The Dynamics of Heritage

Contested use of spaces at the UNESCO listed forts and castles in two regions in Ghana

Ruben Wennerberg
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Supervisor: Andrew Byerley

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Abstract

This thesis is based on seven weeks of fieldwork in Central Region and Western Region in Ghana and discusses how UNESCO listed forts and castles in the area shall be preserved and used today. Through in-depth interviews with important stakeholders and through observations at forts and castles the intention is to unveil what conflicts are present and also how heritage is being negotiated among these actors. A key issue is whether the sites shall be regarded as commodities or as public memorials. Working with the theoretical concepts of space, place and heritage and how these can be understood in the chosen context the thesis seeks to explain how different actors are able to transform the way these edifices are being used. The thesis’ contribution and what makes it relevant is especially how it illuminates that heritage is constantly being re-produced as a response to input from stakeholders. It also stresses the challenges in how to deal with heritage property in the contemporary planning context.

**Key words:** Ghana, space, place, sense of place, heritage, memorial, commodification, UNESCO
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# Table of contents

1. INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................. 1

2. AIM, RESEARCH QUESTION AND PLANNING PROBLEM ......................................... 3
   2.1. SCOPE .......................................................................................................................... 3
   2.2. DISPOSITION ............................................................................................................... 5

3. THE LEGACY OF EUROPEAN INTERACTIONS – AN HISTORICAL OUTLINE .............. 7
   3.1. A TRADING POINT ..................................................................................................... 7
   3.2. THE SLAVE TRADE ................................................................................................. 9
   3.3. THE QUESTION OF HERITAGE – THE EMERGENCE OF UNESCO ...................... 10
   3.4. A WORLD HERITAGE SITE IN GHANA .................................................................. 13
   3.5. MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING ADMINISTRATION IN GHANA ....................... 15
   3.6. THE GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT ............................................................................ 16

4. RESEARCH METHODS AND PRIMARY SOURCES ......................................................... 21
   4.1. RESEARCH METHODS ............................................................................................ 21
   4.2. PRIMARY SOURCES ................................................................................................ 25

5. RESEARCH ETHICS, REFLEXIVITY AND POSITIONALITY ............................................... 27

6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .......................................................................................... 29
   6.1. THE SPACE OF LEBARBRE ..................................................................................... 29
   6.2. EXPERIENCES AND MEMORY - MAKING SENSE OF PLACE ................................ 30
   6.3. DEFINING HERITAGE .............................................................................................. 32
   6.4. HERITAGE AS MEMORIALS: SENSE OF PLACE AT PLAY? .................................... 34

7. A CASE STUDY OF FORTS AND CASTLES IN TWO REGIONS IN GHANA ................ 36
   7.1. HERITAGE AT STAKE - THE CASTLES IN CAPE COAST AND ELMINA .............. 36
   7.2. CONTESTATION ABOUT USES – THE CASE OF FORT ST JAGO IN ELMINA ........ 44
   7.3. FORTS IN THE WESTERN REGION – A MULTIPLICITY OF USES ....................... 47
   7.4. CONCLUDING THE EMPIRICAL SECTION ............................................................. 54

8. THE DYNAMICS OF SPACE, PLACE AND HERITAGE ..................................................... 56
   8.1. THE RE-PRODUCTION OF SPACE AND PLACE .................................................. 57
   8.2. FORTS AND CASTLES IN GHANA - COMMODITIES AND MEMORIALS AT THE SAME TIME? ............................................................... 57
   8.3. THE UNESCO LISTING AS A PARADOX ................................................................ 59

9. CONCLUSION .................................................................................................................... 61

10. FURTHER RESEARCH ...................................................................................................... 62

11. REFERENCES .................................................................................................................... 63
   11.1. LITERATURE ........................................................................................................... 63
   11.2. INTERNET ............................................................................................................... 66
   11.3. INTERVIEWS .......................................................................................................... 67

APPENDIX 1 .......................................................................................................................... 69

APPENDIX 2 .......................................................................................................................... 70
List of Acronyms

CCMA  (Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly)
GHCT  (Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust)
GMMB  (Ghana Museum and Monuments Board)
ICCROM (International Centre for the study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property)
ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites)
IUCN  (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources)
KEEA  (Komenda-Eguafo-Edina-Abrem Municipal Assembly)
NGO   (Non-Governmental Organization)
REC   (Ricerca E Cooperazione)
USAID (United States Agency for International Development)
UNDP  (United Nations Development Programme)
UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization)
1. Introduction

“The past is never dead. It's not even past.”
— William Faulkner, Requiem for a Nun (1951: 92)

The question of how to approach historical milieus and heritage sites has emerged as an interesting and important topic within contemporary urban and regional planning since it has been recognized what potential value that lies in the meaning of sites, buildings and areas of significant historical importance. These buildings or sites may not only be signifiers of history, but they can likewise also be seen as valuable assets in our quest to create a sustainable environment as they often have lasted for centuries meaning they have been sustainable in the very sense of the word. It has also been recognized the role heritage sites can play as landmarks in urban visioning and their potential role in economic development (Bandarin & Van Oers 2012: 115-117).

The European built castles and forts along the Ghanaian coastline were included in UNESCO’s World heritage list in 1979, as they were regarded to have an outstanding universal value for humanity and therefore needed to be protected as significant conveyors of history. Regarding UNESCO listed heritage structures it is common, however, that it is not the sheer buildings as such, even though they in many cases have unique qualities, that make them stand out, but rather how they have been used throughout history. Regarding the castles and forts of Ghana they were for a long period of time used for keeping slaves before these were shipped across the Atlantic to the new world, and they therefore can be seen as physical remnants of an era that in many ways have shaped and continue to shape our contemporary world. In the UNESCO criteria for the listing one can read the following:

The Castles and Forts of Ghana shaped not only Ghana’s history but that of the world over four centuries as the focus of first the gold trade and then the slave trade. They are a significant and emotive symbol of European-African encounters and of the starting point of the African Diaspora1. (whc.unesco.org/en/list/34)

This history makes the former slave forts and castles along the Ghanaian coastline a particularly interesting subject of study since these structures in many ways are contested because of the dark history they carry and what they actually convey to the contemporary world is different depending on who is asked. Whether the structures shall be kept as memorial sites or whether they can be opened up for new uses is something debated and where different actors have different opinions.

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1 The African diaspora is an umbrella term for the descendants of slaves that once were exported from Africa
In this thesis a discussion around the heritage concept will be entered and what might be embedded within it; in effect how heritage is constructed by different actors. The theoretical framework is based around the concepts of space and place and how these can be interpreted in the context of the UNESCO listed forts and castles in Ghana. An important stakeholder in this case is the Ghana Museum and Monuments Board, which is the Ghanaian state agency that is the custodian of the forts and castles along the coast. A further very important actor is the African diaspora community in Ghana and their contributions regarding the use of spaces cannot be underplayed. As this thesis is a part of a Nordic African Institute SIDA-funded project entitled Grassroots organizations in urban Africa and their international networks, the contributions and involvement of NGOs regarding these questions of heritage management has also been relevant to study; particularly in the sense that the thesis considers the role played by international organizations in this context.

The issue of how to preserve, conserve and use monuments and sites of cultural and historical importance is of considerable relevance in the contemporary planning context. Research around these questions is also relevant in a variety of academic subjects, among them anthropology and cultural studies. This planning topic is therefore, as mentioned above, also related to the other sites and localities where there is a discussion on how to deal with physical remnants of a dark past. In a wider context one can also relate the discussions around preservation and conservation in planning not only to sites where atrocities have taken place, but also to the more general discussion around these important concepts and how these shall be approached by planners and society.

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2 This refers to African-Americans, born in the United States that have chosen to return to what they consider to be their native country. In the last two decades the number of people in this African diaspora community has grown significantly in Ghana (Holsey 2008).
2. Aim, research question and planning problem

The aim with the fieldwork and the thesis itself is to examine whether one will be able to detect potential conflicts regarding the preservation, conservation and uses of the UNESCO listed sites in the Central Region and the Western Region in Ghana. As the issue of the former slave castles might be a question where different opinions are prevalent. Moreover, my aim is to try to also work around the concept of heritage in order to unveil how the concept itself can be interpreted differently by various actors and stakeholders involved in planning and development on different levels. Therefore, it will be pertinent not only to ask who is entitled to define what is a heritage worth to preserve, but also how the concept can be defined in a context like this. I believe this is an interesting topic of study because it will address how heritage sites are defined and what role that power might play when it is decided what really is embedded in a heritage site. A further area of focus of this thesis is the concept of commodification in relation to heritage and which role the sites might play in the local economic development.

The over-arching research question focuses on contestations pertaining to the uses of the heritage sites particularly in relation to the following questions:

• How are the UNESCO listed heritage sites in the Central Region and in the Western Region in Ghana being shaped by different actors?

Following this I have two further underlying questions that I will try to answer with my study:

• Which actors have a say and in what way can they affect the use of spaces?

• What are considered as appropriate uses and what are not?

Since the over-arching research topic of the funded fieldwork is urban networks and grassroots organizations an important objective will also be to examine how non-governmental organizations work around these questions and how they might contribute both locally, regionally and internationally. Regarding this I would like to see both what they contribute and also what their objectives for participation are.

The objective with the thesis is that it shall, through the studied example of the UNESCO listed forts and castles in Ghana, bring grounded knowledge to the table in the contemporary discussion around heritage. The intention is that this case study shall contribute to the academic and societal discussion of how heritage is being produced.

2.1. Scope

The geographical scope of the thesis is the two Ghanaian regions Central Region and Western Region where many of the European built structures in form of castles and
forts in Ghana are located. There are in total more than 20 fortresses and castles in different condition along the coastline of Ghana that are listed as World Heritage sites by UNESCO. However, since the research has been focused in the Central Region and the Western Region of Ghana, this has meant that listed structures in the Greater Accra Region and the Volta Region have not been studied in detail. The reason for this selection has partly been logistical since the time in field did not allow me to visit and study all the fortresses along the coast. It would also have been difficult from an analytical point of view to cover them all in a research paper of this format.

Ghana. The Central Region and the Western Region are highlighted.

Figure 1. Ghana with the Central Region and the Western Region highlighted. Created via scribblemaps.com. Based on maps.google.com.

When it comes to the thematic scope I have been forced to choose among many interesting aspects of the study area. Some parts have been studied closely, but because of limitations regarding the number of words that can be allowed within the frame of the thesis and the need of getting an organic and comprehensive text together some themes have been downplayed or, in some cases, even excluded in the final product. During my fieldwork I conducted several interviews where the main focus was to discuss the implications the forts and castles might have when local economic development is concerned. For instance, the question of how revenue is shared between different agencies is highly interesting, but unfortunately this cannot be given enough room in
this paper as it would interfere with the focus of the thesis and therefore make it too difficult to comprehend. The same thing goes for the question of funding which is very interesting to study in a context where many different countries and organizations are involved. Because of the international nature of the heritage sites in Ghana there are also many actors at play in this field.

2.2. Disposition

Regarding the disposition of my work I have devoted a fairly large part to a background section. To an extent, this can of course be discussed, but I believe it is important for the reader at an early stage to get a good understanding of both the historical and geographical contexts in order to fully understand the planning problem that is later addressed in the thesis. Therefore, an overview of Ghana’s history with a specific focus on the slave trade will be presented. Bayo Holsey’s *Routes of Remembrance* (2008), a well-researched anthropological study on the slave trade heritage in the towns of Cape Coast and Elmina has been widely used in this section. Holsey has, through many years of research in Elmina and Cape Coast, tried to unveil how the slave trade history is perceived by the local community and how perceptions can be altered over time. It is also a useful source as it gives a good overview of the history of the two towns. Since, the thesis deals with UNESCO world heritage listed properties there will be a brief section on the emergence of UNESCO, their position and how the world heritage listing works in practice and how the castles and forts were included on the list. It has been pertinent in some cases to also look up the primary sources from UNESCO in order to get clarification on certain issues. I have also included a section which handles how the administrative system of Ghana works as well as a short presentation of the geographical areas that have been incorporated in the field research.

Regarding methods I will mainly discuss the use of semi-structured interviews which is the primary method used to collect the gathered empirical material. When it comes to readings I have used a few comprehensive works that in different ways discuss the qualitative research approach that I have used. From the anthology *Methods in Human Geography*, edited by Flowerdew & Martin (2005) I have used several chapters including Gill Valentine’s *Tell me about…* which deals with the qualitative interview. The anthology *Approaches in Human Geography*, edited by Stuart Aitken & Gill Valentine (2006) has also been a most valuable source. Not least Paul Rodaway’s chapter *Humanism and People-Centered Methods* have been studied closely. There will in this part of the thesis also be a presentation of the key informants during the field research in Ghana.

Then, a section discussing reflexivity, positionality and research ethics will follow. Here, I will try to analyze my role as a researcher and what implications my encroachments in the field might have for the final outcome of the thesis. I will
naturally put some weight on the research context as such and what is embedded when one is carrying out research in a development context.

After this, the theoretical framework of the thesis will be presented with its focus on the concepts of space and place and how these can be understood. An emphasis will be laid on how we can understand space and place as being both produced and re-produced out of memory; and personal and collective experiences. As I have worked with these concepts previously (e.g. Wennerberg 2011), it was natural for me to return to them in this work since I believe the concepts are most applicable in relation to the study. Naturally, some literature has functioned as cornerstones in this theoretical approach and one of them has been Tim Cresswell’s *Place – A Short Introduction* (2004); a very useful work in order to understand the concept of place and how it can be interpreted in various contexts. It is also a convenient book that also uses references to several key scholars in this theoretical field, like for example Doreen Massey and Yi-Fu Tuan. Paul Knox & Steven Pinch’s *Urban Social Geography* (2006) has also been widely used when the major theoretical concepts of the thesis have been concerned. A discussion around the heritage concept and what it might entail is also included as it is a fundamental feature in the thesis as such as well as a section on how memorials can be conceptualized. Helaine Silverman’s *Contested cultural heritage: A selective historiography* (2011) discusses the paradigm shift in cultural heritage studies that stresses that history and heritage cannot be understood as an objective truth and what is represented from history is always someone’s story. Since the thesis is focused around cultural heritage especially related to a site with a dark history I have found it useful to also look at some literature that deals with these issues. One of them is *Memorial Museums. The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities* by Paul Williams (2007) which uses examples on how sites where horrifying events have taken place can be understood and interpreted. Several examples of Memorial museums are listed, but of importance I especially find the theoretical conceptualization that is outlined by the author.

What then follows is the primary material section of the paper which as mentioned above is based on the data collected during my seven-week stay in Ghana. Via observations at places and via quotes from informants my intention is to present a good view of how arguments are going back and forth regarding uses.

Then, it is my intention to synthesize the theory section of the thesis with the gathered empirical material through an analysis on how we can understand the heritage structures in form of forts and castles along the Ghanaian coastline.

Finally, there will be a concluding section in which I will try to summarize what I consider to be the most important findings of the thesis work. At last I have included a section with suggestion of possible future research in the thematic field.
3. The legacy of European interactions – An historical outline

On the eve of 6th of March 1957 the British Gold Coast colony was officially declared an independent country after almost five centuries of European control in different forms. The name Ghana was adopted and the name itself was derived from the old kingdom of Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah, the leading person in struggle for independence was to become the country’s first president (Holsey 2008: 59). Ghana was the first country in Africa that had been under colonial rule to gain independence and the purpose to build a functional independent state began immediately (Briggs 2010).

Inevitably, the almost 500 years of European interactions had a most notable impact on the newfound country and this legacy can of course be found in various forms even in contemporary Ghana. To be able to understand what the country is made up of today, it is of major importance that one understands the impact the European powers had under this long period of time. Therefore, it is pertinent that a brief historical outline is carried out in this background section. Thereafter a presentation of UNESCO will follow before the focus is shifted to the listing of the forts and castles in Ghana. Finally, a section will handle the administrative system in Ghana followed by a presentation of the geographical areas that the study has focused on.

3.1. A trading point

In 1471 the first European encroachment in West Africa took place. It was the Portuguese who then established a trading port in a small fishing village called Edina (Holsey 2008: 28-29). The region was rich in natural resources and the Portuguese instigated trade with the local kingdoms at the time. Among the goods that were sought by the Portuguese traders were ivory, salt, pepper and cotton, but the most precious of the goods was the gold which the Portuguese got in exchange for among other things guns and alcoholic spirits (KEEA 2004, Briggs 2010). However, because of the major importance of the gold they dubbed the coastal line Da Costa de la Mina de Ouro or ‘The coast of gold mines’ and their settlement was subsequently named Elmina; or ‘the mine’ in English (even though the origin of the name is debated, as some argues that the name actually has Arabic origins)(Briggs 2010: 10). Eleven years after their arrival, the Portuguese trade with the local chiefs was well established and they therefore decided to fortify themselves in order to protect the settlement and the trade. Hence they agreed on a lease with the local chief to build a fortress, which became known as the castle of St George’s (Holsey 2008: 29). The objective behind this was to protect themselves from both inland attacks from local kingdoms, but also to secure the trading point from rivaling trading powers. The structure built in 1482 was the first European in sub-Saharan Africa (KEEA 2004: 9). The Portuguese then established themselves at various
locations along the coastline, and therefore was the European power in control at the time.

However, the Portuguese were finally overthrown at Elmina by another European power, namely The Netherlands. The Dutch had launched several attacks on the castle earlier on, but failed until the year 1637 when they were able to conquer the castle and subsequently also the trade with the local kingdoms (Holsey 2008: 30, KEEA 2004: 9). In the years to come the other Portuguese settlements and forts along the coastline was to fall in hands of the Dutch. In 1665 the Dutch further strengthen their presence in Elmina by building another fortification on a hill overlooking the castle. This fortification was named Fort St Jago and made sure that the Dutch kept control over both land and sea (KEEA 2004).

There were a good few reasons why the coastal line of Ghana became the natural focal point for the European settlers and trading powers at the time. As it was the coastal area closest located to the inland gold mines it was an apparent choice from a transport point of view, but apart from that the physical geography of its coastline, which was rocky rather than a mangrove swamp (which was the case along other West African coastlines) made it easy to fortify at the same time as it could provide the sea traders with many suitable natural harbors (Briggs 2010: 11, Van Dantzig & Priddy 1971: 8).

However, the Dutch and the Portuguese were far from the only European powers that realized that this part of West Africa was a highly attractive one from a trade point of view. Danish trading companies played a major role and for more than 200 years the Danes held fortresses in what is now Accra, the modern capital of Ghana. Sweden was another of the powers around and in 1653 the Swedes built a fortress in what is now known as Cape Coast (the Portuguese had called this Cabo Corso, meaning the Short Cape), merely ten kilometers from the Dutch settlement in Elmina. The fortress was named Fort Carolusburg, named after the Swedish king of the time, Karl X Gustav (Holsey 2008: 30). The fort was overthrown by the Dutch eleven years later, but they were only able to keep it until the next year, 1665, when a new power emerged on the coast (Briggs 2010: 13, Van Dantzig & Priddy 1971: 22).

The British West Africa Company had been formed already in 1618 (Van Dantzig & Priddy 1971: 16), but in competition with the trading companies of the other European powers they had failed to establish any major settlements along the coast. However, when they in 1665 managed to capture not only Cape Coast, but also a good deal of other fortresses along the coastline they established themselves as one of the major players in this part of the world (ibid). A position the British were to hold on to for almost 300 years. The British finally declared Southern Ghana their colony in 1874.

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3 Further reading on the Danish involvement in what is now Ghana can be carried out in Stones tell Stories in Osu (Wellington 2011).
4 According to Holsey (2008: 30) this capture took place in 1664.
3.2. The Slave Trade

It cannot be said to be result of the British presence as such, but in connection to their establishment in what is now Ghana in the 1660s a new type of commodity was to replace gold as the main trading good of the coast and the commodity in question was people. In order to manage the agricultural settlements in the new world (The Americas) an immense load of labor force was needed. The solution became, for several of the European powers of the time, to use the human capital available in West Africa to be shipped across the Atlantic as slaves to work at the plantations in the various colonies established there (Bruner 1996).

However, slavery and slave trade was far from a new phenomenon in this area. The Portuguese had imported slaves to the coast from their settlements further east and also traders and merchants from North Africa and the Arabic world had been active in people-trade in West Africa (Bruner 1996). Nevertheless, the slave trade that emerged in the mid-seventeenth century was a far more organized and systematic project and it is a phase in history which arguably has had immense impact on how we see the world of today.

The castle structures at Cape Coast, where the British resided, and at Elmina, which was being kept by the Dutch was to become integral in this trade as they were used to harness the captured slaves before they embarked on the ships which was to take them across the Atlantic Ocean. The castles (a somewhat confusing term, since the structures were sites for merchants rather than they were royal residences) and, in some cases, also structures adjacent to them were also sites of bargaining for slaves before the slaves themselves were imprisoned and kept waiting for the ships in what must be described as horrifying conditions. The presence of violence and the severe punishments for misconduct was a central part of the management at the time. However, worth to notice is, as far as history tells us, that the slaves were rarely captured by the colonial powers themselves, but instead local chiefs sold their own people in exchange for valuable goods (Bruner 1996, Holsey 2008: 31).

This trade, which was part of a triangular trade between Europe, America and Africa where different goods were exchanged at the various locations, went on for almost 150 years until British authorities finally abolished the slave trade in 1807 (they abolished slavery altogether in their colonies in 1834) (Holsey 2008: 32, Kerr-Ritchie in Webb 2008: 376). The Danes, also integral players in the trade at the time, had abolished slave trade already in 1803 (Wellington 2011: 83) while the Dutch followed suit in 1814 (Holsey 2008: 32, KEEA 2004, Van Dantzig 1971: 46) and therefore this sad period of
history came to an end in this part of the world. Although, even after the abolishment of the slave trade it is documented that it went on for another some time illegally (Holsey 2008: 32).

However, the structures along the coastline, of which the most notable was Cape Coast Castle and Elmina Castle, where these atrocities had taken place remained even if they no longer were used to harness enslaved people. The sites were after this used for other purposes, among them residences and administration centers for representatives of the colonial government. Cape Coast was the site for the British government on the Gold Coast until 1877 when the governmental center was moved to Accra (Briggs 2010: 161). In 1872 the Dutch surrendered their settlement in Elmina as a result of the Anglo-Dutch Gold Coast treaty in 1868 and the Gold Coast treaty in 1871 and therefore the British were the European power present until Ghana gained their independence in 1957 (KEEA 2004: 18, Van Dantzig & Priddy 1971: 50). When the British finally left in 1957 and Ghana became an independent country the structures came under control of the Ghanaian authorities

3.3. The question of heritage – the emergence of UNESCO

In the aftermath of the Second World War the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was founded in November 1945 (Bandarin & Van Oers 2012: 38). The aim for this organization was initially to establish an international body of intellectual and moral solidarity (unesco.org). However, conservation of physical structures eventually became an integral part of the organizations work and in order to establish some international guidelines on how conservation issues of heritage sites was to be approached. One of the most important documents regarding this issue was the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites which was a result of the UNESCO conference in Venice 1964. This charter (which was subsequently to be known as the Venice Charter) stressed the importance of conservation when it came to historic monuments and emphasized that the changes regarding physical structure had to be limited in order for the monuments to preserve their authenticity (Bandarin & Van Oers 2012: 39). At the initiative of UNESCO the non-governmental organization ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) was founded in 1965 and they quickly adopted the Venice charter as a principle document on how conservation and restoration of monument and sites should be carried out. Today, ICOMOS, which is an association of professionals like architects and urban planners, has approximately 9 500 members in 110 countries (Bandarin & Van Oers 2012: 38-39).

Following the 1972 United Nations conference on Human environment in Stockholm the World Heritage Convention was adopted at UNESCO’s conference in Paris later the
The treaty, which was the first international legal system within the field of heritage and conservation, have been ratified by 103 and accepted by 71 of UNESCO’s 193 member states as of September 2012 (whc.unesco.org). Among the duties of the state parties of the convention one can for instance mention their obligation to report conservation status of the heritage sites that are inscribed on the World Heritage List.

There are several benefits with a ratification of the convention, where the most notable might be the access to the World Heritage fund; a trust fund where the means are drawn from both the state parties of the World Heritage Convention, but also from private financiers (environment.gov.au). Countries that have ratified the convention can also call for emergency assistance in relation to heritage sites to be made available in those cases when this is needed (whc.unesco.org). As for the Republic of Ghana, they ratified the convention on the 4th of July 1975 (ibid).

In the years after the convention was adopted by UNESCO the organization begun to examine sites, monuments and areas of such significance for humanity that they had to be protected on an international level. This was to be known as the UNESCO World Heritage List, where resources of major cultural and/or natural importance was listed in order to protect them from being transformed or destroyed in ways that would threaten the value of the sites as conveyors of human and natural history. In short, resources of outstanding universal value were to be protected as decay or transformation of these would be harmful to the entire world (WHC 12/01). The first listings took place in 1978 and among the first sites listed were the Galapagos Islands in Ecuador (Bandarin & Van Oers 2012: 99).

The procedure on how a site, building or area is listed is the following: First, the site must be recognized of someone, an individual or an organization. Most often this will take place on a national scale. Thereafter a draft proposal is made to UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee on why the sites historical, cultural and/or natural value is of such importance that it has to be recognized even internationally. If the World Heritage Committee, who in this stage are consulted by organizations like ICOMOS, ICCROM\(^5\) and IUCN\(^6\), then decides that the site in question is of such significant importance that it deserves the status as a world heritage it will subsequently be listed officially. Included in the initial nomination must be a management plan that states how the management and preservation of the site in question will take place (WHC 12/01: 27-28).

The implications of a site being listed is therefore that it receives international recognition and, this is something that in many cases enhances the potential market and tourist value of a site as it will become known to a much broader public. The listing also means that the national or local management of the site listed can make use of expertize

\(^5\) International Centre for the study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
\(^6\) International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural resources
from international bodies when it comes to issues of conservation, preservation and maintenance of the sites. Sites inscribed on the list also undergo an on-going monitoring to make sure their natural and cultural values are being protected and managed in a proper way (whc.unesco.org).

However, even though the World Heritage List is based on the World Heritage Convention it is indeed a list and the convention as such is not a binding legal document in the sense that it has to be acknowledged when it comes to re-development and/or transformation of the site in particular. It is worth to point out that there is no type of international legislation that can prevent such a transformation of a World Heritage site, even though national building laws of course often recognize this listing and therefore the World Heritage listing has an in-direct effect of the legislation in the specific country where the site is located. In Sweden for example, there are several regulations in the Planning and Building Act (PBL 2010: chapter 8, paragraphs 13, 14, 17) that works as guidelines on what alterations that can be allowed on sites and buildings which are being recognized as of cultural-historical importance.\footnote{This is often comprehensively referred to as kulturmärkning or k-märkning in the Swedish context; which translated means \textit{culturally recognized buildings} where limited transformations and alterations can take place.}

The country where the site is located is also the custodian of the site and this means that alterations and the allowance for new uses is a question for the host country and its legislation itself. To be on the list UNESCO requires that the sites are protected by national, regional, local and/or traditional legislation, meaning a legislation that seeks to protect alterations of the site that somehow threatens the outstanding universal value of the site. To have a legislative framework that is able to protect the property is therefore the responsibility of the state party (WHC 12/01: 25). However, when hearing of new developments or alterations at World Heritage sites the World Heritage committee can express their concerns regarding a particular development at a site. One example when the local authorities has responded to these concerns was when a planned re-development scheme in Beijing, adjacent to the Forbidden City and the Imperial Palace of the Qing Dynasty (World Heritage Site nr 439) was dropped after the Committee expressed their concerns over the impact that this development would have on the World Heritage Site (Bandarin & Van Oers 2012: 17).

As the UNESCO listed sites are often used in place marketing purposes both on a national, regional and local level the commercial value of the listing itself can easily be understood. Therefore, any changes and/or alterations of the sites in question which will force UNESCO and the World Heritage Committee to review their listing of a site are unlikely. However, with the commercial potential with listed sites only through recognition realized it can be tempting to use these sites for further commercial purposes as they through their sheer presence are able to attract visitors. However, the
Operational Guidelines of The World heritage Committee states that alterations of uses can take place if they do not transform the site or the property to a too large extent:

World Heritage properties may support a variety of ongoing and proposed uses that are ecologically and culturally sustainable, and which may contribute to the quality of life of communities concerned (sic) (WHC 12/01: 29; Section II F, paragraph 119).

If a listed site is seriously threatened the World Heritage Committee can brand it a World Heritage in danger, meaning that the aforementioned outstanding universal value of the site in question is threatened and therefore the site runs the risk of being taken off the list. A removal from the list would mean that the opportunities for protection diminish as the national management of the site can no longer count on the support from for instance the World Heritage Fund. However, such a removal has happened only twice; the first site to be de-listed was the Arabian Oryx Sanctuary in Oman in 2007 and the second was Dresden Elbe Valley in Germany in 2009. For instance, the reason for the withdrawal of the latter one was the building of a four-lane bridge which, in the eyes of the World Heritage Committee and its consultants, transformed the cultural landscape so much that it no longer could be regarded as a site with outstanding universal value (whc.unesco.org).

3.4. A World heritage site in Ghana

In 1979, after an initial proposal by Kwesi Myles (Holsey 2008: 160) the European built castles and forts along the Ghanaian coastline were listed as a World Heritage site by the World Heritage Committee as World Heritage number 34 (whc.unesco.org). In the introduction of this thesis we could read the criterion for its nomination, but nonetheless this is worth repeating here:

The Castles and Forts of Ghana shaped not only Ghana’s history but that of the world over four centuries as the focus of first the gold trade and then the slave trade. They are a significant and emotive symbol of European-African encounters and of the starting point of the African Diaspora (whc.unesco.org/en/list/34).

However, even though there are over 20 forts and castles from the colonial era along the coast they are all listed as one heritage entity, which means that they also when being reviewed by the World Heritage Committee must be regarded as a comprehensive unit even though differences in uses may appear between the various structures that are included. The Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Committee also recognizes these types of nominations which they call Serial Properties. Here it is acknowledged that it is the line of properties together that form a coherent heritage. In the guidelines one can read:
Consistently, and in order to avoid an excessive fragmentation of component parts, the process of nomination of the property, including the selection of the component parts, should take fully into account the overall manageability and coherence of the property (see paragraph 114) and provided it is the series as a whole – and not necessarily the individual parts of it – which are of Outstanding Universal Value (WHC 12/01: 35; Section III.C, paragraph 139C).

It is worth to point out that this was recognized as a potential management issue with the listing by ICOMOS already at the time of the nomination of the property (ICOMOS 1978).

The listing of the castles and forts in 1979 raised their profile and made them recognized by a far larger public than before. Especially the two castle structures in Cape Coast and Elmina, which had served as the seats of administration for the British and the Dutch settlements on the Gold Coast, were highlighted as these two had been major throughout history. However, the state of these edifices was rather run-down and therefore a large renovation scheme was set up in the early 1990s. Funded by USAID\(^8\), the United States division of ICOMOS, the Smithsonian institute and UNDP a major renovation project was carried out in the years 1992-1997 (Holsey 2008, UNESCO 1998: 22 VII: 35). Many considered this renovation to be out of necessity, even though some voices considered the renovation scheme as something that partly erased the slave trade history at the sites (see Agyei-Mensah 2006: 710; Holsey 2008: 164 and Movatt & Chancellor 2011: 1422, Bruner 1996). The Cape Coast Castle had been used as a museum since 1972, but visitor numbers remained rather low throughout the 1970s and the 1980s, despite the World Heritage listing in 1979. In the years after the major renovations of 1992-1997 the visitor numbers at the Cape Coast Castle raised dramatically, from about 10 000 visitors per year in 1992 to more than 40 000 visitors per year in 1999 (Agyei-Mensah 2006: 710), although we cannot be sure that this was an effect of the renovations as such.

Regarding the authenticity of the structures along the coast, UNESCO states that they have been transformed throughout history and this has to be reflected in the use of today. In the description of the listing it is stated that:

> The forts and castles were periodically altered, extended and modified to suit changing circumstances and new needs. In their present conditions, they demonstrate that history of change. As symbols of trade, and particularly the slave trade, they need to continue to reflect the way they were used (whc.unesco.org/en/list/34).

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\(^8\) United States Agency of International Development
3.5. Management and planning administration in Ghana

The listed forts and castles are properties of the Ghanaian state and this has been the case since Ghana gained their independence from United Kingdom in 1957. The agency that manages the sites and therefore is the legal custodians of them is Ghana Museum and Monuments Board; an authority formed already in March 1957 (ghanamuseums.org). The Ghanaian state is not allowed to sell any of these properties, but they can however be leased to developers for different purposes (Oyortey 25.3.2013).

The different sites are then of course located within the boundaries of various local administrative units even if they are the property of the Ghanaian state and at this stage it is of importance to get an understanding how the planning system and the administration in Ghana works in practice. The country is divided into ten different regions, where the Greater Accra region, where the capital is located is by far the most populous. Regarding the planning; first of all there is a national development policy framework (Government of Ghana, National Development Planning Commission 2010), which works as a general guideline for development in the whole country. Under the national level the administration is divided into metropolitan district assemblies, municipal district assemblies and district assemblies who all produce local plans on a four-year period basis. There are in total six metropolitan district assemblies altogether and these represent the six of the largest metropolitan areas; namely Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi, Tamale, Tema and Cape Coast. Then there are the municipal district assemblies which represent middle-sized towns and finally the district assemblies are responsible for the smallest entities regarding population sizes. This division of administration and jurisdiction is however, at least in theory, non-hierarchical as district assemblies technically operate on the same level as metropolitan assemblies. Even though there are ten different regions within the country there are no formal regional planning in Ghana, but rather planning issues on a regional scale are treated by a regional coordinating council, which is made up of representatives from the assemblies within the region. This council’s say on different issues (one example could be the location of an airport) is not binding per se, but if assemblies decide to act against the regional coordinating council the council can report the assembly to the national planning authorities who can take action if they consider for example a development to be conflicting with the national development plan (Fuseini 22.03.2013).

However, even though the assemblies of different sizes have their areas of jurisdiction and which they are responsible to plan for one cannot discuss land-use in Ghana without mentioning the, by far, most significant land-owners, namely the chiefs. The chiefs are the elected heads of the so-called traditional councils in Ghana and what is called chieftaincy, meaning a jurisdiction based on traditional values, norms and law, are also recognized by Ghanaian state law (Schramm 2004: 157). The chiefs own a large
percentage of the land in the country meaning there position when it comes to physical development is important (Amoah 14.3.2013, Atta II 18.3.2013).

3.6. The geographical context

The two towns in the Central Region that have been the main targets for my study is Cape Coast and Elmina, where the former when it comes to administration is run by a metropolitan district assembly and the latter is a part of a municipal district assembly called KEEA (an acronym for Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem, the old names of the villages that the jurisdiction area is made up of). As for the towns for themselves, Cape Coast is the Regional capital of the Central region and has about 100 000 inhabitants Holsey 2008: 19). As a regional capital the town boosts several central facilities as a regional hospital and a university. Many offices and banks are also located in the town, giving it a rather modern feel (Holsey 2008: 19-20). Moreover, Cape Coast is also the major transport hub in the region with daily connections to Accra, Kumasi and Sekondi-Takoradi; the three largest conurbations in the country. Agyei-Mensah, however, argues that the town’s importance has diminished over the years as larger urban centers has taken over some of the important functions earlier connected to the town, like for example the harbor that earlier was fundamental for the town (Agyei-Mensah 2006: 708). The Cape Coast Castle is its most prominent landmark when it comes to heritage, but as a former seat of government the town boosts a lot of other heritage structures, among them the two fortresses Fort William and Fort Victoria, which are included in the World Heritage listing. Moreover, these structures are also being regarded as National Monuments by the Ghanaian state (ghanamuseums.org). There are however many other buildings that historically have been integral and among them one can mention the first law court in West Africa and the Heritage House; the former residence of the colonial governor (Amoah 14.3.2013).
Figure 2. Cape Coast Castle. Photo by author.

Figure 3. Heritage House in Cape Coast. Photo by author.
Elmina, located about ten kilometers west of Cape Coast along the coast is however quite different. With only about 12,000 inhabitants it’s a small town in all senses of the word. The major economic activity is fishing even if salt mining also have played a big role traditionally. While lacking many of the features that make Cape Coast a regional center, Elmina is heavily reliant on the above-mentioned primary industries, but also the high number of tourists coming to see the castle is something that the local community tries to capitalize on in different ways (KEEA 2004).

Aside from the Elmina Castle (also known as St George’s castle) the old Dutch fortress Fort Jago is a striking feature in the little town, being located on a hill overlooking the castle. The fort is also included among the UNESCO world heritage listed forts and castles of Ghana. Being a former Dutch settlement, Elmina has strong connections to the Netherlands and in recent years a project that focused on restoration of historical buildings has been carried out in cooperation with several Dutch actors. This was known as the Elmina Cultural Heritage and Management Programme and involved among other the institute of housing and urban development at the University of Rotterdam and the University of Groningen as well as the Netherlands-based NGO Urban Solutions (KEEA 2004, urban-solutions.nl). The project was part of a wider revitalization scheme in the municipality called The Elmina 2015 Strategy (KEEA 2004).

Figure 4. Elmina Castle. Photo by author.
In the Western Region, which is located in the South-West corner of Ghana and bordering the Ivory Coast, the regional capital is Sekondi-Takoradi, the third largest city in Ghana with a population of around 300 000 people (Briggs 2010: 187). Sekondi-Takoradi is from the beginning two different towns that over the years have grown together. The city today hosts some important industries, where in particular the oil industry, after recent discoveries of oil in the sea outside the Ghanaian coast, is expected to grow in the years to come. Sekondi-Takoradi is also an integral transport hub in the west of Ghana because of the presence of a deep-water harbor, the railway, an airport and lots of road connections to other parts of the country (Briggs 2010: 187).

The UNESCO listed structures in the Western Region are however scattered along the coastline and the urban settlements of Sekondi and Takoradi played only minor roles during the most intense trading era on the coast. This means that the context of the fortress buildings in this region is rather different than in the Central Region with its heavy focus on the former administrative seats in Cape Coast and Elmina. To get a good understanding of the geographical setting of the UNESCO listed forts and castles in the two regions these can be studied in the figure at the next page.
UNESCO listed forts and castles in the Central Region and in the Western Region in Ghana

Figure 6. The UNESCO listed forts and castles in the Central Region and in the Western Region. Created via scribblemaps.com. Based on maps.google.com
4. Research methods and primary sources

In this section the research methods used throughout the thesis work will be presented. As the theoretical approach of the thesis is based on concepts derived from the humanistic geography this is represented also in the methodology used to collect primary data. There will also be a section where the key informants in the empirical data collection are presented.

4.1. Research methods

The empirical data collection of this study has been gathered during a seven-week fieldtrip to Ghana where I have mainly spent time in the two coastal towns Cape Coast and Elmina, located in Ghana’s Central Region. Some primary material has also been collected in Accra and in the Western Region.

Mainly I have carried out semi-structured interviews with key informants with specific information of the planning case that I have focused on (see Esaiasson et al 2007: 296 and Brockington & Sullivan 2003: 58). Aside from this I did conduct a small survey with about 50 visitors at the two castles in Cape Coast and Elmina. Of considerable methodological importance has also been the large numbers of observations that I carried out at the forts and the castles. The methodology used has been based in the humanistic geography tradition which emphasizes the study of experiences and places (Rodaway 2006: 262-263).

The method used have been qualitative in the sense that I have been looking to elicit peoples’ perceptions and attitudes in different questions rather than uncover some sort of general truth in a positivistic manner (see Esaiasson et al 2007: 291 and Rodaway 2006: 262-263), even though hard facts of course sometimes have been the target. This humanistic focus on the subjective is something that more positivistic focused scholars are often critical about. A difficult stage in the humanistic process is therefore inevitably the presentation of findings and the completion of the research report as this is a phase where an objectification, out of necessity, must take place (Rodaway 2006: 266, 268).

My primary method to gather information has been through semi-structured interviews (Brockington & Sullivan 2003: 58). This has meant that I haven’t worked with a fixed pre-prepared questionnaire, but rather with a set of themes and questions that I have tried to link the conversations and interview around (see Valentine 2005: 119-120). This has worked satisfyingly as I have been able to adjust questions in accordance to interview persons.

Regarding the sampling method, the quest of finding relevant people to talk to has been an interesting one as this has been the first fieldwork that I have carried out in the
Global South. As I was preparing for the field study I did try to get in contact with as many of the relevant organizations that I could via mail from Sweden, but this task proved to be a difficult one. I got a few replies, but I soon realized that this sampling method was far from satisfying as the useful responses were scarce.

The only contact I had arranged something with in beforehand was Dr. Oheneba Akyeampong, a former PhD at the Department of Human Geography in Stockholm. Dr. Akyeampong now works as a lecturer at The University of Cape Coast and he has carried out a lot of research about the Central region with a specific focus on tourism (see e.g. Akyeampong 1996). He was helpful both regarding information pertaining to the research subject itself, but also since he provided me with contacts and phone numbers to people that I was able to get in contact with. However, even in possession of names and phone numbers it was far from easy to actually get hold of people and to book meetings. As it happened, I had at some points actually made appointments only to find out that the people I was looking for at the time was unavailable as meetings, for example, was moved with short (or no) notice. This was, to some extent, of course a frustrating experience, but after a while I learned to cope with it and was able to use the time in an efficient way. In many cases I was also unable to get responses from people through mail or via phone and therefore in several cases I decided to make personal visits at offices and alike; a strategy that worked satisfactorily. This persistence through working with different channels is also something that is stressed by Valentine (Valentine 2005: 118).

Even though I found it a bit troublesome that I had only managed to establish one contact before leaving Sweden I felt rather confident that sampling would be a whole lot easier when I was actually at place in the field. This proved to be a correct estimation as people turned out to be rather accessible and reachable on the phone and often willing to meet with rather short notice. These short-notice meetings and interviews was something that I mostly could not turn down, but it also meant that the time to prepare specifically for these interviews was rather limited. Therefore, as mentioned above, I worked with a rather loose interview guide, more based on the various themes that I wished to touch upon, than with straightforward questions (Valentine 2005: 120). How this limited preparation time for interviews did affect the answers and the conversations is difficult to tell, but I felt that after a while I got rather confident in how to work around my themes and how to adjust them to each interviewee in order to be able to gather the information I was looking for.

Inevitably, new information collected along the way somewhat transformed the themes in the interview guide since I became aware that certain themes were of more interest than others and that issues that I had not anticipated were brought up by my informants (see Valentine 2005: 122). Therefore my interview guide was in a state of constant transformation and adjustment even though it had an over-arching structure regarding themes and questions. During this phase I also had to objectify my work in the way that
I was forced to choose which issues I found most interesting and therefore I had to let others, like the question of maintenance of the castles and the forts for instance, play a lesser role.

Regarding the survey with visitors that I conducted at the castles in Cape Coast and Elmina the purpose with this was also to gather personal perceptions rather than trying to collect some kind of quantitative and statistical data. Therefore, the questionnaire that I used involved questions where the answer options were rather open since I tried to give participants the possibility to express emotions rather than ticking in answers in boxes (see Esaiasson et al 2007: 259). However, this meant that some questionnaires became less useful since some people’s responses were rather short and limited. With some questionnaires the respondents also somewhat misinterpreted my intentions with the questions, meaning these became less relevant for me when analyzing the data. One can in relation to this argue whether the questions themselves were sufficiently straightforward and clear-cut, a problem discussed by Esaiasson et al, where they try to outline how the questions can be formulated in order for respondents to understand the intentions (Esaiasson et al 2007: 275-276). An inherent problem with the questionnaire as such is the limited opportunity for the researcher to further explain his/her intentions when the respondents struggles to understand what the researcher means with a certain question (Parfitt 2005: 85). In some cases I was present myself when the respondents completed the questionnaires and in these cases I was able to clarify what I meant with certain questions. One can also mention the problem with carrying out questionnaires in writing since you have to rely on the writing and reading skills of the participants which of course can be of varied quality (as discussed by Parfitt 2005: 103). It is also worth to notice that the content of my questionnaire had to be approved (which it was without any further queries) by the education body of the GMMB before I could start handing them out.

I will also mention the more context-dependent advantages that my choice of research site gave me. As I was doing research in rather small urban areas like Cape Coast and Elmina where people might be a little more accessible than in a larger city, I had, in several cases, the possibility to return to some of my interviewees in the cases where I needed additional information and clarification on certain issues. However, this advantage must of course also be discussed in the light of positionality as it meant that I made fairly close relations with both people and sites.

I will just shortly also mention how I have chosen to deal with my empirical material. In the presentation of this it is my choice to give the informants plenty of room via quotes to express their emotions around the issues discussed. One could argue that my own reflections should play a larger role in this section, but it is my decision to step back and act more like a moderator in the text since I consider that the informants deserves the possibility to speak out in order for the reader to understand the differences in opinion between actors involved.
Regarding the number of interviews carried out and the actual choice of interviewees is also something to be mentioned. In some cases I was given names of people that my interviewees thought could be of interest for my research and I did find quite a few interviewees through this snowballing method (see Valentine 2005: 117-118). However, in some cases I considered the amount of time too limited to actually try to link with each one of the suggested persons and in some cases I did consider looking people up, but eventually decided that I should not because I actually doubted whether the effort involved in it would serve my cause in terms of useful additional information. It is, indeed, possible that I missed out on valuable information because of this selection, but then again, it is inevitable that as a researcher you have to make these kinds of decisions and especially this is the case when you spend a limited time period within the field.

In some interview cases I have used recording equipment and in other I have just worked with an old-school notepad. Which method that have been used has varied from time to time; depending both on the estimated length of the interviews and the information I was looking for. When I for example conducted shorter interviews with tour guides I chose to not record these as I considered that coping with pen and notebook would be enough. In other cases when I have been expecting longer and maybe also more in-depth interviews I have asked for permission to use a digital recorder and this was granted in every case but one, when the interviewee refused to be taped. Using just notes in some cases might be something to debate as one can discuss in what way this has affected my ability to actually record and collect all the information provided to me in a satisfyingly way. Valentine stresses the advantage when taping is carried out as it gives the researcher the opportunity to go through the interview over and over to find out whether something has been missed out (Valentine 2005: 123-124). However, well aware of the risk of losing out on information when not recording I made an effort to be thorough at these occasions which meant that I sometimes asked my interviewees for clarification on certain issues where I felt somewhat insecure on how to interpret the answers.

When it comes to personal observations, an integral part of actually being in the field, this is something that has provided me with lots of useful information only through my possibility to experience the sites and places I have been studying myself. Especially in the cases of Cape Coast and Elmina castles to where I did return several times my engagement with place became stronger as I got to know the people working there. Douglas Pocock discusses this as a part of humanistic strategy where continuing visits to the studied place or area eventually creates a linkage between researcher and research object (Pocock in Rodaway 2006: 266). Further, when these observations are complemented by reading on the history of the place or when further information is gathered through other channels (in my case through interviews) the ties between researcher and research object tend to grow even stronger (Pocock in Rodaway 2006: 266).
4.2. Primary sources

In this section I will list the main sources for primary data that are being used throughout this thesis, namely the people I conducted interviews with during my fieldwork in Ghana. Hopefully, it will also serve as a good introduction of the actors and stakeholders involved in the chosen planning context.

A very important player is the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board since they are the legal custodians of the UNESCO listed castles and fortresses along the Ghanaian coastline. Therefore I have been carrying out interviews with several of the people there working with these questions in Cape Coast and Elmina, among them Nicholas Ivor, the Regional Head of GMMB for the Central and Western Regions. I have also been talking to Stephen Korsah, head of education for these two regions and his deputy Essel Blankson. In Elmina I met Clifford Ato Ishun, the officer in charge at Elmina Castle. I have also discussed impressions of visitors’ perceptions of the castles with a few of the tour guides at the sites. Regarding more over-arching policy questions for the board on a national level I have also met Zagba Oyortey, the executive director of the GMMB and Fred Amekudi, the GMMB head of the Monuments division; both of whom I met in Accra.

To get the perspective from the local authorities at place I met Justice Amoah, the Planning officer at Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly as well as Labaran Fuseini, the municipal Planning officer in KEEA Assembly; the district where Elmina is located. An important player on the local level in Cape Coast is also the traditional council as their members are the major land-owners at place. Thankfully, in relation to this, I also got the chance to meet Osabarimba Kwesi Atta II, the Paramount Chief of Cape Coast.

In Cape Coast I also talked to representatives for the Non-governmental organization Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust who are working with questions around heritage in the Western Region. Among other things they look for funding, but their perspective is regional, so their efforts are not solely related to the castles and forts. At their office, located in the Heritage House in Cape Coast I met Jonathan Nyaaba, their Programme Officer.

Regarding Non-Governmental agencies involved in cultural heritage site management it is also worth to mention Ricerca e Cooperazione, an Italian Non-Governmental organization, based in Accra, who have been collaborating with GMMB on several cultural heritage projects in Ghana. I had the opportunity to meet their head Gianna Da Re at their office in Accra. In Accra I also met Carl Ampah, UNESCO’s national professional officer at UNESCO’s West Africa office to acquire his perceptions on how the sites are being used and managed and what is implied in the UNESCO World Heritage listing.
Regarding actors with an interest in how the sites are being developed I have also talked to some African-American repatriates based in Cape Coast and Elmina who are interested on how the heritage sites in question are being used. I got the chance to meet Shabazz, whose family runs the guesthouse OneAfrica just outside Elmina and who previously has been conducting ceremonies with pilgrimage visitors at the castle sites in Cape Coast and Elmina. I also met Kohain Halevi, an entrepreneur based in Cape Coast and Elmina, who among other things is involved in the PANAFEST committee. PANAFEST is a biannual festival held in the area that celebrates Pan-Africanism and its culture and it has been held since 1992 (Holsey 2008: 162-163).

For information on how the sites are being used for tourism purposes I have talked to Isaac Annobil at the Ghanaian Tourism Authority in Cape Coast and to Felix Nguah, the founder of Ghana Ecotourism Project, a private tourism enterprise based in Elmina.

There were, however, also a few persons that I wished to speak to, but whose perceptions I could not collect. One of them was Dontoh Cobbina, the director of Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust who was on leave during the time when I was conducting my fieldwork. In the empirical section I also devote a significant amount of words to the development around Fort Metal Cross in Dixcove in the Western Region and it would of course have been of interest to speak to the developer at the site himself. However, during my stay in Ghana I was not able to meet him which was a pity, because it likely would have added yet another perspective to the research.
5. Research ethics, reflexivity and positionality

In this section about ethical issues I will briefly touch upon a few of the issues that have arisen when conducting research in a foreign context, in my case Ghana in West Africa. I will also consider the concepts of reflexivity and positionality in this section as they are closely related to issues of ethics.

An important thing when making research, no matter the context is to make sure that the objects and purposes are well defined through a distinct aim and research question as you will be taking up peoples time with your inquiries (see Vetenskapsrådet 2011: 24). If one would fail with these things it would be an example of lack of research ethics. Further, it is important as a researcher to be open to respondents and informants what the purpose of the study actually is, namely to produce knowledge, but also as an objective for personal development and a degree (see Vetenskapsrådet 2011: 39). This will also come back when the time comes for presenting the results of the study. Therefore, transparency in all stages of the thesis work has been of huge importance.

In some of the interviews I have touched upon sensitive issues where different opinions between actors have occurred since I am investigating a place with a dark history. It is important to be careful as a researcher since this topic might be one that raises emotions. Since it was also one of the aims with the study to detect whether there was any conflicts (as there are in most planning research problems of course) embedded in it this was sometimes a fine line to draw and it was therefore essential that I considered these issues very thoroughly both beforehand and during the empirical data collection.

Since my main empirical data collection has taken place in an African context, the question of positionality and reflexivity is an interesting one as relating to this as one inevitably was foreign in all senses of the word when getting to the research field. This position is discussed by Paul Robbins in his article Research is Theft: environmental Inquiry in a Postcolonial world (2006). Regarding this it is interesting to consider these questions when it comes to issues about for example power relations in interview situations and alike. At some interviews I have encountered people in very high positions, meaning power relations have been at stake. Being aware of this I do think most interviews have been conducted in a constructive manner with an outcome for both me as a researcher and for the interviewee as well.

When doing research in a foreign context it is also of huge importance that one is able to adjust to what is regarded as local codes of behavior (Valentine 2005: 124-125), something that I failed to do on one occasion. I was about to start an interview with the paramount chief of Cape Coast and was told that I could neither wear a hat nor sit with my legs crossed in front of him. However, this experience only made me aware that I had to give this further thought during my fieldwork.
Then there is the question on how to deal with the empirical data and how I as a researcher chose to interpret it. In relation to this, Monaghan states that: *The interpretation is ultimately a personal one and tells us as much about the researcher as what is researched perhaps* (Monaghan 2001 in Rodaway 2006: 263). I find this quotation integral for the entire research that I have conducted because it emphasizes the role you play as researching subject in the creation of a research paper. Or as Paul Rodaway puts it: *What we study affects us and we affect it* (Rodaway 2006: 264). He continues to stress the importance that the researcher critically reflects of his or hers involvement in the research field as something that shapes the very outcome of the study itself (Rodaway 2006: 265). Therefore the findings and results of the study inevitably are the effects of the subjective, meaning that the results become what they become because of who I am and experiences that constitutes what is me is also part of constituting how the study will turn out in the end. Choices made during the way and decisions on which questions to focus more (and less) on are the results of my personality and therefore it is more than likely that another researcher would have made, in some respect, different findings.

It is moreover important to be aware that you as a researcher always have a position. In effect, you are always watching the field from some point and even though this point or position may change through your interactions with the research field it’s nonetheless a position. As Doreen Massey discusses it; you cannot do the ‘God Trick’, meaning if you’re looking at the world from a skyscraper you will still have a position meaning complete objectivity, using this view, is impossible to get (Massey in Pryke et al 2003: 75).
6. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this thesis is based on the ideas of humanistic geography and the central concepts of Space and Place and how these can be comprehended. Closely related to these is also the concept of Sense of Place which will be widely discussed in this theoretical section. Moreover, the idea around what heritage is and how we can understand this in relation to for instance place marketing and commodification will be entered in this theoretical section.

The outline for this section is to first make a broad description on how the central concepts can be understood and interpreted and then a slightly more case-related theoretical piece will follow afterwards when heritage in the shape of memorials is discussed in the contemporary planning context.

6.1. The Space of Lefebvre.

A concept that seems to be ever-present when human geography and planning is discussed is the concept of space, but how can we comprehend this concept in a concrete way? According to the French sociologist Henri Lefebvre one way to understand space is to divide it into three sub-concepts; which he brands representation of space, spaces of representation and spatial practice. The first, representations of space, can be understood as a way of portrayal of for instance a city through planning documents or other codifying laws that visually represents what a city might be. The notion spaces of representation is based more on individual and collective perceptions of space and what can take place in it. Through imagination, desires and cognitive constructions we can create our own picture of what space might be comprised of. What he calls spatial practice is then what we can understand as reality, in effect how power is performed and how the spatial reality is the result of economic and social reproduction in practice (Knox & Pinch 2006: 198-201). One obvious example of this would be the built environment around us.

In the writing of Lefebvre, space must be understood as a social product which at all times is being altered by its users. Edward W. Soja, an influential thinker concerning the space concept in the contemporary era refers to this as socio-spatial dialectics; meaning a process where actors within for instance a city affects its space, but at the same time the space affects the people or actors within it and that his process is constantly ongoing (Soja 1980: 207). Soja further claims that space by traditional geographers and urban planners for a long time was objectified as the Domain of the Dead (Soja in Graham & Healey 1998: 625), meaning space was considered as detached from its users.
Following this we can understand Lefebvre’s notion of spatial practice as something that is constructed through the spaces of representation and the representations of space through a dialectical process (Knox & Pinch 2006: 199-200). David Harvey further explores how we can understand Lefebvre’s triad in the production of space by listing several examples on how space is being produced through the three mentioned notions via four different categories which he calls: Accessibility and Distanciation; appropriation of space; domination and control of space; and finally production of space. The first one deals with distance and how this in various ways affects how space is being experienced, perceived and imagined. Appropriation of space refers to how space is being used through for example land uses, but also how perceptions and opinions of possible uses can take place. Domination and control naturally refers to power relations within space that has an effect on how space is conceived. Finally, the production of space, is the outcome through Lefebvre’s three notions in terms of for instance physical development (spatial practice), new forms of visual representations (representations of space) and imaginations of space (spaces of representation) (Knox & Pinch 2006: 200-201).

Lefebvre does not explicitly use the concept of place, a concept that will be further discussed in the next section. Place can be understood as space being given meaning in a sense, but we must be aware that Lefebvre’s conceptualization of space in a way enters also this discussion, meaning that space, at least partly, is constructed out of perceptions from subjects. We can also understand this from Harvey’s exploration of Lefebvre’s spatial triad above. Having said this; we cannot understand the two concepts as being the opposites of each other, but rather that they are interpreted and used in diverse ways by different scholars.

6.2. Experiences and memory – Making Sense of Place.

One of the leading scholars in relation the place concept is Yi-Fu Tuan and he argues that what distinguishes place is that something becomes place when space is given personal value through experiences of different kinds (Tuan 1977: 6). One can use the example of moving in to a new-produced apartment: When you move in it is empty, there is no furniture; there are no pictures on the wall and, since not being used before, no personal memories and/or experiences connected to it. It is frankly just space. However, when you have moved your stuff in, maybe put up some curtains and had your friends over for a meal you start to wrap the apartment with not only your belongings, but also with your personal experiences and memories. However, following Tuan, this is a process and it will take time before space is transformed into place (Tuan 1977: 136).

Following geographer John Agnew’s ideas around the concept of place it is comprised of three different pillars: One of them is location; ergo the Geographical coordinates
where an object is located in space. The second pillar is what Agnew names locale; namely the physical features of a certain body. For example the particular streets and the squares in city make up the physical structure that helps us to define the place in question from others. The third pillar is somewhat a little more difficult approach since it’s not physical, but cognitive. This is what Agnew chose to call *sense of place* (Agnew 1987 in Cresswell 2004: 7-8). The concept sense of place is defined in the International Encyclopedia of Human Geography in the following way:

> Emotive bonds and attachments, both positive and negative, that people develop or experience in particular locations and environments. Also used to describe the distinctiveness or unique character of particular localities and regions (International Encyclopedia of Human Geography: 96-100).

Through this definition we can understand what Tuan refers to as place through the concept of sense of place, namely something that is shaped out of our experiences. It is the experiences, either personal or through narratives, that contributes to the creation of a sense of place. It is the experiences and memories what makes something a place and therefore distinguished from the more abstract space

Cresswell agrees with this approach when he discusses the concept of memory in relation to place. He argues that even if memory itself is something personal, which implies that we will remember some things while others are forgotten, we must also try to understand memory as something social:

> Some memories are allowed to fade – (and) are not given any kind of support. Other memories are promoted as standing for this and that. (It is) constituted through ‘Production of Places’. Monuments, museums, the preservation of particular buildings (and not others) and so called ‘heritage zones’ are all examples of ‘Placing of Memory’. The very materiality of a place means that memory is not abandoned to the vagaries of mental processes and is instead inscribed in the landscape – as public memory (Cresswell 2004: 85).

Discussing place from this angle means that we shall try to understand place as constructed out of experiences. However, Massey emphasizes another view of place, namely that we must understand places as relational and that place, as well as space, is being constantly re-produced. Place is not only geographical location, but created by humans as a social and cultural construction which through experiences and interactions with other humans and places takes new and different shapes. Therefore, different meanings and value that create place can prevail at different times (Massey & Jess 1995 in Aronson & Braunerhielm 2011: 146).

Also Graham and Healey (1998), following Massey among other argues that we must understand place as dynamic and relational and that the idea of contained places must be
questioned since outer elements will always have an impact on how places will develop. This also relates to the earlier mentioned concept of socio-spatial dialectics, meaning that the production of place is always the result of interplay between the locality and the actors within and outside of it. As they argue; in the current planning and human geography paradigm relations and processes are being more emphasized than objects and forms (Graham & Healey 1998: 642).

6.3. Defining heritage.

The previous notion by Cresswell about place and memory lead us into the discussion of what heritage might be comprised of. What can be seen as a definition of the concept of heritage? Bella Dicks argues that: *History is dedicated to making forgotten pasts understandable, while heritage aims to fashion the past into forms that serve current needs* (Dicks 2000a: 60 in Braunerhielm 2006: 56). Here we can follow one distinction between what the concept of heritage entails and what is it that might be ‘just’ history. As we have seen when UNESCO lists world heritage structures their statutes argues that values of outstanding importance are the ones that should be recognized (WHC 12/01). However, the question still remains how we can decide what has this outstanding value and what has not.

Braunerhielm, in her dissertation on cultural heritage in Grythyttan, Sweden, defines cultural heritage as important historical remnants created by humans. This can have the form of actual buildings, but also of customs and traditions connected to an important time or place in history (Braunerhielm 2006: 24). When something, whether it is a building, a site or a custom is recognized and branded as a heritage we inscribe with a more significant value than some other entities and this valuation, although based on its historical value it may also have the implication that its economic value is altered, although this is not always the case. If it is a particular site or building that is being recognized as a heritage site it is something that can be used in place marketing of a town or a region in order to attract visitors and tourists and therefore also to attract capital. Kotler discusses this particularity and specificity through the concept of place marketing:

*Place cultures and the specificity of places have had a renaissance both regarding marketing and urban planning and the characteristics are often used to promote the value of the place (Kotler 1999 in Aronson & Braunerhielm 2011: 16, author’s translation).*

And as Aronson & Braunerhielm discusses further place marketing is to deliver a story about a certain place as a marketing strategy. It is therefore important to create an interesting image of the place (Aronson & Braunerhielm 2011: 16).
Katarina Schramm stresses this in her article about the politics of heritage in Ghana; *the very notion of cultural heritage already implies a sense of commodification* (Schramm 2004: 156). Through this we can understand that the very branding of a place or a monument as heritage as something of huge significance. In line with this Ashworth & Larkham claims that:

…what is chosen from the past is what it is expected to be profitable. In choosing from the past, commercial values effectively create a new culture. They allow us to slip easily between past and present, and whose values are based on the ability to be interesting rather than the need to be accurate. Commercial values force the past and history to diverge and the past becomes a product of the present (Ashworth & Larkham 1994: 216 in Braunerhielm 2006: 75).

When places are being used for branding or marketing purposes one can rightly talk about place commodification, meaning naturally that the place becomes a commodity that can be bought and sold. Shaw and Williams in their book *Tourism and Tourism Spaces* (2004) discusses the use of heritage assets for tourism purposes and that this is also something that can lead to a loss of meaning of the heritage itself (Shaw & Williams 2004: 174).

But, who are entitled to define what is heritage and what is not then? As Braunerhielm claims; *a person that does not know the significance of a certain building is also unable to comprehend its cultural value* (Braunerhielm 2006: 72, author’s translation). Therefore, she means, some people can find it hard to see why a building shall be preserved or conserved as one is unable to grasp the cultural-historical value in question just through its aesthetic values. However, following this we must also realize that different personal and collective memories are in play when we discuss cultural heritage meaning different narratives are being created. Even though we can read in the World Heritage Convention that the term *outstanding universal value* (WHC 12/01) is used as an over-arching term which signals that the heritage in question has a major importance of all humanity, this doesn’t necessarily mean that all people perceive it the same way. Rather, we must understand heritage as something that is to its heart subjective and therefore also is created out of subjectivities. Following this, Mondale argues: *Selecting particular pasts to conserve is necessarily a matter of continuous negotiation among all interested parties* (Mondale 1994 in Silverman 2011: 7). Further, Michel-Rolph Trouillot discusses the roles of people when history is being negotiated between people and groups like this:

History as a social process involves people in three distinct capacities: 1) as agents or occupants of structural positions; 2) as actors in constant interface with a context; and 3) as subjects, that is, as voices aware of their vocality (Trouillot 1995 in Silverman 2011: 9).
Through this we can understand history and more specifically heritage as a process that is being constructed in the same manner as place, namely through relations and negotiations between various stakeholders and the different types of narratives that they represent. This is also argued by Francesco Bandarin and Ron Van Oers when they discuss how identities of heritage places are the result of a historic process of negotiation (Bandarin & Van Oers 2012: 107).

6.4. Heritage as memorials: Sense of place at play?

How can we then understand cultural heritage in relation to horrifying events and atrocities, as there clearly seems to be incentives of preservation? In Paul Williams’ book Memorial Museums (2007) the idea of creating museums, monuments and other signifiers of memory as something that has become bigger over the most recent decades (Williams 2007: 9). He discusses the features of sites that are being used as memorials and how we can try to comprehend history from them:

The artifact represents two sentiments towards a terrible past. On the one hand, the ability for us to display the object in a museum reassures us that the event has been determined or resolved to some extent. As witnesses to history after the event we are confident that we have some control over what the calamity meant. At the same time the unease cannot be resolved (Williams 2007: 50).

Williams further discusses the concept sense of place in relation to how memories connected to certain locations attaches us more to the localities as such, rather than to what we actually see at them. He argues that:

It is arguably a sense of place – rather than objects and images – that gives form to our memories and provides the coordinates for the imaginative reconstruction of the memories of those who visit memorial sites but never knew the event first-hand (Williams 2007: 102).

Williams means, in the context of Memorial Museums that it is not only through our personal experiences that a sense of place can be created, but rather a sense of place can also be constructed through narratives and collective memories which means that the visitors at the memorials do not necessarily need first-hand experience of what has once happened there. Using the definition from the Encyclopedia above states sense of place is something that can be used to distinguish a certain locality from another, but not through the physical features of a building or a site, but through the values and memories we inscribe to it through story-telling, collective memories and personal experiences. As Young argues there is a specific reason why we choose to visit memorial museums which distinguish them from regular museums. We don’t come
because we’re fascinated or because we want to experience beauty. Neither, we come necessarily because we want to learn. Rather he argues that we come in respect for those who have suffered there in the past and it is our personal experience at the encounter with the physical setting that is essential to the visit (Young in Williams 2007: 6).

Williams further discusses the use of outdoor and public memorials and museums in planning. These are sites and spaces where we can understand historical events in a physical or architectural form (Williams 2007: 78). These sites located away from the traditional museums may serve as the most important sites of memory and importance because they have a far wider reach than regular museums. Or as Acconci puts it: A museum is a public place, but only for those who choose to be a museum public (Acconci in Williams 2007: 78). If one has to pay an entrance fee to get in to see a museum there is automatically a border that has to be crossed and therefore people who do not wish to pay are excluded from the monument or site in a sense.

In her book about public memory in post-apartheid South Africa, Coombes discusses Robben Island (the prison island where many political prisoners were being kept during the apartheid regime in South Africa. Most notable of the prisoners was probably Nelson Mandela) as a site of heritage related to the slave castles of Ghana. As these sites convey degrees of state terror and oppression they might be understood as a dilemma for local politicians and others involved in planning, as they are likely to represent a form of embarrassment for the governments and the authorities (Coombes 2003: 69). Relating to this Coombes discusses that ex-prisoners of Robben Island have been reluctant towards a development at the site which would turn it into a shrine like the memory sites of the concentration camps during WW II in Germany and Poland (Coombes 2003: 59). A shrine in this respect refers to a place which is kept sacred in respect for the people who have suffered there. However, the ex-prisoners also oppose commercialization of the island (Coombes 2003: 59) so there is clearly a fine line here that makes the issue of uses rather delicate. The question of how heritage sites are being used, for commercial purposes in the meaning that they are being regarded as commodities, is vital in the empirical material of the thesis.

Through this reading of the most central concept discussed throughout this thesis it is my ambition that the reader can now enter the empirical case study with at least some ideas on how the major concepts used can be discussed. Therefore we will now look at the primary material of the thesis.
7. A case study of forts and castles in two regions in Ghana

This section will be based on the empirical material collected during my seven weeks of fieldwork in Ghana. I have divided the material into a few key sections which I find the most interesting ones for analysis later on. The first section will handle the Central Region and the two towns Cape Coast and Elmina and the uses of the UNESCO heritage listed castles there. Then we will have a look at the example of Fort Jago in Elmina before we will turn our focus to a few of the fortress structures in the Western Region and how different uses can take place within one World Heritage listing.

7.1. Heritage at stake - The castles in Cape Coast and Elmina

Located on a rock that faces the harsh Atlantic Ocean the Cape Coast Castle is a most striking feature in the Central Region capital. The massive building, being painted in white would likely signal importance and significance to any visitor that comes around no matter if you are familiar with its history or not. It is also a building that expresses power and authority in every sense of the words.

After you have been able to make your way past the artifact vendors outside its gates you come to the reception where you pay a token fee to tour the castle; a fee which size depends on whether you are Ghanaian or whether you are a foreign visitor. If you want to use a camera during your visit you will also have to pay an additional fee for this.

Guided tours are conducted at the castle once an hour and before starting the tour visitors are encouraged to go and see the museum which focuses on the castle’s slave trade history. There is, however, also a section where one can study the actual building history, with a focus more on the architectural side of it and how it has been developed over the years.

The tours commence in the open courtyard of the castle and as a visitor from Sweden, just being released from the grim winter of the North, the sunlight and the heat is clearly striking. What is also striking is the scenic beauty of the ocean that can be observed from this position. When the group that will take the tour is assembled the tour guide will start by giving a brief history of the building and its origins and after this introduction one will enter the dungeons where the slaves were once being kept before they were sent to the ships that would take them across the Atlantic. Naturally, the shift of atmosphere is brutal, when one is leaving the sunny courtyard to enter the dark and narrow passages and quarters where hundreds of people once were packed together in dreadful conditions. There is only a small window where the daylight can get in and when being told that hundreds of people were being kept here naturally creates a feeling of discomfort. The tour then continues to the so-called ‘door of no return’ where the prisoners made the passage before entering the ships. Further on, you get the chance to
see also the parts of the castle where the administration of the time resided, for instance
the governor’s bedroom with its nine windows. You also get to see the Palaver Hall,
where the bargaining of slaves once took place. After the tour is finished visitors have
the option to patronize some of the craft shops that are present within the castle where
local artifacts and other souvenirs can be purchased.

In Elmina, about 10 kilometers west of Cape Coast, the setup is quite similar, although
the white-painted castle building is possible even more of an apparent landmark than its
counterpart in Cape Coast. In Elmina tours are conducted every hour Monday to Sunday
and the contents of the guided tour resemble what you can experience at Cape Coast
Castle, even though the tours at Elmina more directly leads the visitors into the area
where the restaurant and the craft shops are located.

The castles have been used as museums since the 1970s, but they have not solely been
used for this purpose. For instance the Cape Coast Castle was also used as a prison
during the 1980s simultaneously as people could tour the castle (Acquah 14.3.2013). In
Elmina the edifice among other things has been used as a police training school (Ato
Ishun 20.3.2013). Today however, they are open as museums and the GMMB have
offices at both castles, where Cape Coast Castle serves as the seat of administration for
the Central and Western Regions.

Where the GMMB are the custodians of the two castles in Cape Coast and Elmina there
are a lot of other stakeholders who would like to have a say of how the sites shall be
used. These include the local assemblies in Cape Coast and Elmina, the traditional
councils and the NGO Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust which is based in Cape
Coast. Another important stakeholder is also the African diaspora community, a number
of American-born descendants of African slaves who have decided to move back to
what they consider to be their home.

Kohain Halevi, an American repatriate in Ghana and himself a member of the African
diaspora, explains the contributions of the African diasporans in Cape Coast and Elmina
regarding the question of heritage:

–We are not an organization as such. I think community is an appropriate term, but our
presence has created an interesting dynamic on these issues. It is rather individuals
turned into a group and no significant sustained migration movement. However, aside
from the Sierra Leonean and Liberian experience it is the first time any significant
number of migrants has stayed here for a longer time and this has been able to add
another perspective to the discussion of heritage. (Halevi 3.4.2013)

Essel Blankson, deputy of education of the GMMB in the Central Region agrees with
Kohain on this matter:

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9 People who have been coming to Ghana as refugees, my comment
—People have to get their voices heard – Or else their story will die. The arguments are going back and forth of course. As for us; we want to put them into good use and the management tries to satisfy everyone’s wishes. Everybody has right to their argument. (Blankson 4.4.2013)

Figure 7. Within the community. View from Cape Coast Castle. Photo by author.

Figure 8. The last passage. For a period of approximately 150 years African slaves were shipped from the dungeons in Elmina Castle to the Americas. Photo by author.
Figure 9. In the male slave dungeon at Cape Coast Castle. Photo by author.

Figure 10. The market-place. After a tour at Cape Coast Castle visitors can choose to patronize one of the shops that are present. Photo by author.
Figure 11. A Striking feature. The castle is a most apparent landmark when you are approaching Elmina. Photo by author.

Figure 12. At the grounds. Both souvenir shops (left) and a restaurant (right) can be found within Elmina Castle. Photo by author.
Among the issues that have been debated since the emergence of the African diaspora community has been the presence of shops and restaurants within the castles in Cape Coast and Elmina. The difference between the two sites is that in Elmina there are, aside from craft and souvenir shops, a restaurant located within the grounds of the castle. Meanwhile, in Cape Coast there are several shops located inside the castle, but the castle restaurant, previously located above the male slave dungeon, was moved outside the castle in 1994 after objections were being raised because of its unsuitable location (Bruner 1996). The restaurant in Elmina and the shops at both sites are being run as private enterprises meaning that the revenue for the GMMB comes through rent. Kohain Halevi emphasizes that this issue is an important and sensitive one for people in his community:

−It has to be within proper perspective. They’ve got to have some commercial value, but it should not be commercialism. We don’t think this fits the atmosphere of solemn reflection. People are coming there for other purposes and then some other people are doing actual business there. We believe this is a contradiction. (Halevi 3.4.2013)

Many of the visitors also argued that the sites in Elmina and Cape Coast could be compared to for instance the memorials of the concentration camps in Germany and Poland as sites where human suffering has taken place and therefore they found the presence of shops and a restaurant (in Elmina) inappropriate. However, Essel Blankson of the GMMB does not agree on this and he is referring to the edifices former uses as market places as something that also should be recognized in the use today.

−The uses at these sites have been different over time. There have been so many functions. I don’t see any contradiction in having various functions today since it has served many different purposes throughout history. Regarding the market use – This has also been a market place. (Blankson 4.4.2013)

Besides the disagreements regarding permanent market uses there is also a discussion on what temporary uses that can be allowed on the grounds of the two castles. In Cape Coast the above-mentioned Palaver Hall, once the bargaining room used during the slave trade era, has for example in recent years been used for exhibitions. Also musical acts and drama plays have taken place and this is an issue that concerns Kohain Halevi and his community as they only wish to see artistic expressions that are in line with the purpose of the building and what it stands for:

−We came up with our listing of events that could take place including appropriate music and dance that we could allow without it being sacrilegious. I believe this was

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10 The term castle is a somewhat debated one regarding the edifices in Cape Coast and Elmina. Members of the African diaspora community that I talked to told me that in their community they most often referred to them as ‘Dungeons’. On a conference in 1994 it was also proposed that the structures should be re-named Cape Coast/Elmina Castle and Dungeons, but this proposal was rejected (Bruner 1996). Therefore, the term castle is used throughout this thesis as that is what they are called officially.
more through a consensus among stakeholders than through a UNESCO document. Every year we have the reverence evening the 31th July\textsuperscript{11} with a program designed as a commemoration. It includes spiritual music and even jazz was considered an appropriate music form, although RNB and hip-hop were not. Also drama if it is appropriate can be included. Not just any drama. (Halevi 3.4.2013)

Fred Amekudi, head of the GMMB monuments division adds that a certain caution must be taken towards music performances also from a more physical point of view as vibrations from music can actually damage the physical structure.

Despite these uses, both permanent and temporary, Nicholas Ivor, the director of the GMMB in the Central and the Western Region rejects that the notion that the properties are being used as commodities:

–When it comes to the question of commodification: – In my opinion it’s not commoditized. We’re a non-profit organization. Our revenue goes to maintenance. Basically, we need revenues in order to conserve property and to able to transmit it to the next generation.

It’s not actually free to visit, but we’re not using it as a commodity. Primarily; we want to educate and monetary objectives comes second-hand. Our main purpose is to conserve the sites as such. (Ivor 11.3.2013)

The above-mentioned notion of paying entrance fees to the sites is a debated one. There are for instance visitors who argue that the edifices serve as pilgrimage sites and public memorials and therefore should be free of charge. Robert Kugbey, one of the guides at Elmina Castle explains that the visitor perceptions differ a lot depending on where they’re from:

–We have for instance the African-Americans and other descendants of the people that were kept here. It is sometimes difficult to handle these tours. Recently, we had a British woman who collapsed out of emotion. When we go the room with the door of no return people will scream and burst into tears. We know they will react. Then we have the Jamaican Rastafarians and they have a different perception. First: They don’t want to pay. They will argue: –This is where we were kept. Why should we pay to see this? It is our home. Further; they don’t want to see a white man in the house. They require special treatment. They’ll insult white people and will not join a tour together with them. (Kugbey 20.3.2013)

\textsuperscript{11} This is the evening before the Emancipation day on the first of August. The emancipation day is celebrated across the former British colonies and in United States and recognizes the emancipation of African slaves. Slavery was abolished in the British Empire through the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act which was implemented on the first of August 1834 (Kerr-Ritchie in Webb 2008: 376).
Figure 13-14. Located next to the Atlantic Ocean, the castles and forts in Ghana are exposed to harsh weather conditions. The need for maintenance is therefore apparent. Cape Coast Castle June 2012 and March 2013 is a visible example. Image above: Courtesy of Johanna Lindberg. Image below: Photo by author.
That this is a sensitive issue is also confirmed by Shabazz, another member of the African diaspora community in the Cape Coast area. In previous years he has carried out tours and ceremonies with pilgrimage visitors at the sites.

—People will ask: —Why do I have to pay? I’ve come here to commune. I’m here for the experience. There could be donations instead. This is an emotional aspect and it is about the ability to be seen. People regard this as a sacred place. (Shabazz 29.3.2013)

Shabazz claims that it is maybe not the payment as such that is the problem, but rather the business-oriented attitude at the sites that people will react on:

—It is the attitude of the general workers at the sites – they are not sensitized. However, they’ve come a long way with better training. Although at the gates; when people have to pay they have no training on how to talk to people who are emotional. They will go: —Taking pictures is this price etc. It has happened with people I’ve escorted. They got this reception and didn’t feel comfortable with it. That’s a reason why I rather not participate in this any longer. (Shabazz 29.3.2013)

Kohain Halevi is also aware that this is an issue for some people, but he tries to be a bit more pragmatic at least regarding the entrance fees as such:

—I know some in my community raised that argument, but that is being naive. It is a lot of anger, emotions and mixed feelings around this. I consider it more of an anger that has been not properly addressed. More soberly reflections realize it has to be maintained. Most museums and alike will do this through a token fee. (Halevi 3.4.2013)

A visitor from Guyana, herself a descendant of exported slaves, coming on a pilgrimage visit to Cape Coast Castle expresses some concerns of the entrance fee she had to pay to gain entry to the castle.

—As a gesture of goodwill the government should not charge persons in the diaspora much more than nationals! I already had to pay 50 USD for a single entry visa. Having said that I understand the need to raise funds to upkeep the castle... (Visitor from Guyana 8.4.2013)

7.2. Contestation about uses – The case of Fort St Jago in Elmina

To get a good view of the range of actors involved in the usage of heritage sites in Elmina and Cape Coast, the Fort St Jago in Elmina is an illuminating example. Overlooking the castle itself the fort is a part of the UNESCO world heritage listing. Once built by the Dutch in the seventeenth century it is today open for visits even though there is no museum of the kind that one can see in the Elmina or the Cape Coast castle. As the fort was not used for keeping slaves it is not as sensitive when it comes to
new uses, but as of today it is not used for anything even though it has previously served as both a prison and a hospital (ghanamusems.org).

Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust is an NGO based in Cape Coast. It was originally started as a means for regional development because it was observed that the notable cultural heritage assets in the Central Region, one of the poorest of the regions in Ghana, were something that could be used for local economic development. The possibility to attract investment and therefore eventually local development through e.g. employment is seen as a way of battling poverty. They try to raise funds for different heritage properties in the region. When it comes to uses of the forts the strategy of GHCT is well defined according to their Programme officer Jonathan Nyaaba:

‒ We want to open up the forts for new uses. One example could be accommodation. It is all part of a marketing strategy. (Nyaaba 5.3.2013)

This attitude is in line with the policy of the GMMB who has the mandate of implementing the national decision to put the fortresses along the coast in what is called re-adaptive use. According to the GMMB homepage and the head of monuments division, Fred Ameoku, Fort Jago has been earmarked as an inn and a restaurant. Nicholas Ivor, the regional head of GMMB in Central Region and Western Region explains some of the efforts to put Fort Jago into use:

‒ Regarding Fort Jago in Elmina – it is not used at the moment. A guesthouse where meetings and conferences could be held was proposed, but since that would have meant a transformation of the structure UNESCO rejected the proposal. There should have been additional structures put up since the size and capacity of today is rather limited. There are also plans to use it as a training and education center for staff. (Ivor 11.3.2013)

Clifford Ato Ishun, the GMMB officer in charge at Elmina castle, further clarifies and also questions the position of UNESCO in this proposed development:

‒ There have been several attempts to convert that into a hotel. That place was not used specifically for slave trade and therefore it doesn’t have the kind of patronage as the castle. I know that UNESCO is listing structures and places, but, what is their role? How much are they willing to put in to keep it? I don’t know.

We work on development for something else there and to project it from another angle. That is, if we were allowed to convert it. When it comes to UNESCO – as long as the transformation is in line with the objectives of the place they will not have any issues. I think they have issues if it is converted into something else. For the Fort Jago there could example be a highwalk, from where you could see that the Elmina township. It would be in line with it. If a thing like that could be promoted, then, it would not be used for any other thing. (Ishun 20.3.2013)
Carl Ampah, the UNESCO National Professional officer explains that there have also been other proposals of what to do with Fort Jago. He also stresses the importance that the structure has to be retained:

–*In Elmina the Fort Jago has been proposed as a museum for textiles and beads. It is something to be looked at. However, the integrity of the structure needs to be maintained.* (Ampah 26.3.2013)

The development at Fort Jago is something that also engages the local assembly in Elmina as its function and use is not as well-defined as the case with the castle is. Labaran Fuseini, the municipal planning officer at KEEA district assembly explains that they are interested in putting it into a use that would benefit the local community in Elmina:

–*Actually it is this idea that we try to work on. St Jago would be a very ideal place to house a tourism development center. We are trying to see what we can do set up such a center. I think this would be an ideal location.* (Fuseini 22.3.2013)

As we can see there are many stakeholders involved also in this case even though the fort has no direct connection to the slave trade history since it was not a place where slaves were being kept. Although, Kohain Halevi stresses that the proposed transformation or changes of uses at Fort Jago is something that also concerns the African diaspora community, but maybe to a less extent than the monumental castles in Cape Coast and Elmina:
Regarding Jago; it was proposed to be turned into a guesthouse as it has served as a lodge previously. However, there was a strong voice within the community asking: Would it be appropriate? Would it function? It has been contested and at first opinions was strong, but however, the protest wasn’t as loud as in the case with the dungeon. (Halevi 3.4.2013)

Clearly, there seem to be a lot of struggles on how the heritage sites in Cape Coast and Elmina, the former administrative seats of the British and the Dutch in the Central Region, shall be used, but to make this issue an even more complex one we shall also briefly see what has been done with a few of the forts located in the Western Region.

7.3. Forts in the Western Region – a multiplicity of uses

Dixcove is a village located about 30 kilometers west of Takoradi, the third largest city of Ghana, and within walking distance of Busua, one of the most popular beach towns in the country. The village is beautifully situated next to the Atlantic and aside from the many colorful fishing boats in the harbor it’s most striking feature is Fort Metal Cross, from which one can overlook both the village and the bay. The fort, built by the British in 1692 (ghanamuseums.org, Van Dantzig & Priddy 1971: 32) is included in the UNESCO listing and was arguably one of the more well-preserved of the structures I visited during my time in Ghana. It is open for visitors and it is possible to take a tour through the fort which during a period was used for keeping slaves just as the edifices in Cape Coast and Elmina, even though these two were far more important since these towns were the heart of administration during the slave trade era.

However, even though the property in Dixcove is owned by the Ghanaian state and under the custody of the GMMB it has for a number of years been leased to a foreign investor; a British developer whose intentions it is to transform the surroundings of the fort into a modern resort with facilities like a restaurant and a swimming pool. Although alterations within the fort are prohibited through UNESCO limitations and via Ghanaian state law these changes adjacent to the fort dramatically have transformed the physical setting and this caused reactions. When the developer himself is at place in Ghana he lives in the old governor’s bedroom and his staff is living inside the fort permanently.

The fact that it is a British developer that has been allowed to lease a former slave fort is, naturally somewhat controversial as the British of course were notable perpetrators of the slave trade and later colonizers of Ghana. Clifford Ato Ishun, GMMB officer in charge at Elmina castle, explains his reaction when coming to the site in Dixcove:

‒It was terrible. I went there and saw the British flag on top of the fort. What? In this Ghana! That’s nonsense. Come on; be sensitive. (Ishun 20.3.2013)
However, Fred Amekudi, national head of the GMMB monuments division agrees that the development in Dixcove has been bad, but that a leasing agreement with a draft proposal has been signed and moreover, that the development is not on the grounds of the fort itself, but in close proximity of it in an area that is not under the GMMB jurisdiction.

—There has been development around. It is under the district assembly and not under us. It is bad if I can have my say. But, there was a plan before it was leased out — a proposal that has been accepted. (Amekudi 25.3.2013)

Whether the situation in Dixcove is something that has or will change attitudes towards leases is somewhat difficult to answer because different members of the GMMB give different answers. However, Zagba Oyortey, the new executive director of the GMMB, stresses that every lease or proposal must be considered in its own right and that it is therefore difficult to talk about a policy, even though he agrees that the Dixcove case is something that is likely to affect attitude:

—There is always a proposal and most of these things are not acceptable. So therefore it is impossible to lease it. Some experiences have been disastrous. They do not take enough care of the structures in order to conserve them. The case of Fort Metal Cross in Dixcove should change policy. Regulations have to be tighter. (25.3.2013)

Figure 16. Fort Metal Cross in Dixcove. Photo by author.
Figure 17. Scenic view of the bay in Dixcove at Fort Metal Cross. Photo by author.

Figure 18. Contested development. The construction of among other things a restaurant and a swimming pool in close proximity of Fort Metal Cross has raised serious issues on what uses can be allowed at the forts. Photo by author.
Figure 19. The former female slave dungeon at Fort Metal Cross is today used as a kitchen. Photo by author.

Carl Ampah at UNESCO admits that the evolvement in Dixcove is a bit problematic as it is something that might interfere with the content of the operational guidelines in the World Heritage Convention and that it has to be reviewed whether changes and transformations are in line with the original purposes with the structures.

“In Ghana there are over 20 forts and castles listed. If there is one not complying with the World Heritage Convention it may have to be removed so that the others are in line. (Ampah 26.3.2013)

This quote also enters the afore-mentioned problem that several different entities and structures are listed as one single World Heritage site. There cannot be a code that covers all edifices along the coast as they represent different things historically. However, in a case like Fort Metal Cross in Dixcove, the listing itself is something that draws attention to an otherwise little-known fishing village and therefore a de-listing would be problematic when it comes to local development and marketing.

There are also cases when other uses have been put into place at the forts which have not been as dramatic as the case has been in Dixcove. Among these is the Fort Apollonia in Beyin in the Western Region. Built in 1768 by the British (ghanamuseums.org, Van Dantzig & Priddy 1971: 44) it is one of the smallest of the UNESCO listed forts along the Ghanaian coastline. In recent years through a project where cooperation between several governmental and non-governmental agencies have been carried out, the fort has been restored and is now being used as a museum for local
culture (Da Re 26.3.2013). A transformation which, naturally is very much less debated than the development in Dixcove, but, nonetheless, still a transformation and a change of use. The guided tour that tourists can take therefore focus very little on the slave trade history, and almost exclusively on the museum for the local Nzema (the traditional name of the area where the fort is located) culture.

Ricerca e Cooperazione, an NGO funded by the Italian ministry of foreign affairs, was involved in this restoration of Fort Apollonia in Beyin in the Western Region. They have also been active in the restoration project at the Fort Batenstein in Butre. Their contributions among other things involve training of guides and carrying out of environmental assessments in relation to the restorations proposed. The Fort Batenstein in Butre, which was originally built by the Dutch in 1656 is located approximately five kilometers from Fort Metal Cross in Dixcove and is being kept as a ruin (ghanamuseums.org). It is however possible to visit it as a tourist with a guide from the Butre Tourist Development Center.

Gianna Da Re, director of REC explains their contributions:

–Especially in the Western Region our involvement has been great. Our aim is poverty reduction and cultural heritage management is a tool to reach welfare for the people. If people are properly involved and if they are given adequate training and resources this can contribute. There is a virtuous circle between conservation, sustainable tourism and poverty reduction. This is something that UNESCO also talks about. (Da Re 26.3.2013)

However, she stresses that they can just act as advisors, but what they can do is to put stakeholders together and they also try to encourage GMMB to be more involved in questions of local development. She says:

–We always tell GMMB that they should communicate more. They have few offices. They are a bit isolated in their castles. (26.3.2013)

As Gianna Da Re mentions UNESCO also emphasizes the role cultural heritage can play in local development in different ways and she argues the importance that many actors get involved to achieve a balanced discussion. REC has also been involved in the development in other fortresses in the Western Region, which I unfortunately did not have the time to visit.

Aside from the sites that I went to see there are, as mentioned, more structures in the Western Region that have been put into different kinds of uses. For instance the Fort Gross Friedricksburg in Princetown is used as a guesthouse and The Fort St Antonio in Axim has, like the Fort Apollonia in Beyin, been turned in to a museum for local culture. Another example of a re-adaptive use is the Fort Orange in Sekondi which is being used as a lighthouse (ghanamuseums.org). However, these re-adaptive uses are being contested by among other local chiefs, who often are the greatest land-owners at place. Also the African diaspora community is concerned of what happens with the forts
in the Western Region. It is especially the development in Dixcove that has disturbed Kohain Halevi and his community because it is a development that can be regarded as contradictory with the original purpose of the fort. He also questions the leasing of state property:

–How can anything be leased for personal use for somebody’s advantage? How can something under the museum and monuments board be leased? How it got to that point... well, I know how it got there. People can be bought and so for their personal gain.

We have an attitude towards all of it. There should be a general statute of limitation for real historic preservation. We have enough land here for these commercial edifices. The same amount of money could be used to build new structures instead. Not one single area in Ghana has developed its beachfront area fully. I don’t see any justifiable case. I have a blanket opinion on these issues. If it has served as a fort or dungeon it should be preserved. I know there were some fraternity lodges and if they were lodges I could be convinced, but many of them eventually served as trading posts for enslaved Africans. (Halevi 3.4.2013)

When we’re discussing the development at Fort Apollonia in Beyin, Kohain Halevi is a bit more nuanced, but still makes a point:

–I don’t have a problem with that development. There have been some convincing arguments, but still; here in Cape Coast the government invested in a center for national culture. It has land, meaning a culture center could be built around this structure. They have a designated place. Every regional center has its own cultural center. They have their own position within government. GMMB structures should not be surrendered as culture is being taking care of by something else. Even though cases can be argued, that is my position. (Halevi 3.4.2013)
Figure 10. Fort Apollonia in Beyin. Today it is used as a museum for local culture. Photo by author.

Figure 21. Representation of local culture practices in the museum at Fort Apollonia. Photo by author.
7.4. Concluding the empirical section

To sum this empirical section up, it however looks apparent that it is the two castles in Cape Coast and Elmina that are the most sensitive structures when it comes to different uses, even though all uses of forts along the coast are contested in some way. Kohain Halevi explains why Cape Coast and Elmina are the sites that concern the most:

‒ Cape Coast and Elmina are the most sensitized. Cape Coast was the seat of government, even though it later moved to Accra. Things like education and religion, the whole European influence on African culture first took place in Cape Coast. That history cannot be erased. No one can match the number of interaction and contacts that took place here. Right down from the tea and coffee to the toast and butter it was here, in Cape Coast and Elmina, it happened. (Halevi 3.4.2013)

Other structures that are not as much in the public eye seem to be less contested, even though different opinions occur. As we have seen it is also a national decision that the heritage sites along the coast shall be put into re-adaptive use. Nicholas Ivor summarizes the attitude of the GMMB and also notes that heritage is ever-changing:

‒ Things are not irreversible or static. Things have to change. Heritage is something dynamic, meaning uses could change from time to time. If you do not put structures into new use they will eventually deteriorate. (Ivor 11.3.2013)
This discussion of visited UNESCO listed sites in Ghana’s Central Region and Western Region shows us that the range of uses is big and so is also the number of stakeholders involved. From the outside fairly well-defined, but yet very much contested, uses in of the castles in Cape Coast and Elmina to the local culture museum at Fort Apollonia in Beyin via the very much debated and heavily criticized development at Fort Metal Cross in Dixcove to the yet undeveloped Fort Jago in Elmina we can see that there are a wide range of uses that can take place within one UNESCO listing. How we can understand these dynamics through the theoretical approach presented earlier will be a matter for the discussion section of the thesis.
8. The dynamics of space, place and heritage

In this analysis the intention is to return to the research question posed in the beginning of this paper and see how well the gathered material can respond to this query. To be able to do this we will now return to the theoretical framework of this thesis to find out in what way it is possible to draw a bridge between theory and empirical data in the analysis section of the thesis.

The over-arching research question was how the heritage spaces are being shaped by different actors. Another important aim was to identify the actors involved and whether there are any conflicts present on the issue how the heritage structures shall be preserved and used and that there are different opinions on how sites shall be used. We can through the presentation of the empirical material understand that there are a range of actors that, in various roles, are involved in these issues, both on an international, national, regional and local level. We have also tried to see how different actors argue what they consider to be appropriate uses of the sites.

We will in this analysis come back to Lefebvre’s spatial triad, to the concept of sense of place and also how we can understand the theorization of the heritage concept in the context of the castles and forts in Ghana.

8.1. The re-production of space and place

In the theoretical section the Lefebvreian triad of spaces of representation, representations of space, spatial practice was presented. The question is now how we can understand these concepts in the case of the forts and castles along the Ghanaian coast.

Clearly, we can see that spaces of representation, namely the desires and wishes of different stakeholders have a most profound effect on how sites are being used in practice. Together with the representations of space, namely through the national policy on how sites shall be put into use a synthesis is created which we can understand as spatial practice in the words of Lefebvre; namely the physical outcome of the power relations at play as well as the result of the negotiations between actors. As we have seen these results depends on which actors that are at play at the different edifices along the coast. The outcome is rather different both regarding actors and actions depending on both the historical and present context.

There is a strong focus in the debate on the castle structures in Elmina and Cape Coast. At these edifices, as the former administrative seats during the slave trade era and the shipping points of slaves across the Atlantic, the use is rather clearly defined and discussions of the use of spaces is more on a detailed level. However, one must reckon
that the significance and the importance of these sites for many people are so huge that even what can appear from the outside to be minor issues regarding uses are vital when it comes to changes, transformation and uses of the sites. As we have seen the presence of gift shops and restaurants within the grounds is something that raises concerns as there are people who argue that these uses do not comply with the purpose of the establishments, as sites for solemn reflection. Soja’s notion (Soja in Graham & Healey 1998: 625) that space no longer can be regarded as the domain of the dead is very much true in the case of the castles in Cape Coast and Elmina as they have changed in response to inputs.

Returning to the concept of place we could read in the theoretical section that places, in Tuan’s meaning (Tuan 1977), are constructed out of experiences, but we must also understand place in this case as being constantly re-produced to cope with the contemporary situation, whether this would be need for local economic development, as recognized by NGOs like REC and GHCT or through the perceptions of descendants of the slaves once exported from the forts and castles. Coming back to Young’s discussion that it is the sense of place that is at play when we visit heritage sites (Young in Williams 2007: 6); this is what members of the African diaspora community tries to emphasize. It is not because we want to learn or because we admire their beauty a visit is an experience, but rather we come in respect for those who have suffered there in the past. However, sense of place is, as we have seen, not universal, but is rather depending on narratives and collective memories.

The question of the entrance fees at the castles in Cape Coast and Elmina is another issue that might look minor from the outside, but is of huge symbolical importance for especially pilgrimage visitors because it enters the question what the castles actually represent through different narratives. It is hardly the amount of the fee as such, but rather the principle to charge descendants of those people who were once imprisoned at the sites that is the key question and maybe also the attitude among workers that people will react on as this is somewhat that goes across with their sense of place of what the site shall represent and convey.

8.2. Forts and castles in Ghana - commodities and memorials at the same time?

Coming back to Nicholas Ivor’s notion that heritage to its nature is something dynamic maybe we can understand the castles and forts as something that has to change in response to strivings for local economic development as well as to responses of vital stakeholder’s requests. Following Mondale (1994 in Silverman 2011: 7) we have through the empirical data seen that heritage also in this context is constructed through a negotiation of the parties involved.
We have seen that there are people, for instance the African diaspora community, who regard especially the castles in Cape Coast and Elmina as sacred places and to some extent comparable therefore with the holocaust memorials from WW II in Germany and Poland. Although, it is almost impossible and to a certain degree maybe also unfair to compare memorials from different atrocities with each other, it is important to recognize the role narratives and collective memory plays in the construction of identity and subjectivities. With less physical artifacts from the time of the atrocities, in comparison with holocaust memorials, the narratives become even more important. The examples of memorials in post-apartheid South Africa, like for instance Robben Island, are even closer to us in history than the holocaust and therefore somewhat easier to relate to. Coming back to Coombes’ notion about ex-prisoners at Robben Island and their thoughts how this site shall be used (Coombes 2003: 59). These ex-prisoners are, in a case like that, naturally considered as key stakeholders in this case as well as the descendants of slaves once exported from the west coast of Africa are in the case of the forts and castles in Ghana.

Through Mondale’s and Trouillot’s discussions that history and heritage is constructed and produced out of a negotiation among stakeholders we can in the case of the castles and forts in Ghana see this constant negotiation among parties; UNESCO, GMMB, the African diaspora, local assemblies and NGOs like REC who all participate in the planning process and therefore contributes to the production of heritage. What the heritage structures represents is subjective. In his notion on the roles that people play in the negotiation process of history and heritage Trouillot mentions the role people play as voices aware of their vocality (Trouillot 1995 in Silverman 2011: 9). While interpreting this we also have to consider that the strength of voices likely diverge between different community groups.

We have also entered the discussion on to what extent the edifices are being used as commodities or whether they serve as public memorials, for instance through the above-mentioned question of entrance fees. Coming back to Acconci’s notion on public memorials (Acconci in Williams 2007: 78), where he argues that a museum with an entrance fee somewhat excludes some people and includes other, while a public memorial is open for everyone. However, the need of funds for maintenance means that the castles have to be regarded as commodities in some way. Returning to Schramm (2004: 157) who notes that heritage is somewhat commoditized already with the notion of heritage and this might in this case be true as far as we regard commoditization as something that has a commercial value. There is however a distinction between commercial value and commercialization as noted by Kohain Halevi, which is why the presence of shops and restaurants at the grounds of the castles in Cape Coast and Elmina are contested by many people, because it is regarded as something that does not comply with their views of what the structures shall represent.
When it comes to fortresses that are less in the public eye the story is a bit different. The heritage listing draws attention also to the smaller fortresses along the coast. It is in the context reasonable that the Ghanaian state and the local communities regard the heritage sites as potential sources for economic development and it is therefore reasonable that they wish to open them up for new and alternative uses. As the case of Fort Jago in Elmina illuminates the number of views that can be present is numerous and this also emphasizes that a heritage structure is very much up for negotiation as many people recognizes its potential value, economically as well as culturally and emotionally.

A contested use that we have come across is the development at Fort Metal Cross in Dixcove. Most people that I met agreed on that this development is harmful, but in this specific case I do think it is out of necessity that we try to take a step back and look at the broader picture. Because, in terms of local economic development the transformation in Dixcove could as well eventually be a good one since it can bring employment opportunities to the local inhabitants through an inflow of tourists and capital. However, when heritage properties are used for commercial purposes entirely, it becomes a problem both in regard to the UNESCO listing and because some stakeholders argue that a full-scale commercialization does not comply with the initial purpose. Although Dixcove was never as important as Cape Coast and Elmina during the slave trade era it is still a structure that represents something else than what is now proposed for it and it is reasonable that this creates a sense of unease.

Although, from an analytical point of view the case in Dixcove is a highly interesting one because it poses important questions on what is embedded in the heritage concept and what heritage structures really shall provide us with. As Nicholas Ivor noted above, heritage is something dynamic and a transformation over time is most likely inevitable. Other re-adaptive uses like the local culture museum Fort Apollonia in Beyin are naturally less contested since the edifice in question are far from as sensitized as the castles in Cape Coast and Elmina at the same time as the transformation is not as dramatic.

8.3. The UNESCO listing as a paradox

To some point one can argue that being listed by UNESCO creates somewhat a paradox. The World Heritage listing means that the sites and spaces are being recognized on an international level, but at the same time that is something that limits new uses and development, like we have seen through the example of Fort Jago in Elmina. However, it is reasonable that many actors are interested to capitalize on the heritage assets present as well as there are actors such as REC and GHCT who recognizes the role these structures can play in local economic development and that they can be used as a mean for poverty reduction.
Uses can, as we have seen, be altered, but to a certain degree. The custodians of the sites, and in Ghana this is GMMB, have to get revenue out of their properties, if only to secure funds for maintenance of the structures. With the national decision on how the structures shall be put into re-adaptive use they naturally encourage investments at sites. They cannot however go as far as the sites are running the risk of being de-listed which undoubtedly would be an economical setback. However, in the case with the forts and castles of Ghana there are a whole range of different structures listed as one world heritage property which makes the question of how to use them rather complex. Hopefully, this discussion has at least thrown some light on how the negotiations are being carried out in this context and how these discussions can affect the use of spaces.
9. Conclusion

This thesis has sought to examine how the UNESCO listed heritage sites along the Ghanaian coast are being used today and what actors who are able to shape the use of spaces in different ways. It has also entered a discussion on what can be understood as context-specific when heritage is discussed. The UNESCO concept of World heritage is to be understood as universal, but the implications within it must be analyzed in the geographical setting in which the heritage appears.

One of the objects has been to identify the actors and stakeholders involved in this planning case. The emergence of an African diaspora community in Cape Coast and Elmina in the last decades is something that has created a more dynamic discussion on how especially the edifices in these two towns, shall be managed. Also the presence of NGOs, like Ricerca e Cooperazione, in the planning of heritage sites in both the Central Region and the Western Region illuminates that several perspectives are needed in order to achieve a balanced and sustainable development.

The theoretical discussion surrounding the concepts space and place shows us that these concepts are being constantly re-produced and shaped by the actors involved. However, it must be stressed that also heritage, in line with the contemporary discourse within the field, must be understood as something dynamic that has to respond to inputs and perceptions from many different sources.

The Ghana Museum and Monuments Board do, as we have seen, encourage re-adaptive uses of its World heritage listed sites, but it is apparent that a development like the one in Dixcove is something that asks serious questions on what uses that can be allowed. It also illuminates the inherent problem when a number of different entities, which all are appearing in their own contexts, are being listed as one, recognized already prior of the nomination of the World Heritage site in 1979 (ICOMOS 1978).
10. Further Research

Following Massey’s notion that places are constantly being re-produced a future study with a focus on how the forts and castles along the Ghanaian coast are being used would be of much interest since it is hard to tell which path development will take in the years to come. Will for example the experience of the lease in Dixcove be something that shifts the policy of GMMB regarding leases of their property in the future? It would also be of interest to follow how GHCT, REC and other NGOs contributions in the future will be able to affect how sites are being used.

It could also be very interesting to pursue the themes that I have studied, but which has, because of limitations within this publication haven’t been given enough room. These are for instance the dynamics between governmental national and local agencies in the use of spaces and how revenues are being shared. Naturally, more studies carried out around heritage in other contexts would of course also broaden the knowledge on how heritage is being negotiated and produced.
11. References

11.1. Literature


### 11.2. Internet


11.3. Interviews

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Isaac Annobil, Ghana Tourism Authority. Interview conducted 14.3.2013 at Heritage House, Cape Coast.

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Gianna Da Re, Director, Ricerca e Cooperazione. Interview conducted 26.3.2013 at Ricerca e Cooperazione Office, Labore, Accra.

Labaran Fuseini, Municipal Planning Officer, KEEA Municipal Assembly. Interview conducted 22.3.2013 at KEEA Municipal Office, Elmina.

Kohain Halevi, member of the African diasporacomunity in Cape Coast/Elmina. Interview conducted 3.4.2013 at Sanaa Lodge, Cape Coast

Clifford Ato Ishun, Officer in charge Elmina Castle, Ghana Museum and Monuments Board. Interview conducted 20.3.2013 at Elmina Castle.

Nicholas Ivor, Regional Head Central and Western Region, Ghana Museum and Monuments Board. Interview conducted 11.3.2013 at Cape Coast Castle.

Stephen Korsah, Head of Education Central and Western Region, Ghana Museum and Monuments Board. Interview conducted 12.3.2013 at Cape Coast Castle.


Jonathan Nyaaba, Programme Officer, Ghana Heritage and Conservation Trust. Interview conducted 5.3.2013 at Heritage House, Cape Coast.
Felix Nguah, Ghana Eco Tours. Interview conducted 19.3.2013 at Elmina Castle.


Shabazz, member of the African diaspora community in Cape Coast/Elmina. Interview conducted 29.3.2013 at OneAfrica, Elmina.
Appendix 1

Interview outline

• How would you define the concept of heritage? Try to compare to what is ‘just’ history.

• Uses, preservation and conservation of the heritage sites: What are the conflicts that one can find here?

• Importance of Place (Features/significance of sites). The *heritage value* of sites of history.

• Which role do the heritage sites actually play when it comes to local economic development and place promotion?

• Commodification of heritage.

• Non-governmental Organizations working with these questions. Is there a network? How are the organizations themselves structured? Is it possible to map a network?
Appendix 2

Visitor survey carried out at the castles in Cape Coast and Elmina.

My name is Ruben Wennerberg and I am a student in Urban and Regional Planning at Stockholm university, Sweden. This survey is conducted as part of a master’s thesis on how the UNESCO listed heritage sites along the Ghanaian coastline are being used today. If you do not feel comfortable to reply all questions then try to just answer those with which you feel confident. Any information is useful.

Nationality:

Purpose of visit:

Try to describe your experience at the castle today in three single words:

Have you visited any tourist site outside Ghana which you consider comparable with this one? If so; where was this and how is it comparable?

What is your attitude towards the presence of a restaurant (Elmina) and of craft/souvenir shops within the castle?

Do you have any general comments or reflections on your visit?

Finally; Thank you so much for your participation!