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A captivating experience: the voluntary prisoner

A study of prison B&Bs



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And remember: If you can imagine it, you can achieve it, if you can dream it, you can become it.

(William Arthur Ward)

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Abstract

This thesis explore how heritage sites commodify history and the tensions that are visible in this process. The study focus on prison B&Bs in Sweden in order to visualise the commodification of history. Through qualitative interviews, observation and content analysis of newspaper articles it is argued that history is commodified in order to create a unique experience of the B&B which can be used to differentiate the business. Prison B&Bs are argued to be both an accommodation and a tourist attraction and as such, they are positioned in both the accommodation industry and the tourism business. Tourists no longer have to transport themselves between the accommodation and tourist attraction, the attraction is built into the accommodation. Spending a night in a former prison cell is thus transformed into an experience. The study also reveal that history is approached in a playful way where the whereabouts and suffering of the prisoners is turned into a leisure activity in team-building activities, but the playful attitude is also used to jump between past and present, creating a distance between now and then. There are some moral issues at stake here and the study note that the managers are aware of the sometimes dark and difficult past and discuss boundaries of commodification and norms within the society.

Key words – Heritage, history, commodification, prison, B&B, dark tourism

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1. Introduction

Travelling is not only about getting away from every-day life, it is also about new, unique and exciting experiences. A recent trend is to offer an experience embedded in your place to stay. How about spending a “captivating” night in a former prison cell? You will of course get your own key and be able to lock your door from the inside. Spending a night in an authentic former prison not only gives you a place to stay, it also gives you an extra experience, making the place to stay so much more than a room, turning it into a tourist attraction. Today it is accordingly not only the destination and its tourist attractions that offer experiences to visitors; the accommodations now compete about visitors as both tourist attractions and places to stay. This phenomenon could be partly explained by the heavy growth of booking sites on the internet. Today it is possible to search through different search engines, comparing prices, locations and offerings from a wide range of accommodations on the destination. With the growing amount of accommodations that advertise on internet, the need of differentiating the products rise. Offering an experience embedded in the accommodation can be considered as a way of differentiating the business and a need to book a particular accommodation since it offers an unique experience. Transforming a prison into a B&B is not only a way of creating a unique experience and a business advantage, it could also be a way of preserving the building and its historical values. The amount of cultural heritage sites are constantly rising as time passes by and so do the costs of maintaining and preserving them for the future.

Sweden has strong regulations regarding preservation and reconstruction of built cultural heritage. This of course impact how the tourism business can use those sites as an asset for their business. In 2009, the Swedish government ordered an investigation called “the cultural property investigation” (Kulturfastighetsutredningen) which aims to sort out which buildings should belong to the state and which could be sold or rented out privately. The investigation has considered the about 550 stately owned cultural buildings and ranked them in the order of their uniqueness and cultural values. The investigation stress that it is not the purpose of the state to own all cultural buildings but instead a selection of the most valuable according to different features should be kept and the rest should be sold or rented out.¹ Why is the state ordering such a report? Considering that the yearly deficit of the maintenance of cultural properties in Sweden is 400 million SEK every year, the answer would, at least partially, be economical. There are in total 20 properties that are recognized as current or potential big tourism attractions (more than 20.000 visitors each year) and the cost of maintaining and developing those properties for the tourism business require an amount of 30 million SEK every year. The current and potential tourism attractions can contribute with tax

¹http://156.51.176.32/sfv/Kulturfastighetsutredningen_del_1.pdf P. 1-2

income and job openings and the properties can be regarded as a cultural infrastructure.² The report show a governmental economical consciousness about the value of cultural heritage sites, not only as displaying history but also as an economical issue where the most valuable and unique buildings will be kept while the others will be sold or rented out. This is a common issue today, with a shift in government policies toward a market economics and an increased consciousness of where the money goes.³

The need of unique experiences and differentiation in the recreation industry can be physically possible through the commodification of cultural heritage sites. The redundant cultural heritage buildings seem to fit perfectly with the needs of the recreation industry. But is it really that simple? It can be questioned whether or not it is suitable to commodify and use cultural heritage sites like former prisons, letting visitors pay to spend the night in a place where no one wanted to go. Correctional treatment in the 19th and early 20th century is not the one of today; prisoners were put in isolated cells, where the isolation was a part of the punishment. Executions were a part of the every day life in prisons and the last execution took place as late as 1910 in the prison of Långholmen, Stockholm.⁴ But one could question where the problem lies; is it in the use of heritage sites for commercial purposes or is it that places with some kind of dark history (like Långholmen) should not be commodified?

A recent trend in the tourism business is visits to dark places, which can be illustrated by the fact that the Swedish tourism organisation (STF) in 2007 published their annual book on tourism in Sweden, with the theme “Crime and district – a criminal journey in Sweden” (Brott och trakt – En kriminell resa genom Sverige). The book presents different places in Sweden where crimes have been committed together with a story about who did it, what happened and places related to the crime. Different crimes and different places are described to give a historical, criminal odyssey. The reason why STF chose this subject is that the dark history of mankind has always fascinated people.⁵ There is accordingly a need for something unexpected, something not counted for, to be told and there seem to be something with the darker side of humanity that attracts tourists. Have death and punishment become tourist entertainment or is this just a case of a practical re-use?

It seems to be a sensitive question balancing on right and wrong, dos and donts and indicates the possibility of tensions and challenges regarding the commodification of cultural heritage sites.

²http://www.sfv.se/cms/aktuellt/statens_fastighetsbestand_utredning.html P.4

³Choi, A.S. et. al. (2010) Economic valuation of cultural heritage sites: A choice modeling approach. *Tourism management*. Vol. 31, P. 214.

⁴Cornell, P. Skulptur upprättas för avrättad. *Södermalmsnytt* (20-26 november 2010) P. 20.

⁵ Brott och trakt. STF(2007)

The phenomenon of turning a prison into a hotel or B&B cannot only be explained by needs of differentiation or economical interests, it can also display a need of history. History is today not only a theoretical subject in universities all over the world, it is also increasingly becoming an asset in commercial businesses, such as the tourism industry. The use of history for commercial purposes has many different names such as “living history”, “re-enactments” or “time-travels” which all refer to a use of history for commercial purposes.⁶ The annual medieval week on the island of Gotland, Sweden had about 40.000 visitors in 2010⁷ who experienced the medieval times in one way or another. An event like this can be said to display images and representations of the past, but which are they and how are they made visible? The same questions can be asked in the case of former prisons that now operate as a B&B. How do they commodify history, and which representations of the past are chosen and marketed?

The discussion about how history is commodified in cultural heritage sites displays a complex situation where different interests (such as historical or economical) clash not only with themselves, but also with different stakeholders (the state, private companies, individuals), which have caused history to be valued and interpreted in many different ways. The aim of this thesis is to create a deeper understanding of how heritage sites commodify history and to explore if there are any visible tensions in this process.

In order to fulfil the aim the following research questions are formulated:

How do cultural heritage sites commodify and use history in their business and how is it visualized in prison B&Bs in Sweden?

Are there any visible tensions regarding how cultural heritage sites commodify and use history in their business?

⁶Hunner, J. First-person interpretation at living history museums. In: Aronsson, P. & Larsson, E. (eds.) (2002) *Konsten att lära och viljan att uppleva*. P. 19.

⁷<http://www.gotland.info/press/pdf/Slutrapport.%20Medeltidsveckan.pdf> Visited 20/4-2011

2. Theoretical framework

Heritage sites have been popular tourist destinations for a long time, but with the growing mass-market tourism in the 1980s the exploitation of heritage sites for commercial use boomed. Heritage sites were turned into “attractions” and used for commercial purposes⁸, which, in other terms, can be described as a commodification of such heritage sites.

Nuryanti has argued that since heritage is often associated with the word “inheritance” which means that something is transferred from one generation to another, it is no wonder that the use of heritage in the tourism business causes tensions, since tourism is viewed as dynamic and ever changing, causing a reinterpretation of heritage.⁹ She accordingly identify the tension to exist between the different meanings of the words “heritage” and “tourism”, while Tunbridge and Ashworth argue that this might have been true a couple of years ago, but today, heritage is so much more than something “inherited”, it is used as a resource for the leisure industry, as physical evidences of the past, it is ascribed to intangible abilities that differs between persons, creating an individual heritage, it is also a resource for and cause of political conflicts. These processes and views of heritage complicate the meaning of it and it is the nowadays wide meaning ascribed to the word “heritage” that concerns Ashworth and Tunbridge.¹⁰ They argue that the concept of the “dissonant” heritage encapsulate all of these conflicts and tensions in the wide meaning ascribed to heritage. Dissonance indicate a lack of agreement and harmony and raises the question “between what elements does dissonance occur?”¹¹ Dissonance in this case is also referred to as a contradiction to harmony, for example harmony in music. The dissonance is argued to cause a quest where “people will adjust their patterns of behaviour so as to reduce the dissonance and move towards consonance’.”¹² Ashworth and Tunbridge have no absolute solution or truth on how to overcome the dissonance and create a “world of harmony” but argue that the dissonance in heritage have global effects on cultural and political harmony and should therefore be further explored.¹³ Even though it might not be possible to master and harmonize all tensions related to commodification of the past, exploring how history is commodified can help visualising tensions in order to overcome some of the discrepancies.

8Misiura, S. (2006) *Heritage marketing*. Elsevier. P. 4.

9Nuryanti, W. (1996) Heritage and postmodern tourism. *Annals of tourism research*. Vol. 23, No. 2, P. 249.

10Tunbridge, J. E. & Ashworth, G. J. (1996) *Dissonant heritage – the management of the past as a resource in conflict*. Wiley. P. 4-5.

11Ibid. P. 20.

12Ibid. P. 20.

13Ibid. P. 276.

The theoretical chapter is used to create an understanding of concepts related to the commodification of history and the tensions it may cause in cultural heritage sites. The layout of the chapter is as follows: it begins with a discussion of the relationship between heritage and tourism since the commodification of history in heritage sites implies a touristic use of history and heritage and thus their relationship is crucial for continuing the discussion. The chapter continues with a discussion of conflicts and tensions in the commodification process and introduces the concept of “dark tourism” as an example of a touristic trend where tensions and contradictions are clearly visible. Heritage is then discussed from two different perspectives; as an experience and product. Lotta Braunerhielm's research on tensions between cultural heritage and the tourism business is here important for the discussion as she has noted that the meeting between heritage and tourism is more and more characterized by a commodification and a commercial trade.¹⁴

The discussion is then focused on history as a commodity in heritage sites and this discussion is partly supported on Aylin Orbasli's research who has studied cultural tourism in historic towns, showing that history and heritage are assumed to be assets, just waiting for a commodification.¹⁵ The works by Peter Aronsson are also frequently used as he is a noted researcher in the department of History in Linköping University, Sweden. Aronsson's studies are mostly concerned with the phenomenon of “living history” and how history is used in heritage sites, museums, institutions and schools.

It can be questioned why the discussion of heritage and history is separated and the reason for this is rooted in Lowenthal's arguments of a separation between heritage and history:

History tells how things came to be; heritage, on the other hand, passes on myths of origins and continuation, endowing groups with a sense of purpose. Unlike history, heritage is innately presentist. It must revise the past in order, not simply to suit current values, but to give those values legitimacy by rooting them in our shared, if imagined past.¹⁶

In addition to this separation between history as a concept of what happened and heritage as a creation, Ashworth and Tunbridge argue that there are actually three positions here: “...the past (what has happened), history (selective attempts to describe this, and heritage (a contemporary product shaped from history).”¹⁷ History can therefore be seen as an attempt to display the past while heritage is an interpretation of this.

¹⁴Braunerhielm, L. (2006) Plats för kulturarv och turism. Grythyttan – en fallstudie av upplevelser, värderingar och intressen. P. 194. *Karlstad University studies*, 2006:12

¹⁵Orbasli, A. (2000) *Tourists in historic towns. Urban Conservation and Heritage Management*. P. 2.

¹⁶Lowenthal. Quoted in: Gordon, A. (2004) Heritage and Authenticity: The Case of Ontario's Sainte-Marie-among-the-Hu. *The Canadian Historical Review*. Vol. 85, No. 3, P. 509.

¹⁷Tunbridge, J. E. & Ashworth, G. J. (1996) P. 21.

History can thus be valued as authentic while heritage is argued to be a creation since it is always reinterpreted and try to root itself in a past that can be real or imagined. Heritage is therefore approached as a social construction, while history is more concerned with authenticity. Authenticity is therefore included as an aspect of history and the complexity of the word is here stressed, as it can have many different meanings depending on person and situation. The chapter concludes with a summary of the theoretical framework.

2.1 Heritage and Tourism

In order to discuss cultural heritage and its relation to the tourism business it is important to clarify the emphasis of the term “cultural heritage”. The term “cultural heritage” is here defined according to The National Heritage Board of Sweden (RAÄ) which explain the term as: “...objects, buildings and ancient monuments as well as stories, traditions and other intangible assets that have been transferred from previous generations.”¹⁸ Important here is the emphasis on both tangible as well as intangible assets and that heritage is argued to be transferred from previous generations, implying that cultural heritage is a creation where certain parts are transferred to the next generation, while other parts are not. Tunbridge and Ashworth support the idea of heritage being transferred from previous generations but add that it is not only what previous generations have left behind that constitute cultural heritage, but also how present time makes sense of it; heritage is accordingly a product of the present¹⁹.

Braunerhielm have concentrated much of her research on tensions between cultural heritage and the tourism business. She have noted that the meeting between heritage and tourism is more and more characterized by a commodification and a commercial trade which causes tensions due to the different values in this process.²⁰ Tunbridge and Ashworth have further argued that tensions between heritage and commodification is not only a case of culture versus economics, tensions rise due to the possibilities of the heritage product, the same raw material can be the base for many different products in many different markets.²¹ Tunbridge and Ashworth have noted that the commercialisation of heritage sites are many times seen as a destroyer of cultural values²², but they argue that:

...the commodification of cultural achievements does not deny their intrinsic qualities (any more than selling motor cars as life styles denies their intrinsic technical qualities); it only explains one aspect of society's relationship to these phenomena.²³

¹⁸<http://www.raa.se/cms/extern/kulturarv.html> Visited 25/4-2011.

¹⁹Tunbridge, J. E. & Ashworth, G. J. (1996) P. 6.

²⁰Braunerhielm, L. (2006) P. 194.

²¹Tunbridge, J. E. & Ashworth, G. J. (1996) P. 8.

²²Ibid. P. 12.

²³Tunbridge, J. E. & Ashworth, G. J. (1996) P. 12.

Commercialisation, from this point of view, can therefore be argued to not destroy cultural values, commercialisation is only one aspect of how society relate to and use cultural heritage.²⁴ Some critique can be pointed to the view of commercialisation as only one aspect of the relationship between society and a phenomenon such as commodification of cultural achievements, since the impact of that relationship is not further investigated by the author. Is there for example a chance that the other relationships might be affected or reduced due to the commodification of culture? Here, Cohen's work about the relationship between culture and commodification is interesting since he argue that things and activities can have several meanings such as cultural or social values, but that once they are commodified, they can loose some of the meaning. It does not have to be so for all products, it is more common when it comes to the commodification of culture and people for the tourism business. Cohen is not completely critical to commodification, rather, he argues that commodification is often happening when a culture is in decline and that commodification brought by the tourism business, can help in preserving cultural traditions.²⁵ An example of this is the Samian culture in the north of Sweden that have been in decline for many years, but is now growing due to commodification of the Samian culture and how the people live.²⁶ Commodification of culture and people can accordingly have a positive affect, but it can also be questioned on how it affect the overall relationship between a phenomenon and the society. The relationship between heritage and tourism is thus argued to be complex and depending on several variables. Commodification, the relationships between society and heritage and the wide variety of meaning ascribed to heritage are all affecting how heritage and tourism clash and interact with each other. The next section will therefore explore the notion of “dark tourism” which is a recent tourist trend.

2.2 Dark Tourism

A phenomenon that have gained attention from researchers during the last years is “dark tourism” which Sharpley and Stone have explained as: visits to places, which, in one way or another, is connected to death (battle sites, graves, murder sites et.c.).²⁷ Though dark tourism is not a new phenomenon, the theoretical term “dark tourism” is a rather new one that relates back to the lately increased tourist interest in death sites. Lennon and Foley have in their studies about dark tourism used the term to mark that there is a recent shift in how those death sites are handled by the producers; “... death has become a commodity for consumption in a global communications market.”²⁸ Death as a product ready for consumption might cause additional tensions

²⁴Ibid. P. 8.

²⁵Cohen, E. (1988) Authenticity and commoditization in tourism. *Annals of tourism research*. Vol. 15, p. 380-382.

²⁶<http://www.samer.se/1215> Visited 25/5-2011

²⁷Lennon, J. & Foley, M. (2002) *Dark tourism* The attraction of death and disaster. P.3.

²⁸Lennon, J. & Foley, M. (2002) *Dark tourism* The attraction of death and disaster. P.5.

than the previously discussed tensions between cultural and economical values and Sharpley has identified the following tensions/challenges:

- Ethical issues – is it ethical to develop, promote and commodify dark sites?
- Marketing/promotional issues – Many dark tourism sites are not planned to be tourist attractions and when companies promote such sites, they contribute to the attraction of such sites.
- Interpretation issues – how are things presented and what does the available information say? (signs, guided tours et.c.) Through the interpretation process, the history of the site can be reinterpreted and rewritten.
- Site management issues – how to manage death sites in an “appropriate” way which show respect to the people and events connected to the site.²⁹

The four issues show that there are many different kinds of tensions and challenges regarding the commodification of heritage sites which are concerned with death and suffering. The history of such “dark” sites seem to be complex to interpret due to the previously mentioned tensions. Orbasli is critical to the view of heritage as a product for the tourism industry and argue that:

...history has become a product that can be marketed, sold and re-created. Historic settlements and urban areas are seen as assets, readily transformed into products that are sold to customers seeking an “experience.”³⁰

The view of the heritage as an asset, waiting to be commodified, ignore the potential tensions and challenges in the process of interpreting and selecting parts of history for a commercial use.

Walsh argue that political and cultural processes in Western societies are often mediated through professionals and it is because of this that interpretations from this group are considered reliable and authentic.³¹ Museums are accordingly a legitimate interpreter of the past due to the professional perspective and as the tourism industry is considered commercial and accordingly opposing the museums, it is no wonder that interpretation and commodification of heritage sites for the tourism business are questioned.

Misiura has in her research stressed the importance of an “...appropriate interpretation and sensitivity to those whom it belongs”³² regarding how the past is used by historians, marketers and other parties.³³ Though

29Sharpley, R. Shedding light on dark tourism: an introduction. In: Sharpley, R. & Stone, P.R. (eds.) (2009) *The darker side of travel. Theory and practice of dark tourism*. P. 8-9. Channel view publications.

30Larkham (1996) quoted in: Orbasli, A. (2000) P. 2.

31Walsh (1992) In: McIntosh, A.J. & Prentice, R.C. (1999) Affirming authenticity. Consuming cultural heritage. *Annals of tourism research*. P. 590.

32Misiura, S. (2006) P. 15.

33Misiura, S. (2006) P. 15.

cultural heritage sites seem to offer endless opportunities for interpretation of such sites, it is important to consider the history of the place and the people connected to it. The notion of an appropriate and sensitive interpretation can be connected to an ethical perspective in the tourism business.

Malloy and Fennell argue that:

While tourism is a business, its sphere of influence extends well beyond that of a simple market exchange. In addition to its economic impact, tourism influences the social, cultural, ecological, and ethical milieux of each location visited, identified and compared. Further, because of its accelerated growth as an industry, its diversity, and its sheer magnitude, its potential to incur unethical transgressions is considerable.³⁴

Tourism is accordingly a growing industry and due to its diversity and flexibility it is likely to cause unethical violations. Malloy and Fennell suggest a common standard and control regarding the ethical issues and the impacts of the tourism business which would benefit the image of professionalism in tourism companies in the eye of the public.³⁵ On the other hand, Rest note: "...before it is possible to reason, choose values and act morally conscious, one has to recognize that there is a moral issue. ...without any formulated problem, there is really nothing to consider."³⁶ A challenge regarding ethical and moral concerns in commodification of heritage sites seem to be the lack of recognition of such problems and the difficulty to point out exactly where the problem lies. Wheeler has in her research showed that much of the tourism literature regarding tourism and ethics seem to focus on how to make tourism ethical regarding resources such as nature, environment and pollution.³⁷ Dark tourism can therefore serve as an illustration of a category within tourism where moral and ethical tensions and dilemmas have been explored further.

Dark tourism can also be an example of what Judd label as a "hybridization" within the tourism business; "the desire for innovative, unique, novel, alternative, multimedia and/or multidimensional experiences and attractions has led to processes of hybridization in which new amalgamations of phenomena come into being."³⁸ Heritage sites with a dark history are thus combined with and interpreted by the tourism business in order to create new and unique products that can be marketed. This hybridization is also noted by Braunerhielm which argue that tourism is more and more characterised by a differentiation and a commodification of culture.³⁹ Cohen, on the other hand, argue that there have always been an exchange of

³⁴Malloy, D.C. & Fennell, D.A. (1998) Codes of ethics and tourism: An exploratory content analysis. P. 454. *Journal of tourism management*. Vol, 19, No. 5.

³⁵Ibid. P. 454.

³⁶Rest (199) quoted in: Marnburg, E. (2005) "I hope it won't happen to me!" Hospitality and tourism students' fear of difficult moral situations as managers. *Tourism management* 27, (2006), p. 562.

³⁷Wheeler, M. (1995) Tourism marketing ethics: an introduction. *International marketing review*. Vol. 12, No. 4.

³⁸Hertzman, E. et. al. (2008) Edutainment heritage tourist attractions: a portrait of visitors' experiences at Storyeum" *Journal of museum management and curatorship*. Vol, 23, No. 2, P. 169.

³⁹Braunerhielm, L. (2004) *Upplevelsen av en plats – en studie om kulturarvets plats i produktions- och konsumtionsprocessen i*

products, and as markets expand, so does the possibilities in finding new things and activities to commodify.⁴⁰ Commodification is not a new phenomenon, it is just that tourism has expanded the amount and variations of things and activities that can be sold.⁴¹ Tourism can therefore be argued to cause a new set of commodifications where heritage sites can be seen as one of those new products. Heritage as a product will be further analysed in the following section.

2.3 The Heritage Product

Heritage can, due to the expanding range of activities and things that are commodified, be viewed as a product for the tourism business. Tunbridge and Ashworth argue that cultural heritage seem to be a goldmine for the tourism business considering that a wide variety of heritage products can be created from the same raw material. Different materials are combined to create different products for different markets.⁴² It can of course be an extreme advantage to be able to create thousands of products from the same raw material, but, it can also be a problem. Cohen argue that the heritage product often has a rich and complicated past which requires a selection process so that the heritage product can be “...rapidly assimilated into the existing experience, expectations and historical understanding of a visitor with limited local knowledge and quite definite expectations of what this heritage product should contain.”⁴³ A heritage can accordingly have a rich and complicated past, which require a transformation into a product that is easy to consume and therefore don't require a lot of background information. Though the theory of the heritage product as an easy-to-consume product is important, I note that the notion of a “rich and complicated past” does not correspond to the requirements of a product that is “easy to consume”. The gap between the rich and complicated history and the easy-to-consume product seem to be giant and need further exploration.

Strange and Kempa have in their research about Alcatraz and Robben Island (which are famous prisons) noted that the heritage product is often seen as easy to market, but difficult to interpret due to the fact that heritage is loaded with politics and economy.⁴⁴ There are accordingly a lot of issues to consider when interpreting a heritage site. It is now time to discuss a model which illustrate the commodification process, where interpretation is one of the steps to produce a heritage product.

Grythyttan. Arbetsrapport Vol. 13. P. 7.

⁴⁰Cohen, E. (1988) P. 380.

⁴¹Ibid. P. 380.

⁴²Tunbridge, J. E. & Ashworth, G. J. (1996) P. 8.

⁴³Cohen (1979) In: Tunbridge, J. E. & Ashworth, G. J. (1996) P. 22.

⁴⁴Strange, C. & Kempa, M. (2003) Shades of dark tourism. Alcatraz and Robben Island. *Annals of tourism research*. P. 389.

2.3.1 A Model of the Commodification Process

The commodification of history and heritage sites have been discussed from several aspects and in order to visualise the different parts in this process, a model by Tunbridge and Ashworth is used.⁴⁵ (See Figure 1 below.)

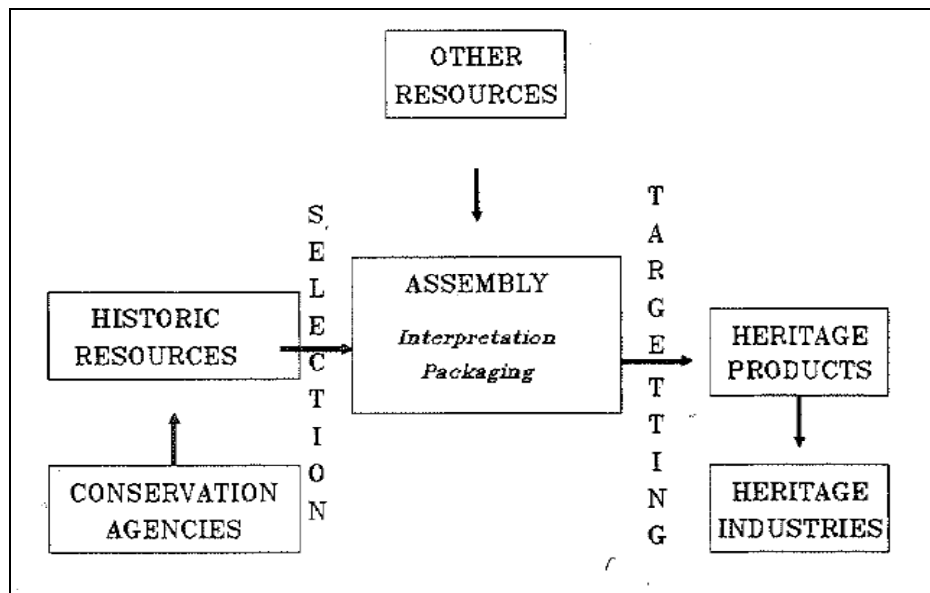


Figure 1: An overview of the commodification process according to Tunbridge and Ashworth.

Simplified this model shows that historic resources (which is a varied mix of “past events, personalities, folk memories, mythologies, literary associations, surviving physical relics, together with the places, whether sites, towns, or landscapes with which they can be symbolically associated”⁴⁶) are put into a selection process where they are transformed into products through an interpretation process which can be explained as “packaging”, where different objects is *selected, assembled and integrated* so that a certain product is created. This process include adding other resources as well, resources that are not historical but used to create an attractive heritage product, labelled “other resources” in the model. Tunbridge and Ashworth emphasize that it is the intangible aspects of a product such as feelings, ideas, pride, pleasure, fantasy and nostalgia which are communicated through the physical parts of a heritage site and that the physical product often remain the same, it is the experience of the place that is interpreted and traded.⁴⁷

Some critique can be addressed to this model since it indicate that heritage is market driven and created only

⁴⁵Tunbridge, J. E. & Ashworth, G. J. (1996) P. 7.

⁴⁶Tunbridge, J. E. & Ashworth, G. J. (1996) P. 7.

⁴⁷Ibid. P. 8.

to satisfy its consumers. This is particularly questioned since Sweden have strong regulations regarding the valuation and conservation of heritage through the state owned authority The national heritage board of Sweden (RAÄ) which are concerned with conservation and management of heritage sites in Sweden.⁴⁸ It is accordingly the state and its authorities that take care of most of the heritage sites in Sweden and it would be wrong to argue that they conserve and manage those sites only for the opportunity to satisfy a modern consumption demand. Though the model put conservation agencies as the one that originally select resources suitable for commodification, it does not consider or explain if those conservation agencies only select resources or if they also are a part of the interpretation and packing of those resources. The model does not include private heritage entrepreneurs, and thus my critique of the involvement and role of conservation agencies are questioned. The next section will look further into experiences as a way of engaging in the past.

2.3.2 An “Experience” of the Past

The notion of experiences and its value have been extensively studied in tourism literature during the last decade and two of the most noted researchers in this field is Pine & Gilmore. Their works about the experience economy offer a voyage to the complexity of what an experience is and its value. They argue that experiences are considered to be one of the main competitive advantages in order to differentiate a product.⁴⁹ O'Dell argue that everything can be sold with references to the experiences that are stored in them.⁵⁰ Aronsson , on the other hand, argue that the experience is often considered to be a value in itself and a mean to reach the goal; knowledge. Knowledge is considered boring, but when an experience is added it is portrayed as the magic key to the door of knowledge thirst and inspiration. The experience cannot be too intense, then the visitor is lost in feelings and awe and will only find pleasure, not knowledge.⁵¹

Aronsson's thoughts about the experience can be related to what Bruner calls a “seriousness” in the quest for experiences. Bruner has studied an outdoor museum in Illinois and argue that the interaction in a heritage site is a combination of leisure and knowledge, where a playful quality between interpreters (such as guides) and visitors is noted.⁵² On the one hand, experiences are viewed as a marketing tool to differentiate the product, but on the other hand, they are portrayed as the magic gate to knowledge; passing through the fire of enjoyment. There seem to be a dilemma related to the value of the experience, is it a mean to gain knowledge

48 [Www.raa.se](http://www.raa.se) Visited 23/5-2011.

49 Pine B.J. & Gilmore J.H. (1998): Welcome to the experience economy. *Harvard Business Review*. Vol.76. No.4, P. 97f.

50 O'Dell, T. Upplevelsens lockelser, tingens dynamik. In: O'Dell, T. (ed.) (2002) *Upplevelsens materialitet*. P. 12-14. Studentlitteratur.

51 Aronsson, P. (2004) *Historiebruk – att använda det förflutna*. P. 109. Studentlitteratur.

52 Bruner, E. M. (1994) Abraham Lincoln as authentic reproduction: A critique of postmodernism. *Journal of American Anthropologist*. 1996, No. 2. P. 411.

or is it only a mean to feel pleasure? McIntosh & Prentice have in their study about consumption of cultural heritage in period theme parks, noted that visitors to places offering an “experience” (such as period theme parks) are often portrayed as “fun seekers” who interpret what they see, but nothing more. The authors stress that one must not forget the reason for the visit; some people might want to relax and enjoy themselves and some want to gain knowledge, and the experience can be a way to experience both.⁵³ This discussion has mainly focused on the “experience” of the past and the creation of experiences in heritage sites has been argued to offer the opportunity to differentiate the business. Creating an experience of the past also touch upon the notion of “authenticity” - is the experience showing an authentic picture of the past or is it a conscious or unconscious distorted past? This will be further addressed in the next section.

2.4 History and the “Authentic” Experience

History will be explored as a commodity for the tourism business and its relation to authenticity since an interpretation, selection and packaging of a heritage product choose only parts of the past, which can effect the feeling of authenticity in the consumption experience.

History is traditionally linked to the scientific history in universities, museums and in schools but lately it has been argued that history is so much more than empirical research of the past,⁵⁴ but still, researchers are sceptical to the use of history in the tourism business. Aronsson (which has dedicated his research to the study of “living history” and representations of the past) claim that the scientific view of history is that history is something that cannot be experienced, the building material of history is traces or sources that have been kept until modern days.⁵⁵ The view of history as impossible to experience contradicts the movement labelled “living history”, “experiential history” and “re-enactments of history” and is explained as a “methodology of presenting the past to the public in an engaging way.”⁵⁶ The tradition of living history is over 100 years old,⁵⁷ but there are still discussions on the value and authenticity of “living history”.

The notion of authenticity is intimately linked to history and especially to “living history” since the latter is about engaging the past through for example re-enactments of history, thus offering an experience of history. Mattsson and Praesto have studied the case of “Arn” which is a historical novel by Jan Guillou about a

53McIntosh, A.J. & Prentice, R.C. 1999) P. 591.

54Snickars, P & Trenter, C. (ed.) (2004) *Det förflutna som film och vice versa. Om medierade historiebruk*. P. 5. Lund studentlitteratur.

55Aronsson, P. (2002) Att uppleva historia. I: Andersson, I. & Johansson, K. & Lindstedt Cronberg, M. (eds.) *Tid och tillit*. En vänbok till Eva Österberg. P. 76. Stockholm.

56Hunner, J. First-person interpretation at living history museums. In: Aronsson, P. & Larsson, E. (eds.) (2002) P. 19.

57Ibid. P. 19.

templar knight called Arn. The Novel is mostly fictive and set to the lands of the county Västergötland in Sweden. Even though the story of the novel is fictive, the different places displayed in the book have become huge tourist attractions. Accordingly, the description of the places of the book are many times authentic, while many of the characters and their whereabouts are fictive. This have caused massive critique from historians as a museum in Västergötland did an exhibition about Arn, a fictive person, and that visitors would not be able to separate the factual history and the novel. The critique of the historians were answered with an argument that the more visitors that visit the museum, the greater the chance is to clarify to the visitors what is fictional and not.⁵⁸ The display of a consciously fictive past in a museum is here argued to give the opportunity to further clarify to visitors what is fictive and what is not. A critique to this approach is if visitors actually will seize the opportunity to clarify what is fictional or not since researchers such as Petersson have noted that “playing persons” as a contradiction to “academics”, seem to be more focused upon the “experience” rather than if it is fully or only partly authentic.⁵⁹ Consciously displaying a fictive past can therefore be seen as a risky way to get the attention of visitors since visitors might not bother about what is real and what is fictive, as long as they get the experience.

Petersson has in her study showed that there are expectations of an authentic experience in heritage sites and that such can be unsatisfying when for example reconstructed viking boats are equipped with a motor. On the other hand, if a house is built on a foundation of cement which is not visible to the visitor, that will not disturb the authentic experience.⁶⁰ This shows that authenticity does not necessarily mean that the place is authentic in every little detail or way, it is more about the experience of the place. This is also the case in Bohman's research about authenticity in Skansen (an open-air museum in Stockholm). Visitors experienced the environment and houses as authentic but on the question if they believed that people lived like that in historical times visitors hesitated and asked “wasn't it dirtier?” The fact that the building and environment were authentic and if it showed an authentic way of living in historical times were not the same.⁶¹ In addition to this, Tunbridge & Ashworth argue that artifacts and sites many times are preserved due to the argument that they help in constructing an accurate record of what has been and how it was.⁶² The authentic buildings and environment in Skansen would accordingly help the visitor to construct an image of how it could have looked like physically, but if the displayed picture is true or not, is another question.

58Mattsson, J. & Praesto, A. (2005) The creation of a Swedish heritage destination: An insider's view of Entrepreneurial marketing. *Scandinavian journal of hospitality and tourism*. Vol. 5, No. 2, P. 164.

59Petersson, B. (2003) P. 359.

60Ibid. P. 361.

61Bohman, S. (1997) Besökarna och museendet av historien. P. 96. I: Palmqvist, L. & Bohman, S. (ed.) *Museer och kulturarv*. Carlssons.

62Tunbridge, J. E. & Ashworth, G. J. (1996) P. 9.

Another study of authenticity in heritage sites is conducted by DeLyser. She has studied a “Ghost-town” in California which address the complexity of the authentic experience in heritage sites. DeLyser argue that the town Bodie (now a State Historic Park) is perceived as authentic due to several reasons. One of the reasons was that the town is kept in decay and there are no shops or restaurants which could interfere with the tourists imagined picture of the past.⁶³ A second reason is that the town use the common knowledge of western ideas (such as cowboys, the American spirit, adventures and the like) in order to reaffirm the myth of the West, instead of challenging the already existing ideas. She noted that the images of the West are so powerful that the already existing ideas of the West were projected into the town and its surrounding landscape⁶⁴:

The mythic West, then, is essentially a feedback loop: created in a local and national media but reflected back in the lives of real towns and real people until the images and ideas became an expected and formative part of the towns and the people themselves. For some ghost towns, Bodie included, their mythic history is as important as what some might call their actual history, as fictional(ized) stories have become critical ways of understanding the towns themselves.⁶⁵

Stories, might they be true or not, are used to create an understanding of the place and this understanding is derived from different medial representations of the place, which then are applied to the place, creating a picture of the past that correspond to the myth. The already existing ideas of a historical period can accordingly act as the “authentic” version of the past, creating an authentic experience of history, even though it is based upon a myth. Thus, authenticity in a ghost town is not tied to the accuracy with which it represent its past.⁶⁶

Larsson has studied representations of history in Swedish museums and found that there are mainly three historical periods that dominate regarding re-enactment and role play; Stone age, medieval times and the turn between the 19th and 20th century. The stone age is regarded as the start of the history and typical stone age activities are likely to be cooking, learning how to light fires and how to shoot with bow. The stone age represents a simplified relationship to nature and are often used to learn children about ecological thinking. Medieval times is often representing adventures and is seen as an exciting contrast to modern life. The turn of the 19th and 20th century is often used to represent authenticity and safety and is often re-enacted in rural

63DeLyser, D. (1999) Authenticity on the ground: Engaging past in a California ghost town. *Annals of the association of American geographers*. Vol. 89, No. 4, P. 617.

64Ibid. P. 608ff

65Ibid. P. 611f

66Ibid. P. 602.

settings.⁶⁷ The idea of assigning different pictures and representations to different historical eras are, according to Larsson, suiting different needs that different people might have.⁶⁸ Larsson does not specify which kind of needs these representations suit, but other researchers such as Petersson have explored this notion further.

2.5 Summary of Theoretical Chapter

Tourism is a growing industry and with it, an increasing amount of activities and things are commodified in order to satisfy consumption demands. Cultural heritage sites are today frequently used as resources in the tourism business and are argued to be socially constructed through a process where history is selected, interpreted and targeted to become a product that can be sold. This process is labelled “commodification process” and is important to create a product that don’t require much background information but can be easily consumed. Heritage sites are argued to be containers of a rich and complicated past which would indicate that the interpretation of the past is highly complicated as it require the ability to overview the past and select pieces, that, put together, can create an understanding of the heritage site and its history to create a product that can be easily consumed. Dark tourism is here introduced as a tourism trend where the commodification of a complicated and questioned history is highly visible. Visits to places of death and suffering raises ethical questions regarding commodification as it can be questioned if the death and suffering of thousands of people should be turned into a commodity, ready to be consumed by tourists, seeking an “experience”. The term “dissonant” heritage is here used as a way to explore and understand the complexity of heritage and history as a resource for the tourism industry, indicating that heritage today has a wide array of meanings, causing a dissonance in how it is interpreted and used.

Another element embedded into the heritage product is the notion of offering an “experience”. History thus comes alive and can be experienced, which is argued to increase the amount of gained joy and knowledge. There are however different opinions regarding the seriousness of the experience, is it only a matter of pleasing demands from tourists or can experiences actually be a base for gaining knowledge? This is related to the discussion about authenticity since an experience of the past show one version of the past – may it be authentic or not. The more commercial a place is, the harder it is for visitors to imagine life in another time. Being authentic is argued to be more than just the issue of showing an “authentic” version of the past. A place can be considered authentic even if it is reconstructed; the reconstruction can be made in an “authentic” way.

⁶⁷Larsson, E. Att resa i tiden. In: Aronsson, P. & Larsson, E. (2002) P. 16-17.

⁶⁸Larsson, E. Att resa i tiden. In: Aronsson, P. & Larsson, E. (eds.) (2002) P. 16.

History is an important resource to commodify heritage sites and it is closely linked to authenticity since the sites display different representations of the past, which are being interpreted by visitors that create their own understanding and judge the authenticity of the place. It is not only the heritage sites that create and maintain the ideas of the past, rather, media projects an image, which in the case of the ghost-town was applied to the site and its surroundings to confirm the picture. Important here is the fact that the mediated pictures does not have to be authentic, rather, they seem to rely on the common knowledge and that different periods of history have different characteristics. Authenticity is accordingly experienced differently in different places and by different people in different situations.

3. Methodology

The collection of empirical material is an important step and this chapter is used to discuss methods and approaches for data collection. 3.1 is used to discuss restrictions regarding choice of study objects while 3.2 and 3.3 discuss qualitative method and inductive approach as methods for this thesis. 3.4 contain a discussion about the chosen methods for data collection, which ends with a summary in 3.5.

3.1 Restrictions

There is always the question of what data to collect and how much⁶⁹ and therefore a discussion about the restrictions of the thesis is important. The core of the thesis is how history is commodified in cultural heritage sites. In order to concentrate the research, it is limited to heritage sites in Sweden and more specifically former prisons that are turned into B&Bs. When reading about tourist sights in Stockholm I came across an article about Långholmen prison and became interested in how they, as a heritage site, commodify history and that was when I decided to restrict the thesis to prison B&Bs in Sweden. I am aware that there are several former prisons that today are used as touristic resources in many different ways, but this research is concentrating upon prison B&Bs in order to proceed from a homogeneous sample material. In order to highlight and discuss commodification of prisons from a broader perspective, a discussion of what has happened to other prisons is presented in section 4.4.

The process of selecting suitable study objects was conducted in several rounds. In the first selection round, the former prisons that do not function as a B&B today were eliminated. In the second round, former prisons that had undergone a total make-over and of which the old prison was not visible in the B&B today were eliminated (an example of this is a hotel in Karlstad which due to a heavy refurbishment only have one original part left; the facade). In the third round, former prisons that were a part of a product, but not the core product, were eliminated (an example of this is the B&B in Varberg which is located in a former fortress and even though it has been a prison, the main product is centred around the medieval fortress and representations on medieval events and thus it was excluded from the study). The amount of prison B&Bs had now been narrowed down to four prisons and due to one decline, the following are included: Visby, Långholmen and Falu prison.

Långholmen has a rich material regarding history and program investigations and will therefore be used as an example to illuminate the development from prison to B&B in chapter 4.3. The other two prisons are included to further deepen the managerial perspective on history as a commodity. It could be questioned why

⁶⁹Pryke, M., Rose, G. & Whatmore, S. (2003) *Using social theory. Thinking through research*. Sage Publications. P. 103.

only three prisons are analysed in this thesis, but I argue that it gives an opportunity to go deep and fully explore and analyse the commodification of history from a homogeneous sample. The prisons included in this study are seen as homogeneous due to the following criteria:

- All are built in the mid 19th century.
- All are built in the same style with the prison of Alcatraz as a role model.
- All are privately owned.
- All of the prisons offer a product which focus on the old prison as a main attraction, offering B&B, conferences, courses, meetings and parties.

The prisons will be further presented in chapter four.

3.2 A Qualitative Study

The aim of the study is to identify how commodified cultural heritage sites commodify history and in order to do so the qualitative method was chosen since it considers words and wordings instead of only quantification. Another reason for choosing the qualitative method is that it is more about generating theories instead of testing them⁷⁰ which suites the purpose of this research to generate theories on how history is used in commodified cultural heritage sites.

One of the critique's of qualitative research is that the process of research and how the author came to the conclusion is often difficult to identify.⁷¹ In an attempt to visualize how the research process have progressed and how conclusions were made, a model by Bryman⁷² is used which visualize the main steps of qualitative research. The first step is to produce general research questions which in this thesis led to questions related to tensions regarding a commercial use of cultural heritage sites.

The second step refer to a selection of relevant sites and subjects. This led to the decision of looking at tensions in cultural heritage sites that had a contested history; former prisons. A prison in Stockholm was selected due to the fact that it has the status of a cultural heritage and is now used in the tourism business as a hotel, B&B, museum and a conference centre.

Step three highlight the collection of relevant data and my data was decided to consist of a semi-structured interview with the marketing director of the B&B as well as an observation of the place. The observation meant taking photos of physical remains of the prison in the current building. In order to prepare for the interview a background search on the history of the place was made.

⁷⁰Bryman, A. (2008) P. 373.

⁷¹Ibid. P. 392.

⁷²Ibid. P. 370.

The fourth step involve interpretation of data which in this case led to a transcription of the interview and sorting the taken pictures from the visit. From the collected data it could be seen that the history of the prison was visible in the building today but that the assumed tensions did not show either in the interview material nor the observation which led to the conclusion that my hypothesis was not true, but maybe not completely false either.

In this case the fifth step was initiated which is about the conceptual and theoretical work. In the search of literature which handled tensions between heritage sites and the tourism business the field of “dark tourism” was discovered which refer to using sites of death, pain and punishment for commercial purposes). A theoretical framework of ethical and moral tensions in such heritage sites was formed and the more knowledge gained, the more complex the subject seemed to be. This led to a rephrasing of the research question (which is step 5a) as to contradictions and tensions in such death sites. At the same time more data was needed and the collection of further data (step 5B) begun. In the search of more data more prisons that had been turned into B&Bs' were discovered and after a lot of reading two more interviews were made (this time by telephone as the distance was too far). This led back to the fourth step again where data is interpreted and this in its turn led to a new set of research questions where the use of history in commodified heritage sites were emphasized. The last and sixth step is writing up findings/conclusions and here the conclusion was drawn that history is used as an asset and business advantage in order to differentiate the business and attract customers.⁷³ The benefits of using the qualitative method for this thesis is accordingly the transparent links between the fourth and fifth steps which allows new theories to be generated and further collection of data and a new formulation of research questions. Due to the importance of the transparent links between the different steps, a thesis diary was kept during the whole procedure to keep track of the ideas and avoid confusion going back and forth between the steps.

3.3 Inductive Approach

The inductive approach is chosen since it offers the possibility to investigate several single cases and if there is an observed connection between those, the connection can be argued to be generally valid.⁷⁴ By the use of the inductive approach, the three prisons in this study can be used to draw general conclusions on how history is used and made visible in commodified cultural heritage sites. Of course it can be argued that since not all existing B&Bs' are analysed, the generalizations that are drawn from the sample does not have to count for all B&Bs', but the approach still offers the possibility to identify *generally* valid connections.

⁷³Bryman, A. (2008) P. 370.

⁷⁴Alvesson, M. & Sköldberg, K. (2009) *Reflexive methodology*. New vistas for qualitative research. Sage publications. P. 3.

3.4 Data Collection

With the methodological background in mind it is now time to discuss methods for data collection.

The Value of the data depends on what you are planning to do with it⁷⁵ and therefore the advantages and disadvantages of the different methods to collect data will be discussed. In order to enlarge and deepen the study, three different methods for data collection were selected; qualitative interviews, observation and content analysis of newspaper articles.

3.4.1 Semi-structured, Qualitative Interviews

Three interviews were conducted and they are individually presented in order to identify the different settings of the interview and how it was conducted. The three prisons are further presented in 4.1. The three interviews are in chronological order:

1. Långholmen prison. I called the reception of Långholmen and asked to be directed to someone who could answer my questions about the business. I was connected to the marketing director and decided to meet up for an interview a week later. The interview took place the 24th of february 2011 in the breakfast-room of Långholmen. The interview lasted 55 minutes and the interviewee seemed comfortable in the setting. The respondent had been working in the company since they started and had accordingly a good knowledge over the development of the business and shared a lot of thoughts and ideas about the usage of cultural heritage for commercial purposes. The interview guide from Långholmen is available in appendix 1.

2. Visby prison. A visit to the webpage of the B&B revealed a telephone number and got me in contact with the chief-executive of Visby prison. The respondent accepted to participate in an interview and the date was set to the 16th of march. The interview was made by telephone since the time and resources are limited. The interview was approximately 22 minutes long and the reason for this relatively short interview was that the manager was stressed and on his way to a meeting. We had confirmed the time and date of the interview but the interviewee seemed stressed and thus the author hurried through the questions in order to get an answer on all of them. In the end, the respondent seemed calmer and the author could therefore go back and ask for more thorough answers. The interview guide is available in appendix 2.

3. Falu prison. As in the case of Visby, a visit to the webpage of Falu prison revealed a number which

⁷⁵Silverman, D. (2008) *En mycket kortfattad, ganska intressant och någorlunda billig bok om kvalitativ forskning*. P. 75. Sage Publications. Studentlitteratur.

directed me to the chief-executive of the B&B. The respondent accepted to participate in an interview which was set to the 17th of march by telephone. The interview was approximately 14 minutes long and was pre-booked. The respondent had time for my questions but stressed that it should not take so long and thus the interview questions were asked in a hurry, in order to get answers to all of the questions. The interview guide is available in appendix 3.

The author is aware of the fact that the respondent in each interview and company does not have to represent the ideas of the whole company. Långholmen prison have a lot of employees and the marketing manager was selected since he is responsible for marketing and communicating an image of the B&B. The other two prisons have 2-4 employees and are thus much smaller than Långholmen and does not have an appointed marketing manager. The chief-executives of Visby and Falu prison were therefore chosen as respondents since their work tasks are similar to the marketing manager in Långholmen.

All of the interviews were semi-structured which means that an interview guide was constructed with different set of questions or topics. The structure and nature of the questions can change and develop during the interview.⁷⁶ An interview guide was constructed before the interview in Långholmen and all of the questions were asked, but in different orders and sometimes differently formulated. The interview guide for Visby and Falun was based upon the interview guide from Långholmen and was revised a little bit. The revisions concerned taking away or reformulating some of the questions that could be difficult to ask by telephone (such as moral or ethical tensions regarding how they use the history of the place) or simply that the first interview showed potential improvements in phrasing. (See appendix 1-3 for differences). There are both advantages and disadvantages with qualitative telephone interviews. It is not possible to record physical expressions which can lead to misunderstandings, on the other hand, telephone interviews might make the respondent more comfortable since they don't have to answer sensitive questions face-to-face with the interviewer.⁷⁷

A reason for choosing the semi-structured interview is because the interview has different roles and purposes if it is used for a quantitative or qualitative study. Qualitative interviews put a stronger emphasis on the respondent's perspective⁷⁸ which is of great importance to this research. The aim of the interviews was to capture how the respondent referred to history as a commodity in their business as well as personal

76Bryman, A. (2008) P. 438.

77Ibid. P. 457.

78Bryman, A. (2008) P. 437.

reflections on this subject since people can attribute meaning to a place or their environment.⁷⁹ One note from the first interview is that when the interview was finished and the tape recorder was switched off, the respondent gave a lot of extremely useful information and this is according to Bryman a common phenomenon in qualitative interviews.⁸⁰ This was also the case in the two telephone interviews that were made; when the interview came to its end and the respondent was asked if he had something to add, the most useful information about their ideas of using history in their business was revealed. In Långholmen, the author added notes about what the respondent said after the recorder was switched off, in the other two interviews the recorder was recording all the time, but the respondents talked considerably more about their business in the end of the interview.

There are some ethical aspects to consider when using people as a data source. Revealing name and personal details of respondents can be sensitive and cause harm⁸¹ and therefore the names of the respondents are not revealed and they will here after be called “representatives” in order to mark that they are representing their business. All of the interviews were recorded and the respondents were asked if it was ok to record the interview and all of them accepted it. After the interviews the recordings were transcribed in order to see how the respondents expressed themselves and their use of history in their business. The benefits of transcribing is, that expressions can be analysed and not only my memories of what the respondent say. My memory and remembrance of the interview does not have to correspond to the respondent's view and therefore it is important to record and transcribe qualitative interviews.⁸²

3.4.2 Newspapers

How cultural heritage sites commodify will, as previously mentioned, be analysed from three different sources where newspaper articles is one source. In order to find newspaper articles the Swedish media archive named “Retriever” was used. Retriever is the biggest digital media archive in the nordic countries and consists of printed newspapers, journals and business related articles. There are articles from all of the daily newspapers, local newspapers and hundreds of different journals.⁸³ Several searches were made in order to find articles that concerned each of the three prisons but also to find other cases of prison commodification which can contribute to a wider discussion about commodification and highlight the discussion of what to do with former prisons.

79Ibid. P. 385.

80Ibid. P. 456.

81Booth, W.C., Colomb, G.G. & Williams, J.M. (2008) *The craft of research* The University of Chicago Press. P. 83

82Bryman, A. (2008) P. 451.

83<http://www.retriever-info.com/se/tjaenster/research.html> Visited 25/3-2011

A search consisting of the words “Långholmen” and “prison” generated 394 hits. In order to sort out the articles whose content treated imprisonments another word was added; “B&B”. That search generated 27 hits in the media archive. The same search was made for Visby and Falu prison. Falu prison generated the enormous amount of 8682 hits on the combination of “Falu” and “prison”, adding “B&B” to the search narrowed it down to 1662 hits. Going through the articles about Falu prison, it was noticed that the majority of the articles were ads in different newspapers and therefore had the same headline and could be sorted out rather easily. The numbers for Visby prison were 1580 hits for the combination “Visby” and “prison” and only 13 hits when adding the word “B&B” to the search.

After printing the articles they were sorted according to the newspaper they were published in and a short overview of the different newspapers together with the number of articles are here presented in order to show the validity of the material:

- Expressen – a daily evening paper, started in 1944. Distributed in the whole of Sweden.⁸⁴ 6 articles.
- Falu kuriren – a daily local paper distributed in the district of Dalarna. Owned by the media company DT and started in 1987. 2 articles.⁸⁵
- Södermalmsnytt – is a local weekly newspaper which is distributed in many parts in Sweden. They are owned by the company Media press and focus on local news.⁸⁶ 1 article.
- Restauratören – Sweden's biggest weekly newspaper intended for the leisure industry. It is distributed by Restauratörens Förlags AB and begun 1916.⁸⁷ 1 article.
- Helsingborgs Dagblad – the fifth biggest local daily newspaper in Sweden, distributed in the north-west of Scania.⁸⁸ 1 article.

The newspaper articles were then divided into new categories depending on the type of articles. The categories and numbers are the following:

Notices: There are five articles that are categorised as “notices” meaning that they illuminate happenings, awards and jubilee of the prisons.

Travel guides: There are five articles that describe the prisons through a visitor perspective, in the sense that some visitors are interviewed about their experiences and information about the accommodations and facilities are displayed in the text which is categorised as travel guides.

Review: One article has the form of a review where the restaurant in Långholmen is evaluated.

84 <http://www.expressen.se/omexpressen/1.1485762/om-expressen> Visited 30/6-2011

85 <http://www.dt.se/kundservice/omdt/1.3039960-om-dt> Visited 30/5-2011

86 <http://www.direktpress.se/> Visited 30/5-2011

87 <http://www.restauratoren.se/sida/om-restauratoren-33> Visited 30/5-2011

88 <http://hd.se/omoss/2009/08/13/vaart-mediahus/> Visited 30/5-2011

All of the articles are in Swedish and thus all of the used quotes are displayed both in Swedish and translated into English. This is done in order to display the original wording as a translation might alter the words, but the translation is also useful to give the English-speaking readers a chance to understand the quotes.

In order to capture the qualitative aspects of the newspaper articles, a qualitative content analysis approach was chosen. The approach can be seen as a strategy in the search for underlying themes in documents which are often supported with extracted quotes.⁸⁹ The qualitative content analysis is a useful approach in this research since it offers the possibility to sort out the common themes in articles about prison B&Bs. A critique to content analysis approach is that the process of generating themes often is invisible in the research.⁹⁰ How the different themes emerged and why they were chosen can accordingly be questioned, and the author will therefore make an attempt to motivate the selection of themes in the analysis.

The articles give the opportunity to study how history is displayed and referred to and how it is referred to in relation to the B&B. The author is aware that the articles display an interpretation of the sites and that they can be composed with different agendas in mind, but, this is also why the articles were chosen; they display a selling picture of history and how the B&Bs are portrayed show the different features of history as a commodity.

3.4.3 Observation

Even if you only observe things you have to find a way to record your observations. How do you describe what you see and how do you categorize activities?⁹¹ In connection with the interview in Långholmen, an observation was made. When the interview was finished I asked if I could go around and look at things on my own and got permission to do that. The observed area was the main entrance and the first and second floor of the B&B. The observation was visual in the sense that photographs were taken in order to document and identify physical traces of history. This kind of visual observation is often referred to as “visual ethnography” and is common in qualitative studies.⁹² There are two different ways to approach the material, the researcher can analyse visual material that is not derived through research, for example photo albums (extant material) or the researcher can analyse material that is made for the research (research driven)⁹³, for example my photographs in Långholmen which were taken solely for this research project.

89Bryman, A. (2008) P. 529f

90Ibid. P. 530.

91Silverman, D. (2008) P. 77.

92Bryman, A. (2008) P. 424.

93Bryman, A. (2008) P. 424.

The analysis of photographs can be conducted in several ways and this study will use the method of “photo-elicitation” where the photograph is used as a foundation for a discussion about the meaning and value of the pictures.⁹⁴ The photographs are used in order to physically visualize history as a commodity in the prison B&Bs. Photo-elicitation as a method can be criticised since it is the author that makes the observation, identifies the physically visible traces of history, takes the photographs and then extract the ones that display the commodification of history in the best way. The author is aware that her interpretation of history as a commodity have affected the selection of photographs and therefore all of the photos that were taken during the observation are saved in a separate document available upon request. The observation only included Långholmen and cannot be used to illustrate how the past is physically visible in all three cases, but it can still act as a physical amplifier for the case.

3.5 Summary of Method Chapter

The aim of this chapter has been to present and discuss methods and approaches to collect data. The study is qualitative due to the intentions to explore the meaning of words and wordings, rather than to count them. The inductive approach is here seen as useful because it allows a study of several single cases in order to see if there are any connections that can be generally valid. This approach offers the opportunity to explore history as a commodity in three prison B&B's and to draw general conclusions on history as a commodity in heritage sites. Though the thesis is limited to three cases it might not be possible to draw conclusions that are valid for all commodified heritage sites, but it still gives the opportunity to explore *generally* valid conclusions.

The data have been collected through interviews, observation and newspaper articles. The author find the use of three different methods as a strength since it offers the opportunity to analyse history as a commodity and the tensions it brings through several perspectives. The interviews display how the representatives relate to their business and how they commodify history while the observation gives physical evidence of the commodification and the newspaper articles display the commodification of history and the B&B business from an outside perspective. The selection of those three methods can therefore be argued to deepen the understanding of history as a commodity.

⁹⁴Ibid. P. 424.

4. Case

It is now time to further present the selected prison B&Bs and their history. The three B&Bs that are part of this study are, as argued before: Långholmen, Visby and Falu prison. The prisons are shortly presented in 4.1, which is followed by a short overview of the history of imprisonments and correctional treatment in Sweden in section 4.2. Section 4.3 include a discussion about the transformation from prison to B&B where Långholmen prison is chosen to illustrate the transformation. The author is aware of the fact that not all former prisons become B&Bs and therefore a discussion of what has happened to other prisons in Sweden is included in section 4.4.

4.1 Background of the Prisons

Långholmen

Långholmen is the 7th biggest island in Stockholm and has a long history. Here, the prison of Långholmen was built in the 1840's and was in use until 1975.⁹⁵ (See figure two for location.) The prison consisted of mainly three parts where the physical environment of the prison was adapted to the thinking of the 19th century where isolation was the goal and the cells and buildings were built according to this.⁹⁶ Only parts of the prison were conserved and one part now function as art ateliers⁹⁷ and the remaining prison was in 1986 turned into a



Figure 2: The pink circles show the location of the B&Bs

B&B, hotel, restaurant and conference centre which were ready in 1989. Långholmen is run by “Långholmen Hotel & Restaurant Inc.” The facility is privately owned.⁹⁸

Falu Prison

The prison is located in the town of Falun. (See figure two for location). The prison was built 1842-1848 and put into use in 1849. The prison was shut down in 1996 and turned into a B&B in the year 2000. There have

⁹⁵<http://www.langholmen.com/Sv/Vandrarhem/OmVandrarhemmet.aspx> visited 11/2-2011.

⁹⁶Lamroth, A. (1990) P. 21.

⁹⁷Ibid. P. 7.

⁹⁸<http://hem.bredband.net/ullflo/langholm/kronoh.html> visited 11/2-2011

been many renovations but the exterior of the house is more or less the same as when the prison was in use. The B&B offers possibilities for conferences, courses, meetings and parties. There is also a museum which is intended to give information about the prison and the history of the correctional treatment in Sweden. The prison is privately owned and connected to SVIF (Swedish B&Bs' united)⁹⁹

Visby Prison

Visby prison is situated in the town of Visby, on the island Gotland. (See figure two for location). The prison opened in 1859 and was called “the seven poles” because of its seven chimneys. The last prisoner in Sweden that was executed in public was imprisoned here. The last prisoners were moved in 1998 and a couple of months later the B&B opened. Most of the prison cells are original, although the beds are new.¹⁰⁰ The prison is privately owned.

4.2 Prisons and Imprisonments in Sweden – a Short Overview

In the middle of the 19th century many prisons were built in different cities and towns in Sweden. With the progression of the correctional treatment and new laws they eventually became outdated and in the middle of the 20th century it was decided to shut some of them down. One of the most famous prisons in Sweden, Långholmen prison in Stockholm, was one of those prisons; built in the 1840's and outdated in the 1950's.¹⁰¹

The reform that was established in 1945 and taken into use in 1946 was one of the biggest reforms regarding imprisonment in Sweden. Before 1946 convicted people were sent to Långholmen prison to achieve more punishment and imprisonment was looked upon as a way to scare the prisoners from committing crime again and to scare the public from committing crimes. Prisoners were kept isolated in their cells during the whole imprisonment but with the change in 1946 the loss of freedom that an imprisonment meant, was looked upon as the biggest punishment for the prisoner. The prisoner should also have the possibility to try and adapt to the outside world. With the new law the prisoners shouldn't be kept isolated but instead work together during the days and they were not locked in in their cell until the evening.¹⁰²

4.3 From Prison to B&B

To discuss how history is used in the three prisons in this study it is important to understand the transformation from a prison to a B&B. As argued before, Långholmen has the richest material and is used to

⁹⁹<http://www.falufangelse.se/> Visited 9/3-2011

¹⁰⁰Nyberg, N. Fängslande boende. Ta chansen att sova i samma cell som kända brottslingar. *Expressen* (22 february 2004) P. 55.

¹⁰¹Cornell, P. Skulptur upprättas för avrättad. *Södermalmsnytt* (20-26 november 2010) P. 20.

¹⁰²Lamroth, A. (1990) P. 17-18.

illustrate the transformation from prison to B&B.

The discussion of what to do with Långholmen prison begun already in the 1950's since the prison was outdated and couldn't meet the requirements of correctional treatment.¹⁰³ The last prisoners were not moved until 1979.¹⁰⁴ During the years there were several suggestions of what to do with the island but they all suggested that the island should be used for recreational purposes.¹⁰⁵ In 1955 there was a suggestion that Långholmen prison and its surroundings should be converted to a state owned amusement park in the style of a Colosseum.¹⁰⁶

It was not until a program investigation conducted in 1977 that the national heritage board of Sweden thought that the prison of Långholmen had such a huge historical value based on the correctional treatment and a general cultural history interest that the prison should be conserved and made available to the public.¹⁰⁷ The buildings of "kronohäktet" and "spinnhuset" were conserved and the rest were torn down.¹⁰⁸ The prison was sold to a private company in the 1980's and reopened as a B&B in 1989.¹⁰⁹ There is little or no information on what happened from 1979 when the prison was emptied until the reconstructions for the B&B started in 1986. Though the history of how Långholmen transformed into a B&B is far more complex than the somewhat shortened version presented here, it still illustrates the process from a decision to close it in the 1950s', seemingly without any regards to its potential cultural values and the turn in the 1970s when the national heritage board of Sweden presented the investigation, displaying the prison as a heritage which should be conserved as a document over correctional treatment and the installation of the B&B in 1989.¹¹⁰

4.4 What has Happened to Other Prisons?

Långholmen, Falu and Visby prison are not the only prisons in Sweden that have been shut down and later reconstructed to suit new functions. This section shortly discuss four other cases of abandoned prisons and how the discussion has been going regarding what to do with the buildings and their ascribed values.

The four prisons in this section have come differently far regarding what to do with the buildings. In Mariestad, there is still a discussion of what to do with the building and which values that should be ascribed

¹⁰³Ibid. P. 12.

¹⁰⁴ Programutredning för Långholmen. *Långholmen, från fängelse till fritidsområde*. Programutredning dec 1977 P. 6.

¹⁰⁵Ibid. P. 6.

¹⁰⁶Ibid. P. 6.

¹⁰⁷Ibid. P. 11.

¹⁰⁸Lamroth, A. (1990) P. 7.

¹⁰⁹<http://hem.bredband.net/ullflo/langholm/kronoh.html> visited 11/2-2011

¹¹⁰Programutredning för Långholmen. P. 11.

to it¹¹¹ while in Vänersborg the decision of selling the prison has been made, now trying to find a buyer.¹¹² The prison in Härnösand already has an owner but the owner cannot incorporate the prison into his business and is therefore looking for someone that want's to rent it. The owner acknowledge the symbolic value of the building and the interest from locals which wants to see a function of the building, in opposite of the empty shell now.¹¹³ In Gävle, on the other hand, the building has been refurbished and now house a cultural association and is accordingly in use.¹¹⁴

There are many stakeholders regarding what to do with prisons; locals that wants to see the building come alive, the state and municipalities that cannot afford the maintenance costs, companies that see potential business opportunities and the national heritage board of Sweden and others concerned with preservation and cultural values. The four examples visualise the different interests and possibilities, but also difficulties in incorporating the history of a building and its cultural values into a modern business.

4.5 Summary of Case

This thesis is mainly based on three prison B&Bs and this chapter has aimed at introducing the prisons and their history. It is important to remember that imprisonment in Sweden in the 19th century was nothing like todays modern prisons with electricity, heating and private space. The short introduction to imprisonments will be further analysed in the analysis. The discussion about what has happened to other prisons is important since it illustrates the possibilities of commodification, which, related back to the theory chapter, is considered to be a goldmine. With this in mind, it is now time to move on to the analysis.

111 <http://www.kuriren.nu/nyheter/?articleid=5275581> Visited 3/5-11

112 Karlsson, K. Söker fängelsekunder. Åldrade celler till salu i Vänersborg. (1999, oct. 07) *Expressen*, P. 106.

113 Thelberg, O. Riksanstalten ska säljas i vår. (2011 jan. 29) *Tidningen Ångermanland*, P. 9.

114 www.sfv.se/cms/showdocument/documents/sfv/kulturvarden/2003_01/notiser.pdf Visited 6/4-2011

5. Commodifying History in Cultural Heritage Sites – an Analysis

In order to analyse how cultural heritage sites commodify history in their business, three types of material have been analysed: newspaper articles (content analysis), photographs (photo-elicitation) and interviews (qualitative).

The analysis is divided into three themes and start in 5.1 with an analysis of prison B&Bs as a concept in order to identify their product and if there are any common ground between them. The two following themes are directly connected to the research questions where 5.2 discuss the commodification of history in prison B&Bs and 5.3 is centred around tensions and conflicts when transforming history into a commodity. Important to note here is that the analysis is focused on the three prison B&Bs and a broader discussion and generalisation of the findings is offered in the concluding discussion in chapter 6.

5.1 Prison B&Bs as a Concept

The prison B&Bs are in this study often described as an entity that present the same concept and in order to further analyse how they commodify history, it is important to explore what the concept constitute and how they differentiate their businesses.

Prison B&Bs as a concept is visible in an article published in the daily evening paper *Expressen*. The article has the headline “A captivating accommodation” (Fängslande boende) and list a number of former prisons, now functioning as B&Bs. The article is a guide to “...eight places where you voluntarily can rack bars during the vacation.”(Här är åtta ställen där du frivilligt kan skaka galler på semestern.)¹¹⁵ The article accordingly identify the prison B&Bs as a concept, relating the possibility to rack bars as one of the things that unite them. The prison B&Bs as a concept is also pointed out by the marketing manager at Långholmen, who, during the interview is asked if they have any collaboration with other prison B&Bs and he responded that he has the ambition to create a kind of network between such businesses, a kind of “prison chain” or “hotel prison chain” which would be related to a customer service concept.¹¹⁶ In addition to this, the newspaper articles offer a strikingly unified description of the prison B&Bs where the fact that the prison cells are refurbished into B&B rooms seem to be the most highlighted characteristic.

There is also another issue that indicate that prison B&Bs can be considered as a concept. The way the

¹¹⁵Nyberg, N. Fängslande boende. Ta chansen att sova i samma cell som kända brottslingar. *Expressen* (22 february 2004) P. 55.

¹¹⁶Interview with marketing director in Långholmen prison 2011-02-24.

B&Bs' have incorporated history into the current business by offering an authentic environment, a museum, and of course, to spend the night in a former prison cell can be interpreted as an attempt to create an extra experience in the accommodation, which makes the B&B's positioned in two markets; the tourism business and the accommodation industry. It is not a new phenomenon to be positioned in two markets, rather it seem to have become increasingly common. One example of this is the growth of the phenomenon “shopping tourism” where shopping is transformed into an experience and combine both being a tourist and shopping. This can be applied to prison B&Bs as they today offer an “experience” embedded into the product. When the representative of Långholmen was asked how he related the business as an accommodation or tourist attraction, he answered:

Here you get a travel destination in the travel destination. The main purpose might be to attend a concert in Stockholm and then you can spend the night here, like a bonus in the visit.

(Här får du ett resmål i resmålet. Här kanske huvudsyftet är att gå på en konsert i Stockholm och då kan man dessutom bo här, det är som en bonus i sitt besök.¹¹⁷)

The quote show the two main strengths of the B&B; the possibility to offer an experience but also accommodation. The visitors does not have to spend time to find the right bus or train to go sightseeing and then make it back to the hotel; here the visitors have an experience and then they can spend the night here too! The representative of Falu prison argued that the B&B is 80% B&B and 20% tourist attraction and if tourists are choosing between two B&Bs, they can choose the prison due to the image of the place as a tourist attraction. Interestingly, the representative continued to point out that tourists are not coming only because they want to visit the place as an attraction; “We have not reached that far yet...” (Dit har vi inte nått än...)¹¹⁸ The quote show that the idea of the business as a tourist attraction is acknowledged and is a desired transformation.

The notion of the accommodation as an experience is also visible regarding why they attract tourists. In each of the three interviews the representatives were asked why they think that tourists come to their place. The representative of Visby prison stressed the location of the B&B and the prison and summed it up to: “Läge och kultur och allt i ett kan man säga.”¹¹⁹ The representative of Falu Prison stressed the importance of the location and car parking and concluded with “...plus, det som är ett väldigt stort plus, det är fängelset. Det här är lite häftigt att bo i. Detta är ju en stor verkan.” The prison is once again mentioned as one of the main

¹¹⁷Interview with marketing director in Långholmen prison 2011-02-24.

¹¹⁸Telephone-interview with executive of Falu prison 2011-03-17.

¹¹⁹Telephone-interview with executive of Visby prison 2011-03-16.

reasons for attracting tourists. The representative of Långholmen put the location, nature and experience of the place as the main reasons for attracting tourists.¹²⁰ The location of the B&Bs seem utterly important, but the quotes also show that the culture, i.e. the prison and their history is an important reason for coming, or as the representative of Långholmen expressed it: “...Its the prison that is important...” (...det är fängelset som är grejen..)¹²¹ The quotes also show that the history of the building is not solely enough to attract tourists, it is the combination of location, culture and experience. The accommodation as an experience is thus a tool to attract more tourists, but not the only attraction.

In 2009, Långholmen was awarded the prize “årets kudde” which is given to the B&B with the most satisfied clients. The motivation for the prize is quoted since it displays both the concept of the B&B as well as the accommodation as an experience:

The pillow of the year is a B&B of contrasts(...) ...few other B&Bs offer so much to experience inside. The B&B is living out its fantasy stimulating and universal history despite the fact that they are offering everything you can request of modern service and freshness.

(Årets kudde är ett vandrarhem av kontraster(...) ...få andra vandrarhem erbjuder lika mycket att uppleva inomhus. Vandrarhemmet lever ut sin fantasieggande och mångsidiga historia trots att det erbjuder allt man kan begära av modern service och fräschör.)¹²²

The reason that Långholmen won, seems to be that they have managed to display the history of the building and its activities in a contemporary mix according to modern demands and that they offer so much to experience inside. The business is fresh and modern, but in the same time it has managed to portray its history in an interesting way.

The concept of the prison B&Bs thus seem to rely upon the fact that they are more than an accommodation, they can differentiate their business by a commodification of the past, where the building, the cells and the museum is a part of the “experience”. The offered “experience” is argued to be an advantage, but when asking the manager of Långholmen about how many of the visitors that return, he answered that it is about 10% and that they continuously work on getting returning customers since the prison is more than just a one-time visit.¹²³ The fact that the accommodation is perceived as an experience can therefore be argued as a risk due to the fact that the place already has been “experienced” and show that the product development and the interpretation of the site must be an ongoing issue so that the risk of already being “experienced” can be

120Interview with marketing director in Långholmen prison 2011-02-24.

121Ibid.

122Swartz, L. Långholmen fick årets kudde. *Restauratören* (2009, nr. 33)

123Interview with marketing director in Långholmen prison 2011-02-24.

decreased. As argued in the theoretical chapter, it is also increasingly common today to offer an experience imbedded in the product and the notion of offering an “experience” might not be that unique today.

The offered experience is, in many of the analysed newspaper articles and during the interviews, discussed as a “different” experience, portrayed as “something else”. This can be interpreted as an attempt to illustrate the “otherness”, but what is actually different or other further explained. The author has therefore made attempt to identify what this “otherness” can be in comparison with other B&Bs.

One difference is that the B&Bs have a museum. Picture five show the entrance to the museum in Långholmen prison where the doll in the cabinet supposed to be a prison guard and the sign “inskrivning” refer to the registration of prisoners. second difference would be that they offer guided in the building and museum, regardless if you are guest of the B&B or not. A third difference would



that they offer a range of activities to the visitors. *Picture 5: The entrance to the museum in Långholmen*

Långholmen has a lot of conference guests and have assembled some activities that can be considered team-building, where the guests can take part in “The prisoners on Långholmen” (“fångarna på Långholmen”) where the guests can get locked up and then they have to try and get out of the prison. There is also an outdoor activity called “The break-out” (“rymningen”) where the guests participate in different activities, which is described as: “Scouting in black- and white stripes” (“scouting i svart-vit-randigt”).¹²⁴

The described differences are only a part of all the activities the B&Bs offer and it might not be unique to offer team building activities, but still, the mix of experiences in the B&Bs of this study point to a unique product which position themselves on the market as a unique business, being part of both the accommodation industry, but also, the tourism business. The prison B&Bs seem to be aware of the fact that

¹²⁴Interview with marketing director in Långholmen prison 2011-02-24.

they are positioned in two markets and welcome the development, and they are in the same time approaching and developing their businesses as a coherent concept that can include other former prisons as well.

5.2 Commodifying History

How prison B&Bs commodify and use history in their businesses can be discussed from different angles and in this section the author will begin with an exploration of the value of history in section 5.2.1, continuing with a discussion about how prison B&Bs approach history in section 5.2.2.

5.2.1 History – an Authentic and Unique Commodity

The use of history for commercial purposes is not a new phenomenon, but *how* it is used varies between different sites and even though the prisons in this study share the same prerequisites in the sense that the business is based on the tangible and intangible assets of the prison building, factors such as location, competitors and amount of visitors varies between the sites. This section focus on analysing the characteristics ascribed to history in prison B&Bs.

History is argued to be ascribed a *unique* mix of past and present, old and new. In one of the newspaper articles there is a description of a visit to Långholmen prison which is described as:

The raw and humid air is quickly filling the 4 square meters of the keep and the sunbeams does not reach the cold stone floor. For a moment you are transported 250 years back in time. But there is something wrong with the picture. A small, sunburned boy dressed in a black and white striped prisoners shirt is walking by with a big ice-cream in his mouth.

(Den råa fuktiga luften fyller snabbt cellens fyra kvadratmeter, och solens strålar når inte det kalla stengolvet. För ett kort ögonblick flyttas man 250 år tillbaka i tiden. Men bilden stämmer inte riktigt. En liten solbränd kille i svartvitrandig fångtröja släntrar förbi med en stor glass i munnen.)¹²⁵

The quote displays the conditions of the former prison where the lack of electricity and heating made the air raw and humid in the small cells. But the quote also marks the fact that there is something wrong with the picture; the sunburned boy dressed in a prisoner's shirt walks by with a big ice-cream in his mouth, disturbing the image, transporting the author back to reality again. The boy disturbs the image since children are not put in jail, but he is still wearing a prisoners shirt and he is eating an ice-cream, which probably wasn't included in the prisoners' meals. The quote illustrate what can be argued as a conscious strategy of creating a contemporary mix of old and new, good and bad, where the aim is not to transport guests back to

¹²⁵Så här bra mat fick aldrig fångarna. (1990, sept. 28) *Expressen*, P. 101.

the 19th and 20th century prison, but to choose bits of the past and mix them with the demands of a modern B&B.

The history in the prison B&Bs is also argued to be unique since they commodify a part of history which is not commonly used for commercial purposes; correctional treatment in the 19th and 20th centuries. As argued in the theoretical chapter, history is divided into different eras which are assigned to represent different aspects of history. The turn between the 19th and 20th century is frequently re-enacted in Swedish museums today as a safe, authentic and rural era.¹²⁶ The history of prisons and correctional treatment in the same period does not fit into that rural and safe picture, making the prisons unique in their representations of history. The uniqueness of the history that is told is also something that the representative of Långholmen is aware of:

...When you travel around and watch the Swedish meetings and educational institutes, everyone have an old 18th century wing or De La Gardie, or something else. This is a bit “more”.

(...när man åker runt och tittar på de här svenska möten och kursgårdar, varenda jävel har någon gammal 1700-tals flygel och De La Gardie, eller något annat. Det här blir lite mera ”så”.)¹²⁷

The commodified version of history in the prison B&Bs is accordingly also ascribed as an *edge* to the history that is told in the prison. It is unique in the sense that it is not as common to commodify, like 18th century buildings and paintings. Aronsson has noted in his studies that as the distance in time shrinks, so does the possibility of ascribing fairytale pictures.¹²⁸ Buildings from the 18th century can therefore be argued as easier to interpret and ascribe fairy tale pictures to, than 19th century prisons. The interpretation of prisons and the process of ascribing values to them thus have to consider the realities of modern life.¹²⁹

History is, in this case, ascribed to qualities such as a unique of old and new, an edged history which is not often commodified due to the challenges of interpreting and ascribing values to a place which is recent in time. There is also another quality that was visualised during the analysis and that is the importance of being authentic. This can be illustrated with a quote from an article regarding the prison in Visby, where the author of the article ask the owner if they have any plans on removing the bars and the barbed wire, but the owner replies “Never! This is the thing! Annika replies, happy to have found something unique that outdo the most”

¹²⁶Larsson, E. Att resa i tiden. In: Aronsson, P. & Larsson, E. (eds.) (2002) P. 16-17.

¹²⁷Interview with marketing director in Långholmen prison 2011-02-24.

¹²⁸Larsson, E. Att resa i tiden. In: Aronsson, P. & Larsson, E. (eds.) (2002) P. 16.

¹²⁹Ibid. P. 16.

(“Aldrig! Det är ju det som är grejen! Säger Annika, helnöjd att ha hittat en nisch som bräcker det mesta.”)¹³⁰

The bars and the barbed wire makes the place unique, but also authentic. The fact that the building is an authentic former prison is here considered to be an business advantage. The B&Bs' in this study can be considered authentic due to their history as prisons.

The authenticity of the building is used in the current business and picture one displays the authentic (but refurbished) prison doors that today are the doors to the B&B rooms. The number above the door shows the room-number for the B&B but can also be interpreted as a former cell number. The numbers are written in an old style and it can be questioned if the numbers are authentic or if they chose new numbers for the rooms? The question of whether or not the numbers are authentic does not have to affect the feeling of authenticity. Petersson showed in her study that authentic experiences can be unsatisfying when something is disturbing the image of the past, obviously not fitting into the picture, but if it is not visible to the visitor, it will not affect the authentic experience.¹³¹ As the numbers are written in an old style and as the cells were numbered before, the question of whether or not



the numbers are authentic, does not disturb the experience since they, by the mere look, is experienced as authentic. There are a lot of physical assets in the building that can be considered to be authentic due to the fact that they derive from the time when the prison actually functioned as a prison. Picture two on p. 46 display the old prison gallery which is another physical asset considered to be authentic since it is original. In 2.3 it was argued that artefacts and sites are many times preserved to help the construction of how it could have been and looked like which can be seen as an argument for why the doors and gallery are kept and only refurbished; they help visitors construct a sense and experience of a “real” prison.

The feeling of authenticity and being real is displayed in one of the analysed newspaper articles which portray the authenticity and being real as something that can be sensed:

¹³⁰Molund, L. Så fångar man turister. *Expressen* (18 July 1998) P. 202.

¹³¹Petersson, B. (2003) P. 361.

No surveillance, hobble or locked doors. But undoubtedly a different accommodation. Here are eight places where you willingly can rack bars during the vacation. Fancy boutique-hotels and personal guest houses in its honor, but their walls are not guttered with history and life stories. Nor have dissidents, dynamitards, impostors and criminals lived there during long periods.

(Ingen övervakning, fotboja eller låsta dörrar. Men tveklöst ett annorlunda boende. Här är åtta ställen där du frivilligt kan skaka galler på semestern. Sobra boutiquehotell och personliga pensionat i all ära, men inte dryper väggarna av historia och livsöden. Inte har dissidenter, dynamitarder, bedragare och busar bott där i långa perioder.)¹³²

The way the prison is described as a place where the walls are filled with history and life stories gives an authenticity that cannot be experienced in other accommodations. It is almost as the authenticity of the building makes history something that can be sensed in the building. The walls are filled with history, and it is almost as if you can experience the past by the feeling of history in the walls. The urge to “feel” the history is according to Aronsson common today as history can be experienced through the use of our senses, opposite to the ideals of the 19th century where history was only to be experienced through the eye.¹³³ Guest houses and boutique hotels are accordingly portrayed as the opposite of real and authentic, they can be interpreted as distorted places, not offering the same “authentic” experience.

The value of being authentic is also visible in several of the newspaper articles which relate to the three prisons in one way or another. In one article about the 10th year jubilee of Falu B&B, the rooms were described as: “Guests spend the night in original keeps which are refurbished and equipped with bars.” (“Gästerna övernattar i ursprungliga gallrade celler som idag är fräscht reoverade.”)¹³⁴ The quote manage to squeeze in that the keeps are original, they still have the characteristic bars and they are now modernized; another example of the mix of old and new, weaved together with authenticity to create a “real” experience. The importance of the building and its history is highlighted by the representative in Falu B&B which expressed his thoughts about the commodification as:

In the year 2000 we redecorated it into a B&B, but to preserve the environment of the prison has always been important. If it would disappear, then the place would loose its important air...”

(År 2000 byggde vi om det till vandrarhem, men att bevara fängelsemiljön har hela tiden varit viktigt. Skulle den försvinna, då skulle stället tappa sin viktiga prägel...)¹³⁵

132Nyberg, N. Fängslande boende. Ta chansen att sova i samma cell som kända brottslingar. *Expressen* (22 february 2004) P. 55.

133Aronsson, P. (2004) P. 118.

134Norin, A. Firade tio år i fängslande Falumiljö (2010, jun. 21) *Falu Kuriren*, P. 6.

135Norin, A. Firade tio år i fängslande Falumiljö (2010, jun. 21) *Falu Kuriren*, P. 6.

This quote bring forward the notion of how cultural and historical values are used in the business. Preserving the history of the building seem to be very important since the place would loose its unique attributes of offering a night in an authentic prison and authentic keep. Authenticity can therefore be intimately linked with the unique history which has previously been discussed. Picture two is an example of the combination of a unique and authentic experience where the prison gallery is kept almost the same and is both unique since there aren't many of those galleries left, but also authentic since it is original. The gallery is an important part of the building and one of the main attractions.¹³⁶



Picture 2: The “authentic” gallery

The authenticity of the place can therefore be argued to be the base of which history is commodified. The marketed chance to spend the night in a former prison cell is thus a commodity constructed through the authenticity of the place and its artefacts and is turned into an experience. The next section continue to explore history as a commodity, but this time from the perspective of how prison B&Bs approach the history of the site.

5.2.2 Approaching History in Prison B&Bs

Going through the empirical material a sense of a playful and almost humorous attitude to history was identified. The newspaper articles display an almost endless play with words, offering a “captivating” experience. The history of the prisons is not a nice little fairytale, it is a story of how the development of the criminal correctional treatment progressed and how prisoners were treated which is far away from the modern prisons today where there is central heating, electricity and access to the world outside. The reasons for adopting this playful attitude will be further discussed.

Words can often have several meanings and this is extremely obvious in the analysed newspaper articles. In one article, the following quote was found: “The old prison is now rebuilt as a B&B, with bars over the

¹³⁶Interview with marketing director in Långholmen prison 2011-02-24.

windows and a lounge.” (“Det gamla fängelset är numera ombyggt till vandrarhem, med galler för fönstren och cellskapsrum.”)¹³⁷ The physical traces of the past are here mentioned with the, almost mandatory, joke of “cellskapsrum” (the original spelling of the word is “sällskapsrum” which refer to a lounge, but the part “säll” is here exchanged with the word “cell” which is the Swedish word for prison cell.) which, as we will see more examples of, seem to be a common and thankful way of playing with words in articles about prison B&Bs. Another example of the playfulness is the following quote which is a guide to a: “Captivating experience. Take the chance to sleep in the same cell as famous criminals.” (Fängslände boende. Ta chansen att sova i samma cell som kända brottslingar.) The use of the word “captivating” (fängslände) is a common phrase in the analysed articles¹³⁸ and is yet another example of the double meanings that a word can have. (“Fängslände” can refer both to something “exciting” as well as a “sense of being captivated” in a prison cell.)¹³⁹ Another example of the playful attitude is found in an article in Expressen which tell the story of two visitors:

Here we have Maria Nitteberg and Trond Andreassen from Tromsø, Norway, shaking bars. It is their first trip to Sweden and they end up in jail, which they think is great.

(Här sitter Maria Nitteberg och Trond Andreassen från Tromsø i Norge och skakar galler. Första Sverigesemestern – och så hamnar de i finkan. Det tycker de är toppen.)¹⁴⁰

The playful attitude can be identified by the fact that the tourists don't mind to be put in jail, they actually enjoy it. It's their first time in Sweden and they end up in jail! A pity? Not according to the tourists, the possibility of ending up in jail is instead a positive feeling. The article concludes with a joke from the owner of the prison: “We don't lock them up, otherwise it is almost the same as in the past.” (Vi låser inte in dem, annars är det sig ganska likt från förr.)¹⁴¹ This quote shows one of the biggest differences between past and present; the fact that prisoners were locked in, but the tourists have their own key. The joke can be interpreted as a way of creating a distance between past and present in a safe way. This is also noted by the representative in Långholmen: “...as soon as you create distance to things, then the view changes and a form of ironic humour is created...” (...så fort man får distans till saker och ting, då blir det en annan uppfattning, då blir det lite galghumor kring det hela...)¹⁴²

¹³⁷Fahlander, R. En fängslände kulturhistoria. *Falu Kuriren* (29 september 2003) P. 6.

¹³⁸Molund, L. Så fångar man turister. *Expressen* (18 July 1998) P. 202.

¹³⁹Ibid.

¹⁴⁰Ibid.

¹⁴¹Ibid.

¹⁴²Interview with marketing director in Långholmen prison 2011-02-24.

The playfulness is not only identified in the newspaper articles but also physically in the buildings. Picture three show a sign pointing at different locations in the building. The pub in the prison is called “Finkan” which is a slang word for prison in Swedish. The name “tingssalen” (eng. sessions-hall) is now refurbished into a conference room. Old names are reused here in the current business and can be interpreted as a way of telling the story of the building, but also, as a way of jumping between now and then, past and present. Dallen & Boyd have in their research argued that heritage sites are a physical link between past, present and future and that those heritage sites often are the hub in conflicts between conservation and tourism.¹⁴³



Picture 3: Where do you want to go?

Heritage sites such as prisons are accordingly a link between not only past and present, but also the future. The way the newspaper articles and the pictures display a mix of past and present through a playfulness with words and meanings can be seen as a flexible solution to the idea of the heritage site as a physical link between past and present. The idea of the heritage site as a link require a strategy to jump between past and present and the playful attitude is accordingly a strategy to cover that need.

Being able to joke about and take on this playful attitude towards history might not be possible in all heritage sites. Making jokes and playing with words require a certain common knowledge of the place, otherwise the jokes wouldn't make sense. The representative of Långholmen argued that: “...it doesn't matter how old you are, everyone can understand that this is a prison.” (“...det spelar ingen roll hur gammal man är, alla fattar att det här är ett fängelse.”)¹⁴⁴ The possibilities of presenting the current business with references to the past is possible due to the fact that there is a common knowledge of the place and its function. Visitors might not know the exact history of Långholmen, Visby and Falu prison, but they do know what a prison is and its function. The common knowledge and playfulness of the place can be seen as an advantage in constructing a heritage product. As argued in the theoretical chapter, a heritage product should not require much background information and offer the possibility to be consumed rather easily¹⁴⁵ which would make the old prisons attractive to commodify. Picture four show a sign that points to “Café Rastgården” where “Rastgård”

¹⁴³Dallen, J. T. & Boyd, S. W. (2003) *Heritage tourism* Pearson education limited. P. 133.

¹⁴⁴Interview with marketing director in Långholmen prison 2011-02-24.

¹⁴⁵Cohen (1979) In: Tunbridge, J. E. & Ashworth, G. J. (1996) P. 22.

refer to the old exercise yards in the prison, the name of the café tell the previous function of the past and is a way of incorporating history into the present business.

It is also worth noting that the numerous jokes about the prison and its history many times are put as dichotomies. The quote from an article in *Expressen* have a clear dichotomy: "For ice cream lovers there is the 'dream of the runaway'. The old isolation cells in the basement offer opportunities to taste wine and cheese" ("För glassälskare finns rymmarens dröm. I de gamla isoleringscellerna längst ner i källaren kan du idag avnjuta vin och ost.")¹⁴⁶ The ice-cream called 'the dream of the runaway' was something prisoners could only dream of. The isolation cells in the basement were a place of suffering, now it is a place of pleasure where wine and cheese can be enjoyed.



Picture 4: A sign pointing to the café *Rastgården*

The last quote is interesting not only due to the contradictions, but also since a sense of critique towards the commodification can be sensed:

The last prisoners were let out in december last year and now families and young people are dwelling through the prison gates for one or a few nights of cheap accommodation.

(De sista busarna släpptes ut i december i fjol, nu väller semestrande barnfamiljer och ungdomar in genom fängelseportarna för en eller ett par natters billig övernattnig.)¹⁴⁷

The tourists are portrayed as families and young persons that dwell through the gates of the prison in search of a few nights cheap accommodation. The prisoners were "let out" and the tourists are "let in". The prisoners spent many nights here, the tourists spend one or a couple of nights here. The quotes that have been used in this section display contradictions between past and present, pain and pleasure. The newspaper articles have contributed with an image of the past that is filled with playfulness and contradictions. Sharpley has discussed the media attention of dark sites, noting that media often combine the words 'dark' or 'grief' with 'tourism' in their headlines, which can be provoking due to the image of tourism as relaxing and an

¹⁴⁶Så här bra mat fick aldrig fångarna. (1990, sept. 28) *Expressen*, P. 101.

¹⁴⁷Molund, L. Så fångar man turister. *Expressen* (18 july 1998) P. 202.

escape of the everyday world and the like.¹⁴⁸ The same conclusion can be drawn in the case of the ghost-town Bodie (mentioned in the theoretical discussion); the projected image and myth of the West have affected the interpretation in the way that the ghost-town now correspond to the mediated picture of the west. This can be linked to the fact that when prisons were functioning as prisons, they were not accessible by people from the outside, unless you were convicted of a crime or worked in the prison. The reality of prisons and prisoners were something that few experienced and when the manager in Falu prison was asked about reactions from locals he answered

/.../there was a lot of attention for a house where there has been a business for 150 years and no one has been inside unless you were an employee. /---/ It was a closed facility in the centre of town which people only could look at from the outside. There was a lot of curiosity. To see what it was and there was a lot of positive reactions. From being a closed and dark house during 4-5 years, until it opened for the public /.../

(/.../det var ju väldigt mycket intresse för ett hus där det pågått verksamhet i 150 år och ingen har fått komma in om man inte varit anställd. /---/Det var ju en helt sluten anläggning mitt i stan som folk bara fick titta på utifrån. Det var ju en väldigt nyfikenhet. Att se vad det var för någonting och vi mötte väldigt positiva toner så att säga. Från att ha varit ett stängt, mörkt hus i 4-5 år till att det öppnade för allmänheten /.../)¹⁴⁹

The opening of the prison B&B made a previously closed place available to the public. The positive reactions from locals was also mentioned during the interview with the representative of Visby prison: “They [the visitors] think its attractive, most people have not been inside before, if you put it like that.” (De [besökarna] tycker att det är attraktivt, de flesta har ju inte varit här inne, om man säger som så.)¹⁵⁰ A part of the attraction of prison B&Bs thus seem to lie in the fact that they have been previously closed to the public which has generated a kind of mythic image of prisons which visitors want to experience by themselves.

In Långholmen, a lot of visitors ask questions about life in prison and want to know if the myth that prisoners only were served water and bread is true. Visitors seem to want to confirm if their previous understanding of prisons are correct or not and at least in the case of Långholmen, the fact that bread and water is put on the menu in the inn¹⁵¹, show an awareness and confirmation of such common knowledge. It can also be linked to the theoretical discussion in 2.2 where heritage is argued to be both something “transferred” from previous generations and a product of the present.¹⁵² There are both tangible and intangible assets in the prison B&Bs that have been transferred on to today; the building and its cells as well

148Sharpley, R. Shedding light on dark tourism: an introduction. In: Sharpley, R. & Stone, P.R. (eds.) (2009) P. 7.

149Telephone-interview with executive of Falu prison 2011-03-17.

150Telephone-interview with executive of Visby prison 2011-03-16.

151Så här bra mat fick aldrig fångarna. *Expressen* (28 september 1990) P. 101.

152Tunbridge, J.E. & ashworth, G.J. (1996) P. 6.

as stories about the treatment of prisoners and what they ate and drank. Since prisons have been associated with restricted access or no simply no access at all for many people, the intangible aspects has been transferred as myths, which now is visible through the shown interest and questions from visitors. The former restricted access can therefore be interpreted as an important reason for the current interest, but the playful approach to history, which allow visitors to jump back and forth in time, is another reason. In a study by Bruner, he noted that the idea of the progressing society was frequently mentioned since the guides kept asking the visitors “Would you like to live back in the 1830's, when life was so hard?”¹⁵³ Visitors are apparently exposed to contradictions between now and then as a way to relate to differences and to create an understanding between now and then.

The importance and value of history has now been analysed and it is time to explore and identify tensions and conflicts regarding the previously discussed commodification of history in such sites.

5.3 Tensions and Conflicts in Prison B&Bs

The following sections will look deeper into tensions and conflicts that are visualised in the prison B&Bs. The section starts with an analysis of the connection and association of prison B&Bs as dark tourism sites in 5.3.1 and continue in 5.3.2 with an analysis of do's and dont's in the heritage industry.

5.3.1 Prison B&Bs: a Case of Dark Tourism?

In the theoretical chapter, it has been argued that the “ideal” heritage product should be easy to consume, which contradicts the commodification of dark tourism sites since they often have a rich and complicated past. How do you turn a rich and complicated past into an easy-to-consume product? The history of correctional treatment in Sweden which was displayed in 4.2 show that prisons have a history of suffering (prisoners were isolated and worked long hours) and death (some prisoners were executed and some simply died of the harsh conditions) and can therefore be considered to fit the description of a “dark tourism” site, but is commodification of prisons really a case of “dark tourism”? Strange and Kempas study about Alcatraz and Robben Island was discussed in the theoretical chapter and they argue that some sites might not be a typical “dark” site, but are instead referred to as “shades “of dark tourism,¹⁵⁴ implying that a site of death and suffering can have a really dark history, or just a touch of grey. When the representative of Långholmen was asked about the phenomenon of “dark tourism” he recognised the term but strongly disagreed when I implied that the B&B could be interpreted as a dark site;

¹⁵³Bruner, E. M. (1994) P. 411.

¹⁵⁴Strange, C. & Kempa, M. (2003) P. 388.

...if you mention that type of tourism with people travelling to Vietnam , crawling into the small caves /---/. then I think that this is “kindergarten” if you compare them.

(...om du börjar nämna den typen av turism med folk som åker till Vietnam, krälar ner i de små hålorna /---/. då kan jag tycka att det här är kindergarten om man jämför med det.)

The label “dark tourism” is here interpreted as something negative, which the representative is not comfortable with, but for example Kempa and Strange argue that there is nothing to be ashamed of, the Roman catacombs have been accredited and acknowledged tourism sites for long, and they are also death sites.¹⁵⁵ The recentness in time can of course have a large effect here since the Roman catacombs are so old that they might be hard to envision for people in the 21st century.

5.3.2 A Tasteful Balance – Do's and Donts in the Heritage Industry

History has so far been displayed as a unique and authentic resource for the prisons in this study. Further it has been argued that there is a playfulness in the attitude towards how history is used. The playfulness is useful in terms of being able to jump between past and present and create a feeling of distance between past and present, making the dark past into a manageable product. A manageable product does not mean that tensions regarding the commodification are removed, rather that they are avoided. It seems to be a case of a tasteful balance where the line between commodifying and exploiting is thin. The notion of what to do with heritage sites and whether or not the commodification of those is just a case of greediness or if it actually can be of any good have been discussed at length, and the aim here is not to continue that debate, but to explore the do's and dont's in the heritage industry.

Researchers such as Lennon and Foley argue that sites of death and destruction today have become consumable products.¹⁵⁶ A parallel to this is the remembrance ceremony that took place in Långholmen in 2010 to commemorate the last execution in Sweden, 100 years before. A sculpture was uncovered with the purpose of “...to remind us of the dark history.” (“...ska påminna om den mörka historien.”)¹⁵⁷ which places the dark history of Långholmen in focus of the remembrance. Highlighting the dark history of the place through the sculpture is according to the representative of Långholmen a way of marking the distance in time and to show that this kind of justice is no longer used. The sculpture mark the progress of the correctional treatment system in the same time as it let's us remember it.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵Strange, C. & Kempa, M. (2003) P. 386-387.

¹⁵⁶Lennon, J. & Foley, M. (2002) P.5.

¹⁵⁷Interview with marketing director in Långholmen prison 2011-02-24.

¹⁵⁸Interview with marketing director in Långholmen prison 2011-02-24.

But there is also another reason for uncovering the sculpture: the executions that took place in the prison are frequently asked about by the visitors and therefore something that could be highlighted.¹⁵⁹ The dark history is accordingly identified as an asset due to the noted interest from tourists which offers the opportunity to further commodify and highlight certain parts of the history.

The feeling of right and wrong is present in the B&B's from several aspects. The first one is the most obvious one; the legal right and wrong where doing wrong puts you in a prison. There is also another aspect of right and wrong, in the case of how far a commodification can go? During the interviews the representatives were asked about their feelings of responsibility towards the building as a cultural heritage site and running a profitable business in the building. The representative of Falu B&B expressed his feelings of responsibility towards the building in the following way:

Yes, I want to say that, if they would say 'we'll change the business and modernise the whole building', then I will not support it. I think this should be a prisonbuilding...

(Ja, jag vill säga det, att skulle de säga så här att 'vi gör om det här till en annan verksamhet och moderniserar hela skiten' då kliver nog jag av. Jag tycker att det ska va en fängelsebyggnad...)¹⁶⁰

The feelings of responsibility in this quote seem to refer to a concern of modernisation and transforming the prison to the degree that the building no longer can be visualised as a prison.

The representative of Långholmen refers to the responsibility of the building in the following way:

A deliberate strategy is that the prison is a gift and that we have to build our business on it. There is always a balance, which some, if you go back in time, thought that how can you profit on misery...?

(En medveten strategi är ju att vi har ett fängelse till skänks och det måste vi bygga vår verksamhet på. Sen e det ju hela tiden en balansgång och det kan vissa, om man går tillbaka i tiden, tyckte att hur kan man profitera på allt elände...)¹⁶¹

And continues:

This is a part of our cultural heritage and what should the alternative be? To build a giant museum and just let it be? The building was already in decay so I mean, I think that, I am not trying to idealise it, but we do something at least, using a cultural historically interesting house, as we think, in a good way. It is an open business...

(Det här är en del av vårt kulturarv och vad skulle då det andra alternativet var?

159Cornell, P. Skulptur upprättas för avrättad. (2010, nov. 20-26) *Södermalmsnytt*, P. 20.

160Telephone-interview with executive of Falu prison 2011-03-17.

161Interview with marketing director in Långholmen prison 2011-02-24.

Att bygga ett jättemuseum och bara låta det stå? Det var ju redan förfallet så att jag menar, jag tror att man ändå, jag ska inte försöka skönmåla något, men vi gör ändå något, använder ett kulturhistoriskt intressant hus, som vi tycker, på ett bra sätt. Det är en öppen verksamhet...)¹⁶²

These two quotes illustrate the feelings of responsibility as a balance where the prison is the body of which to construct the business on, but also, a feeling of taking care of the building and its history, because what would the alternative be? The quote can also be interpreted as a form of critique against museums, where history is preserved, not used. The feeling of responsibility seem to focus upon the fact that the building is actually used and alive now, in contrast to a museum where history is assumed to only be displayed.

The representative of Visby B&B acknowledged the prison as a cultural heritage and argued that:

We have saved as much as possible of the old stuff, all that was possible to save. Everything is here, everything is intact, doors and such, it is reconstructed due to safety requirements and such, but otherwise it is all intact, as it was...

(Vi har sparat så mycket av det gamla som har gått att spara. Så allt är kvar, allt är intakt, dörrar och så, det är ju omgjort efter brandmyndighetskrav och såna grejor, men annars är det helt intakt, så som det var...)¹⁶³

The feelings of responsibility are here interpreted as an urge to display how it really was. The prison is of course partly reconstructed due to security demands, but otherwise it is described as authentic.

These four quotes are an attempt to display that the representatives of each prison are well aware of the cultural as well as economical values of the prisons. There are concerns for a transformation of the place where the building would no longer be identified as a prison, but also for the balance between business and heritage and an urge to display a physical authenticity of the place. This is important to illustrate since representatives of commodified cultural heritage sites often are dismissed as economical exploiters, without the moral and ethical compass that the representatives of preservation agencies claim to have. Aronsson has noted that the state, municipalities and county councils have for long been responsible for cultural heritage sites but that associations, private persons and companies more and more is acknowledged for their preservation efforts.¹⁶⁴ The question according to Aronsson is if companies, private persons and associations should be integrated and accepted into the sphere of acknowledged institutions or if they maybe can have an independent meaning in a growing industry?¹⁶⁵

162Interview with marketing director in Långholmen prison 2011-02-24.

163Telephone-interview with executive of Visby prison 2011-03-16.

164Aronsson, P. (2004) P. 174.

165Ibid. P. 178.

Whether or not private companies such as the prisons in this study will be accepted as preservers of history or exploiters of the same, the somewhat tasteful balance seem to lie in how the site is interpreted. Misiura has stressed the importance of an “... appropriate interpretation and sensitivity to those whom it belongs”¹⁶⁶ regarding how the past is used by historians, marketers and other parties.¹⁶⁷ It is of course difficult to define what is appropriate or not since different places carry different meanings and the case of sensitivity seem to refer to a sense of respect to the place and to the people connected to it. Strange and Kempa noted in their research that the heritage product is seen as easy to market, but the difficulty lies in interpreting the heritage because it is being loaded with politics and economy.¹⁶⁸ This can be connected to the previous discussion of the fairytale picture of history where Aronsson argues that the more recent in time a heritage is, the more difficult it is to remove the issues of everyday life.¹⁶⁹ The B&Bs' in this study thus seem to have a lot of important issues to address regarding the interpretation of the site and even though the representatives of the B&Bs' seem to be aware of the balance between cultural and economical values the question of how far they can go in the search for consumable products is still present. Where do the representatives of the B&Bs' draw the line according to their moral compass?

There seem to be several opportunities to strengthen and expand the business of the prison B&Bs' but there are some things that are identified as not suitable to commodify. In Långholmen, the representative (when talking about the business) several times referred to the commodification as “it could have been worse” as an attempt to mark that what is commodified today in the building could have been much worse. The representative also noted that they had no ambitions in turning the place into a chamber of horror, as they didn't want to enhance that part. On the other hand, he also noted that journalists that visit the place to write a story often want to see the worst room.¹⁷⁰ Could it be an attempt to display the authenticity and feeling of the place?

The representative of Långholmen was sceptic towards telling which cells celebrities have had during their imprisonments, even though he had noted an interest where visitors expressed: “Oh, I would like to stay in the cell where Tumba-tarzan (which was a famous Swedish prisoner) was kept.” (“...oh, jag skulle vilja bo i Tumba-tarzans gamla cell.”)¹⁷¹ but that such information was unessential. What has been highlighted is the different categories of professionals connected to the prison which now have given names to the different

166Misiura, S. (2006) P. 15.

167Idib. P. 15.

168Strange, C. & Kempa, M. (2003) P. 389.

169Larsson, E. Att resa i tiden. In: Aronsson, P. & Larsson, E. (eds.) (2002) P. 16.

170Interview with marketing director in Långholmen prison 2011-02-24.

171Interview with marketing director in Långholmen prison 2011-02-24.

conference rooms¹⁷², but the matter of which keep that belonged to a certain prisoner, the matter seem to be a bit more sensitive. Långholmen have apparently drawn the line of their moral compass here. Visby B&B seem to draw the line differently and an example of this is a quote from an article in *Expressen*:

The question is who would want to stay in cell, sorry, room nr 30. There is a note on the door on which you can read: This is the cell of Tektor, the last man that was executed in Sweden in the year of 1876, a thursday morning. They had to chop four times before the head fell to the ground. - They say that the executioner was drunk! Says the guide and laughs.

(Frågan är bara vem som vill bo i cell, förlåt, rum nr 30. På dörren sitter en lapp på vilken man kan läsa: Här satt Tektor, den siste mannen som blev avrättad i Sverige år 1876 en torsdag morgon. Man fick hugga fyra gånger innan huvudet föll. - Det sågs att bödeln var full skrattar Guiden Linda.)¹⁷³

The last executed prisoner is not only identified by name here, but also which cell he was kept in. The offensive detail of the executioner having to try four times before being able to chop the head is a break-neck detail that can be questioned if it is needed in the text? Furthermore, 1876 is still rather recent in time which makes it possible for relatives of the prisoner to be alive. This is accordingly a good example of the somewhat, thin balance between dos and donts and what has been previously argued as a feeling of sensitivity to the place and a respect to those connected to it. The quote is also interesting from another angle; competition. The quote highlight that the last execution in Sweden took place in Visby, 1876. But this is not totally true... during the interview the representative of Visby prison stressed that the execution in 1876 was the last known *public* execution.¹⁷⁴ The last execution in Sweden took place in Långholmen prison in 1910.¹⁷⁵ While Långholmen can compete with the last execution in Sweden, Visby highlight that they have the last *public* execution, turning the execution into a mere competition.

An illustrative case regarding commodification of prisons is found in Shackleys, previously mentioned study about Robben Island. Robben Island was the prison where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned and Shackley noted that most visitors to Robben Island do not know the history of the place, their desire is to see the cell where Nelson Mandela was kept and the conditions of imprisonment for the other political prisoners. She identify several problems for the site management such as the need to generate money and therefore use the fame of Nelson Mandela to attract tourists, but, also incorporating the local culture and history of the place since Nelson Mandela is only a small part of the history.¹⁷⁶ This case is illustrative because it shows that the

172Ibid.

173Molund, L. Så fångar man turister. *Expressen* (18 july 1998) P. 202.

174Telephone-interview with executive of Visby prison 2011-03-16.

175Cornell, P. Skulptur upprättas för avrättad. *Södermalmsnytt* (20-26 november 2010) P. 20.

176 Shackley, M. (2001) Potential futures for Robben Island: shrine, museum or theme park? *International Journal of Heritage Studies*. Vol. 7, No. 4, P. 359.

demands from tourists to see the cell of Nelson Mandela has been acknowledged and used by the site management to increase the popularity of the site. While the cell of Nelson Mandela can attract a lot of tourists, it also takes away focus from other parts of history, showing that only a small part is commodified, the part that is recognised as a tourist attraction. Just as the information about the last known publicly executed prisoner hangs on a door in Visby prison, the promotion and focus on Nelson Mandela can be questioned as it is both recent in time. Shackley point to the production and vending of souvenirs in Robben Island where “...the teddy bears dressed in Nelson Mandela prison tee shirts...”¹⁷⁷ as a most inappropriate commodification due to the recentness in time and the respect to the person Mandela.¹⁷⁸ There are several identified tensions and challenges regarding history as a commodity in prison B&Bs. This can be related to the four tensions that was identified by Sharpley and discussed in 2.2.4.

There are *ethical* aspects to consider such as if it is ethical to develop, promote and commodify sites with a dark history. During the interview in Långholmen, the representative stressed that they at least did something with the building and that the alternative would be to create a giant museum of the place, at which cost and for whom? The main arguments seemed to be that at least the building was in use, in, what he considered, an “appropriate” way. Relating back to section 4.4 about what happened to other prisons, the problem of what to do with the prisons is present since the buildings are huge and centrally located and could house many different businesses. It might not become legitimate to commodify a site with a dark past only due to the fact that it is redundant and abandoned, but maybe a, as previously mentioned, code of ethics can help acknowledge ethical issues in such places.

Marketing/promotional issues – Many sites are not planned to be tourist attractions and when they are promoted, they contribute to the interest of dark sites. The prisons in this study were not intended as touristic resources, they were built to be prisons and when the history of the prisons is used to market the sites, the interest in such places is rising.

Interpretation issues – How things are interpreted and presented can also cause tensions and in this case, the privacy of the prisoners can be used as an example. Långholmen does not display where its famous prisoners have stayed, but in Visby, the last executed person is named and told about in a note on the cell door he was locked up behind.

Site management issues – how to manage death sites in an “appropriate” way is relevant for the prisons in this study since this section much has argued that the three businesses have their own moral compass to follow and that what to do and not do is a snaky way between different norms and values in the society.

¹⁷⁷Ibid. P. 361.

¹⁷⁸Ibid. P. 359.

5.4 Concluding Discussion of Analysis

The gathered newspaper articles revealed a rather playful attitude towards the use of history in the three B&Bs. The numerous jokes about getting your own key, being able to lock the door from the inside etc show that there is a certain common knowledge about prisons, a knowledge which enable jokes, because everyone can understand them. The Jokes are used to create a distance between the cruel past and the modern world. The prisons are a physical evidence of the development of the correctional treatment and how prisoners were treated, which is not always a nice and pleasant story to tell. The distance in time can here enable a somewhat “lighter” version of the dark past to be told, simply a commodified version of the past. The jokes not only enable a lighter version of the past to be told, they also offer the possibility to jump between past and present. It has earlier been argued that cultural heritage sites are links between past and present and they therefore require the possibility to jump between past and present in order to tell the story of the building. Jokes are therefore a useful strategy to create the unique mix of history and modern business that they have been acknowledged for. It is also important to note that the jokes are posed as dichotomies:

- Visitors have a key, prisoners did not.
- Visitors are dwelling through the gates, prisoners were let out.
- Visitors spend one or a few nights here, prisoners sometimes a lifetime.
- Visitors eat ice-cream, prisoners could only dream of eating ice-cream.

The distinction between past and present, prisoners and visitors is extremely visible in those cases and accordingly a good example of the playful attitude as a strategy to approach history in cultural heritage sites.

History is also used as a unique and authentic resource in order to create the heritage product in the B&Bs. The fact that the unique and authentic history is stressed in interviews, newspaper articles and observation display the importance of history for the business and can be interpreted as a way of strengthening the legitimacy of the place. As argued before, museums are the ones with the highest legitimacy to interpret history and in order to compete and manage the history of the site, such businesses have to push the notion of the place as an authentic and unique place. The authentic and unique history of the place are seen as important resources for the B&Bs, but it can also limit the business due to requirements from the government, considering the cultural values of a building. Transforming an old prison to B&B is thus a convenient way to preserve the building as the business rely on the old cells to create B&B rooms. As argued before, maybe private companies can create their own meaning of the place and accordingly, their own legitimacy.

It has been argued that the displayed playful attitude allow the B&Bs not only to jump between past and present, but also to create a unique mix of the same. There is a conscious strategy of creating a contemporary mix of old and new, good and bad, where the aim is not to transport guests back to the 19th and 20th century prison, but to choose bits of the past and mix it with the demands of a modern B&B. What makes the history unique in the prisons in this study is accordingly their ability to mix the demands of a modern B&B with the history of the building, portraying a contemporary mix of old and new and in the same time managing a part of history that is not often commodified due to the challenges of interpreting and ascribing values to a place which is recent in time. The representations of the turn between the 19th and 20th century as a safe, authentic and rural era does not fit the representations of the same period in the prisons. The representations of history in the prisons tell a story about a criminal correctional treatment system which now have been gradually replaced and left behind. It has been argued that the more recent in time a place is, the more difficult it is to interpret it due to the fact that the historical fairy tale is lost and modern aspects of life become visible. Interpreting medieval times can therefore be considered as rather safe to commodify due to the distance in time, in contradiction to the prisons in this study. On the other hand, the recentness in time can also be considered a strength because the prisons in this study have no intentions to display the past as a fairy tale, their history is intentionally used to create a unique product which evoke visitors' feelings. Evoking visitors feelings is common in dark tourism, which have noted an increased willingness or desire from tourists to visit dark places.¹⁷⁹ Even though the prison B&Bs in this study might not be considered as dark tourism places, they can be viewed as shades of dark tourism. This imply that they still have to deal with ethical questions regarding what to commodify, but not to the extent as places like Auschwitz. Prison B&Bs still rely on evoking visitors' feelings.

¹⁷⁹Sharpley, R. Shedding light on dark tourism: An introduction. Sharpley, R. & Stone, P.R. (eds.) (2009) P. 5.

6. Concluding Discussion

The analysis of how history is commodified in the three prison B&Bs displayed several interesting observations that can be discussed and applied to a general discussion of heritage sites.

The first conclusion was that prison B&Bs through their attempt to offer an experience in the accommodation have begun to position themselves in two markets, being part of both the accommodation industry and tourism business. The advantages of creating an experience in the business is that it could be used to differentiate the business and attracting more customers, but on the other hand, there is a risk that the accommodation becomes a one-time experience, next time there is another experience in another place. This development is by no means unique to prison B&Bs, rather, I have argued for a hybridization of the tourism and heritage industry. The amount of things and activities that can be commodified and sold are continuously expanding, which is visualised in this study. Not all heritage sites are suitable to be turned into accommodation and tourist attraction, but the prison B&Bs display a unique product, constructed by a unique combination of resources. Many heritage sites today offer guided tours and experiences of different kinds but since it is argued that the possibilities of commodification and hybridization are almost endless, there should be so much more to do, but first, someone needs to identify it.

Today it seem important to create a heritage product which don't require much background information and thus is easy to consume. In this aspect the prison B&Bs have an advantage due to the common knowledge of prisons. There is no need to explain the function of a prison or the prison cells since that is common knowledge. What might be required though is to confirm or reject the common knowledge of the visitors, like if the prisoners really drunk and ate only water and bread. The common knowledge of prisons can here act as an amplifier of the past, since there already exist a common knowledge to build the business on. The common knowledge of a site or history can differ and vary in depth, but there seem to be at least a small piece of common knowledge which can be taken into consideration in the interpretation and packaging of the heritage product.

A second conclusion concerns how heritage sites approach history and this study has showed that prison B&Bs are using a humoristic and playful attitude in order to tell the story of the place. This playful attitude allow visitors and staff to jump back and forth in time, turning the dark history into a joke, for example the obvious “Visitors get a key and can lock their cell from the inside.” which illustrate a contradiction between visitors of today and prisoners in the past. Even though this joke is funny, it also tell about the conditions in

the past. The jokes and wordings that are visualised in all of the three materials are interpreted as a strategy to approach history in the prison B&Bs. The strategy on how to approach history in heritage sites can of course differ between sites and the intentions with the site, but all sites that are concerned with history and interpretations of it must in some way approach it in order to interpret it. It has also been argued that heritage sites are seen as a link between past and present which further illustrate the need to jump in time, allowing visitors to experience history in the present.

History has been viewed upon as an asset and resource in this study, showing that prison B&Bs actively use the authenticity of the place and building, in an attempt to produce a unique experience by spending the night in a former prison cell. Though the history of the place and the cells have been argued as assets on which the business is built upon, they can also be seen as constraints since they also limit the business. The small cells cannot be enlarged more than they already have and the building is protected from bigger changes by The Swedish National Heritage Board (RAÄ). Different interpretations of the past can of course be chosen, but the history of the place cannot be totally altered, suddenly transforming the building to a medieval castle. This constraint concern heritage sites since they are connected to the history of the place, but they still, have the power of making different interpretations, showing different aspects of the history.

The model of the commodification process by Ashworth and Tunbridge that was presented in the theory chapter, play an important role in the attempt to understand how heritage sites use and commodify history. The model have been partly re-worked due to the findings in this research and the updated model is visible in Figure three on the next page. The main idea of the model is kept where historic resources are seen as the base for which resources to select and combine. A difference here is that the original model put conservation agencies as the ones in charge of the selection process while this research has showed that also private actors, in charge of a cultural heritage site can go through the same process. By including both companies and conservation agencies as the ones selecting, interpreting and in charge of packaging the product, show that both public and private actors are making attempts to create a product out of history. Tunbridge and Ashworth do not mention how they would position or relate to private actors as creators of heritage products but as the prison B&Bs in this study are all privately owned, they are actually the creators of such products and are thus included in the model.

The original model show that when resources are interpreted and packaged, they are put into a targeting process where the heritage product is created. The heritage product then become a product for the heritage

industry. The heritage industry is excluded in the new model since heritage products today are a part of many industries. The prison B&Bs in this study are argued to be a part of both the accommodation industry and the tourism business and show the diversity of the heritage product. The last revision of the model is the inclusion of two new concepts which I argue are important to consider in this process and that is the “authentic” and the “created” where historic resources are argued to be authentic, while the heritage product is created. Heritage is in this thesis argued to be a social construction, constructed mainly out of historic resources.

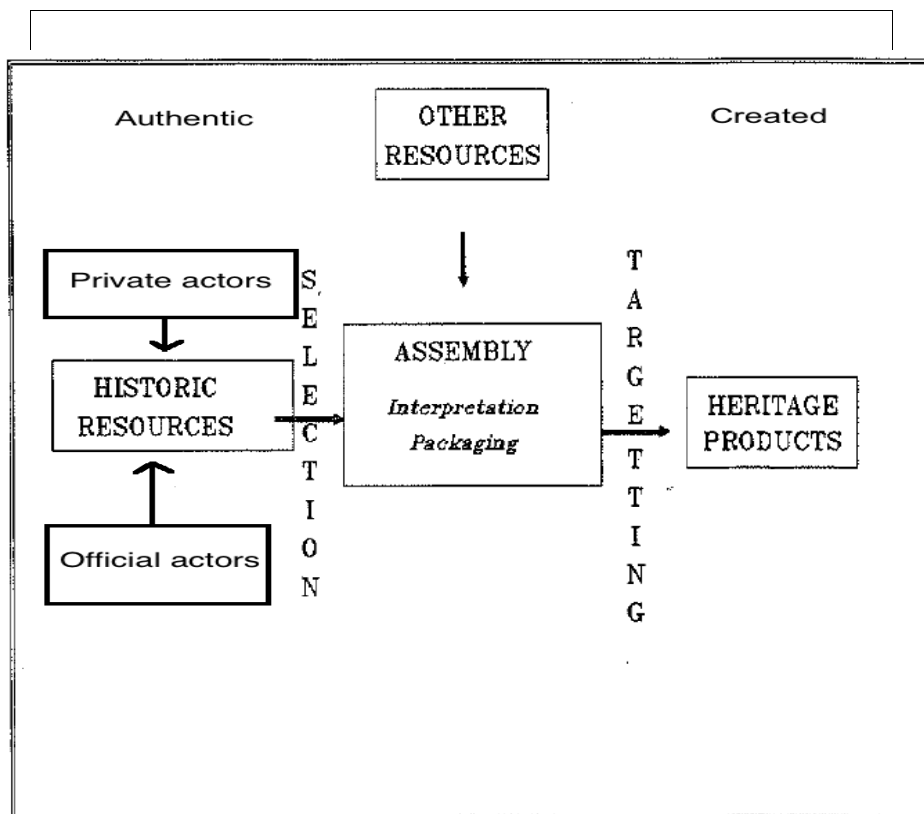


Figure 3: The updated model, originally from Ashworth and Tunbridge.

The analysis regarding visible tensions in the commodification of history revealed several interesting conclusions. The study showed that the representatives in the B&Bs are concerned with, and interested in the heritage of the building. The line between commodifying and exploiting is thin and what to do and not differ between the sites , showing that it is up to each owner to decide where the line is drawn. All of the representatives, in one way or another expressed identified things they would or would not do and were all concerned with the history of the place and its value. Though they expressed their concern about the heritage, it seemed to be up to the company to decide on what they should do or not which indicate a lack of, as previously mentioned, codes of ethics which could be a guiding compass for private as well as public

companies/agencies regarding the sometimes difficult task to interpret the place, its value and meaning to different stakeholders. But this raise the question of who is legitimate to say what is right and wrong?

Tensions in heritage sites do not only include moral or ethical responsibilities towards a heritage, it is also a question of economics. Heritage sites are interpreted and packaged in order to create a heritage product, which is eventually sold, generating money. The relationship between the process of interpretation and the heritage product can therefore, according to Kurtz, be seen as reflexive: the interpretation affect the economy and the economy affect the interpretation.¹⁸⁰ The process of using history in cultural heritage sites is therefore not a question of preservation or exploitation, it can rather be seen as a reflexive relationship where heritage sites need an income in order to be preserved and the economy need heritage sites to generate an income. The commodification of cultural heritage sites are often blamed to cause tensions between cultural and commercial values but this study has showed that it is not only a question of economics versus culture, rather the problem lies in the growing meaning of heritage, which is interpreted and used by more people in wider meanings than before. By analysing how heritage sites commodify history and exploring the tensions of this process I hope to have contributed with a few pieces of the puzzle, but there are many more to be found and put in the right place to solve the puzzle.

My journey of exploring prison B&Bs have now come to an end, and to conclude the notion of how heritage sites commodify history, I would like to end with a quote from one of the representatives, who in one sentence grasped the challenge and contradiction of the B&B:

How can we attract people to a place which was the last place people wanted to go to?

Suggestions for further research

During the work of this thesis the notion of ethical and moral tensions regarding commodification of history in heritage sites have been present. It has been argued that there is a need of a code of ethics or a helping guide regarding what to commodify and not. As I've questioned who would have the legitimacy to decide what is right and wrong, it might be a hard thing to do, but after studying the prison B&Bs, it was noticed that there is a need of exploring ethical and moral issues in heritage sites, and not only in dark places, since all heritage sites, sooner or later come to the point where they ask "Can I do this?"

¹⁸⁰Kurtz, M. (2010) Heritage and tourism. In: West, S. (Ed.) (2010) Understanding heritage in practice.

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Figures

- Figure 1: Tunbridge, J. E. & Ashworth, G. J. (1996) P. 7.
- Figure 2: <http://timrabauer.se/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/sverige-karta1.gif>

Appendix

Appendix 1 Interview guide Långholmen

Intervju Långholmen

1. Berätta om din bakgrund i företaget.
2. Hur bedrivs verksamheten idag? Organisation?
3. Varför tror du att er verksamhet har blivit så populär?
4. Varför tror du att besökare kommer till er?
5. Känner ni att ni har något ansvar för hur ni använder ”kulturarvet” i er verksamhet?
6. Vad har ni mött för reaktioner gällande er verksamhet? Från kommun? RAÄ? Besökare?
7. Vad har guldkudden betytt för er verksamhet ekonomiskt? Kulturellt?
8. Skulle ni kunna tänka er att marknadsföra kända fångar?
9. Är du bekant med begreppet ”dark tourism”? Är Långholmen ett exempel på detta fenomen?
10. Har ni något samarbete eller kontakt med andra fängelser som också är B&B?
11. Ser ni er själva som en turistattraktion eller ett B&B?
12. Moral och etik. Har ni några betänkligheter gällande den ekonomiska verksamheten?

Appendix 2 Interview guide Visby prison

Intervju Visby fängelse

1. Berätta om din bakgrund i företaget.
2. När öppnade ni? Samma ägare?
3. Hur bedrivs verksamheten idag?
4. Varför tror du att er verksamhet har blivit så populär?
5. Varför tror du att besökare kommer till er?
6. Vad har ni mött för reaktioner gällande er verksamhet? Från kommun? RAÄ? Besökare?
7. Hur reagerar besökare som kommer till er?
8. Hur mycket använder ni er av fängelset i marknadsföring et.c.? ”fängslade upplevelse” ”intern känsla”
9. Känner ni att ni har något ansvar för hur ni använder ”kulturarvet” i er verksamhet?
10. Hur mycket av originalinredningen har ni behållt? Har ni haft betänkligheter om vad ni kan göra eller ej?
11. Vad väljer ni att poängtera i era guide turer?
12. Har ni något samarbete eller kontakt med andra fängelser som också är B&B?
13. Ser ni er själva som en turistattraktion eller ett B&B?

Appendix 3 Interview guide Falu prison

Intervju Falu fängelse

1. Berätta om din bakgrund i företaget.
2. När öppnade ni? Samma ägare?
3. Hur bedrivs verksamheten idag? Konferens? Vandrarhem? Restaurang? Museum?
4. Varför tror du att er verksamhet har blivit så populär?
5. Varför tror du att besökare kommer till er?
6. Vad har ni mött för reaktioner gällande er verksamhet? Från kommun? RAÄ? Besökare?
7. Hur reagerar besökare som kommer till er?
8. Hur mycket använder ni er av fängelset i marknadsföring et.c.? ”fängslade upplevelse”
9. Känner ni att ni har något ansvar för hur ni använder ”kulturvet” i er verksamhet?
10. Hur mycket av originalinredningen har ni behållt? Har ni haft betänkligheter om vad ni kan göra eller ej?
11. Vad väljer ni att poängtera i era guide turer?
12. Har ni något samarbete eller kontakt med andra fängelser som också är B&B?
13. Ser ni er själva som en turistattraktion eller ett B&B?
14. Skänker folk prylar till er?