields that the complexity of place branding makes it necessary to differentiate the two models and use them with two different objectives. The models by Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) should be used internally by each separate organisation. In comparison, the five principals of Hankinson (2007) should be used as a tool to increase the collaboration between different stakeholders within place branding. Based upon the collected data, it was possible to draw the conclusion that today few of the organisations actively worked with their own place brand identity with the exception of the municipality of Nyköping. It was also possible to make the conclusion that today there is a limited collaboration between the different stakeholders concerning place branding issues. However, the good climate and high collaboration between the organisations regarding other topics gives a positive indication that a future collaboration concerning place branding issues is possible.

By discussing these themes one by one it has been possible to create a deeper understanding of each of the core areas separately. Furthermore, negative as well as positive aspects of the present interaction between the different areas have been discovered. By combining the findings with already existing theories and models it has been possible to develop a new model (see Figure 7). This model shows how each area interacts with one another and how this interaction should work in order to harmonise a place brand among multiple stakeholders.

![Figure 7. Infrastructural Influences on the Brand Management Process Concerning Multiple Stakeholders (own model, Karin Frändberg & Filip Ingelström)](image)

The infrastructure section of the model is exquisitely based upon the findings of this thesis. The reason to propose an alternative model concerning infrastructure rather than use an already existing model is that the results of the study were very cohesive concerning the importance of these four components of infrastructure.

By adopting the approach suggested by Hanna and Rowley (2011) saying that infrastructure together with place brand management creates a place brand identity, the proposed model connects the identity-based place branding model designed by Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) with the new infrastructure section. By combining the identity-based place branding model by Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) with infrastructure, it is possible to highlight the importance that infrastructure has upon each
stakeholder’s place brand identity. The model further shows that identity-based place branding is a process, which should be managed separately by each organisation. The reason is that place branding is a complex process and before starting to coordinate stakeholders, it is important that each stakeholder has an individual ongoing place brand identity process.

The next step is to coordinate the place brand identities of multiple stakeholders. Within this part of the process it is important that there exist a clear leader to coordinate different stakeholders. Whether this leader is a single organisation or a joint work group, consisting of several organisations, depends upon the situation. Within this thesis, all interviewees considered the municipality of Nyköping as the natural leader of place branding issues concerning Nyköping. This coordination should be based upon the five principals of coordination by Hankinson (2007) and focus upon communication, exchange of knowledge as well as visions.

By applying the proposed model of infrastructural influences on the place brand management process concerning multiple stakeholders, it is possible for Nyköping to create a place brand with the possibility of adapting it to multiple stakeholders’ place brand identities. Furthermore, the model manages to show the impact that infrastructure has on the place brand management process. The model highlights that the place branding process should result in a harmonised place brand rather than a cohesive place brand.

The thesis fulfil its purpose, namely it has been possible to reach a deeper understanding about how different stakeholders perceive the place brand identity of Nyköping as well as how they collaborate within the place branding process. Furthermore, an original model, based upon previous research as well as the empirical data, has been designed in order to explain each core area of place branding as well as their interaction. This illustrate the findings of the thesis. However, in order to be able to call it a holistic model further research in addition to this study has to be performed. Nevertheless, the purpose of this thesis can be considered to be reached.

6.2 Managerial Implications

The findings of this study have enabled the authors of this thesis to propose a model showing how infrastructure affects the place branding process. The proposed model could be used by the organisations within Nyköping as a guideline to their place brand management. Some organisations, such as the municipality of Nyköping will benefit from the proposed model as a whole, including questions about coordination of multiple stakeholders’ place brand identities. For the municipality of Nyköping, the biggest concern is to be able to attract regional organisations to be a part of the place branding process of Nyköping. This suggestion might be troublesome to implement, since many of the regional organisations work with several different municipalities at the same time. Therefore, the municipality of Nyköping has to highlight how particularly important the place brand of Nyköping is to the region of Sörmland, when trying to attract the regional organisations to be a part in the place branding process of Nyköping.

To organisations such as Östsvenska Handelskammaren and Sörmlands Turismutveckling the proposed model gives further advantages. Since they are member organisations they in their turn have to coordinate multiple stakeholders in order to create a harmonised place brand identity within their own organisation. By using the proposed model, their internal place brand identity could be defined, which further would be enhanced in the place branding process of Nyköping.
To organisations with a regional perspective, for example, Almi, Regionförbundet Sörmland and the county administration, the proposed model will also concern the process of developing an internal place brand identity. Since many of the interviewees working at regional organisations expressed that Sörmland, as a region, lacks coherence; it is important for each organisation to internally define how they perceive their individual place brand identity. This process is important for these organisations, since all of them aim to contribute to the regional development within different segments. However, the place brand identity for these organisations concerns Sörmland as a region and is not focused upon any individual municipality.

Despite their focus upon the region as a whole, the regional organisations could benefit from being a part of the place branding process of Nyköping. The process of the proposed model will enable the individual organisations to acknowledge each other’s individual views upon the place brand identity of Nyköping. By giving attention to the differences between the place brand identities among the organisations, it is possible to start a discussion regarding how these different perceptions can be integrated into a harmonised place brand of Nyköping, as well as the region as a whole.

Last of all, the proposed model highlights the importance that infrastructure has for the place branding process, regardless of what stakeholder group the organisation is part of. This study emphasises the importance of considering infrastructure when developing a harmonised place brand.

6.3 Truth Criteria

The most significant challenge when conducting a qualitative research is to create a study that can be replicated and is rigorous enough in its confirmation. Whittermore et al. (2001 p.522) suggests that there is a clear distinction between primary and secondary validity in a research. Primary validity consists of authenticity, credibility, criticality and integrity, which are all important factors when conducting a qualitative business research (Whittermore et al. 2001 p.522). Secondary validity consists of explicitness, vividness, creativity, thoroughness, congruence, and sensitivity according to Whittermore et al. (2001 p. 522). These factors are not as essential in a research as the primary validity factors but there importance shall not be diminished when conducting a research. Guba and Lincoln (1994 p.114) support this claim by stating that with a constructivist research two criteria are important such as trustworthiness and authenticity. Trustworthiness is divided into credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability in Guba and Lincoln’s work (1994 p.114). These criteria’s are much alike the truth criteria that Whittermore et al. (2001) propose.

Credibility and authenticity are closely related to each other whereas credibility is used to create a sense of confidence in the research that has been carried out (Whittermore et al. 2001 p.530). In order to establish confidence for this study all interviewees were asked if they wanted to look through the transcribed materials before it was published. All interviewees, except for one, turned down this opportunity granting the authors of this thesis with their approval to use statements that has been said during the interviews. All interviewees expressed an interest to see the results of this study.

This further leads to the question of authenticity and the need for the interviewed person’s expressions and quotes to be a reflection of themselves and their roles in their organisations. Since not everything is expressed with words only, it is important to be reactive to changes in for example the tone and volume of the interviewees’ voice (Whittermore et al. 2001 p.530). This fact has been taken into consideration and been highlighted in the transcribed interviews. For example, laughter has been noted in the
written text in order to understand the overall atmosphere better. Throughout this thesis there has been an extensive use of the transcribed interviews in the form of quotes from the interviewees. This use has been done in order to reach a better understanding of what the interviewed persons actually expressed and therefore directly and indirectly have answered.

Throughout the whole process of reviewing previous literature, designing the interview guide, writing the methodology, conducting the interviews and analysing the data a high degree of criticality have been kept by the authors of this thesis. This has been done in order to discover any contradicting nuances, find biases and most importantly not to prompt the interviewees. Whittermore et al. (2001 p.531) writes that open inquiry, high degree of reflection and having a critical analysis contribute to a critical validity in a research. Criticality was used when conducting the interviews in order not to prompt the interviewees to any distorted answers. In order to keep a high degree of reflection throughout the process of writing the thesis, the material has been viewed several times within different time frames. This procedure has been done to enable the authors’ time to reflect upon their material and findings.

Since everything that is related to the interviews has been transcribed in detail, it has been easy to return to the material and clearly establish what was said during the interviews. This process was done in order to be able to interpret everything correctly and understand if it was valid for the outcome of this research (Whittermore et al. 2001 p.531). Repetitive checks from the transcriptions have further established that the interviewees’ words has been correctly understood and used in a way the interviewees intended.

Prior to the interviewing process there was a fear that the interviewed persons were not going to be keen to participate in the interviews. Trying to avoid this, Karin’s mother, Catharina Frändberg who works at Regionförbundet Sörmland, has helped the authors to contact the interviewed persons. It could be argued that using this approach has created a bias, but since Catharina Frändberg is not in an executive position for the interviewed persons in six of the seven studied organisations, the belief is therefore that this bias cannot be strong, if it exist at all. Catharina Frändberg has only been of help when initially approaching the interviewees.

6.4 Limitations and Future Studies
The authors of this thesis acknowledge that it is impossible to cover all topics of a research field within the same thesis. Therefore, this study contains both limitations and suggestions for future studies.

When designing this study one major limitation was not to include the political aspect when exploring the interaction between different stakeholders within the place branding process. The decision to not include political challenges was made in order to get a more coherent and exact view of the research question without the politic issues influencing it. If politics had been included, the focus upon the three core areas chosen for this thesis had been challenged, creating conflicts of interest.

Therefore, future research can explore how politics influence the place branding process. Multiple stakeholders can be affected by the politics performed within the place. It would be interesting to investigate how the relationship between organisations and politics affects the place brand management process.

This thesis was limited to conducting a qualitative study. This research approach enabled the authors to develop a deeper understanding about the place branding process.
However, studies focusing on the same research topic as the thesis could be used as a base in order to perform a quantitative study on the residents of Nyköping. This thesis had a managerial focus. Asking questions using a deductive strategy in order to gain knowledge about general perceptions in the community, would be another interesting viewpoint. Such a study could be focusing more on the image of the place rather than the identity of the same place. Future research could be conducted in order to gain knowledge of what the people living in a place feels about the attributes of the place. This research could thereafter be implemented in order to examine the relationship between place image and place identity.

Another limitation of this study relates to its choice of context. Since this research focused on a specific place the model proposed in this research is suitable for the purpose of this thesis and the context of Nyköping. The proposed model is designed upon the data collected within this study. Future research could be performed in order to test the model further and discuss whether the model used in this study could be applied to other contexts. Furthermore, the organisations selected to this study might influence perceptions and experiences of the interviewees about place branding. Future studies are recommended to explore other organisations, their segments and their perceptions about the place branding process.
List of Reference


Appendix

1. Interview Questions

Questions regarding Ostlänken and the brand Nyköping

The purpose with this thesis is to create an understanding between how different actors within the region work to create a cohesive brand for Nyköping. As base for our thesis, we use Ostlänken and its significance for the region of Nyköpings brand. The questions are asked in order to gain a deeper understanding for how the municipality, business sector and tourism sector work in questions regarding branding in relation to Ostlänken.

1. Please tell us about your organisation and what the goal is with it?
2. What are the factors that make Nyköping competitive?
3. What factors (infrastructure, nature, etc.) do you focus upon when you market the region (Nyköping)?
4. How do you cooperate with other actors (politicians, the business sector, etc.) regarding the building of a stronger brand for the region?
5. How is your brand generally seen in the region?
6. Are you working at this moment with integrating Ostlänken in your marketing projects?
7. How will Ostlänken change the brand of Nyköping?
8. Do you believe that you will work differently with your marketing and branding when Ostlänken is constructed?
2. Thematic Analysis

2.1 Coding manual

1. Nature
2. Transport
3. Business Environment
4. Culture
5. Attraction
6. Young people
7. Collaboration
8. Branding
9. Disagreement
10. Communications
11. Infrastructure
12. Proud to live in Nyköping
13. Availability
14. Education
15. Security
16. Location
17. Business sector
18. Tourism
19. Regional/local
20. Accommodation
2.2 The Thematic Network

Global Theme - Place Brand Identity

- **Org. – Geographical conditions**
  - **Basic Theme**
    - Nyköpings position towards Stockholm makes it attractive.
    - Nyköpings geographical position creates opportunities.
    - The nature surrounding Nyköping is an important factor of the place brand, Nyköping.

- **Org. – Availability**
  - **Basic Theme**
    - The fact that Nyköping has a high availability makes it competitive.
    - Ostlånken will increase Sörmlands’ availability.

- **Org. – Drawbacks**
  - **Basic Theme**
    - In comparison to other places close to Stockholm the position of Nyköping is nothing that affects the competitiveness of the place.
    - A beautiful nature is not enough in itself to differentiate the place.

- **Org. – Culture and History**
  - **Basic Theme**
    - Nyköping has a young atmosphere.
    - Nyköping has a strong culture.
    - The history of Nyköping makes the place attractive.
    - The tradition of entrepreneurship makes the place attractive.

- **Org. – Social Factors**
  - **Basic Theme**
    - Nyköping offers a safe environment.
    - For Nyköping to be competitive it is important to provide good schools.
    - It is attractive to live in Nyköping.
Global Theme – Multiple Stakeholders

- Org. – Tourism
  - Basic Theme
    - Tourism has a weak brand position within the region.
    - A communication system cannot be designed from an infrequent travellers perspective.

- Org. – Business Sector
  - Basic Theme
    - To be competitive a well functioning labour market is required.
    - Nyköping has a good business climate.

- Org. – Segmentation
  - Basic Theme
    - It is important to market the city from its context.
    - The target group varies depending on what organisation you work for.

Global Theme – Physical Functions

- Org. – Ostlänken
  - Basic Theme
    - Ostlänken is already integrated in our organisational projects.
    - Ostlänken is built to be an extension of Skavsta.
    - Ostlänken will strengthen the brand of Nyköping.

- Org. – Infrastructure
  - Basic Theme
    - Infrastructure has a strong significance to places.
    - Infrastructure should not be too expensive.
    - It is an advantage for the place of Nyköping that the region has a high variation of infrastructure.

- Org. – Skavsta
  - Basic Theme
    - Skavsta is of high importance for Nyköping.
    - There is a conflict of interest between Skavsta and Nyköping.

- Org. – Communication
  - Basic Theme
    - Good communications is essential to access places.
    - An efficient communication service provides improved opportunities of reach.
Global Theme – Place Brand Management

- **Org. – Conflicts of Interest**
  - **Basic Theme**
    - There is a conflict of interest between local and regional operators.
    - Sörmland has a weak non-coherent identity.

- **Org. – Collaboration**
  - **Basic Theme**
    - It is important to collaborate.
    - We collaborate with other organisations.

- **Org. – Place Branding**
  - **Basic Theme**
    - The municipality and other organisations within the region do not agree how to brand Nyköping.
    - It is hard to find a coherent view of a brand.
    - The municipality of Nyköping is responsible for the place brand.