

EXPERIENCING AND GAZING FINNISH HERITAGE IN SUOMENLINNA FORTRESS

MASTER THESIS



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The photograph on the cover page shows all of the islands that belong to Suomenlinna fortress.
(Source: www.suomenlinna.fi)

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One and half years ago I started the master program Leisure, Tourism and Environment in Wageningen University and started my life in the little rural town of Wageningen in the Netherlands. Sooner than I knew, it was time to finish up my studies and start writing my thesis. In order to do so, I travelled back to Helsinki Finland and conducted qualitative research on the experiences of foreign visitors to Suomenlinna fortress. The fortress is located on the archipelago of Helsinki and has an interesting history since mid18th century as a maritime fortress. The reason I chose this particular topic and location, stems from my interest in heritage and tourism experience, and wanting to combine these topics with a historically significant site, in my home country Finland.

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After spending an amazing year filled with hard studying and being part of the multicultural atmosphere of Wageingen, one can only be sad that it has come to an end. This thesis is a way of saying goodbye and thank you to the wonderful people I got to know and the moments I have shared with my fellow classmates, professors and others students of Wageningen University. Thank you!

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ABSTRACT

At the present age, consuming and experiencing heritage has gained more relevance and interest in the tourism studies and literature (McIntyre, 2009 and Timothy, 2011). Studies have focused largely on heritage motivations and management and thus the importance of the subjective negotiation and personal relevance of the visitor has been neglected.

As non-Finnish visitors' experiences of Finnish cultural heritage sites have been under-explored, this study seeks to contribute by investigating how foreign visitors with different cultural backgrounds (other than Finnish nationals) negotiate and experience Suomenlinna fortress and its heritage. Suomenlinna is a maritime fortress built in the 18th century to improve the defense of Finland during the Swedish regime. In addition, the reason for visiting the site and how heritage interpretation through guided tours and museum objects influence the visitor experience. The researcher has taken the interpretivist philosophical stance and applied that in the data collection and analysis of findings. Qualitative research methods such as in-depth interviews, autoethnographic observations and Tripadvisor comment analysis were chosen as the research methods. Drawing on theory from heritage interpretation, tourist experience and tourist gaze this thesis aims to investigate the visitor experience in Suomenlinna fortress.

The findings of the study indicate that Suomenlinna as a single location can have multitude of meanings; history, recreation, cultural aspects and relation to one's own country, to different visitors (Poria et al. 2006) and these meanings are negotiated through visitors' cultural and social backgrounds. Visitors' cultural and social background also influence on the preferences to visit a particular site (Urry, 2002). Suomenlinna was visited due to its recreational and historical relevance and heritage interpretation resulted in educating and providing the visitor with relevant information on the site and its history. Foreign visitors were able to tap into and relate to the heritage of Suomenlinna fortress through the interpretive tools (multisensory objects and stories) provided at the tour and Suomenlinna museum.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The production and consumption of culture and heritage has recently become a new lifestyle (McIntyre, 2009). Globalization, more disposable income, transportation enhancements and population ageing are ever more contributing to tourism and tourism activities, by increasing the interest in travelling, local culture & heritage and participation in cultural related tourism activities (Labadi & Long, 2010 and Brida, 2012). Culture and heritage, which are often intertwined, are not new in the field of research but have currently become a major theme of study among tourism scholars, considering for example tourists, heritage sites, attraction management and history (Poria et al. 2006:162). Heritage, which is the context of this study, is defined as something, which we inherit from the past and use in the present day. History represents past, whereas heritage is the modern-day use of the past for tourism and other purposes. According to many studies, visiting heritage sites is a way for people to cope with the complexity of today's life and to find some stability. Broad spectrum of research have been undertaken to understand why people visit heritage sites. Social/personal and educative reasons are seen as the main reasons, and one of the most often-cited reasons for people to visit heritage sites is socializing with others e.g. family members and friends (Timothy, 2011).

Heritage tourism, like other tourism activities, is largely viewed as a process of experiential consumption (Chen & Chen, 2010). Thus, tourists' visiting a heritage site consume it as their experience. Tourist experience itself is an extensively studied topic and a key research issue and tourist experiences have been approached in many different ways and conceptualizations have been developed over time (see: Cohen, 1979 and Uriely, 2005). What binds tourist experience and a heritage setting together is interpretation. Interpretation provided at a heritage site is a key element in a tourist's experience (Poria et al., 2006), enhancing the visitors understanding of the history and significance of events, people, and objects with which the site is associated (Alderson and Low, 1985; Reisinger and Steiner, 2008).

This study aims to investigate how a heritage site is negotiated and experienced by visitors from different cultural backgrounds and how heritage interpretation (tour

guides and museum objects) influences that experience. In addition, the aim is to explore the reasons for the visit to the heritage site. The focus of the study will be a UNESCO Heritage Listed site, Suomenlinna fortress in Helsinki Finland, which is a maritime fortress built in the 18th century and offers a unique location for heritage tourism research.

This chapter will further elaborate on the focus of the study, the research objectives and questions, significance of the research and structure of the report.

1.1 FOCUS OF THE STUDY

This study explores the heritage experience of visitors with different cultural backgrounds to Suomenlinna fortress in Helsinki Finland. Suomenlinna fortress has been chosen as the case study of this research due to its versatile and unique history as a maritime fortification. Suomenlinna is also a district of Helsinki (capital of Finland) having the highest volume of incoming foreign tourists and visitors in Finland.

Suomenlinna located on the coast of Helsinki is an important part of Finland's history under the two super powers Sweden and Russia during 18th and 19th centuries. Suomenlinna is exceptional in that while functioning as a maritime fortress it was also a village and part of the city of Helsinki. On one hand Suomenlinna was a base for soldiers who had their cannons ready in case of a battle and on the other a village and a home for its other residents. Another exceptional detail about the fortress is that it is not a typical castle or a fortress that people would associate it with. Suomenlinna fortress is a fortification with walls and buildings spread over a group of five islands. The islands are attached to each other and easily accessible by foot. To reach the islands from the mainland one must use ferry transportation.

Today, Suomenlinna is a living memory of the Swedish and Russian regimes having authentic walls and buildings that are preserved and used as different type of facilities. For tourists and visitors there are several cultural and historical sights and objects housed in museums. One can also make use of the beaches, parks, and picnic areas or to walk around the islands gazing the old buildings and monuments. In 1991 Suomenlinna was nominated as a UNESCO World Heritage as an example of unique European military architecture (the research site is further explained in chapter 2). In the light of these aspects, the fortress offers an interesting case and a research site for this thesis.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The objective of this research is to investigate the (heritage) experience of foreign visitors (visitors with other nationality than Finnish) to Suomenlinna fortress. The researcher aims to investigate how tour guides and museum objects are interpreted by the visitors, and how heritage interpretation shapes their experience.

In order to get a deeper understanding of the foreign visitors' experiences and interpretations in Suomenlinna fortress, the following research questions have been formed:

Main research question:

- How is Suomenlinna fortress and its heritage experienced by foreign visitors generally and at the guided tour and at Suomenlinna museum?

Sub- research questions:

- What is the role of tour guides and Suomenlinna museum in the experience and practice of heritage tourism at Suomenlinna Fortress?
- How is heritage interpretation and guiding done at the site and how do foreign visitors relate to these?

1.3 SIGNIFIGANCE OF THE STUDY

What appears to be the issue in heritage tourism research at the moment is the lack of different perspectives that consider the visitor and the place visited, as well as the meaning that is based on the heritage experience. There is also lack of literature about the personal and individualized meanings tourists place on heritage (Willson et al. 2007). Furthermore, little attention has been placed on cultural heritage regarding the individual visitor needs, motivations and the value sought and gained from visiting a heritage attraction (McIntosh, 1999). Despite the existent research, there appears a lack of conceptual clarity in defining who is a heritage/cultural tourist and what constitutes heritage tourism (Timothy, 2011). It is also stated that the emotional elements of heritage experience have been ignored, yet the value of the heritage visitors' personal experience in terms of enjoyment, understanding and appreciation, has been realized and regarded as important (Hall and McArthur, 1993; Moscardo,

1996 and McIntosh, 1999). Thus, there is a research gap in heritage tourism research from a visitor perspective. Moreover, as McIntosh (1999), have argued there is need to have a wide range of applications to smaller scale environments e.g. heritage sites.

The chosen research site Suomenlinna fortress is an ideal location to investigate the visitor experience in a heritage context. Due to its diverse history and rapid development to a popular tourist site Suomenlinna offers great research possibilities in different fields of tourism in a small environment. Previous research in Suomenlinna has touched upon different fields such as; design & art, prisons, history and tourism (Fritsch et al. 2007; Kantanen, 2005 & Larson, 2013). Thus, tourism and historic tourism research in Finland is still rather young and the first tourism research in Suomenlinna was conducted in 2006. Tourism research in Suomenlinna has mainly been carried out by students and they have focused on measuring customer satisfaction and profiling visitors using quantitative instruments such as surveys. Students' research has been mainly conducted during the peak season, which is from May until October, leaving the wintertime visits under researched.

The need for heritage tourism research with a subjective and personal focus on the visitor experience becomes apparent for both academia and Suomenlinna fortress. Furthermore, a similar research has never been conducted at the site. Thus, to add to previous heritage tourism research and research in Suomenlinna, this study aims to bridge the gap by bringing the subjective focus on the visitor experience at a small-scale environment by building on the theory of the Tourist Gaze and tourist experience. Furthermore, by understanding the personal experience from visiting a heritage site, can help understanding of how people consume heritage and heritage sites and how heritage adds meaning to their lives. In addition, this thesis helps to understand how foreign visitors with different cultural backgrounds negotiate Finnish and European heritage in Suomenlinna fortress.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The thesis is structured in the following way. After this Introduction, the second chapter "Background and Context of the Study" gives an insight on the background of the research site Suomenlinna fortress and its functions. The third chapter "Theoretical Framework" functions as the backbone of the study by introducing the different

theories of heritage tourism, heritage interpretation and tourist experience, to aid understanding on the topic. The main concepts on heritage interpretation, tourist experience and the tourist gaze will be further discussed. The fourth chapter "Methodology", introduces the research strategy, research design, research methods, analysis of findings and limitations of the study. The researcher took an interpretivist philosophical stance and chose to apply the exploratory single case study. As methods and instruments; in-depth interviews, autoethnographic observations and Tripadvisor comment analysis were used, followed up by the thematic data analysis. The fifth chapter "Findings" will present the empirical findings retrieved from the data analysis and will be linked with the main theoretical concepts of this thesis. The key findings suggest that the tour guides play a key role in the interpretation and experience of foreign visitors and these findings contribute to the literature regarding the multi-faceted visitor experience at heritage sites. Finally, the sixth chapter "Conclusion and recommendations" compiles the main findings of the study and provides recommendations on future research on the topic.

2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This chapter explains the empirical context of the study, Suomenlinna fortress (the location of the research) and gives an insight into the visitor activities; the guided tour and museum, which are of relevance to this study and for further understanding of the findings in chapter 5.

2.1 HISTORY OF SUOMENLINNA

2.1.1 THE SWEDISH ERA

The construction work of Suomenlinna began in 1748 with funding from France. At the time Finland was under the rule of the Swedish Kingdom and one of the main reasons to build Suomenlinna or Sveaborg in Swedish was to improve the defence of Finland. France was concerned with the growth of Russian power and pressed Sweden to fortify Finland by promising to assist in the building project with 450 000 thalers. This decision presented the power politics of the time. Sweden had also recently lost its regional superpower status and its most significant eastern fortresses, thus needing a new military base and a naval barrier against Russia. A group of islands on the coast of Helsinki offered a great location for this new “invincible fortress”. The fortress was to operate as a landing place for reinforcements arriving from Sweden safeguarding the fairways leading to Helsinki (Eerikäinen & Rosén, 2005; Paljakka, 2003; whc.unesco.org and www.suomenlinna.fi).

The supervisor of the construction work of Suomenlinna was Lieutenant-Colonel Augustin Ehrensvärd (1710-1772) who can be considered one of the most important persons in the history of Suomenlinna. Augustin was in charge of the fortification plan and supervision during three periods. Augustin was honoured for his achievements but also critiqued due to some decisions he had made in the fortification and his unusual independent post. He was later appointed commander of Suomenlinna. The fortress was built by military tenure soldiers, recruited troops, artisans and prisoners and was the biggest Swedish building project in the 18th century. Building work took up to 14 hours per day and before Ehrensvärd could improve the working conditions 20 out of 100 men were lost annually. Coffins formed a part of the normal supplies of the fortress. The active construction phase on the fortifications of Suomenlinna lasted for

four decades but was never fully completed, albeit the original plan was to finish building in four years. During the construction, more men died in the fortification works than were ever lost in the military use of the fortress. Ehrensvärd died on October 4th in 1772 and he was buried in Sveaborg in the Great Castle Courtyard, where a stone womb was made (ibid.).

In 1788-1790 during the Russo-Swedish War ('Gustav III's War'), Suomenlinna served as a naval base and survived without combats. In 1808-1809 during the Russo-Finnish War (the 'War of Finland'), there were no major combats in Suomenlinna but soon after the War had begun, Suomenlinna surrendered under the command of the Commandant Carl Olof Cronstedt. Cronstedt had to bear the heaviest responsibility for the surrender. There has been dispute over the surrender of the fortress and until today, speculations and rumours exist of what actually happened. Some of the rumours blame Cronstedt for believing the Russians propaganda and their false information where they claimed to destroy the fortress with a fleet two times as big as in Suomenlinna. Some rumours on the contrary praise Cronstedt for caring for the many women and children of the fortress and ending the War. The war ended without any shots fired and the fortress was surrendered to the Russians without a battle (ibid.).

2.1.2 THE RUSSIAN ERA

In 1809, the fortress was taken over by the Russian Imperial government. Finland had become an autonomous Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire thus; Suomenlinna remained a Russian military base. Defence strategies had to be rethought and from now on the troops were to safeguard St. Petersburg. The fortress was made a fortified port of the Russian Baltic fleet. The Russians had big plans for the fortress and held it in high regard. Despite this, Suomenlinna became more of a garrison and as the 19th century progressed its military strategic importance had started to decline. The Russians prioritized building barracks to house soldiers and neglected rebuilding and caring of the fortifications which eventually led for Suomenlinna to fall into decay (Eerikäinen & Rosén, 2005; Paljakka, 2003; whc.unesco.org and www.suomenlinna.fi).

The condition of the fortress did not raise concerns before the Crimean War in 1853-1856 when it was already too late. The war broke out between Russia and Turkey, but as England and France joined forces with the Turks, an Anglo-French fleet bombarded

Suomenlinna for two days in August 1855. The construction work of Suomenlinna was not complete by the time and the fortress suffered from heavy damage. In the late 19th and the early 20th century, the fortifications of Suomenlinna were built up again and the appearance changed even more after the high and damaged buildings were lowered or pulled down in case of a new bombardment. However, Suomenlinna had lost its importance and ultimately became just one of the many Russian fortresses (ibid.).

During the First World War (1914–1918), Suomenlinna formed part of the Naval Fortress of Peter the Great, designed to protect the Russian capital of St Petersburg. During 1916-1917 an extensive reconstruction work was carried out to put the old dry dock in shape. The dock had housed hundreds of warships during the existence of the fortress. The Russians had also built hospitals, schools and an Orthodox church.

2.1.3 THE FINNISH GARRISON ERA

After Finland gained its independence in 1917 Suomenlinna lost its importance as a fortress and the focus of defence had shifted elsewhere. Suomenlinna was still held by the Russians and when the Finnish Civil War broke out in early 1918, they turned part of the fortress over to the Reds fighting in the Civil War. However, Whites reinforced by the Germans, soon gained the upper hand. The Russians gradually left the islands leaving the fortress for the Whites that had set up a prison camp of 6000 Red prisoners. The prisoners were put in every possible place and in cramped conditions so they had to sleep in shifts. There was a lack of hygiene and if the prisoners didn't die from pneumonia or other diseases, they were executed. The last prisoners vacated the islands in 1919 and after that the restoration begun and the fortress was opened to the public (Eerikäinen & Rosén, 2005; Paljakka, 2003; whc.unesco.org and www.suomenlinna.fi).

In 1939, a Winter War broke out and Suomenlinna was stationed by the anti-aircraft and artillery units. The fortress also functioned as a submarine base. In 1941-1944 during the Continuation War, Suomenlinna also housed German military personnel. After the war, only a few military units remained on Suomenlinna. In 1960's the Defence Forces announced that it would vacate the fortress completely and in 1972 the Suomenlinna Coastal Artillery Regiment moved out permanently and Suomenlinna

was turned over to civilian administration. Only the naval academy remains there today (ibid.).

2.2 SUOMENLINNA FORTRESS TODAY

Still today, Suomenlinna is a district of Helsinki and populates more than 800 people. 6 km of walls and 190 buildings have been preserved and the old buildings are used as housing, working space, maintenance facilities and visitor service facilities. The civilian community started to develop alongside the army institutions since 1918 and some of the families still living in Suomenlinna came to the fortress at that time. Since 1920 the islands have had their own elementary school and kindergarten. The library was built in the fifties and clubs and activity groups still exist. The fortress has been open to visitors since 1948 when tourists were allowed to enter the islands. Today, Suomenlinna receives roughly 700 000 visitors annually being Helsinki's most important tourist attraction and a popular travel destination among domestic and foreign tourists. Suomenlinna houses six museums, guided tours, exhibitions, crafts, events (jazz, theatre etc.) cafes, restaurants, walls, cannons, tunnels, a submarine and the Suomenlinna prison. As a district of Helsinki, there is a free access to the islands and the fortification and by buying a ferry ticket to the islands visitors can wander around freely.

Suomenlinna is the property of the Finnish government and is managed by the Governing Body of Suomenlinna, an agency subordinate to the Ministry of Education and Culture. Ehrensverd society founded in 1921 takes care of the history of the fortress and shares information about it (Eerikäinen & Rosén, 2005; whc.unesco.org and www.suomenlinna.fi).

2.2.1 SUOMENLINNA PART OF WORLD HERITAGE

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) lists the most remarkable and interesting objects that represent architecture, ancient cultures and natural formations to the list of World Heritage Sites. Suomenlinna was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1991, as a unique monument of military architecture. Suomenlinna is to a large extent historically authentic, consisting of original structures and features (Eerikäinen & Rosén, 2005).

What makes Suomenlinna unique is its versatile landscape that depends on two factors: its situation in the outer archipelago and the changes in natural conditions brought on by the immense construction works. Nature has been shaped by human work and the destroyed vegetation has been replaced by cultivated plants. The natural landscape consists of meadows and fields (ibid).



Figure 1. Map of Suomenlinna islands (Source: researcher, 2014)

2.3 GUIDED TOURS

Guided tours are organized every day during the summer months and every weekend during the wintertime. Wintertime guided tours are offered in English once a day, on Saturday and Sunday and last approximately one hour. Tours are led by the Ehrensverd

Society guides, who are familiar with the rich history of the five islands that constitute Suomenlinna fortress. The tour points out the most important historical moments of the fortress and covers the main sights such as; the dry dock, and the Great Courtyard. The tours start from the Suomenlinna center. (www.suomenlinna.fi/en and www.suomenlinnatours.com).



Figure 2. Dry dock (Source: researcher, 2014)



Figure 3. Ehrensvärd's monument (Source: researcher, 2014)

2.4 SUOMENLINNA MUSEUM

Suomenlinna Museum, located in the Suomenlinna Centre, showcases the eventful history of the fortress from the 18th century to the present day. The museum depicts the different historical phases of the fortress and the lives of the people who lived and worked there. There are different objects such as; touch screens, audio commentary, a short film every half hour that is available in eight languages, pictures and historical artifacts. The museum is open throughout the year seven days a week (www.suomenlinna.fi).



Figure 4. Cannon in the museum (Source: researcher, 2014)



Figure 5. Film in the museum (Source: researcher, 2014)



Figure 6. Touch screen in the museum (Source: researcher, 2014)

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter elaborates the main concepts that are essential for this thesis. The first paragraphs explain and discuss the concepts of heritage, culture & tourism, heritage interpretation and tourist experience and explains their applicability to this research. In the last paragraph, the concept of tourist gaze will be introduced and explained. Together these concepts form the theoretical framework of this study.

3.1 HERITAGE, CULTURE & TOURISM

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines heritage tourism as ‘an immersion in the natural history, human heritage, arts, philosophy and institutions of another region or country’ (www2.unwto.org). For many researchers the meaning of heritage is linked to the past representing some type of inheritance to be passed on to the current and future generations, both in terms of cultural traditions and physical artefacts (Timothy et al. 2003). Timothy and Boyd (2003:4) define heritage as the modern-day use of elements of the past and Nuryanti (1996) states that heritage can be seen as a carrier of historical values, and therefore viewed as part of the cultural tradition of a society.

In terms of tourism, heritage is commonly regarded as a tourist activity in a space where historic artifacts are presented and is normally categorized either as cultural or natural heritage (Garrod and Fyall, 2001 and Poria, 2004). Cultural heritage consists of monuments, historical or architectural remains and artifacts on museums, philosophy, traditions, art, literature, folklore etc. Natural heritage on the contrary consists of landscapes, national parks, wilderness, flora and fauna etc. (Herbert, 1989; Zeppel and Hall, 1992 and Nuryanti. 1996). In addition to cultural and natural heritage there is a third form, that of built heritage, which according to Nuryanti (1996) is more culture than nature related, although the two are interrelated and can complement each other. Built heritage is comprised of human-made elements and holds historical values and meanings that stem from the setting and societal values (ibid. 1996). Suomenlinna fortress can be defined as natural, cultural and built heritage in terms of these aforementioned classifications. The fortress is at the same time a landscape and a built fortification, where monuments, historical/architectural remains and artifacts can be found on museums.

Heritages are important attractions in cultural tourism and cultural tourism can be said to exist because tourists want either to experience living places and cultures other than their own, or to gain access to foreign cultures, different in time and space, through artefacts housed away from their original locations, often in museums (Prentice, 2001 and Kantanen at al. 2006). Tourists who want to experience these living places and cultures can be defined as cultural tourists. Cultural tourists can have different interests regarding heritage and leisure and they might value and choose to participate in different activities in different heritage settings (Herbert, 1995 and Kantanen at al. 2006).

Historic buildings, and castles in particular, are both familiar and popular sights throughout Europe, offering a variety of cultural experiences to different visitors (Laws, 1998). Guided tours and museums at heritage settings are typical mediums for the visitors to tap into, and interpret the history of the site. Visiting heritage sites such as museums and monuments is seen as a way to develop relationships during leisure time, which is important for many people. Walking, sightseeing, gaining emotive or spiritual experiences, pursuit of knowledge, relaxing etc. are other relevant reasons to visit heritage sites (McIntosh, 1999 and Nuryanti, 1996).

Considering this study, it is important to understand why Suomenlinna attracts visitors and more importantly why they choose to join a guided walking tour or to visit the museum.

3.1.1HERITAGE INTERPRETATION

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the essence of heritage tourism is the reconstruction of the past to the present. This can be done through different means but to ascribe meaning to past events, educate and entertain visitors at a heritage site, requires interpretation (Nuryanti, 1996).

Tilden (1977:9, cited in Moscardo, 1996) has described and outlined the core elements of interpretation and he describes it as “an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships”, as “an art”, and as “revelation based upon information”. He also mentions that interpretation must connect its topic or place “to something within the personality or experience of the visitors”. Similarly, Moscardo (1996), has listed four key principles that should underlie interpretation at built heritage sites.

One, visitors should be given variety in their experiences. Two, visitors should be given control over their experiences (in general control is given to visitors through opportunities to interact with or participate in the interpretation, and good physical orientation systems). Three, interpretation needs to make connections to the personal experiences of visitors; and four, interpretation needs to challenge visitors, to question and encourage them to question. Using the different elements of interpretation the visitor can understand and experience the site and its history. Nuryanti (1996), argues that interpretation is not only in the form of physical facts and tangible elements such as maps, guided tours and signage, but it gives a deeper, even a spiritual and emotional response, that leads to a deeper understanding of the site. Timothy (2011), brings out the educational element and emphasizes the importance of heritage places for formal and informal education. According to him, education is the most important overarching role of interpretation in a heritage setting. The aim of education in a heritage site is to get visitors to understand and appreciate the site they are visiting. Interpretation can also create great awareness, self-fulfillment and enjoyment among the visitors (Herbert, 1989 and Nuryanti, 1996). The importance of interpretation and education has risen due to the focus of tourism as an experience rather than a product and interpretation can be seen as the link between the visitor and an area's resources.

There are several approaches to personal interpretation in the heritage context. What they all have in common is the use of a live person as the information source. One of the most common and popular mean to provide live information is the use of tour guides; they can make the material presented personally relevant for the visitors (Timothy, 2011 and Moscardo, 1996). Guides are also noted important by providing physical orientation, and, through their ability to answer questions (Moscardo, 1996). Similarly, interpretation plays a big role on the way guides provide information at the site. The use of the interpretive elements such as; provocation, relation and revelation are essential. By provoking, the guide catches the attention of the visitors; provocation arouses interest and assists in presenting the story. By relating the topics and stories to the visitors, the guide aids understanding and reveals hidden meanings that connect visitors with the site and its history (Bohlin et al. 2014). Furthermore, Bohlin et al. (2014), note that interpretation is widely recognized to influence the experience that tourists gain from a particular site.

Another approach to interpretation, which is relevant to the current study, is the use of museum objects. Museums are considered important cultural heritage and tourist

destinations for local and foreign tourists (Jansen-Verbeke et al. 1996) and are regarded as experience-centered places that offer both emotional and cognitive stimuli through the use of multisensory objects such as: touch screens and videos for example (Kim et al. 2009). According to McIntosh (1999:43), the range of museum experiences is similar to heritage experiences, which “may include feelings of fun and enjoyment, escape from routine, sharing valued time with family or friends or learning”. Furthermore, museum experiences are a complex combination of factors that shape the feelings and attitude of visitors towards their visit and include issues of perception and subjective experience as reflected in the museum practices (Kim et al. 2009). Museum visitors also seek variety in the offerings and experiences in which they connect with the past, encounter inspiring examples, express pride in their heritage, and honor important events, (Kotler and Kotler, 2000).

Due to the rich and eventful history of the fortress there are several interpretive methods that are applied to educate, inform and entertain the visitors of Suomenlinna. Interpretation in Suomenlinna is provided by tour guides, museums, maps, signage and mobile apps, for example. Thus, this study focuses on the role of tour guides and Suomenlinna museum in terms of visitor experience and heritage interpretation. The focus in this study, is delineated to tour guides and Suomenlinna museum, to capture the main interpretive elements of the fortress, thus to tap into the role and relevance of the ‘live’ interpretation provided at the site. Moreover, it is important to scrutinize how interpretation is implemented at the guided tours and Suomenlinna museum, whether it has an influence on the experience of the visitors and how the visitors relate to it.

3.2 TOURIST EXPERIENCE

“What does it take for a visit, an activity, an event, a view, a gelato, a feeling, knowledge or learning to become experience, the tourist experience?”- A question raised by Serena Volo (2009:119) that is relevant for understanding the meaning of tourism experience. She, among other scholars, is questioning the very essence of the tourist experience and not without avail. The complexity of the tourist experience becomes apparent through literature and findings of many studies. It is a complicated psychological phenomenon and scholars have had difficulties in defining, identifying and measuring the components, and defining how tourist experience changes according to the characteristics of the individual tourists (Volo, 2009; Cohen, 1979;

Vitterso et al., 2000; Cutler and Carmichael, 2010; Jennings et al., 2006; Selstad, 2007). Tourist experience has been a key research topic and extensively studied since the 60's, thus clear consensus of the conceptualization of what constitutes the experience is still missing (Volo, 2009; Komppula and Gartner, 2013). The shift from modern to postmodern approaches in tourist experience research has also had its impact on the matter. Previous, homogenizing portrayals turned into pluralizing depictions that take into account the multiplicity of the experience. The focus from objective to subjective negotiation of experiences has also changed the way tourist experiences are seen; as subjective constructs that are built on the individual's personal meanings and attributes (Uriely, 2005)

3.2.1 DEFINING THE TOURIST EXPERIENCE

"Different kinds of people may desire different modes of touristic experiences; hence 'the tourist' does not exist as a type" (Cohen, 1979:4).

Aiming to understand the essence of tourist experience, tourism scholars have acknowledged that there is no single definition or a type of a tourist or a tourist experience, and approached it by constructing different typologies (Cohen, 1972 and Wickens, 2002). Cohen (1979), basing on his idea that 'the tourist does not exist as a type' identified different modes of the tourist experiences. First mode; the recreational mode is a form of seeking entertainment. Second mode; the diversionary mode is an escape of the boring mundane. Third mode; experiential mode is the search for the authentic. Fourth mode; the experimental mode is the quest of finding one self while trying new things. And the fifth mode; the existential mode is the extreme 'seeker' who tries to escape the mainstream. He sees tourist experience through different ranges of motivations. Holt (1995, in Shaw, 2004) approached tourist experience through consumption and suggested that people consume experiences in four different ways: as experience, involving subjective and emotional reactions; as integration, by gaining information; as classification, by defining the individual or group through that which is consumed, with strong links to ideas of identity and cultural capital and as play, through socializing and communicating. What can be noted is that similarly Holt's different ways of consuming an experience builds on multitude of aspects, capturing the heterogeneity of tourists as Cohen (1979) has noted. Hence, tourist experience is mostly seen as affected by several aspects. In addition to the

aforementioned aspects, scholars such as Larsen (2007:8), has noted that tourist experiences base and originate from the individual tourist and can be considered as psychological phenomena. In the same vein O'Dell (2005:15) goes on saying: 'experiences are highly personal, subjectively perceived, intangible, ever fleeting and continuously ongoing'. An individual's mood and feelings, as well as their cultural/ social background can affect them. In line with O'Dell (2005), Jennings et al. (2006), argue that tourist experience can only be interpreted by reflecting on the specific individuals involved in the specific setting where experiences take place. These arguments come together in the model of Cutler and Carmichael (2010). They have approached the complexity of the tourist experience by focusing on the phases, influences and outcomes of the tourist experience. To add more elements to the existing views on tourist experience they adapted the model of Clawson and Knetsch (1966). The different elements of the model are taken from findings and conclusions from the existing tourist experience literature to better comprehend the different aspects and influences that affect the tourist experience. The original model consists of components such as: anticipation, travel to site, on-site activity, return travel and recollection. Cutler and Carmichael (2010:8) added an influential and personal realm to the model and argue that this new model demonstrates the "multi-phased, multi-influential and multi-outcome nature of the tourist experience". According to them, the personal realm involves elements within an individual such as knowledge, memory, perception, emotion and self-identity. The over all evaluation of the trip can be judged through satisfaction/dissatisfaction and this evaluation can affect and is affected by these elements in the personal realm. These elements can be seen as outcomes that can change and develop after an experience through reflection and recollection and can be impacted on the experience itself. These elements also shape the experience of a tourist who arrives at a destination with individual memories and perceptions of the place, people, knowledge and understanding of the self. "The personal realm then feeds into motivations and expectations for future experiences, providing a cycle of motivation/expectation, experience and outcome" (Ryan, 2003 and selstad, 2007 in Cutler and Carmichael, 2010:9). The influential realm involves elements that influence the individual's experience from the outside. These elements can be categorized as physical or social aspects or services and products. Physical aspects can be natural or man made settings or spatial and geographical characters. Social aspects consist of personal relationships, social settings, and interactions with personnel and other tourists/visitors. Services and products can be souvenirs, transportations,

accommodation or other available facilities. From these elements, physical and social aspects are seen to have the most influence on the experience either enhancing or worsening it directly. Services and products are in the intermediary role to enable the occurrence of the experience, thus having a lesser impact on it.

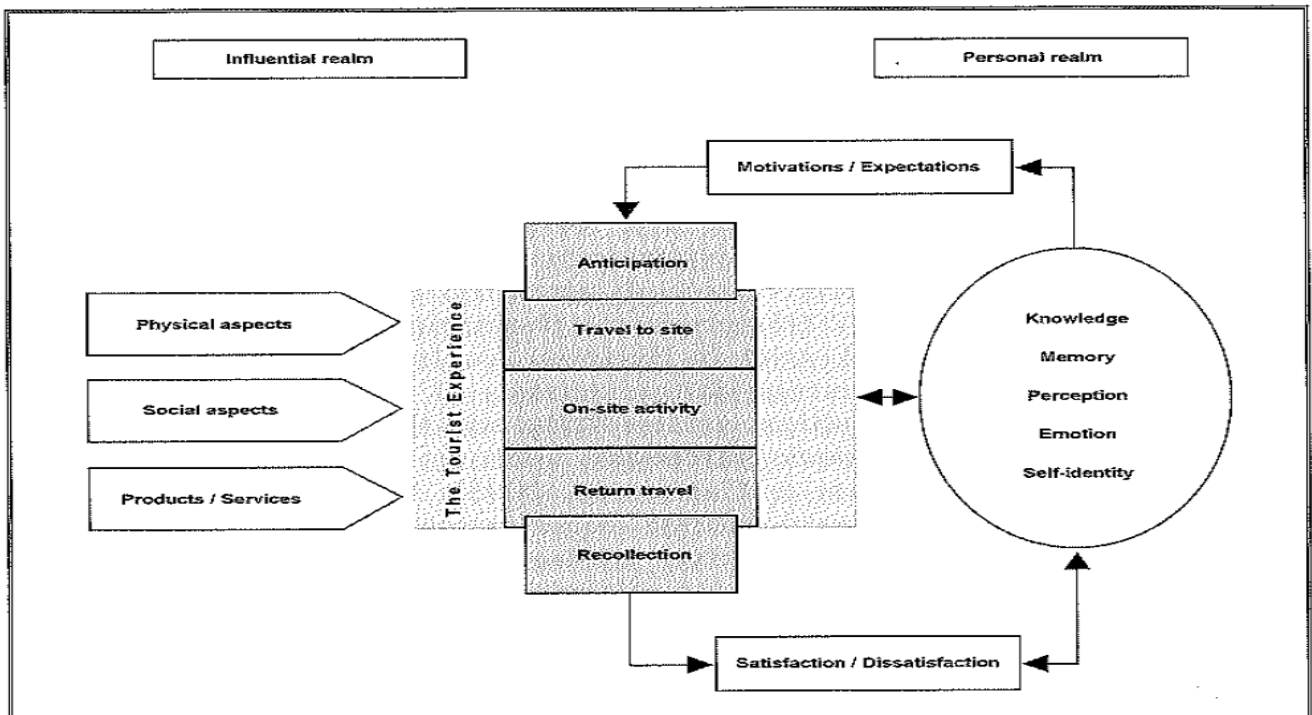


Figure 7. Phases, influences and outcomes of the tourist experience (Cutler and Carmichael, 2010).

As can be seen in figure 7, Cutler and Carmichael's (2010) model successfully compiles all the different elements that can have an impact and are mostly associated with the tourist experience. With this model they have intended to clarify the multifaceted nature of the tourist experience. Thus, this model proves useful in this thesis when scrutinizing the visitor experience in Suomenlinna fortress. By building on the model of Cutler and Carmichael (2010) the visitors experience can be examined through the personal and influential elements depicted in the model and can be further integrated into a more schematic model with the tourist gaze (further in next paragraph).

As becomes evident from the literature, tourist experience has been approached through somewhat varying typologies and definitions, but what is important for this study, is seeking to understand what shapes the experience of the visitors in Suomenlinna fortress. To be able to interpret and make sense of the visitor experience in Suomenlinna these

previous concepts and model in figure 7, provide the basis for understanding how the tourists experience can be influenced by multitude of aspects. The next paragraph explains one of the key concepts of this study, the tourist gaze by John Urry.

3.3 THE TOURIST GAZE

The concept of the 'gaze' was coined by Michel Foucault in 1976 when he described the roots of objectification in the birth of the Clinic. Foucault's notion of the gaze depicts the transformation in medical discourse; how the view of the patients' changed from human beings to medical conditions, spiraling to the concept of the "medical gaze" (Foucault, 1994). Later, tourism scholar John Urry extended the gaze of the doctors to tourists who gaze to consume pleasurable experiences (Urry, 2002). According to Urry 'people gaze upon the world through a particular filter of ideas, skills, desires and expectations, framed by social class, nationality, age and education resulting into a performance that orders, shapes and classifies, rather than reflects the world' (Urry and Larsen, 2012:2). Thus, the tourist gaze is not unique but affected by society, social group and historical period, and constructed through difference. Urry emphasizes that 'there are many ways of gazing in tourism and tourists look at difference differently'. To gaze at certain sights/places it is done through frames or cultural lenses affected by personal experiences, memories, rules, styles and images and texts of other places, resulting in gazing 'interesting, good or beautiful physical forms and material spaces' (ibid.).

According to Urry, the gaze is constructed through signs and tourism is the grand collector of signs. A gaze is purely visual and is the fundamental process of consumption; hence there is two versions of the gaze with different characteristics; romantic and collective. In the romantic gaze the emphasis is on 'solitude, privacy and a personal, semi-spiritual relationship with the object of the gaze. In the collective gaze the presence of a large group of other people is vital. Thus, these other people create the atmosphere and the sense of being where one needs to be (Urry, 2002).

Different visitors can gaze upon the same objects and read and perform them in different ways, thus sites are not systemically and unresponsively negotiated. Tourists in heritage sites can recreate their own sense of past even if the site has entertaining characters, 'many tourists make associations between what they see at the site and their personal lives', resulting in gazing at a collection of artifacts and buildings,

imagining the history behind these objects (Bruner, 1994:410 in Urry, 2002:102).

The essence of the gaze is based on visual consumption and the importance of the expanding popularity of photography in the late 19th century is an indicator of this new form of visual perception, and its role in shaping the tourist gaze that was emerging in this period. "The photographing eye teaches new ways of looking at the world and new forms of authority of doing so" (Urry, 2002:125).

Architects and architectural practices have also their impact in shaping the contemporary tourist gaze. Through social differences, tourists gaze different architectural styles decisively. Moreover, each place and object is viewed from several perspectives. There are also differences in the way visitors and locals 'see' a place, and between the viewpoints of old and new residents. Wright (1985:237, in Urry, 2002): 'What is pleasantly old for one person is decayed and broken for another'. Urry also notes that as tourists, people see objects as signs that signify something else. These signs stand for 'tourist clichés' and what matters is what tourists are told they are seeing. He emphasizes by quoting Horne (1984) that the fame of the object becomes its meaning. Thus, it is the agency over the things we see and the order they should be seen. The different social background of the visitors also results in diverse preferences of where to visit and on the effects of the visits to host populations and the popularity of such sites. These preferences of the gaze are also a result of globalization and postmodernity, that have made the tourist gaze into a universal phenomenon, being at the same time 'everywhere but nowhere in particular' (Urry, 2002:143-144).

The tourist gaze has been used previously in studies concerning e.g. tourism consumption, tourist performance and railway heritage (Kwek and Lee, 2013; Perkins and Thorns, 2001; Halsall, 2001). Recent works on tourist gaze have argued that the gaze should be studied in combination with the performance turn where tourists are performing with other tourists and tourism entrepreneurs. Tourist gaze has been a tool for scholars and researchers to investigate the social and physical environment and the consumption of objects and natural and built environments (Edensor, 2000; Kwek and Lee, 2013; Larsen and Urry, 2011). As Urry notes in his book, one can consider the typical objects of the tourist gaze to make sense how social groups construct their tourist gaze and contrast it with the wider society (Urry, 2002: 2).

In this research the researcher chose to apply the concept of the tourist gaze to explore the meaning the foreign visitors to Suomenlinna fortress have of their experience at the guided tour or at Suomenlinna museum. As part of the theoretical framework of this study tourist gaze offers an elegant conceptual tool to analyze how different tourists/visitors from different cultural backgrounds view their experiences and assign meanings to objects, places and the environment. Thus, the concept of tourist gaze also provides a useful framework for exploring tourist experiences in a heritage context.

4 METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to present the chosen research methodology employed in this study and to introduce the research strategy and design, data collection methods, data analysis and limitations of the study.

This chapter is divided into five paragraphs. The first paragraph presents the research strategy. Paragraph two explains the research design, sampling and data collection methods. Paragraph three presents the data analysis and finally, paragraph four describes the limitations of the research.

4.1 RESEARCH STRATEGY

Behind every method lies a belief, thus, to be able to answer the research questions of this study a research strategy pointing out the epistemological assumptions underlying the research has been developed. In this case, the researcher believes that it is important to understand the meanings that humans attach to their actions and that people experience reality in different ways and what they feel and see is important. An interpretivist philosophical stance in this research is taken to try to comprehend the heritage experience of foreign visitors in Suomenlinna fortress and to describe their individual experiences as thoroughly as possible. Hence, the chosen stance allows the use of qualitative methods when gathering empirical data. The epistemological view of the study functions as a framework that guides the data collection and analysis processes. Moreover, the purpose is to allow the researchers own interpretations within the research process.

At each stage in the research process, interviewing and observational techniques offer contrasting ways to approach the social world and both aim to expand common understandings of social processes (May, 2002). By using an interpretivist stance, the researcher can apply methods that serve the research purpose and it is possible for the researcher to look at the data through her own worldview and add her own interpretations to it. Interpretivism aims to uncover meaning toward a better understanding of the issues involved (Alverman et. al 2010). In this research an interpretive dimension can be of advantage to be able fully comprehend how heritage is experienced at the site (Lester, 1999). The researcher used views and methods from

the interpretivist social science paradigm, to be able to get as thorough picture of how a group of people experienced the heritage of Suomenlinna

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN, SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION

4.2.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The chosen research design for the current qualitative study is the one of exploratory single case study. The purpose of the research was to study a group of foreign people who visited Suomenlinna fortress in January and February 2014 and to understand how they negotiated and experienced the site, how the interpretation provided at a guided tour or Suomenlinna museum influenced their experience and additionally to be able to obtain more background information why these foreign visitors come to Suomenlinna fortress. The researcher investigated whether the visitors were seeking to experience education, knowledge, recreation or a personal experience. Personal experience in this study comprises of the personal experience based on the visitor's identity, tradition, or other social or emotional dimensions (Poria et al. 2004). These aforementioned reasons; education, knowledge, recreation and personal reason were chosen to be applied due to the previous heritage research by Poria et al. (2004).

The researcher adopted the exploratory single case study design to enable her to get a well-grounded picture of what is happening on the site, in a limited amount of time. An exploratory case study design was chosen due to the uniqueness of the research site and to serve the research objectives. Suomenlinna offers great research possibilities within historical heritage tourism research and there are many options regarding what and how to research. When the decision of the research topic had been chosen an exploratory method for the research allowed the researcher to investigate the heritage experience of the foreign visitors in Suomenlinna when there was little or no knowledge about the group, process, activity or situation under study, and a single case study method to investigate contemporary phenomena in a real-life context and to consider the subjectivity people bring to their interpretations. Case studies can also rely on multiple sources of data and cope with distinctive situations with many interesting data points (Yin, 2009; Silverman, 2000; Stebbins, 2001 and De Vaus, 2001).

It was also to be kept in mind as Glaser and Strauss (1967:25) note, that “exploration” produces hypotheses, tentative generalizations about the group, the process, activity or situation being studied. Hence, the exploratory findings retrieved from this study will be regarded as tentative generalizations.

4.2.2 PURPOSIVE SAMPLING

The researcher decided to use purposive sampling when selecting the research sample. Purposive sampling was chosen to be able to select a sample that would fit the research objectives. It was already decided when planning the objectives that the focus of the study would be the foreign visitors of the fortress. That was due to the pure interest towards the visitor experience that fascinated the researcher and also offered the opportunity to bridge the research gap in heritage tourism research in Finland by tapping into the way these visitors from foreign cultures and with different background would experience the heritage of the fortress. The researcher chose to focus to investigate those foreign visitors who joined a guided tour or visited the Suomenlinna museum. The researcher felt that the focus in foreign visitors was an interesting way for gathering the data on heritage interpretation and tourist experience. Suomenlinna being one of the most visited places among foreign visitors to Helsinki enabled her to reach visitors with different nationalities and with the concept of tourist gaze (in chapter 3) the researcher was able to investigate how visitors from different backgrounds and cultures experience a Finnish heritage site.

4.2.3 DATA COLLECTION

The current study adopted an interpretative stance and applied this philosophical assumption to data collection. As mentioned earlier for interpretivist research allow the use of qualitative methods and offer a great way to uncover the meaning behind the issue that is being investigated. Therefore, in-depth interviews, autoethnographic observations and Tripadvisor content analysis were chosen as the most suitable methods for this study.

AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATIONS

Due to the exploratory nature of the study, the researcher chose to adopt the autoethnographic method to be able to gather more in-depth findings on the topic by

using her own observations and experiences from the site. Firstly to better understand the data retrieved from the interviews and Tripadvisor comment analysis, thus to get insights on what is happening at the site and secondly, autoethnography makes it possible to “relate the research process to both social world and the self, draw on personal stories and narratives and consolidate intertextuality between ethnography and autobiography” (May, 2002). Furthermore, autoethnography brings more flexibility and viewpoints to the current study than mere observations.

Several scholars have used qualitative methods in interpretive studies but technique such as autoethnography is not common. This is perhaps because of the controversy related to the method and its accuracy (Komppula & Gartner, 2013). Despite these controversies, the researcher believes that autoethnography is an appropriate method to support the research objects and to gain relevant in-depth information on the visitor experience and interpretation in Suomenlinna fortress.

Autoethnography was conducted between 18th-19th of January 2014, 1st – 2nd and 15th of February 2014 and in this study it consisted of observations and researchers own interpretations. These interpretations are based on the researchers experiences and observations, thus cannot be generalized to other visitors’ experiences and feelings.

To guide the observations the researcher conducted an observation plan (appendix 2), however some observations were based on momentary notions without pre-planning. Observations were conducted in three different locations; at the guided walking tour, at Suomenlinna center and at the ferry to Suomenlinna. Since Suomenlinna fortress is located on seven islands on the coast of Helsinki and one must use a ferry transportation to get there, it was considered important to observe visitors of Suomenlinna in places that they must pass by before joining a guided tour or visiting Suomenlinna museum. It was noted that the researcher could not observe all of the visitors that were later interviewed and that at locations such as the ferry or Suomenlinna museum observations were based on the general behaviour of all visitors. Moreover, these different locations allowed the researcher to get better insights and a more complete understanding of what is happening at the site. Hence, combining observations with researchers own experiences in a case study like Suomenlinna can provide richer data and findings. When conducting observations and wandering around Suomenlinna fortress the researcher took notes of the behaviour,

expressions and body language of the visitors and paid attention on their appearance; whether they were men or women, whether they were young or old, whether they looked European or Asian and listened what language they spoke. Furthermore, the researcher wrote down her experiences of Suomenlinna fortress based on her feelings and perceptions of the visited locations and conducted activities. The notes are further explained as part of the findings of the study in chapter 5.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

In-depth interviews offer a form of conversation where knowledge about the social world is constructed in normal human interactions and the emphasis is on free expression (Ritchie et al. 2003).

To be able to understand why foreign visitors come to Suomenlinna fortress, how they experience and interpret the heritage of the site, 13 in-depth interviews with foreign visitors who joined a guided tour or visited the Suomenlinna museum. Interviews were conducted between 18th of January 2014 and 15th of February 2014 in Suomenlinna fortress in Helsinki, Finland. The goal was to select a group of respondents who were strategically located to shed light on the larger forces and processes under investigation (May, 2002:204). The interviewees had to have another nationality than Finnish, be at least 16 years of age and either have joined a guided walking tour or visited the Suomenlinna museum. The respondents were approached at Suomenlinna center after visiting the museum or during the guided tour, and enquired whether they would participate on the interview.

Interviews were held in English and were recorded with a recording device. An interview guide was constructed to guide the interview and transcription process (appendix 1). Research questions were open-ended since the research objectives are to get a deeper understanding of the visitors and to use as little structure as possible.

The respondents represented the following nationalities; Austria (3), German (2), Norwegian (1), French (1), French (1), British (1), American (1), Colombian (1), Japanese (1) and Russian (1) and had the following age; 16-20 (2), 20-30 (5), 30-40 (), 40-50 (3), 50-60 (3). The majority of the respondents were women.

TRIPADVISOR COMMENT ANALYSIS

According to O'Donoghue and Punch (2003), triangulation is a method of cross-checking data from multiple sources to search for regularities in the research data.

To triangulate the data retrieved from interviews and autoethnographic observations, a Tripadvisor comment analysis was conducted. Tripadvisor is a popular travel website that provides travel information and reviews. Reviewing user comments of visitors on their visit to Suomenlinna adds to the fairly low number of interview respondents and gives more insight on the research topic. 35 Comments were collected from the most recent wintertime visits and the aim was to collect comments from foreign visitors, thus to get as representative sample as possible. It was not always clearly stated if the visitors joined a guided tour or visited Suomenlinna museum, but the reviewed comments provide insight on the overall experience of the visit and give a more detailed explanation on the activities they conducted and the elements they encountered during their visit.

4.3 DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter elaborates the data analysis of the collected data. In the first paragraph the analysis of autoethnographic observations is explained. In the second paragraph the analysis of in-depth interviews is described and in the third paragraph the analysis of Tripadvisor comment review is explained.

4.3.1 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Researcher chose to adopt thematic analysis for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data from Autoethnographic observation notes, in-depth interview notes and Tripadvisor comment review notes.

Thematic analysis as an essentialist or realist method is useful to report experiences, meanings and the reality of participants and proved to be useful in analysing the data collected from the visitor experiences at the fortress. Through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provided a flexible and useful research tool that enabled the researcher to go further than merely describing the data set. Interpretations of different aspects of the research topic could be further interpreted (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

The first step of thematic analysis used in this study was to create themes and codes to answer the research questions. Coding involves noting patterns in the data and dividing up the data to give greater clarity regarding their detailed content. In order to do so the patterns are labelled as codes. Distinctions are drawn between different aspects of the content by organizing the data into a set of categories (Marks and Yardley, 2004). In this case, the researcher used deductive coding where a theme is drawn from existing theoretical ideas that the researcher have brought to the data (Boeije, 2010). The researcher formed codes in order to answer the research question. Two sets of main themes and sub codes were created.

The idea was to create themes that have sub codes that point out relevant details from the research notes. Themes and sub codes in figure 2, were created for the analysis of interview notes and Tripadvisor comments. In figure 3, themes and sub codes for the analysis of autoethnographic notes are listed. Researcher chose to create two sets of codes to serve each method. Research methods in this study looked at different aspect, thus being more appropriate when creating codes according to the objectives designed for interviews (appendix 1.) and observations (appendix 2.).

Table 1. Themes and codes for thematic analysis of interviews and Tripadvisor comments.

THEME	CODE			
REASON TO VISIT SUOMENLINNA	Education/Knowledge (information seeking for studies/work, hobby)	Recreation (sightseeing, leisure)	Personal reason (one's own history, personal interest, family, commemoration)	History/World heritage (interest in history, interest in (world) heritage,
VISITOR EXPERIENCE AT THE GUIDED TOUR	Feelings, sights, physical aspects, social aspects	Personal experience/connection with the site (through one's one culture, history, family)	Experience of the guide, guides effect on the experience (through interpretation, sights)	
VISITOR EXPERIENCE IN THE MUSEUM	Overall feelings, sights, physical aspects, social aspects)	Personal experience/connection with the site (through one's one culture, history, family)	Experience of the museum objects, objects effect on the experience (through interpretation)	

Table 2. Themes and codes for analysing autoethnographic observation notes.

GUIDES	MUSEUM	VISITORS	INTERACTION	LOCATION
Behaviour, Mood, Personality	Visuality (objects on display)	Group size	Picture taking, looking at objects	Activities conducted
Information sharing during the tour (stories, additional info), Spots visited during the tour	Information distribution via museum objects (stories, additional info)	Nationality	Questions to the guide	Places visited, Objects gazed
Atmosphere, Overall feeling	Atmosphere, Overall feeling	Body language, Facial expressions, Behaviour	Verbal interaction with the guide and with each other	Time spent at different spots

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

The data retrieved from the interviews were transcribed (Boeije, 2010), and after transcribing, the codes (figure 2.) were used to identify important pieces of text. Each piece of text was collected and fitted under a corresponding code. After coding, the remaining pieces of text were interpreted through the epistemological stance of the researcher and results finally results could be drawn.

TRIPADVISOR COMMENT ANALYSIS

The researcher chose to be less strict with coding the Tripadvisor comments and used themes and sub codes mainly to help choosing the most relevant comments to his study.

AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATIONS

The autoethnographic observation notes consisted of two sorts of written notes; observational notes of the visitors and notes of the researchers own experiences. All notes were analysed by using the themes and codes from figure 3. After coding the notes, the most relevant pieces were chosen to support the interview findings.

4.4 LIMITATIONS

This paragraph discusses the limitations of the research, considering the methodological and researcher aspects. Overall, this research seeks to uncover situated knowledge regarding the fortress and is not meant to create broad generalizable claims regarding Finnish or global heritage tourism.

The current research also posed a few specific limitations that might have affected the data collection and the gathered data. One major limitation was the time frame of the data collection. The data was gathered between January and February 2014, which meant freezing outdoor temperatures of minimum of -20 degrees Celsius, limited wintertime opening times, limited access to museums and attractions in Suomenlinna (only one museum open) and a small number of organized guided tours (two guided tours per week, one on Saturday and one on Sunday). These aspects might have affected on the rather low number of respondents (13). The fortress is also a challenging location for this type of research, where there is only one person collecting the qualitative data. The guided tours last an hour and after the tour the visitors can go and explore the island on their own and might not be willing to wait to be interviewed, especially in the freezing temperatures. In addition, when visitors exit the museum the researcher can only interview one person at a time and might not reach all the potential visitors, since the number of people visiting the museum during the data collection was fairly low compared to the summertime for example. The researcher believes that these aspects have affected the number of the respondents to some extent.

5 FINDINGS: MULTITUDE OF MEANINGS IN SUOMENLINNA HERITAGE EXPERIENCE

“Findings are created through the interaction between the participant, the data and the researcher.” (Guba et al. 1995)

This chapter elaborates the analysis of findings on the research objective, which is to examine the visitor experience of the foreign visitors and to investigate how tour guides and museum objects are interpreted by the visitors, and how heritage interpretation shapes the experience and negotiation of the visitors. In addition, to acquire more background information the purpose is to explore why foreign visitors come to Suomenlinna sea fortress.

To be able to answer the research questions, the researcher conducted 13 in-depth interviews with foreign visitors who joined a guided tour or visited Suomenlinna museum. The respondents are from different nationalities and professional backgrounds and had no previous connection to the interviewer. To support the interviews, the researcher conducted autoethnographic observations and collected comments from Tripadvisor on the experiences of foreign visitors in Suomenlinna.

The findings will be discussed in the following way; paragraph 5.1 will elaborate background information on the reasons why foreign visitors chose to visit Suomenlinna fortress and the reason they joined a guided tour or visited Suomenlinna museum. These findings suggest that the fortress appealed foreign visitors in recreational and historical sense. Connections to the fortress were made through visitors’ own history and home country and there seem to be multitude of reasons for these foreign visitors to visit and gaze the fortress. Paragraph 5.2 will explain how the foreign visitors experienced Suomenlinna and/or its heritage overall, at the guided tour and at Suomenlinna museum and whether the visitors had a personal connection with the site. These findings reveal that through subjective negotiation and portrayals of ones’ own culture these visitors were able to find personal connections with the site and its history. Paragraph 5.3 will discuss how heritage interpretation is done at the site and how the visitors relate to it. These findings indicate that the guides and museum objects successfully distributed relevant information on the fortress and its history. Heritage interpretation at the site has seemingly had an effect on the experience of the visitors experience.

5.1 VISITING SUOMENLINNA FORTRESS

This paragraph will elaborate background information on the reason foreign visitors choose to come to Suomenlinna and whether they seeking to experience education, knowledge, recreation or a personal experience. In addition, it is explained why these visitors chose to join a guided tour or visit Suomenlinna museum. The answers of the 13 respondents will be discussed and linked with the theoretical framework.

REASON TO VISIT SUOMENLINNA FORTRESS

Heritage tourism literature and studies have indicated that the reason for people to visit heritage sites can be walking, sightseeing, gaining emotive or spiritual experiences, relaxing, other social/personal and educative reasons. Visiting museums and monuments is seen as a way to develop relationships during leisure time, which is important for many people (Timothy, 2011). This thesis aimed at exploring if the reason for visiting Suomenlinna fortress would be a search for education, knowledge, recreation or a personal reason, which could be based on the visitors identity, tradition, or other social or emotional dimensions (Poria et al. 2004).

The respondents of this study expressed different, yet similar reasons for their visit. What could be noted was that the vast majority of the respondents visited the fortress due to recreational/sightseeing purposes and/or for historical reasons. None of the visitors expressed a personal reason as their main reason to come to Suomenlinna fortress. For the respondents who expressed recreational/sightseeing reasons it was obvious that their visit to Suomenlinna was part of the main sights of Helsinki that they wished to experience and that they found information about the fortress from a guide book or Helsinki brochures.

Examples of the visitors' comments:

"We saw this sightseeing.. here in the tourist guide and we though it is very very interesting" (Visitor from Germany).

"It was because it was part of the main sites of Helsinki. I've heard of it that is is a beautiful place to go so I wanted to see it to hear of it" (Visitor from France).

“Well we read in the Finnish Helsinki guide the tourist guide. We heard over colleagues speaking about the fortress and saying that it was interesting sightseeing visit, historic monument so we thought it is nice to see” (Visitor from Colombia).

“Because I’ve been searching for things to do in Helsinki and it came up as an interesting thing to do” (Visitor from Portugal).

What was interesting to notice was that only one respondent mentioned the UNESCO heritage listing when explaining the reason for the visit. The respondent from Austria explained that: *“I come to Suomenlinna because it is really a good sight so I decided to come and I saw it is a UNESCO heritage listed so that is nice”*. Otherwise, UNESCO heritage listing did not come up during the interviews or was not mentioned in the Tripadvisor comments at all. It can be noted that UNESCO listing did not provoke the foreign visitors of this study to visit Suomenlinna fortress. It seems that these visitors did not know that Suomenlinna fortress is a UNESCO heritage listed site and it could be that depending on the background of the visitors they may not be familiar with UNESCO heritage sites and the idea behind heritage preservation or it was not important to them. Thus, most of the visitors were not seeking to gaze the fortress due to it being a UNESCO heritage listed site and it did not have added value when choosing to visit the fortress.

In addition to the recreational/sightseeing reasons the one of history was often mentioned. Respondents who expressed historical reasons for their visit did it in decisive manner and seemed to know what they wanted to see and experience at the fortress. A respondent from England indicate that: *“I’d read about it in the guidebooks and I thought it would be a good excursion. Lot’s of history, lot’s of European history as well”*. This respondent was obviously interested in the history of the fortress partly because it is part of Europe’s history. Perhaps this enabled him to connect with the site and its history better. Connecting to a site through one’s own history/heritage can enhance the visitor experience and understanding of the site (Poria et. Al 2000 and Timothy, 2011).

Next to the sole interest on history respondent from Japan showed interest towards the historical buildings and monuments at the fortress. When asked the reason why he came to visit Suomenlinna he explained that: *“So, I like historical buildings and especially here is the military monument”*. For this respondent monuments and buildings convey history of the site. He also explained that already prior to his visit he

wanted to see the submarine that is one of the sights of the fortress. His interest in history expresses oneself when finding familiarizing oneself with the relevant historical sights beforehand. Visitor from Russia also showed interest towards history and elaborated that: *"I have read that it is the most famous sight in Helsinki and it's the most historical place. We visit historical places mainly"*. Seemingly, these respondents have a strong interest in history and as Timothy (2011) notes; the personal interests of people determine what heritage activities they undertake. Thus, these respondents visited the fortress due to their genuine interest in history.

Reviewing and analyzing the comments on Tripadvisor revealed that most of the visitors were in Suomenlinna for recreational purposes and historical reasons. It seems that people spent a nice leisurely day out exploring the sights of the fortress and often mentioned the history of the islands as an interesting fact. Other things that were often mentioned on the comments were the beautiful scenery, nice ferry trip, cozy cafes and the museum. Example comments:

A good place to spend a day. Picturesque surrounding, great view of the sea, nice museum and short and sweet ferry ride (ankurgupta87 from New Delhi India, visited in February 2014).

We went to Suomenlinna in winter and the ferry trip was included on a public transport ticket, which we purchased from the tourist info centre in Helsinki. The view as the boat went through the ice was very pretty. We loved the island and enjoyed walking round it and hearing the audio commentary to the film in the museum, as we didn't know much about the island beforehand. Had a very nice home-cooked lunch in I Vanille (very cute old Russian-style wooden building) and a cup of afternoon tea in the Ice Cellar I and gallery where I also bought some nice cards. A great day out and would be lovely to go in summer when you could take a picnic (Mary449 from Hobart, Australia, visited in February 2014).

In addition to the nice scenery and leisurely activities these visitors have also sought information about the fortress while walking around the islands. This points out that next to recreation Suomenlinna's heritage and historical relevance does not go unnoticed. Even if the visitors wish to have a nice day out the surrounding fortress its story evokes curiosity and awakes their thirst for information.

The aim was also to explore whether the visitors would have a personal reason based on the visitor's identity, tradition, or other social or emotional dimensions. None of the visitors expressed a personal reason as their primary reason for the visit. A respondent from England however, when asked whether he had a personal reason for his visit expressed the following: *"Not personal no but it fits into context with other bits of history I have studied, so yeah"*. This comment supports the earlier notion that visitors can make a connection with the site and its history through their own history to be able to tap on to it better.

Based on the interviews and Tripadvisor analysis it can be concluded that Suomenlinna is perceived as a site for recreation but for also, a site to feel, hear and see history. Some of the respondents expressed that they wanted to do sightseeing and visited Suomenlinna due to it being one of the main sights of Helsinki. However, when reasoning for their visit some of them mentioned that it was an interesting site and that there are historical monuments. Some respondents articulated the historical features and importance for their visit at the very beginning. It becomes clear that for the visitors of this thesis Suomenlinna fortress is a site where they can engage in recreational activities in a historical environment. Based on their own preferences and interests they choose to participate in different activities and look at different objects. As Urry (2002) notes, the different social background of the visitors result in diverse preferences of where to visit and the popularity of such sites. Thus, visiting Suomenlinna fortress can be due to multiple of reasons that depend on the visitors' personal interests and nature of their trip.

REASON TO JOIN THE GUIDED TOUR OR VISIT SUOMENLINNA MUSEUM

The researcher interviewed those foreign visitors who had either joined a guided tour or visited Suomenlinna museum, to investigate their experience more in depth. The aim was to enquire why they had chosen to join a guided tour or visit Suomenlinna museum during their visit to Suomenlinna.

GUIDED TOUR

When asked about the reason for joining a guided tour the respondents' tour expressed similar reasons. They felt that it was important for them to get information and hear stories of the place they were visiting in order to understand it better. Example comments of the respondents:

“Because I think that one of the best ways to understand the story of a place is to follow a guide to hear what he is saying about it and also I’m travelling by myself so it’s easier to spot the little things, the little sights when you are with a tourist guide” (Visitor from France).

“Well it’s the best way of knowing some new information because it is no convenient to read the paper and the prospect. If you visit a place and don’t take a guided tour you don’t know anything about the place” (Visitor from Russia).

“Because usually when you arrive to this type of tours unless you have prepared yourself and read about it and really get to know the place and the history of it. Which we didn’t we just went to the touristic center in Helsinki and got pamphlets and read a little about it. Then it is nice to hear about it from someone who is knowledgeable about the site and we can really have a true portrait of what happened here and why it is important” (Visitor from Colombia).

These respondents wanted to gain more information about the site as well as some additional information on sights when joining a guided tour. They were seemingly after local knowledge that they wish to be able understand what has happened at the fortress. Respondents from Austria also explained that the tour was more interesting than to just walk around by themselves without knowing anything about the site. Some respondents joined the tour because they can access it with the Helsinki card. Helsinki card is a city card for tourists to experience the main sights of Helsinki for one price.

The reasons to join a guided tour reveal that these visitors are not visiting Suomenlinna just for sightseeing. They obviously are not familiar with its history and seek for more information about it and wish to understand the relevance of the fortress. They seem to be after the collective gaze, the presence of a group of people, which signifies that they are gazing in the right place in the right time. These visitors wish to gaze something different and what they actually see and want to see is affected by their societies and ideas and images of what they have of the place (Urry, 2002).

SUOMENLINNA MUSEUM

The respondents to Suomenlinna museum expressed wanting to know about the island and its historical background. They considered it to be a better medium for experiencing the history than walking around on their own. Some respondents mentioned that they visited the museum due to the Helsinki card and free access. A respondent from Norway expressed that she wanted to *“see what was here and to see the buildings that’s big part of it and to take pictures”*. Respondent from England explained that his visit to the museum *“puts everything into context and enable to sort of see where everything fitted in”*.

Reasons for visiting the museum are also revealing that these visitors are after more than recreational activities of the fortress. They are after information and historical details on the site they are visiting. It seems that these visitors did not have (any) prior ideas or images of the fortress but the fact that it is a historical site with buildings that can be photographed. Having different historical and cultural backgrounds these visitors have different images of what the site represents. Thus, these visitors have not exoticized the fortress beforehand and articulate wanting to gaze the fortress with a deeper experience of its heritage and history. The way these visitors imagine and negotiate the site stems from the broader societal ideas and discourses (Ong and Du Cross, 2012).

AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATIONS IN SUOMENLINNA FORTRESS

As mentioned in chapter 3, the researcher also conducted autoethnographic observations in different locations at Suomenlinna fortress aiming to provide more insights to what is happening at the site. Hence, an extract from the autoethnographic observation notes attempts to realize this:

It was a cold Saturday morning in January 2014 and I headed to Suomenlinna fortress to start my data collection. I purchased a ferry ticket from the ticket office at the market square in Helsinki and noted that there are quite some people queuing for the short ferry trip through ice to reach the historical fortifications of Suomenlinna. The ferry headed to the fortress crashing the ice under it. As a Finn, this was not anything out of the ordinary since we Finns are use to the freezing winter weather conditions and we have found our way with the icy lakes and see. It must have evoked different feelings among the foreign visitors at the ferry since they were glued to the windows

taking pictures from every possible angle. Especially for the Asian looking visitors it seemed to be a totally different adventure and they wanted to capture every moment of it. As I repeated the journey to Suomenlinna five times on Saturday and Sunday mornings in January and February and took notice that every Saturday morning the ferry was full of foreign tourists mainly Asian and Russian but on Sunday mornings the ferry was full of Finns. Hence, the ferry was always full and every time the foreign visitors preferred to sit next to the windows while gazing outside in awe. Once we had docked to Suomenlinna visitors could go and wander off around the island. I knew my way to Suomenlinna center where I positioned myself while gathering most of the data. It was about 10 minutes walk from the dock and one can pass by cafes, a church, library and many houses that belong to the residents of the islands. The walk itself was already an experience and one can enjoy solitude in the crispy weather while taking pictures of the idyllic scenery. Somehow the people at the ferry had disappeared somewhere around the fortress and it did not feel crowded or congested. Certainly something that I enjoyed and would assume visitors from big metropolitans would too. After reaching Suomenlinna center it was quite empty but every time the ferry had come to the island visitors would come by in groups. They would not stay for long and mostly used the facilities for example to warm up, to take brochures and maps, ask for direction, to buy something or occasionally to visit the museum. It seemed to me that these visitors preferred to continue to explore the islands on their own since the museum stayed empty and only a few people signed up for the guided tour. I was curious why so many visitors would prefer not to use the "local" knowledge. I thought to myself that maybe they already know about the history or have local friends or acquaintances who would guide them or maybe they are not interested in the fortress due to its historical relevance. Many Finns do not even remember what the fortress stands for and only come there to walk around in the nice scenery and have a cup of coffee in one of the cafeterias because it is a different experience than a cup of coffee in the mainland. What was also interesting to notice was that the vast numbers of Russians and Asian people I took the ferry ride with did not visit the museum while I was at Suomenlinna center or did not join the guided tours. It gave me the impression that the visitors were mostly travelling in small groups and spending a leisurely day out wanting to wander around the island by themselves. There were generally many foreign people but only a small number of the visitors joined an organized tour or visited Suomenlinna museum. (Liisamaija Marjoniemi, February 25, 2014).

The autoethnographic notes indicate that there are many foreigners that visit Suomenlinna fortress but most of them wish to explore the island on their own. Most of the visitors gaze through their cameras and capture their experience once they step their foot on the ferry.

5.2 VISITOR EXPERIENCE IN SUOMENLINNA FORTRESS

This paragraph will elaborate how the foreign visitors of this thesis experienced the heritage of Suomenlinna at the guided tour and Suomenlinna museum and how Suomenlinna was experienced regardless the tour and Suomenlinna museum. The researcher also investigated if these visitors have a personal connection with the site.

EXPERIENCE AT THE GUIDED TOUR

According to Meethan (2001:100), “a space can be subject to a variety of interpretations or “readings” concerning its symbolic significance.” Hence, a space can hold different meanings of what it represents.

Respondents of the guided tour were asked how they experienced and felt about the tour and it can be noted the respondents felt different things that were meaningful to them and these feelings created different experiences. Some respondents to the guided tour felt the historical aspects and especially the 200-year history of the island were considered remarkable. Similarly, the fact that people still reside on the island provoked curiosity. The Austrian respondent was astonished to find out that Suomenlinna could have people residing on the islands. Her comment was:

“It is very strange because for two hundred years ago there was a war and people who were building this with hard work and now there are only some tourist walking around and there are living some people. I think for me it is strange to imagine that the fortress has changed from about two hundred years from war to now, to an island were only living some people, 800 people” (Visitor from Austria).

Respondent from Colombia was also overwhelmed to learn that there are people living in Suomenlinna. She expressed her feelings in the following way:

“How do I feel.. It was, I was impressed to learn that there are people living here, still. This was impressive, because I find it is an isolated place. I mean concerning let’s say standard modern conditions like energy and gas and fuel and getting your car to your house. There must be limitations. Aside having a very tranquil place to live I’m not sure if I would join” (Visitor from Colombia).

This respondent is contrasting the living conditions of the fortress with her idea of standard living conditions and for her it would not be an ideal living situation. She sees difference in how the people of the fortress live and by stating that she would probably not join is in line with Urry (2002) who quoted Wright (1985:237); What is pleasantly old for one person is decayed and broken for another’. The visitor from Columbia negotiates her experience through her own set of ideas and sees the living conditions in Suomenlinna differently to the residents of Suomenlinna.

Respondent from Germany was surprised to learn that the history of the fortress belongs to the more general history of Europe and found a connection after learning that the fortress has been under Russian regime.

“I don’t know, I need time to think about. It’s interesting to see how was the history and how it works because it is far away from rest of Europe and we didn’t have so much connection to the history of Finland, to Russian yes but now it gets another connection” (Visitor from Germany).

For this respondent the information he had gained during the guided tour was an interesting new piece of information to the history he was already familiar with. He had clearly thought that Finland being situated in the far north wouldn’t share any historical relevance with German history but after learning that Finland was part of the Russian empire he felt that now there was a connection, through Russia.

Respondents of the guided tours experienced different things that were meaningful to them. Different aspects were noticed and negotiated through one’s own worldview. Applying Holt’s (1995, in Shaw, 2004) typology of tourist experience these respondents have negotiated their experience through either involving subjective and emotional reactions; articulating their experience through contrasts with the history of the fortress and/or living conditions of the residents or as integration; by gaining

information on the history of the site and reflecting it with one's own historical knowledge.

MUSEUM EXPERIENCE

Respondents who visited Suomenlinna museum were asked how they experienced the museum and they mostly regarded their visit good, informative and complete. They felt that the historical parts of the fortress were well explained. It became clear that the visitors who went to Suomenlinna museum have a general interest in history or they are showing a historical interest with their visit to the museum.

Some respondents explained their experience at the museum in the following way:

"No I thought it was very good. Puts everything into context in each historical place, the film was particularly good and broadened it out into the European context what was taking place at the different times, why the place was built, how strategic it was and its development and the huge amounts of money that was spent building it" (Visitor from England).

"I think it was a very complete description of the period and the people who lived here and the Swedish period and the Russian period and all that stuff" (Visitor from Austria).

"I was impressed I think. It is nice to see something about the history. I also visit museums in Austria so I like to see something about history" (Visitor from Austria).

"Yes I thought it was very interesting and I saw the movie and it was very informative and I had a general idea of the Finnish history" (Visitor from Portugal).

Visitors to the museum have consumed their experience as integration (Holt, 1995 in Shaw, 2004) by gaining information of the fortress to understanding the historical relevance and to be able to connect to the site.

EXPERIENCE IN SUOMENLINNA

During the interviews both the visitors to guided tours and Suomenlinna museum were asked how they experienced their overall experience at the fortress. The respondents

felt that their overall experience next to the guided tour and museum visit in Suomenlinna fortress was positive. Some comments about the whole experience on the islands were:

“So far I find it a good place to come and visit, really beautiful, and I will still walk around in it” (Visitor from France).

“I’m pleased and I will try to visit this place again” (Visitor from Russia).

These respondents were so pleased with their visit that they indicate a repeat visit in the future.

Regarding the visitor experience in Suomenlinna Tripadvisor comment analysis revealed that aspects such as; winter, sights, pleasure, museum and history showed up consistently in visitor comments. Examples of some of the comments:

“I went here a long time ago with my family for a holiday loved the experience, as my family live in Finland i went to visit them and they suggested this place which was amazing, it has a great history which i found great. I found Finland to be a bit boring but when i went here thats when i realised that just one place can change your mind about a country.”
(Jamesblackbird, Peterborough, England, United Kingdom. Visited in February 2014)

“Good to do on a sunny day. It takes 3-4 hours to go around. You can stay longer if you want to really go around all the island. Enjoyed the boat trip to the fortress. Nice walk around. We learned a lot of history.” (Chris M, Brecon, Visited in January 2014)

As the above comments reveal history, sightseeing and the boat trip were popular inputs of the comments.

Many visitors thought that their experience at the fortress was a nice leisurely day out. They also felt being surrounded by historical buildings and nice cafes. Again, recreation and history go hand in hand. The boat trip to the island and the scenery along the way were also considered worth mentioning. Some example comments:

“Beautiful weather and a short boat ride from Helsinki downtown, it seems like we were transported to the countryside. I love the tranquility of this

petit island with old historic forts overlooking the sea.” (maradonny, from Singapore, Singapore visited in January 2014)

“Suomenlinna fortress is very big - lots to see (there's 6 islands in total which form the fortress). You can explore all of the tunnels and 'caves' which once housed the likes of cannons. I visited in the winter and there was lots of snow and ice, which made it look incredible.” (LouisP, from Islington, UK, visited in February 2014)

Next to history, sightseeing and the ferry trip, wintertime and its influence on the visitor experience did not go unnoticed. Cold weather and limited access to shops and museums were noted and some visitors had more negative experiences due to the weather conditions while others regarded it as appealing. A Tripadvisor commentor named ‘followingthehorizon’ from London, United Kingdom, posted his comment under the heading: *“I wouldn’t recommend in the winter”*. He visited Suomenlinna in December 2013 and explained how difficult it was to walk around the island due to slippery roads. ‘TravellerGillian’ from Caterham, United Kingdom, also experienced the wintertime freezing and posted but had a different experience. His comment was posted in February 2013: *“Wonderful in the summer, but in the winter the water freezes over, creating a fascinating and stark contrast to the summer.”* What can be noted from these two visitor comments that aspects such as the weather can be experienced differently. ‘Followingthehorizon’ was put off by the coldness and wouldn’t recommend anyone to visit the fortress during the winter. ‘TravellerGillian’ on the contrary experienced the freezing water to be fascinating and did not seem disappointed. This can be explained by the different weather preferences between these two respondents.

As previously mentioned in the theoretical framework tourist/ visitor experience is difficult to identify and define due to its multifaceted nature. What can be seen from these findings is that these different visitors have had different yet similar experience in the same environment. As Larsen (2007) and O’Dell (2005) have noted tourist experience is mostly affected by several aspects and they base and originate from the individual tourist and can be considered as psychological phenomena. O’Dell also argues that experiences are personal and subjective and individual’s mood and feelings, as well as their cultural/ social background can affect them. These findings indicate that different visitors can experience same environments, objects, activities and weather in different ways. As Cutler and Carmichaels’ model (2010) depict there

are influential and personal elements that can influence the experience in Suomenlinna fortress. Influential elements; physical and social influencers such as services and products at the fortress or spatial and geographical characters of the site can impact on how the experience is perceived. As well as, personal elements within an individual such as knowledge, memory, perception, emotion and self-identity are also elements that have an influence on the experience. These findings on the visitors experience of Suomenlinna are also in line with Urry (2002) who argue that visitors can gaze upon the same objects and read and perform them in different ways, thus sites are not systemically and unresponsively negotiated.

PERSONAL CONNECTION

The researcher also sought to investigate if the heritage experience in Suomenlinna would hold any personal meaning for the visitors or if they could connect with the site and its history and possibly have a personal connection with it. Few respondents expressed personal feelings and/or relations during their experience. A Russian visitor connected the history of the fortress with her nation and commented:

“Maybe a bit proud of my nation, that they conquered such a place and built some buildings and thought about some military strategies how to guard this place and save this place” (Visitor from Russia).

By being proud of her nation, the respondent expresses somewhat personal feelings about her experience through nationalism. She connects and relates to the history of the fortress through her nation and its history. The respondent seemingly connects the events from the Russian era in the 17th century, with how she felt during the guided tour.

Similarly, the visitors from England and Germany felt a connection to the history of the fortress through Europe’s general history, by connecting to it through their own history. Reminiscing the historical past and events of early 20th century, these respondents could tap into and connect with the past of Suomenlinna. Connecting the different wars and main characters of what they considered to be their own history with the one of the fortress, binds them all together leading to a personal connection.

“I had not realized that in the Crimean war the British fleet had come in to the Baltic. That was something new and I was interested in it and I had

perhaps missed it in my history when I was younger so that was very interesting” (Visitor from England).

“For example to the connection of Peter the Great of how was the relationship between England and France against Russians and where the history point in Finland at that story” (Visitor from Germany).

Other personal connections to the site were made through contrasting the fortress and its history with similar places and events that exists and takes place in the home countries of the visitors. Respondent from Colombia gave an example of a Colombian fortress when she was asked about a personal connection with Suomenlinna. She explained that: *“Well, we were speaking about what it means to have this type of historic monuments in different places around the world. We have something similar in Colombia. It is a fortress, it was a Spanish fortress to defend the city, and this one is a walled city in the Americas Colombian Caribbean. The impressive part of it is that these are fortresses either for man defending man or for man attacking man in war conditions or in confrontation conditions and this is very interesting”.*

Similarly visitors from Austria contrasted Suomenlinna with their country and how fortresses are perceived there. One of these respondents acknowledges that even though we are in Europe it is not the same and that she is looking at Suomenlinna with other eyes. Examples of the respondents’ comments:

“No. Not really. It is little different to Austria because we have no sea and we didn’t have ships and battles on the sea so that was really interesting to see and also our fortresses look a little different they are bigger and on the mountains” (Visitor from Austria).

“Yeah it is very difficult. We are in Europe but it’s not the same as my home country I think and you see it with other eyes. I can’t explain but it is little bit out of situation when I get in a museum in Austria or in my homeland” (Visitor from Austria).

As Walsh (2002) and Cohen (1979) note, the tourist experience is always unique to the individual as the context of reception is always potentially unique. Hence, different tourists require different experiences. Cohen (1979) also goes on saying that different experiences, in turn hold varying meanings, all of which are mediated by their societies. The researcher feels that these different experiences of the visitors were in

fact mediated by their societies and as individuals. There are similarities in the way the visitors have experienced the site but they negotiate it through their own perceptions of the world and perceptions of their identity. According to Urry (2002) tourists in heritage sites can recreate their own sense of past even if the site has entertaining characters, 'many tourists make associations between what they see at the site and their personal lives', resulting in gazing at a collection of artifacts and buildings, imagining the history behind these objects (Bruner, 1994:410 in Urry, 2002:102). Urry (2002) also argues that how these visitors have experienced the site and its heritage is affected by their society, social group and historical period, and constructed through difference. Different visitors in Suomenlinna have gazed difference differently through their cultural lenses that are affected by personal experiences, memories, rules, styles and images and texts of other places.

5.3 HERITAGE INTERPRETATION AND ITS RELATION TO THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

This paragraph discusses how heritage interpretation is done in Suomenlinna fortress and how the foreign visitors relate to it.

GUIDED TOUR

The respondents were asked how they felt about the tour guide and the majority of the respondents considered the guides nice, sympathetic and that they answered to all questions. Some example comments:

"Very nice and sympathetic" (Visitor from Colombia).

" Really nice and her English was really good and good to understand"
(Visitor from Austria).

"She told the stories very interesting and it was nice to hear" (Visitor from Austria).

"She explained everything very good and I think when we have questions it was possible to get the answers" (Visitor from Russia).

The guides were considered as 'alive information' and most of the respondents' felt that the guide was able to make them relate to the history. It was also noted that the

guides provide visitors with more knowledge than just walking around the island by them selves. Some examples of the comments:

“It makes it more moving. It is more alive. Yeah, it is better because you have information from a Finnish person and I think that is better for understanding and it is more interesting when you hear something from a person instead of only walking around” (Visitor from Germany).

“Uhm, I learned something about the history of here that I wouldn’t have read about in my books so yeah. I don’t know.. I have more knowledge. I think without the guide I would have had less knowledge about, less understanding of this place. So I think it is a good choice to have done this guided tour” (Visitor from France).

It can be seen that these visitors prefer a guide and her information to text books. It is also noted that the information is more interesting when hearing it from a guide. As Timothy (2011) and Moscardo (1996) state one of the most common and popular mean to provide live information is the use of tour guides and they can make the material presented personally relevant for the visitors.

Also the way the guides share their knowledge and engage with the visitors was noted. Respondent from Russia felt appreciated when a tour guide showed interest towards her and her boyfriend and was most apparently influenced by the tour guide. The respondent commented the guide in the following way:

“I liked the tour and how she talked about this place. Well yes she is very interested in what she is doing and she is very experienced woman. She works in the archives and studied a lot of documents. She paid attention to different parts of Russian history and the buildings that Russians built and she made a connection with us, she properly communicated with us” (Visitor from Russia).

This comment indicates that the tour guide was able to give relevant information and relate it with this visitor resulting in personal connection with the site. As Bohlen et al. (2004) argue that by relating the topics and stories to the visitors, the guide aids understanding and reveals hidden meanings that connect visitors with the site and its history. Furthermore, Bohlin et al. (2014), note that interpretation is widely recognized to influence the experience that tourists gain from a particular site. The information

the guides shared and the way it was done have influenced on the visitors' experience in a positive way.

These visitors were also appreciative of the guide's information from a personal point of view:

"Ah well it was the information that she gave and the way she explained us and how she explained her private experience and the area around here how she connected that" (Visitor from Austria).

"She did a nice job and she was honest in telling the story in a very dynamic way and she had the art of speak, having a speech that could attract people's attention. This is not easy to do. She did it" (Visitor from Colombia).

The guide was also able to catch the attention of the visitors in the way she was articulating the information during the tour (Bohlin et al. 2004).

Some respondents remembered their experience through stories they heard on a guided tour. The use of interpretation as mentioned earlier, is a key factor in educating the visitors and providing them with useful information. Visitors felt that the tour was interesting and explained as follows:

"It was really interesting that Augustin brought fruits, so that was interesting and a nice story" (Visitor from Austria).

"It was very interesting about the war, about Augustin and what he did for the Finns" (Visitor from Austria).

The stories the guide told at the tour have seemingly had an effect on how these respondents felt about the tour. It can be noted that the guide being an interpretive tool, succeeded in telling the story/information about the fortress in such a way that she was able to catch people's attention. She also left a pleasant feeling of herself to the visitors and was able to create mindful visitors that can remember, learn and appreciate what they have seen.

AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATIONS

Researcher joined guided tours to conduct autoethnographic observations to be able to experience the tour as a visitor and understand how the interpretation is done at the tour.

Autoethnographic observations from the guided tours:

I took part in three guided tours on three Sundays in January and February 2014. The weather was freezing and I thought to myself; how can I manage and how can these foreign people manage in this weather. It was cold in all of the tours I took part in and every time I thought next time I should wear something warmer. For some tour participants it was too much and during one of the tours few people left and headed back to Suomenlinna center. During the tours the guides explained why the fortress was built, who financed it and who lead the construction work. With simple explanations they were able to engage with the group and give a good start to the tour. The introductory story varied a bit depending on the guide but usually consisted of the same facts. From the center the guide lead us to the dry dock, which according to the guide was an important part of the history during the Russian era. The dry dock was a place where all the boats were kept during the winter. Connecting stories about place to Russian era and how they used the dock as a swimming pool made the spot more interesting. After the dock we went inside to a casemate that use to house the soldiers that lived on the island. From the casemate we went to see the monument and house of Augustin Ehrensward who was the supervisor of the construction work of the fortress. By telling stories of Augustin and how he lived made it more interesting and more alive. After the monument we went on through a road where one can spot the famous cannons on the horizon and ended the tour at a spot that was designed as a death trap in case of a war broke out. Guides told us to spot all the possible angles where cannons could be fired, hence one could imagine oneself in the middle of a battle. During the tour we heard different stories of different aspects of the history of the fortress and every spot we visited had a meaning to the story of Suomenlinna. All the stories were about people who resided on the island and about their roles in the fortress. I thought that these aspects made it easy to relate to the historical phases that can sometimes be a bit hard to digest. Being a Finn and having studied the history of the fortress before it was still a more efficient way to understand what happened in a short amount of time. Overall, I felt that the guides were very informative and good at engaging the visitors

with questions relating to the history. Asking the group to point out something at each of the stops we made along the way forced people to think about their surroundings. One of the guides also mentioned that she is working in the museum archives and could explain some history of the fortress through her work there. That gave an extra something to the tour and I noticed how some of the tour participants were enthusiastic about it. I was left with the feeling that the guides are very knowledgeable and they were able to relate the visitors to the historical events of the fortress by pointing about different facts that at least European visitors could relate to. There were few things that I thought were interesting and surprising, firstly, the guides did not mention the fact that the fortress is a UNESCO heritage listed site neither did the visitors ask or mention it during the tour and second, the tour participants hardly took any pictures during the tours. Perhaps the UNESCO listing is not considered to bring any added value and maybe the tour participants are listening to the guide so tentatively that they forgot or preferred to just gaze without a lens (Liisamaija Marjoniemi, February 2014).

Based on researcher's autoethnographic notes the guides had pleasant personalities, were interactive with the groups and shared versatile information by telling different stories of the main historical characters. The interpretative content of the tours were good and by engaging the groups with questions and pointing out certain things these guides succeeded in their task of being educative and entertaining.

It can be concluded that as guided tours and museums at heritage settings are typical mediums for the visitors to tap into, and interpret the history of the site and guides should provide interpretation by revealing meanings and relationships and to connect the topic or place "to something within the personality or experience of the visitors". (Tilden, 1977:9, cited in Moscardo, 1996. In this study, guides were able to perform these tasks and by giving variety and control over the experience of the visitors by asking questions during the tours and allowing the visitors to pose questions (Moscardo, 1996). This led the visitors to gain knowledge that they were after and to connect with the site through meaningful facts and stories. Urry (2002) has noted that tourism is a grand collector of signs and that these signs stand for 'tourist clichés' and what matters is what tourists are told they are seeing. The stories that were told at the tours and sights that were pointed out are signs that these foreign visitors consume while taking the tour. Each 'sign' has its own meaning and the story around it. The guides have agency over these signs and by pointing them out in certain order and assigning different meanings to them influence the way the visitors negotiate the site.

MUSEUM VISIT

Visitors to Suomenlinna museum were asked whether they thought that the museum objects helped them to understand the history and relevance of the fortress. Most of the respondents articulated that the objects such as; the touch screens, the film about the history of Suomenlinna, pictures and other artefacts in the museum helped them to understand and relate to the history of the fortress. The visitors also felt that the museum was interesting and that they saw enough during their visit. Example comments:

“Yes. The screen really helped and I think it is really good to see the movie before you see the rest because then you have previous information”
(Visitor from Austria).

“It was ok, very visualized and that is good. Yeah cause if it was just text I wouldn’t have read it” (Visitor from Norway).

“I think it was a very complete description of the period and the people who lived here and the Swedish period and the Russian period and all that stuff. As I said I liked the objects from the old houses and I also liked the history of how the Finnish government decided to turn this to a tourist attraction and rebuilt everything and put everything impeccable” (Visitor from Portugal).

The respondents also acknowledged that it was better to have visited the museum before seeing rest of the islands because of the information that was available there. It is also apparent that the visuality of the museum is important in its information distribution and as its heritage interpretation. As the respondent from Norway states she wouldn’t have read the information if it was mere text. The respondent from Portugal brought up the objects of the old houses and how she admired the rebuilding of Suomenlinna into a tourist destination. She also articulated that: “this has not and would not happen in my country”. She explained that the Portuguese government is not willing to restore and rebuild old heritage buildings. Seemingly, the visuality of the museum objects have had an influence on some of the respondents through information distribution and as objects that connect the visitor with the history of the fortress and with the respondent’s home country.

The art of interpretation as Tilden (1977) in Moscardo (1996) describes is to educate the visitors providing them with information as art; through meanings and relationships. In Suomenlinna museum this is done via screens, movies and other artifacts that provide visitors with visual stimuli. This is in line with Kim et al. (2009) argument that museums are experience-centered places that offer both emotional and cognitive stimuli through the use of multisensory objects such as: touch screens and videos. Providing information of the fortress through multisensory objects Suomenlinna museum has succeeded in providing these visitors with information through meaning and relationships. According to Kotler and Kotler (2002) visitors also seek variety in the museum offerings and it is in line with the findings of this study. In order to tap into the provided information different visitors require different information outlets.

Researcher also conducted autoethnographic observations in the museum to capture the visitor experience and understand how the interpretation is done in the museum.

Autoethnographic notes from the museum visit:

I had the privilege to visit Suomenlinna museum and experience it myself. Once I entered the museum I noticed the different objects and artifacts that provide different information on the historical phases of the fortress. There were touch screens, old clothing, miniature houses, pictures, boats, cannons and all kinds of portrayals. The display was neat and well organized and the different objects lead the visitor to see the movie that is broadcasted every half hour. The movie depicts the different historical phases and gives a visual picture of what happened at the fortress. After seeing the movie one can take the stairs up and continue to explore the second floor of the museum. The second floor had more touch screens, artifacts and short films. Visiting the museum takes about 45 minutes to an hour, depending if one watches the film down stairs. Overall, the museum was visually pleasant and by providing different objects that were used in telling the history and story of Suomenlinna helped me to understand the information better. Hence, the visuality touched me more deeply when I could picture the people and the circumstances in my mind. I could not think of anything to add or anything to complain about. In my opinion the museum is worth visiting and especially before exploring the island it gives the idea of what happened and what to see when walking around the fortifications (Liisamaija Marjoniemi, February 2014).

Based on researchers autoethnographic notes it can be concluded that the museum as an interpretative tool succeeded in offering a complete description of the eventful history of the fortress through multisensory objects. Thus, one is able to visualize the past and contrast it with the present.

As mentioned in chapter 3, heritages are important attractions in cultural tourism and cultural tourism can be said to exist because tourists want either to experience living places and cultures other than their own, or to gain access to foreign cultures, different in time and space, through artefacts housed away from their original locations, often in museums (Prentice, 2001 and Kantanen et al. 2006). In this study those foreign visitors who visited Suomenlinna museum deepened their knowledge on the heritage of the fortress and gazed something that was from a different culture than their own. By providing visual consumption and stimuli of historical/architectural remains and artifacts, Suomenlinna museum has shaped the feelings and attitude of visitors towards their visit and included issues of perception and subjective experience (Kim et al. 2009). As museum visitors also seek variety in the offerings and experiences in which they connect with the past, encounter inspiring examples, express pride in their heritage, and honor important events Suomenlinna museum has enabled these foreign visitors to understand and connect with the 'cultural other' (Kotler and Kotler, 2000 and Urry, 2002). These visitors have been able to encounter and gaze the heritage of Suomenlinna and negotiate it through their own worldview and societal values and possibly relate it to the world heritage. Museum visit has also allowed its visitors to perform the romantic gaze where emphasis is on 'solitude, privacy and a personal, semi-spiritual relationship with the object of the gaze. Different visitors have gazed upon the same objects and read and performed them in different ways and assigned different meanings to them (Urry, 2002). Through visual consumption of the artifacts, pictures, movies and other objects, these visitors have been able to make connections and gain relevant information of the fortress that is meaningful to them.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this paragraph, the results of the study will be concluded and discussed. Recommendations on further research on the topic are also given.

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

The researcher conducted 13 in-depth interviews, autoethnographic observations and Tripadvisor comment analysis in order to investigate how foreign visitors to Suomenlinna fortress interpret the site in general, through tour guides and museum objects and how that shapes their experience. In addition, more background information is sought after in terms of why foreign visitors come to Suomenlinna. To be able to answer the research questions of this thesis the findings will be concluded in the same manner as in chapter 5. First the reason for visiting Suomenlinna fortress and reasons for joining a guided tour or Suomenlinna museum will be concluded. Second the heritage experience and personal meaning for the site will be concluded. Third the heritage interpretation and its relevance for the visitor experience will be concluded and fourth the overall conclusion of the thesis will be presented.

The researcher investigated why the foreign visitors chose to come to Suomenlinna fortress and whether it was a search for education, knowledge recreation or a personal reason (Poria et al. 2004). Both the interview and tripadvisor analysis findings indicated that the foreign visitors visited Suomenlinna due to recreational/sightseeing purposes and for historical reasons. For recreational visitors Suomenlinna was obviously among the main sights of Helsinki and some of the visitors had the Helsinki card, which allowed them free access to the museum or the guided tour. Regarding historical interests, these respondents were very clearly interested in history of the fortress partly because of the general history of Europe. Only one respondent mentioned that Suomenlinna is UNESCO heritage listed when enquired the reason to visit the fortress and it can be argued that most of the visitors were not familiar with UNESCO or that it did not influence on their decision to visit the fortress.

Autoethnographic notes support the fact that visitors to Suomenlinna tend to come to the fortress for recreation and to admire the historical objects. The researcher observed that the ferries were always full of foreign people and many foreign visitor

groups entered Suomenlinna center or walked around the islands taking pictures of the sights. However, only a small number of these foreign visitors joined an organized tour or visited Suomenlinna museum. This can be interpreted that mostly foreign visitors of Suomenlinna preferred to explore the island on their own while gazing the fortress and its surroundings. The aim was also to explore if the respondents would have a personal reason for their visit to Suomenlinna fortress and as a primary reason for visiting the site no-one mentioned personal reasons based on the visitor's identity, tradition, or other social or emotional dimensions. However, connections were made through the respondent's own history and this enabled these respondents to connect with the site better as Poria et al. (2004) and Timothy (2011) have noted. The reason for joining a guided tour was to gain knowledge to understand the site and its importance better when having little or no prior knowledge. Local knowledge was also emphasized and sought after. Some respondents also mentioned that they joined the tour because they could do so free of charge with the Helsinki card. These visitors seem to be after the collective gaze and wish to gaze something different and what they actually see and want to see is affected by their societies and ideas and images of what they have of the place (Urry, 2002). Similarly the respondents who visited Suomenlinna museum explained that they wanted learn more about the site and its history due to the lack of prior knowledge of the site. Having different historical and cultural backgrounds these visitors have different images of what the site represents and the way these visitors imagine and negotiate the site stems from the broader societal ideas and discourses (Ong and Du Cros 2012). It can be concluded that for the foreign visitors in this thesis Suomenlinna is both recreationally and historically relevant. Different social backgrounds and preferences of the visitors result in multitude of reasons for them visiting and gazing the site (Poria et al. 2004 and Urry, 2002).

The research also sought to investigate how the foreign visitors experience Suomenlinna fortress and whether the site has personal meaning for them. Visitors who joined a guided tour considered the tour remarkable and the fact that people still reside on the islands provoked curiosity. The long and eventful history of the fortress was also experienced fascinating. It was also noted that respondents were able to find personal connections with the site through their own history. Some respondents contrasted the history and events of Suomenlinna with similarities in their own countries. These respondents could connect with the site better through subjective

negotiation. Respondents who visited Suomenlinna museum experienced it as informative and appreciated that the historical parts of the fortress were well explained. It became apparent that the visitors who visited the museum have a general interest in history or they had free access with Helsinki card. Next to the guided tour and museum visit researcher explored the overall experience in Suomenlinna. According to the respondents and Tripadvisor commenters the overall experience appeared to be a nice leisurely day out enjoying the winter, sights and history of Suomenlinna. Analysis of the findings showed mainly positive experiences but a mention was made about the cold weather and how it was experienced to influence on the visit negatively due to the coldness, freezing wind and slippery roads. The researcher also investigated the personal experience of the visitors and was able to identify some personal feelings during the interviews. Personal connections with the site were made through nationalism, history and contrasts with one's own country and its similarities and differences. The findings regarding the visitor experience in Suomenlinna indicate that different visitors have different experiences in the same environment and circumstances. Tourist experience being a multifaceted phenomenon as argued in the theoretical framework in chapter 3, supports the notion that there are several elements that can influence on how the experience is perceived. These are; services and products, site attributes and elements on the individual (knowledge, memory, perception, emotion and self-identity (Cutler and Carmichael, 2010). It can be concluded that the foreign visitors of this thesis negotiated Suomenlinna fortress through their own worldview and cultural and social backgrounds. These visitors consumed their experience either by articulating it through contrasts with the history of the fortress and/or living conditions of the residents or by gaining information on the history of the site and reflecting it with one's own historical knowledge (Walsh, 2002; Holt, 1995 in Shaw, 2004; Cohen, 1979 and Urry, 2002).

To serve the purpose of this thesis heritage interpretation and its relation to the visitor experience was also scrutinized. The interview respondents to the guided tours were enquired how they felt about the guide. Most of the respondents had a positive opinion about the guides and they were considered sympathetic and knowledgeable. Guides were considered as 'alive information' that was able to make the visitors relate to site and its history. Tour guides were also able to give relevant information, which aids the understanding of the site (Bohlin, 2004). Hence, it was noted that the visitors gained more information on a guided tour than walking around on their own. As it is

pointed out in the theoretical framework guides can make the presented information personally relevant for the visitors (Timothy, 2011 and Moscardo, 1996). It was also mentioned that guides were able to catch the attention of the visitors and that the stories that were told during the tours have had an effect on the visitors experiences. This lead the visitors to gain knowledge that they were after and to connect with the site through meaningful facts and stories and to consume the heritage as 'signs' that influence on the way the visitors negotiate the site (Urry, 2002). The interview respondents to Suomenlinna museum were enquired whether the museum objects helped them to understand and relate to the history of the fortress. Those foreign visitors who visited Suomenlinna museum deepened their knowledge on the heritage of the fortress and gazed something that was from a different culture than their own. It was mostly articulated that the touch screens, films and artifacts were helpful and served their purpose. Heritage interpretation in Suomenlinna museum was provided through meanings and relationship that are relevant to the visitors, which resulted in visitors' education and appreciation towards the site attributes (Tilden, 1977 in Moscardo, 1996). It was also acknowledged that the visit to the museum was worth the information of the site and the visuality of the objects have seemingly had an effect on the visitor experience through reflections with one's own home country and cultural background. Suomenlinna museum has enabled these foreign visitors to understand and connect with the 'cultural other' and to perform the romantic gaze where one can gaze privately and have a semi-spiritual relationship with the object (Kotler and Kotler, 2000 and Urry, 2002).

Based on the interview findings, autoethnographic observations and Tripadvisor comment analysis it can be concluded that Suomenlinna as a single location can have multitude of meanings; history, recreation, cultural aspects and relation to one's own country, to different visitors (Poria et al. 2006) and these meanings are negotiated through visitors' cultural and social background. Visitors' cultural and social background also results in the activities they participate in and how they gaze their surroundings and why they choose to visit a particular site. Suomenlinna was visited due to its recreational and historical relevance that was due to the multiple reasons that depend on the visitors' personal interests and nature of their trip Urry, 2002.

Heritage interpretation (guided tours and Suomenlinna museums) in Suomenlinna is done through provocation, revelation and multisensory objects, which result in educating and providing the visitor with relevant information on the site and its

history. Foreign visitors were able to tap into and relate to the heritage of Suomenlinna fortress through these interpretive tools (multisensory objects and stories) provided at the tour and Suomenlinna museum. Guided tours and Suomenlinna museum as heritage interpretation has had a seeming effect on the visitors' experience at the site and how they make meaning to these objects through their cultural and social backgrounds.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The scope of thesis was limited, thus further research can cover more aspects of this topic. To obtain more information on visitor experience in Suomenlinna fortress further research could focus on Finnish visitors and compare if there are differences in the way the natives experience the fortress and its heritage. It could also be interesting to conduct interviews with Russian and Swedish visitors and compare all of the historically relevant nations, their perceptions and experiences at the fortress; a closer investigation on their relationship with the heritage and whether it would lead to more personal connection with the site. Another possible path could be to interview the local residents of Suomenlinna and gather insights on their views of the fortress, how they experience it as the 'locals' and how they feel about the incoming visitors. As Finnish heritage tourism research is under researched there are many possible ways to add to this research and bring more viewpoints to it with these aforementioned aspects.

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APPENDIX 1. INTERVIEW GUIDE

Research purpose:

The researcher aims to examine the visitor experience of the foreign visitors by focusing on their subjective negotiation of the site. The aim is also to investigate how tour guides and museum objects are interpreted by the visitors, and how heritage interpretation shapes the experience of the visitors. In addition, the purpose is to gain more background information on why foreign visitors come to Suomenlinna sea fortress. To understand the reason why these visitors come to the site, the researcher investigates whether the visitors are seeking to experience education, knowledge, recreation or a personal experience.

Main research questions:

- How is Suomenlinna fortress and/or its heritage experienced by the visitors at the guided tour and at Suomenlinna museum?

Sub-questions:

- What is the role of tour guides and Suomenlinna museum as heritage interpretation in the experience and practice of heritage tourism at Suomenlinna Fortress?
- How is heritage interpretation and guiding done at the site and how do visitors relate to these?

Instructions for the introduction

- The researcher; name and study background.
- Topic of the interview: visitor experience in Suomenlinna fortress.
- Goal of the interview: to get a picture of how the heritage experience is for the visitors.
- Duration of interview: no more than 20 minutes.
- Recording the interview: consent from the respondent.
- Confidentiality: names won't be mentioned in the final report but I would like to mention the country you are from. The results will be part of my master thesis.

Opening question

- General introduction question to get the conversation started: I would like to ask you more specific questions about your visit to Suomenlinna fortress and your experience at the guided tour.

Interview guide: Foreign visitors of the guided tour

1) Can you tell me the reason for your visit to Finland?

- How long are you staying?
- Where are you from?
- Are you travelling with someone?
- How old are you?
- What is your education?

Keywords: nature of visit, age, education

2) What is the reason you came to Suomenlinna fortress?

- What did you want to experience/see during your visit? Anything particular?
- Does Suomenlinna hold any personal meaning for you?
- Why did you join an organized tour?
- Did you go to the museum?

Keywords: education, knowledge, recreation, personal meaning

3) How did you experience the tour?

- What did you see during the tour?
- How do you feel about what you saw?
- Do you feel like you saw enough? Why?
- Could you relate to anything you saw? How?
- Could you personally connect with what you saw? How?

Keywords: experience, feelings, personal meaning

4) How did you feel about the tour guide?

- Does the tour guide have an effect on your experience? If so, what kind of an effect did the tour guide have?
- Was the guide able to make you relate to the site and its history? How?

Keywords: tour guide, experience, personal meaning

5) How was your overall experience in Suomenlinna fortress?

Interview guide: Foreign visitors of Suomenlinna museum

1) Can you tell me the reason for your visit to Finland?

- How long are you staying?
- Where are you from?
- Are you travelling with someone?
- How old are you?
- What is your education?

Keywords: nature of visit, age, education

2) What is the reason for your visit to Suomenlinna fortress?

- Why did you choose to visit the museum?
- Does Suomenlinna hold any personal meaning for you?
- What did you want to experience/see during your visit in Suomenlinna? Anything particular?
- Did you join an organized tour? Are you going to join an organized tour? Why? Why not?

Keywords: education, knowledge, recreation, personal meaning

3) How did you experience the museum?

- What did you see?
- How do you feel about what you saw?
- How do you feel about the way the history of Suomenlinna was told at the museum?
- Do you think the different objects (the screens, the film, the stories etc.) helps telling the "story"/history of Suomenlinna?
- Do you feel like you saw enough? Why?
- Could you relate to anything you saw? How?
- Could you personally connect with what you saw? How?
- Do you feel like you saw enough? Why?
- Can you relate to anything you saw? How?
- Could you personally connect with what you saw? How?
- How was your overall experience in Suomenlinna?

Keywords: experience, feelings, personal meaning

APPENDIX 2. OBSERVATION GUIDE

Observation guide

Research purpose:

The researcher aims to examine the visitor experience of the foreign visitors by focusing on their subjective negotiation of the site. The aim is also to investigate how tour guides and museum objects are interpreted by the visitors, and how heritage interpretation shapes the experience of the visitors. In addition, the purpose is to gain more background information on why foreign visitors come to Suomenlinna sea fortress. To understand the reason why these visitors come to the site, the researcher investigates whether the visitors are seeking to experience education, knowledge, recreation or a personal experience.

Main research questions:

- How is Suomenlinna fortress and/or its heritage experienced by the visitors at the guided tour and at Suomenlinna museum?

Sub-questions:

- What is the role of tour guides and Suomenlinna museum as heritage interpretation in the experience and practice of heritage tourism at Suomenlinna Fortress?
- How is heritage interpretation and guiding done at the site and how do visitors relate to these?

Location

The purpose of the research is to understand why the foreign visitors come to Suomenlinna fortress and how they experience the site and the tour and whether there is a link between the visitor and the place visited. Also the effect of the tour guide on the experience is being explored. Due to this purpose the location where I will observe the visitors is at the guided tours that go around the fortress, Suomenlinna center and the ferry to/from Suomenlinna.

Activities

I will focus on the behavior and interaction of the visitors' considering the following aspects:

- Group size, nationality
- Interaction with the site (picture taking etc.)
- Interaction (verbal & physical) with the guide
- Interaction (verbal & physical) with other visitors
- Body language, facial expressions