A large, leafless tree stands in the center of a field. The tree has a thick trunk and many bare branches. In the background, a house is visible through the trees. The ground is covered with dry grass and fallen leaves. The sky is overcast.

A Good Life for All

**Essays on Sustainability
Celebrating 60 years of making
Life Better**

Arne Fagerström and Gary M. Cunningham, Editors

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Atremi

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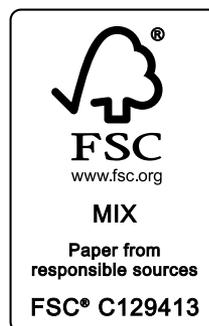
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Chapter Nine

Sustainability of world heritage: who inherits the ownership of decorated farmhouses of Hälsingland?

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Abstract

This chapter discusses sustainability of Sweden's most recent World Heritage (WH) site, the Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland. A general overview presents what WH is, why it is special and why it should be preserved for future generations. The views of WH farm owners on managing a WH site and how they feel about the task have been assessed. WH must be preserved for future generations and it is necessary for the farms to interact sustainably with their local communities. Most WH farms are privately owned and have been within the same family for centuries. Will this continue in the future or are there problems with succession?

World heritage sites

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is an agency of United Nations (UN) that has a purpose to contribute to peace and security by promoting international collaboration through educational, scientific and cultural activities in order to increase universal respect for justice, the rule of law and human rights along with fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the United Nations Charter. In 2016, UNESCO has 195 member states and nine associate members. It has five major programmes: education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture and communication of information (UNESCO 2016).

UNESCO sponsors projects in literacy, technical and teacher-training programmes; international science programmes; the promotion of independent media and freedom of the press; regional and cultural history projects; the promotion of cultural diversity, translations of world literature, international cooperation agreements to secure the world cultural and natural heritage such as WH Sites and to preserve human rights and attempts to bridge the worldwide digital divide. UNESCO is also a member of the United Nations Development Group (GHF 2016).

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UNESCO's aim is "to contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information". Other priorities of the organization include attaining quality education for all and lifelong learning, addressing emerging social and ethical challenges, fostering cultural diversity, a culture of peace and building inclusive knowledge societies through information and communication (GHF 2016).

There is a special programme, the UNESCO World Heritage Education Programme, initiated as an UNESCO special project in 1994 that gives young people a chance to voice their concerns and to become involved in the protection of common cultural and natural heritage. The programme seeks to encourage and enable tomorrow's decision-makers to participate in heritage conservation and to respond to the continuing threats facing WH (GHF 2016).

Young people learn about WH places, about the history and about the traditions of their own and other cultures, about ecology and sustainable development and the importance of protecting biodiversity. They become aware of threats facing places and learn how the international community as a whole unites to save its common heritage. Most importantly, young people discover how they can contribute to heritage conservation and make themselves heard. The project has been of great inspiration and of great importance for many young people.

What is a world heritage?

From the 17th century, since the Enlightenment, it is possible to speak of national heritage. It has been used to strengthen local historical roots and national identity. The ideas behind WH are not new. WH is a legacy from the past, what people live with today, and what they pass on to future generations. Cultural and natural heritage are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration (UNESCO 2016). Education on WH and ideas behind it are therefore crucial to coming generations.

In 1972, various international bodies united to draw up the WH Convention that was designed to provide a way for international cooperation to protect cultural or natural places identified as outstanding universal value (OUV) so future generations can enjoy them. WH sites are places such as a building, city, complex, forest, lake, monument or mountain that are listed by UNESCO because they are of special cultural or physical interest and also of importance for all humanity. In this context, OUV is what truly determines whether or not cultural or natural heritage can obtain the status of WH. UNESCO defines OUV as follows:

Cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity. As such, the permanent protection of this heritage is

of the highest importance to the international community as a whole. (UNESCO 2005)

It is therefore OUV that places a heritage site on the UNESCO list and makes the difference whether or not another heritage site is on the list. WH is of great importance for humanity and other ordinary heritage might not be significant.

Each member country that has agreed to the WH Convention has to abide by duties that the convention mandates (UNESCO 2015):

- Identify potential sites and the states' role in protecting and preserving them.
- Pledge to conserve WH sites and protect their national heritage.
- Encourage integration of protection of cultural and natural heritage in regional planning programmes.
- Establish staff and services for the protection, conservation and presentation of their sites.
- Undertake scientific and technical research that makes it possible to counteract dangers that threatens heritage.
- Adopt a policy that gives each heritage site a function in the life of the community.

The WH site has to fulfill demands from UNESCO by regular evaluations and periodic reports; otherwise, it will lose this status and privileges that come along with the status. The WH list is maintained by the international WH Programme administrated by the UNESCO WH Committee composed of 21 UNESCO member states which are elected by the General Assembly (Swedish National Heritage Board, 2014). The UNESCO WH list currently holds 1,031 properties/sites as of April 2016 (see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/> for current status). Two sites have been delisted and 48 sites are endangered for various reasons. Sweden has 15 WH sites (Swedish National Heritage Board 2014).

The process of becoming a world heritage site in Sweden

In order to put a property on the WH list, a country must first sign the WH Convention. Then a long drawn-out process of nomination and assessment begins. Sweden signed the WH Convention in 1984 and started in 1985, in close co-operation with other Nordic countries, to make a nomination list of suitable WH sites in the Nordic countries. The first list has been updated once. A report on WH in the Nordic countries was presented in 1996 containing many suggestions for potential sites (Nordic Council of Ministers 1996).

In 1991, six years after signing the WH Convention, the Castle of Drottningholm at Lovön became the first WH site in Sweden. Today (in 2016), the Swedish WH site list contains 15 very different heritage sites:

- Royal Domain of Drottningholm, Lovön (1991)
- Birka and Hovgården, Ekerö (1993)
- Engelsberg Ironwork, Fagersta (1993)
- Rock carvings in Tanum, Tanum (1994)
- Skogskyrkogården, Stockholm (1994)
- Hanseatic Town of Visby, Gotland (1995)
- Lapponia Area, Lappland (1996)
- Church Town of Gammelstad, Luleå (1996)
- Naval Port of Karlskrona (1998)
- Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland (2000)
- High Coast/Kvarken Archipelago, Ångermanland (2000)
- Mining Area of the Great Copper Mountain in Falun, Kopparbergslagen (2001)
- Grimeton Radio Station, Varberg (2004)
- Struve Geodetic Arc (2005)
- Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland (2012)

The process that these WH have experienced is briefly described: The Swedish National Heritage Board, *Riksantikvarieämbetet*, is a governmental agency that is responsible for heritage and historic environment issues. Its mission is to play a proactive and a coordinating role in heritage promotion efforts and to ensure that historic environment is preserved in the most effective possible manner. The board is also responsible for WH dealing with culture, whilst the Swedish National Environmental Protection Agency, *Naturvårdsverket*, is responsible for Natural WH. Those two authorities are formally in charge of checking that the convention is followed as carefully as possible and these are also responsible for reporting progress to UNESCO every sixth year (Swedish National Heritage Board 2014). If WH is not taken care of according to the plan, proposed sites can be closed and removed from the list. The WH Convention makes clear that being on the list also brings with it many responsibilities. The main responsibility is supporting the upkeep of the site and the OUV it is known for. Once on the WH list, global recognition and tourism are generally assured.

“The fact that the label representing Outstanding Universal Value gives tourists the expectation that visiting the site will be a unique experience and at the same time provides the tourism industry with an easily promoted and almost fail-proof destination. WH Sites are therefore amongst the most popular and heavily promoted attractions in a variety of countries,” said a 2011 IUCN report about WH and tourism (Borges *et al.* 2011).

Each country can nominate new WH sites without restriction. The nomination process in Sweden starts with the two authorities suggesting a new WH site. There are many national experts in different disciplines involved in working groups to prepare for new WH sites. The county administrative board (*Länsstyrelsen*)

in question is in charge of coordinating work together with the two authorities because WH consideration in regional planning is a must, according to the Convention. The government then decides and after that, the decision is taken, the application is sent to UNESCO for a decision.

In case there are buildings involved, in the nomination process it is necessary that the buildings already be listed cultural heritage buildings of the highest grade (*byggnadsminnen*). According to Sweden's Heritage Conservation Act (1988:950), a building may be designated a cultural heritage building by the county administrative board because of its cultural historic value if it is in non-state ownership. The county administrative board prescribes by means of protective regulations in which way the building specifically shall be managed, maintained and physical aspects that may not be altered, both exterior and interior. There may also be an inclusion of an area surrounding the building that must be kept in such a state that the appearance and character of the building will not be debased. These regulations are outlined in consensus with the building and surrounding landowners. The obligations of the owner must not exceed what is necessary for the maintenance of the cultural historic value. Use of the building and reasonable desires of the owner must be taken into consideration. The owner of this type of listed building has possibilities of applying for subsidies for overshooting preservation costs that may arise, for example restoration. It is important to use materials and technological methods that are historically correct in order not to destroy the values that are important to preserve. These actions are more expensive than upgrading 'ordinary' buildings and it is this extra cost that the subsidies are intended to reduce. Subsidies corresponding to 50 to 90 percent of the overshooting costs may be applied for cultural heritage buildings (Jakobsson *et al.* 2013). Subsidies are available for other listed lower grade buildings which commonly are protected within the frame of building codes and ordinary municipality planning work, but are more limited because the protection grade is lower.

Several decorated farmhouses in Hälsingland have been listed buildings since the early 1990s. The interest of having a WH site involving Hälsingland farms started in the end of the 1990s by individuals in the Gävleborg county administrative board and the county museum of Gävleborg (Paju 2016). In 2007, a nomination entitled "Farms and Villages in Hälsingland" was sent to UNESCO. The nomination was denied because the OUV was too weak and too many properties, fifteen, were distributed over a large area (Paju 2016; Sannerman 2009). Officials from Gävleborg County were recommended to put focus on two aspects: authenticity and integrity. Authenticity deals with how original, unchanged, the objects, farmhouses and farms in this case, of the WH site are and how well the physical objects correspond to the narratives of the interior paintings and decorations. Integrity considers that the nominating party clearly indicates the extent to which other similar environments could threaten its own claim to be

universally outstanding. For example, it is not unusual for economically powerful landowners to manifest their prosperity through architectural expression. With a clearer focus on interior painting and its variations in the landscape, the integrity with respect to OUV is clearly asserted in relation to other similar environments on an international level. Finally, the nomination would be strengthened by clarifying the surrounding areas boundaries and the regulations of protection for the interiors (Paju 2016). Having this done, the decorated farmhouses in Hälsingland obtained WH status in 2012 with motivation of the OUV based on the large, impressive farmhouses having richly decorated rooms for parties that reflect an outstanding combination of timber construction and folk art tradition, the prosperity and the social status of the independent farmers who built them. They represent the culmination of a long tradition in Hälsingland. Seven decorated farmhouses in the countryside of Hälsingland, all together, constitute a WH site.

Decorated farmhouses of Hälsingland

The seven properties have been selected as representative of about 1,000 other Hälsingland farms (*Hälsingegårdar*). These are: Kristofers in Järvsö, Gästgivars in Vallsta, Pallars in Långhed, Jon-Lars also in Långhed, Bortom Åa in Fågelsjö (Los), Bommars in Letsbo and Erik-Anders in Söderala. These were built between 1700 and the 1850s across an area of 100 kilometers from east to west and 50 km north to south. Six are situated in Hälsingland Province with the seventh farmhouse, Bortom Åa at Fågelsjö, just across the border in Dalarna Province. The area was culturally a former part of Hälsingland Province. The properties are situated across four municipalities. All seven farmhouses have a number of decorated rooms for festivities, between four and ten rooms, largely intact. The houses are located in countrysides that mirror their agrarian function. They all reflect the prosperity of independent farmers.

The uniqueness of these farmhouses lies in independent farmers' ambitions to erect big, numerous and decorated buildings in which parts of or an entire building were designated for festivities (see OUV). Figure 1 shows the impressive size of a two-storey dwelling. The dwelling has, in some sense, become the symbol of the term Hälsingland farms; yet the term includes other buildings and the surroundings within the agrarian landscape, though many farms today have ceased to be production units.

Often, there are two or sometimes three houses for different generations. These are mostly two storey buildings, but some one-storey cottages exist as well, with room for two families. Along with a decorated farmhouse came a large number of buildings, freely placed outside the courtyard. These include large barns, large log cabins, smithies, breweries, grain storage houses, stables and liveries, all a part of a system in which each building or outbuilding had a specific function. The



Figure 1. Bortom Åa, Fågelsjö in Los presents the sheer size of the building with two floors and a decorated veranda.

most unique type of building or room in a dwelling had the function of having festivities for very special events such as weddings and funerals. This building or room was seldom used. Halls, rooms and sometimes the entire building were painted, decorated and furnished only to be used on a few occasions over a lifetime. Not even the merry harvest celebrations or solemn Christmas feasts were fine enough activities for these rooms. A major family event with plenty of invited guests was required for the doors to be opened and festivities went on for days, therefore requiring houses or rooms where guests slept, the so-called 'bed-cottages'. Otherwise, these buildings or rooms were empty or locked. This phenomenon has resulted in buildings or rooms that are well preserved from the 1800s. By the end of the 19th century, the various small buildings with different functions were replaced by a couple of large buildings that accommodated multiple functions under the same roof. This marks an end to how the farms were physically planned.

The WH farmhouses are examples of traditional rural construction techniques in the old farmers' society in Hälsingland, using only wood, and are an expression of popular architecture; the farmer's way of building as it evolved when means flourished. Building technology is based on a local timber building tradition that goes back to the middle ages, though most were erected during the 1700-1850s. The well-constructed dwelling houses, often designed with elegant woodcraft—woodwork is a part of the decoration—in trimmings and skirting around roofs and windows. Beautifully decorated doorways mainly represent styles of the 19th century; see Figure 2. There are also older farms with low, unpainted houses built in a square shape around the yard and buildings with rich carpentry and



Figure 2. Jon-Lars in Långhed shows elaborate woodwork in trimmings and skirtings.

large porches from the start of the 20th century. Each parish had its own style of construction, mainly shown in the craft of front porches and otherwise elaborate entrances; see Figure 3. Some areas, foremost the coastal parishes, lacked front porches entirely; instead they had more costly doors and door fittings.

Inside, the farmhouses have well preserved interiors with paintings on the walls, on the wood structures, or on paper stencilled wall decorations and expensive wallpaper. The amount of well-preserved interiors kept in their original state is unique in the world and therefore of great importance. The paintings represent a union of folk art with styles favoured by the landed gentry of the time, including Baroque and Rococo. Biblical motifs were transformed into Hälsingland milieu, funny stories and moral tales, mixed with religious motifs, ribbons and large flowers, see Figure 4. These were made by local or wandering painters from the neighboring province of Dalarna. Because the paintings are often not signed,



Figure 3. Decorated porch at Pallars, Långhed.

some works still have unknown artists.

Expensive imported wallpaper from France was combined with popular painting into something entirely new such as stenciled paintings which were allowed to flow on walls, ceilings and fireplaces (see Figure 5). hilariously, some wallpaper has been applied to the wall upside down!

It was the independent farmers' prosperity that allowed buildings and decorations. Good economy depended on the vast size of the farms; they were all large. Many farms also had extra income from producing linen, textiles, timber, fishing or even metal works, in combination with trade by travelling to remote marketplaces. The extra earnings were in turn due to the form of succession. The eldest son inherited the farm without having the buildings and the land divided into lots. Consequently, siblings became craftsmen on the farm and became contributors to the richness of the farm.

Today, six of the seven WH farms are privately owned, which is an extraordinary feature for a WH site, because most are owned by governments, institutions or large companies. The WH buildings are part of properties that are an individual's or family's private residence and in a couple of cases have been within the family for the last 400 years. This unique aspect puts sustainability in focus, the intimate relation among the owner, the farm and the WH status. The farm, or physically the land and buildings, and WH status will most likely outlive the owner. Who will take on



Figure 4. Interior decoration at Bortom-Åa, Fågelsjö



Figure 5. A measurement sensor within a research project that is placed in front of stenciled wallpaper at Gästgivars in Vallsta.

this role in the next generation? A WH site is destined to be sustained into the future in the same way that the farms or more specifically the land and buildings have been sustained until today. Who is prepared to own, live in, maintain and sustain a WH site for future generations of mankind?

How do WH farmhouse owners feel about WH management?

Now that the property owners have had WH sites running for four years, they surely have pondered on whether or not managing a privately owned WH site is a burden or a privilege and who will manage the property in the future. In order to get a better picture of this situation, a questionnaire was sent to the owners. The questionnaire posed open-type questions. In order not to take too much of the owners' time—the timing when these were sent by e-mail was unfortunately in the preparation period prior to the summer tourism period—owners were asked to write down answers that first came to their mind. Because the questions are complex, a semi-structured interview would have given more detailed and penetrating information, but the purpose of this inquiry was not to perform research on the matter; it was more so to bring to light if there are concerns in view of ownership and management. Owners were informed that participation was voluntary and presentation of results would be anonymous.

Questions, translated here, were:

- How do you feel about managing a WH site?
- What responsibility do you feel for the management task?
- What encouragement, economic, social etc., is provided by society and the local community?
- Who will take over and continue managing the property?
- Upon your death, will you feel content with having carried out the management task?

Four responses were obtained: two written and two by telephone. Responses are compiled and summarised for each question.

When it comes to managing a WH site, it is done “responsibly and with pride”. “This is big”, one owner responded and another expressed that “I feel obliged to do my best in the upkeep and maintenance; the buildings and garden, making these look good”. However, there was a voice that said there is “no difference between before and after with respect to the WH status.” Another respondent stated that “I manage the property as before”, indicating that the task of managing a cultural heritage is not different for a WH site. For the property that is not privately owned, the manager replied that there is a “shared responsibility because we have ongoing work for the owner”. Another expressed concerns about visitors, such as “visitors wear the buildings down”.

Upon reflecting on how content they are with their role of managing the WH site, the majority of the answers were “yes” and “quite much”. In one case, the owner is content and that this role more or less just happened, the intention was never to; “When I contacted the county museum [about the building], my intention was not to make a big deal about this. It then became a listed building and later a part of a WH site.” An interesting answer that reveals that WH status is only a minor part of life is as follows: “The WH task does not have anything to do with the management. It’s good to have done your best, but it is not about material things; it’s about having done good things with the persons close to you. [...] It’s not a vocation or private thing to manage a WH site. In terms of WH, it’s the responsibility of the state.” The management, according to the respondent, has to be done whether or not the farm has WH status or not. The important thing in life is not material matter; it is relations with family and friends.

There are split visions on what encouragement, economic, social etc., is provided by society and the local community. Some owners feel that there is satisfactory economic support through “funding from Swedish National Heritage Board to renovate buildings” and that “the support from Gävleborg County Administration Board has been good [...] A total of eleven buildings are to be preserved and require renovation”. However, there are other views, for example “there are subsidies for maintenance of the buildings, but these are small”.

There are unanimous feelings that there is “no actual income”, “no income” and that “this has to be achieved by ourselves”. Because tourism is normal for WH sites, it is seen as a main source of income; there would be a need of having many visitors to increase income, which may be difficult in a private residence. One response says “I thought there would be more visitors; however, attention has increased ...”

As for encouragement, aside from economic aspects, there are mixed views. Among positive comments, there is a “fine voluntary support from the local people during our events. They are also proud of the farm.” Moreover, “visitors say cheerful things”. However, the WH status sets restrictions that neighbours have to abide by; “neighbours feel that the protection zone is annoying.”

Upon the question of who will take over and continue managing the property, the answers are in essence the same: “Don’t know”. One answer is clarified by adding “it becomes more complicated when the farm is a WH site”. There is some hope with one respondent who informs that “nothing is decided. My son is interested, but his wife and son might not be. Hopefully one more generation...” keeping in mind that the property has been in the family for centuries.

The above results are summarised from the raw data collected from the inquiry. These are analysed and discussed below in a broader context about sustainability and in view of ownership.

Some words on sustainability and sustainable living

What is sustainability? In more general terms, sustainability is the endurance of systems and processes. Sustainable development is the organizing principle for sustainability which includes three interconnected domains: ecology, economics and social, see Figure 6. Sustainability could be defined as the ability or capacity of something to be maintained or to sustain itself, sustain-ability. Therefore, it's about how people need to live now without jeopardising the potential for people in the future to meet their needs. A sustainable activity should be able to continue for the foreseeable future. (Kazmerski 2016)

Sustainable living represents choices that a person makes in everyday life that contribute to sustainable development. The choices are based on negotiating needs within limits across all the interconnected domains. See Figure 6. A common example of sustainable living is that an individual tries to minimise

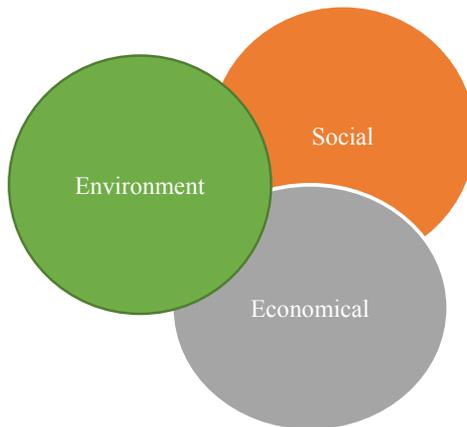


Figure 6. Sustainable development illustrated with three domains. (Kazmerski 2016)

the carbon footprint by making daily choices. For example taking a bicycle to go to work instead of a car reduces carbon dioxide and other emissions from fuels that the car requires. Also, it is probably more costly to drive the car than the bicycle as seen on the individual level. Furthermore, exercise from cycling and discussions with other bikers are discussed during the coffee break!

The domains in Figure 6 do not give substance to actually evaluate sustainable processes and development, though there are tools being designed for this purpose. During the 1950s, Suojanen (1954) discussed enterprise theory which defined the firm as an enterprise or a social unit used by stakeholders. In further development of Suojanen's concept, Fagerström and Cunningham (2016) put forth a theoretical resource model that focuses on sustainable accountability, the Sustainable Enterprise Theory model (SET model). The model has its basis

in resources from each of the domains mentioned above. This model is further elaborated below in the context of sustainability of a WH site. Instead of having an enterprise in the middle, this place been replaced by a WH site because the focus will be on sustainability evolving around a decorated farmhouse.

Ecosystem of stakeholders in the SET model

In order to analyse value creation and capture of values, the use of business ecosystems is fruitful. The concept of business ecosystems was originally introduced by Moore (1993) who defined it as consisting of co-evolving interdependent and interconnected actors: customers, agents and in the area, sellers of complementary products and services, suppliers, and the firm itself. The idea of an ecosystem comes from ecology (Iansiti and Levien 2004) in which organisms are interdependent in their actions and they co-evolve over time within a certain natural environment.

The farms are located in the countryside and each farm has its own surroundings and its own stakeholders; notably, few properties actually make a living on farming today. Because this is a new WH site, it is of interest to identify which actors and stakeholders are directly or indirectly involved or affected by the WH site and associated processes. This is performed within the context of the SET model; the objective is not to analyse monetary resources, processes or benchmark performance.

The farms and the surrounding area need some form of business activity in order to generate funds for persons who live in the area. Not only the cost of living must be covered, but also the maintenance and sustainability costs must be included. Freeman's model (1984) in Figure 7, originally illustrating stakeholders of a firm in the business world, is adjusted to reflect a WH farm.

A WH farm has several stakeholders and also is part of a business ecosystem. There are several interdependent and interconnected actors around the farm, including WH site visitors, customers of locally made products, sellers of complementary products and services such as those from visitor centres, restaurants and hotels. This business ecosystem is very important for value creation in the heritage farm business. The numbers of visitors and products sold and services for the heritage farm depend much on the business ecosystems complementary products and services. In turn, suppliers of complementary products and services also depend on the 'heritage' value that the WH farm has. The process of creating value and capturing the value in a business ecosystem is complex.

As an example, a marketing activity of one WH farm can attract new visitors to come and marketing activities will also 'spill over' on other WH or other heritage farms in the area and also on suppliers of complementary products and services. This 'spill over' effect can be used if a business ecosystem works in co-operation

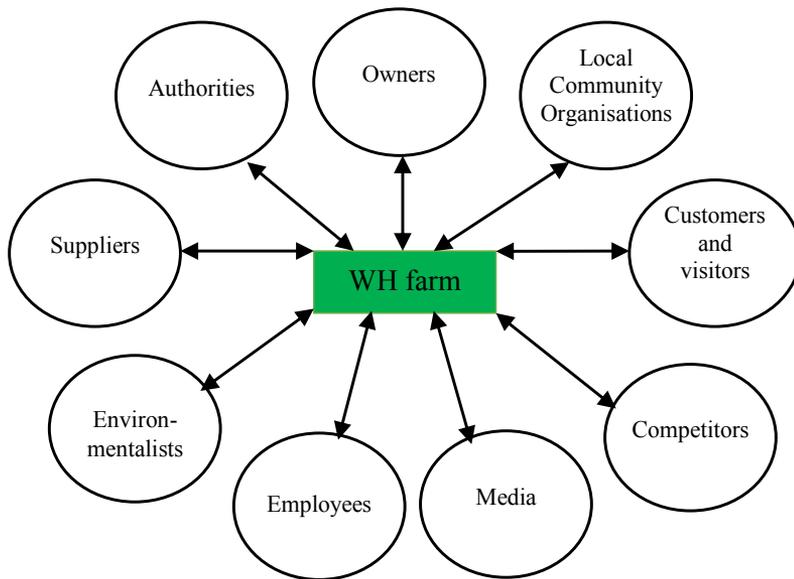


Figure 7. Stakeholder view of a WH farm, developed from Freeman (1984).

with activities that create values for all participants of the ecosystem. This is an easy example to understand. A more difficult aspect is when a WH farm invests costs into the farm in order to increase the heritage value. Such investment could, for example, be better visiting conditions, information material about history of the farm and maintenance in order to keep the WH farm sustainable. This investment can be expensive for the farm. The question is whether the business ecosystem can distribute such costs. This is an issue outside the frame of this chapter to solve. There is clearly a need for ‘political discussions’ within the business ecosystem and the stakeholders of the WH farms to solve this issue.

Stakeholders are introduced in Figure 8. In terms of ownership, these farms have, in most cases, traditionally been in the same family for generations because the first-born son often inherited the entire property. This meant that the land seldom was split up and divided among male siblings; the land and buildings were intact after a shift in generation. As will be seen in the discussion below, this tradition has not entirely been abandoned today, but is a risk in terms of inheritance when the deceased does not own more than the property and children have legal rights for equal claims. What if no children wish to inherit the farm and the WH site? What if there are no successors?

The terms “customers” and “visitors” are seen in a broader context: this may be a visitor or tourist but may also be a purchaser of products or services that are linked to the farm in some way. There are differences among the farms; some farms do not produce goods or services, these are purely residential where one

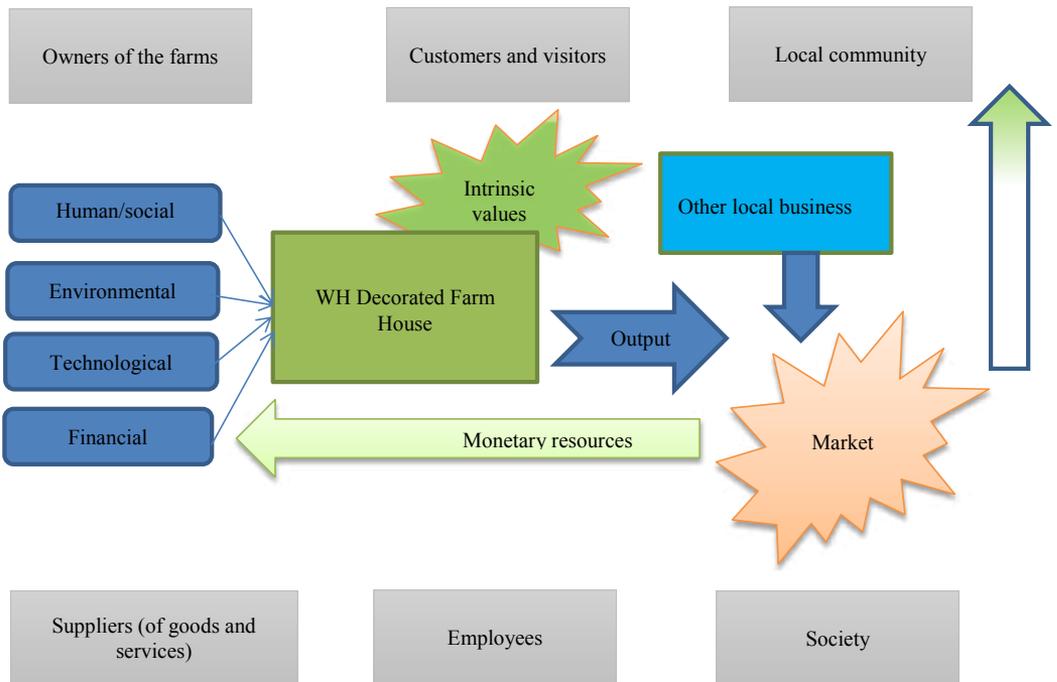


Figure 8. Adaptation of the sustainable enterprise theory model (Fagerström and Cunningham 2016) to correspond to the case of WH Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland.

of the buildings is home of the owners or tenants or are merely unoccupied. As for visitors, the farms have very varying situations. Some have developed the property to receive many visitors while others have a private residence with very limited possibilities to take on large numbers of people. For example, Erik-Anders has made investments by having a service centre at site, by developing a conference centre, offering rental rooms and has a stage to promote live music. In 2015, Erik-Anders had some 12,000 to 13,000 visitors (Wikström 2015). In contrast, Kristofers is running an environmental farming business and cannot have numerous visitors. About 600 visitors in 2015 is the upper limit of the amount is feasible (Wikström 2015). The visitor season is during the summer, mid-May to the end of August, obviously owing to summer vacations in the Northern hemisphere, but also due to the buildings of interest being not heated during the winter. There are possibilities of visiting off-season, but this only applies to booked groups.

As previously mentioned, UNESCO’s WH Convention specifies duties that member states have to perform. Measures have to be adopted to give this heritage site a function in the day-to-day life of the community. In Figure 8, the community is denoted by “Local community” including “Other local business” that may be

associated with the day-to-day life. Examples of “Local community” are the local neighbourhood, schools and theatres. WH sites give possibilities for people to celebrate marriages at sites, organize concerts—Erik-Anders has “Hälsinge Jazz Nights” and ecological food fairs. “Other local business” in Figure 8 includes small businesses that are directly linked to a WH site, such as guides who are employed in case the owner is not personally engaged in doing this. There are four visitor centres that have set up staff and services at or next to the sites. A difference between the local businesses and suppliers of goods and services is that local businesses are more prone to build up the intrinsic assets of the site. According to Fagerström and Cunningham (2016), intrinsic assets are various forms of capital resources that are present in the enterprise, but are more difficult to evaluate in monetary measures. For example, research may give more historic and cultural information about ancestors, or other persons, who historically were associated with the site and thereby increase the cultural resource capital of the property, i.e. enhance intrinsic values. The same applies to serving only locally produced ecological food like produced prior to industrial times, which adds to intrinsic values and developing the trademark of a decorated farm in the agrarian landscape. This is closely linked to value creation in the heritage farm business.

The sites have to be protected and preserved according to the WH Convention. Part of the responsibility lies on the Gävleborg County Board, Länsstyrelsen Gävleborg, whereas regional planning programmes have to be set up partly by the Regional Development Council, Region Gävleborg, and research established, e.g. in museums and universities. These are bundled into the term called “Society”, which also includes municipalities. Some of the activities in which these stakeholders have or are participating, are described below.

In his doctoral thesis, Martin Paju (2016) presents observations from the process of the decorated farmhouses becoming WH sites. The work with the decorated farmhouses and WH nomination can be considered as being two parallel processes with different driving forces. One process was initiated by the Regional Development Council with a focus on establishing the foundations for promotion and marketing and regional economic development in conjunction with having WH status. It also included a group that was oriented to conservation in which cultural values are symbolic capital that cannot be subjected to instrumental requirements. The second was a bureaucratic process dealing with nomination procedure, documentation and choice of representative farms. The latter followed formal regulations in the Swedish administrative and management practices and the ideals of UNESCO WH Committee. To draw attention to the decorated farms’ cultural values, a number of project activities were held by individuals, nonprofit organisations and governmental authorities. The processes that lead to WH nomination involved conflicts, negotiations and alliances between and among various stakeholders. In the middle of it all were the

farms, each with its unique ‘career’ as a private residence, production unit or part of the tourist industry. The example of Hälsingland farmhouses shows how local mobilisation can be developed in conjunction with WH nomination, in which individual and organized actors at local and regional levels meet a management culture that promotes and monitors bureaucratic and formal aspects of WH. Officials were not perceived to be sufficiently humble to individual farm owners’ wishes and financial ability. Being part of a WH can mean a lot of restrictions on a farm and its activities, but also a resource to preserve its unique values and assets. The challenge to live with a WH site could therefore be a rather difficult question to consider.

“*Samverkansbryggan Hälsingegårdar*” (Cooperation Bridge Hälsingland Farms) is a project about building a sustainable organization and structure around collaboration, product development and promotion of the Hälsingland farms. The background of this project is that there had been a long development process that culminated with the WH nomination. Finally, when it came to how to work and develop the WH site, it was not clear how this could be done. This is not simple because there are a number of private and public stakeholders in a wide and complex field that are situated across a number of municipalities working with building and planning issues, tourism, teaching, research, administration, etc. This project embraces the WH farms and heritage farms, six municipalities, *Hälsingland Hembygdsförbund* (the rural heritage centres association), visitor centres, museums and *Hälsingegårdsföretagarnas ekonomiska förening* (Hälsingland farms entrepreneurs’ economic association) as well as other stakeholders within tourism, culture and heritage in general. The project started in September 2016 will continue for three years and is co-financed by the Regional Development Council, *Region Gävleborg*. (Wikström 2016) This project is run in close connection to Hälsingland Farms Platform (*Plattan*) which is cooperation among owners, municipalities, county administrative board and Hälsingland farms entrepreneurs’ economic association that works with operative questions, for example, that decide when Hälsingland Farmhouse days are celebrated and what themes the days should focus on. In 2016, the theme was traditional food from Hälsingland also including a competition on who could make the best Hälsingland cheesecake.

Aside from research in which museums are continuously involved, there is also research performed by academia. The Department of Conservation, University of Gothenburg, together with Carl Malmsten Furniture Studies, Linköpings University and several departments from Chalmers University of Technology have an ongoing interdisciplinary project from 2014 through 2017 that focuses on the farmhouse interiors. Their aim is to develop new and deeper knowledge of colours, colouring, paints, surface treatments and substrates of the buildings’ decorative paintings, painted furniture and patterned textile fabrics.

The goal is to collaborate with the Swedish National Heritage Board to develop and adapt methods for the analysis of materials and technologies used in the popular interior paintings and textiles. Another goal is to cooperate with other institutions, regional and local actors in the heritage field to explore Hälsinglands peculiar decoration culture with respect to the interior paintings, furniture and furnishing textiles (Persson 2015).

In a one year pilot project from 2015 to 2016, co-financed by the Regional Development Council, *Region Gävleborg*, the University of Gävle investigated how the university can contribute in the long run to sustainable development of the decorated farmhouses in terms of organisation and activities and projects through interdisciplinary studies. The pilot project will result in the establishment of the Research and Development Node Hälsingegårdar with two representatives from each of three areas who will promote research and cooperation with actors in the ecosystem of the WH sites. So far, the university has conducted a monitoring project in which temperature and moisture conditions were assessed in the farmhouses to determine if visitors generate moisture loads that may damage paintings and to check moisture condition in crawl spaces of the buildings (Mattsson and Akander 2015). There are concerns about the foundations building technology, crawlspaces, in view of future climate change. These buildings were erected and have sustained when the climate was different from what it will be in the future. This foundation type does not exist in countries in Central Europe where there are warmer climates because it has not worked there; the intermediate floor moulds and may gradually rot. For this reason, monitoring equipment will be permanently installed for alarm purposes and detect the influence of climate change, as well as work pro-actively with what solutions can be used when conditions become adverse.

Sustainability of WH farmhouses – a change in paradigm

At the Nordic WH Conference 2015, Professor Mike Robinson, head of WH site Iron Bridge in Birmingham, UK, presented the shift in perspectives that the WH Convention has undergone in the last decades. The shift has been from preservation and conservation of artifacts by historians, in which a site has signs telling historic facts, to a broader sustainability perspective, which includes protection of the site, interpreting the site and its history, presenting the site with interesting and timely narratives and having the insight that the heritage must have a function and meaning in the daily life of the local community. This is in line with the interpretation of the WH Convention. Without interaction with the local community, the site will fade away; preservation is not enough to maintain the site. It must involve more domains than being an end itself. The question now pops up: how will the WH site cope financially? There are various ways, but tourism is seen as being viable. For example, Iron Bridge has one million visitors

annually. Visitors are the funders of the site because there is little support from the state (Robinson 2015).

The Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland site is a new WH site. Four years after being granted WH status, there are many processes taking place at the sites and in their vicinity by a multitude of actors in the business ecosystem. As previously described, there is ongoing research on who the painters were and who painted what; research on stories told and how these may be interpreted, local narratives, and what measures can be taken to preserve the buildings in view of climate changes. There is development of the organization Cooperation Bridge Hälsingland Farms that will deal with tourism, how and what is to be marketed and promoted. Can the WH site act as a catalyst to increase output of locally produced food, preferably from a Hälsingland farm, to local restaurants? Where can guides or carpenters with suitable qualifications be found? This requires new education programmes. Which educational resources will be used in elementary schools to inform about the farmhouses and WH? In general, these processes are desired in terms of the WH Convention and even within the concept of sustainability, the interactivity between the WH sites and community. A glance at Figure 8, on the adapted SET model, shows that present and future stakeholders must be a part of the WH ecosystem in order to reach sustainability. However, where do the owners stand in these exuberant activities and processes? From the responses of the inquiry, the following can be perceived:

In terms of managing a WH site, the owners feel responsibility for that task. Being owners of these buildings, which are cultural heritage-listed buildings and afterwards became WH sites, many of which have been erected and maintained by ancestors, they would have performed the same management regardless of the WH status. The maintenance would inevitably been performed for the family's future generations anyway instead of for mankind, as stated by the WH Convent. As mentioned by a respondent, to maintain a WH site means that it has to be preserved forever instead of into a foreseeable future. Yet, the aim of management is for the farm to sustain and consequently the WH site will sustain. It is not only the owners who are involved in this process, there are plenty of other stakeholders (see Figure 8) and management and responsibility are a responsibility of theirs, too. As seen in the shift in perspectives of UNESCO from responsibility of preservation to sustainability, the site will only sustain if a WH site affects the day-to-day life of the community. Sustainability is a necessity for preservation.

As stressed earlier, the local community is important for the WH site and vice-versa. In terms of encouragement, being economic or social (monetary resources in Figure 8), the owners replied that various authorities subsidise maintenance and renovation of buildings. The picture is somewhat unclear because some owners were rather content with this aid while others mentioned that the subsidies are very small in proportion to the costs. However, there is unity in the view that

the income from WH-related activities is negligible. Income from visitors barely covers costs of presenting the site; visitors may even increase the wear and tear of original irreplaceable parts and components of the property, thus depleting the sites' assets. In terms of sustainability, the question that arises for an owner is whether or not having visitors is economically viable because the activity is almost unable to sustain itself. With more visitors, the income would increase (in Figure 8, the monetary resource increases) but this is not possible in some cases because the farmhouses are private homes. In such case, if the monetary inflow may be less than the resource outflow spent on the market and society.

In the social context, how the owner perceives encouragement from the surrounding community is not uniform. One owner remarked that local inhabitants are proud to have a WH site in their area. Another respondent replied that visitors give the owner positive comments about their work; visitors are entering private property, the actual homes of the owners. In contrast, a respondent states that the neighbours are not happy about the restrictions that the WH site sets upon nearby surroundings. This means that neighbours must have authorised permission to perform minor changes to their properties due to the agrarian setting in which the farms nearby must also be protected.

A specific requirement that this WH site involves is that no wind power mills for electricity production are allowed to be erected within visible range of each WH site because three were already built close to Gästgivars in Vallsta and were regarded as spoiling the setting and landscape. The municipality of Bollnäs within four years after WH status has already rejected one application for erecting wind power mills next to a WH site after contemplating the risks that the WH site would encounter if permission were granted (Kastman 2015). Aside from the discussion that arose of what is a more beneficial resource for society, WH or renewable energy, there is a greater problem. Countryside property owners in the region who cannot survive on farming see producing renewable energy as a means of monetary income and being able to continue living in the countryside as their ancestors have and might actually live in a decorated farmhouse. This causes disputes in the local community and negative views about the WH site. Such problems have to be resolved in a larger setting than in the SET model. Importantly, neighbours and technological resources, as described here, are implicitly included, "local community", in the model and a part of the process of having sustainable WH sites and sustainable living for owners.

Perhaps the question about who will take over the property and manage it is the most crucial. Life of individuals is not sustainable because human beings do not live forever! Owners, who today are driving spirits of each site, will someday need to let someone else take their roles and responsibilities in managing the property. Owners have expressed that there are no heirs today who are willing to take the property and continue with the work of their predecessors. In one case,

the fact that the property became a part of a WH site complicates things because management of a WH site comes in addition to the 'normal life' in the countryside. Questions are poised: Are the youth of the family that owns the property ready to sacrifice time and money? Can these efforts be balanced with monetary inflow at the same time? This is a risk they are taking. What happens if family members abandon this idea? What happens to the property in the future and, consequently, the WH site? The answer to the question of succession is "don't know" and it affects the sustainability concept in various ways. Owners are the most vital stakeholders in terms of the property. There has to be an owner, otherwise the property and the WH site will collapse. In terms of ownership, the traditional inheritance by a member of the family who has knowledge, authenticity, passion for the past, the stories and experiences to tell about, would be a most qualified and desired person from a sustainability aspect. This is through the cultural perspective and does not involve having tourists in the home. The convention does not require visitors, i.e. that the site is open for the general public. However, this person must abide by the principles of resource in- and outflow and more so consider the terms of the management of a WH site. Another option is to have another private owner who is not kin to the family. This owner may have fine qualifications for managing a WH site and sustainably.

There are even options of having non-private owners in the future. This would suggest that private ownership of a WH site is not sustainable because a potential private owner recognises that the risk is too large, i.e. anticipates that the outflow of resources is larger than the inflow. This means that other stakeholders have to increase the share of inflow of resources in order for private ownership to be feasible.

Finally, there are mixed opinions on how owners anticipate their task of the management of their part in the WH site. In general, they have a feeling that they will have done their best. Considering the responses from owners, they feel a responsibility and pride in managing the property and not because today it is a WH site; the engagement would have been the same without the WH status. This view is definitely strengthened by one of the respondents that the property is a material thing; it is more important to have been 'good' to the closest family and friends. Again, management of the properties would not be significantly different if these only were 'cultural heritage', but for different reasons.

Summing up

It is difficult to sum up diversity of aspects in sustainability, or even more complicated a sustainable living in the case of private ownership of a WH site. What can be pointed out is that WH has the perspective that the site shall be preserved in the future for other generations. This is only possible with a broad view of what sustainability may be and WH sites must be a part of it.

Great thanks to the owners and especially to those who responded

Discussion questions

1. Discuss sustainability of the WH farms in the dimensions environmental-, social-, technological- and economical sustainability.
2. How can cultural factors be included in sustainability?
3. Discuss the repositibility of the WH farms future.

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