



# Examination of the relationship between authenticity and digital implementations

A case study of  
Besættelsesmuseet

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## Abstract

This thesis has investigated the perceptions of authenticity at Besættelsesmuseet and how the sense of authenticity is influenced by digital implementations. The thesis is originally inspired by a personal experience at Besættelsesmuseet in which I had a very entertaining and authentic experience while my older brother did not feel the same sense of authenticity. The main reason for our different perceptions of the experience was the use of digital elements. I personally enjoyed the elements whereas my brother preferred the more traditional physical exhibitions. This made me wonder how individuals perceive authenticity and whether the use of digital implementations improves or reduces the sense of authenticity.

As a consequence of my personal experience at the museum, the purpose of this thesis is to attain an insight into how the museum and its visitors perceive authenticity, the use of digital elements and the possible relation between the two. Subsequently, a literature review was made to assess the current research field in regard to the following three areas: experience, authenticity and digitalisation. The literature concerning experience and authenticity both supported the notions of how individual a tourist's perceptions and preferences are. In other words, the perception of whether an experience is good or an experience is authentic will be based on the tourist's personal perceptions. Moreover, the literature concerning experience and authenticity highlighted how digital elements are being implemented in order to better the experience or heighten the sense of authenticity. Due to digitalisation's great variation, the use of digital elements can improve a variety of different areas within the tourism industry.

In order to structuralise the rather dynamic concepts examined in the literature review, the Service Quality model (SERVQUAL) by Parasuraman (et al. 1985) was selected to create a manageable overview of the museum's and the visitors' perceptions. Due to the SERVQUAL's generic nature, the model was modified to suit the specific case of Besættelsesmuseet which resulted in the following gaps being used: 1, 5, A, D and AD. To recapitulate, gap 1 deals with the museum's and visitors' perception of expectations while gap 5 highlights whether the visitors perceive their experience to live up to their expectations. Gap A visualises the museum's and visitors' perception of authenticity. Next, gap D deals with the two parties' perception of digital implementations at the museum. Finally, gap AD presents the perception of the relation between authenticity and digital implementations.

The knowledge gathered from the literature review and the structure of the SERVQUAL inspired the following research question:

*Based on the SERVQUAL model, which gaps occur due to Besættelsesmuseet's historical background and its implementation of digital elements, and how are the visitors' sense of authenticity of the museum influenced by the possible issues related to these gaps?*

In order to look further into the perceptions of the museum and its visitors, the thesis has used observations and interviews to gather in-depth data about these perceptions. The thesis has a phenomenological approach which entails that the individual is the centre of attention. The use of interviews is especially beneficial when having a phenomenological approach because the interviews provide in-depth and personalised data.

The data were coded with thematic coding and then analysed using the gaps from the modified SERVQUAL. The analysis highlighted the museum's and its visitors' perceptions as well as the possible gaps in relation to gaps 1, 5, A, D and AD. There were no major gaps between the museum's and the visitors' perception of the aforementioned subjects.

The analysis of the gaps revealed that the digital implementations at Besættelsesmuseet positively influence the museum's sense of authenticity. The majority of visitors would express how the digital elements would create additional sensuous layers to the experience which would not only bring them closer to history but also amplify the sense of authenticity. Similarly, Besættelsesmuseet's reasoning for implementing digital elements was to add additional features to the experience that could not be attained through traditional physical exhibitions while also providing an up-close experience for its visitors. Nevertheless, the museum and its visitors stressed that the digital implementations cannot create a sense of authenticity at Besættelsesmuseet on its own. The digital elements are highly dependent on the physical buildings and objects that the museum includes.

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## 1. Introduction

*During the summer of 2021, I visited Besættelsesmuseet in Aarhus, Denmark with my family. The museum showcases the period of occupation in Aarhus during World War II (1940-1945). As the museum is a war museum, I had certain expectations for my visit. I am personally not very interested in war or history which made me rather sceptical prior to my visit because I had visited other war museums that I considered boring and tedious. However, my experience at Besættelsesmuseet was quite the opposite of my previous experiences. I was engaged and fascinated by the history due to the museum's use of interactive digital elements. The museum focuses on telling the stories of normal human beings rather than just showcasing bombs, guns and warfare. I left with a new perspective of the war and considered my experience to have been extremely authentic. Nevertheless, my older brother did not have the same authentic experience as I did, as he prefers more traditional, non-digital war museums. This made me wonder how the museum's use of digital elements affects the sense of authenticity that visitors experience.*

In the literature concerning tourist experiences, it is a common fact that experiences are perceived individually (Tussyadiah 2014; Jantzen 2013; Jernsand et al. 2015). Tourists will have certain desires and needs based upon personal preferences which influence how the experience is perceived. Additionally, this 'personal' influence makes it close to impossible for a tourism service provider to predict exactly how to accommodate the tourists' desires (Tussyadiah 2014). However, by having an insight or understanding of the tourists' preferences, the tourism service provider will be able to design an experience that suits the tourists' preferences.

A common desire amongst tourists is the desire to experience something authentic, especially within heritage, ethnic, historical or dark tourism (Wang 1999). In a traditional sense, the term authenticity suggests something genuine, truthful and real (Kennick 1985). The term has also been connected to honesty and simplicity (Boyle 2003). However, tourists' perception of authenticity is not that simple as presented in my introductory personal case experience at Besættelsesmuseet. Similar, to the understanding of experiences, the perception of authenticity will be based upon the tourists' preconceived notions and preferences (Gregorash 2018). For example, MacCannell (1999) stressed how some events that are staged specifically for the tourist can feel authentic for some, yet be inauthentic for other tourists that seek to experience tourism sites that are untouched and preserved against modern technologies. In other words, some tourists may accept a recreation or reflection of the actual experience whereas others will only accept the original as authentic. The decision of

whether tourists accept these recreations as authentic or not relies on many different indicators such as our interest or expertise in a subject.

Modern technologies are also becoming more prominent in relation to authentic tourism experiences. Digitalisation is a growing concept in the tourism industry that entails a variety of different tools which can be used to improve the tourists' experiences (Dredge 2019). Digitalisation is defined as the adaptation of digital technologies in everyday life (Urbach and Röglinger 2019). To exemplify, some of the digital elements that have been adapted into our everyday lives are technologies such as social media, wearable technologies and mobile apps (Dredge 2019). These technologies have been impactful to the tourism industry as the elements are beneficial for satisfying the overall tourist experience (Härting et al. 2019). To illustrate, the digital elements can help create new dimensions to an experience such as sound, touch, visuals and interaction (Benyon et al. 2014). The digital elements are in some cases used to recreate tourism sites that have been destroyed or damaged throughout time (Gruber 2012; EU Science and Innovation 2016). These recreations aim to provide the visitors with authentic reflections of the sites whilst being entertaining. However, the results of using digital elements are not always positive for the sense of authenticity because they can collide with the tourists' perceptions of authenticity (Kirova 2012). As emphasised in the introductory case, Besættelsesmuseet also uses a lot of digital elements throughout their exhibitions which raises the question of whether these digital elements positively or negatively impact the museum's sense of authenticity.

Based on my introductory case and the literature regarding experience, authenticity and digitalisation, it seems that there is a high risk of gaps in relation to how authenticity is experienced and perceived by different actors. These gaps can occur between tourists as it did between my brother and me, but also between the tourists and tourism providers. In short, a gap is when one party's perceptions are not in alignment with the other party's (Parasuraman et al. 1985). The SERVQUAL model from 1985 visualises such possible gaps that may occur in relation to the perception of service quality. The theory concerning the SERVQUAL model stresses that when the perceptions between provider and consumer are in alignment the consumer has a positive experience i.e., experiences high service quality (Parasuraman et al. 1985).

In order to assess the concerns regarding the use of digital implementations in relation to Besættelsesmuseet's sense of authenticity, this study will aim to attain an insight into any possible gaps between Besættelsesmuseet's and their visitors' perceptions of authenticity to determine

whether the sense of authenticity is influenced by any of the issues that follow these gaps. Based upon my previous experiences at Besættelsesmuseet and literature research concerning experiences, authenticity and digitalisation the following research question was drafted:

*Based on the SERVQUAL model, which gaps occur due to Besættelsesmuseet's historical background and its implementation of digital elements, and how are the visitors' sense of authenticity of the museum influenced by the possible issues related to these gaps?*

To attain a more in-depth understanding of the relation between authenticity and digital implementations the following sub-questions were made:

- 1. How do the museum and the visitors at Besættelsesmuseet perceive authenticity?*
- 2. How do the museum and the visitors perceive the use of digital implementations?*
- 3. In which way do the digital implementations create or support a sense of authenticity at Besættelsesmuseet based on the museum's and visitors' perceptions?*

## 2. Contextual background

In the following chapter, a presentation of Besættelsesmuseet will be made as this study is a case study based on the given museum. The presentation is made in order to provide the reader with an understanding or an idea of what type of museum Besættelsesmuseet is. The presentation will be based on an observation made at the museum, an interview with a representative from the museum and additional literature. Moreover, the chapter will also include two sections that give a brief introduction to two types of tourism that are considered to be relevant for this study. The two types of tourism are dark and heritage tourism.

### 2.1 Presentation of Besættelsesmuseet

In the introduction, I presented my personal experience at Besættelsesmuseet during my summer holidays in 2021. The museum describes itself as a museum that “[...] *tells the dramatic story of Aarhus during the occupation in the Second World War.*” (Besættelsesmuseet 2021b). The museum is located in the buildings that were originally used as the Town Hall and police station in the 1940s. However, from 1944 until the liberation in 1945, the buildings were used as the headquarters for the German security police (Gestapo). The museum has created exhibitions in the old prison cells and the basement that showcase “[...] *the story of everyday life, Danish propaganda and Nazi terror during the war.*” (Besættelsesmuseet 2021b). To accentuate, the exhibitions present the struggle of everyday life such as shortage of supplies and blackouts, but also the fear concerning propaganda, sabotage, terror and illegal printings (VisitAarhus n.d.). The majority of the exhibitions are centred around Aarhus, yet the stories could easily have occurred in any other city of a similar size (appendix 14).

As the museum only consists of three prison cells and a basement, the museum is rather small. However, the space is used efficiently. There are in total six exhibitions that showcase Gestapo’s headquarters, the war 1939-1945, everyday life, Germans in Aarhus, heroes and villains and the liberation (appendix 13). All of the exhibitions contain ‘traditional’ museum exhibitions such as physical objects but also digital elements that the visitor can interact with (Appendix 1-12). The interaction aspect is important for the museum as Besættelsesmuseet aim to create a space that is engaging, debating, educational and social (appendix 14). To ensure an interactive environment, the museum provides the visitors with ID cards that they can use throughout the museum. Each ID card provides the visitor with a fictional persona whose story is then followed throughout the exhibitions. The persona is not an actual person but all the experiences and dilemmas that the persona has is based upon real events (appendix 14).



*Examples of female and male ID cards – Appendix 12*

Throughout the museum, there are different scanners for the ID cards that showcase different aspects of the persona's life (appendix 5). To exemplify, the scanner below would present the persona's everyday life whereas a different scanner would present the persona's relation to the resistance. The scanners provide visuals as well as voice acting which creates a multidimensional experience for the visitors.



*Appendix 5*

The digital elements are common to experience throughout the museum. For example, in the three prison cells, the visitors are faced with a physical and digital experience as they go through the process of what would happen if they were captured by the Gestapo during WWII – namely interrogation, torture and concentration camp (appendix 1-3).



#### *Appendix 1-3*

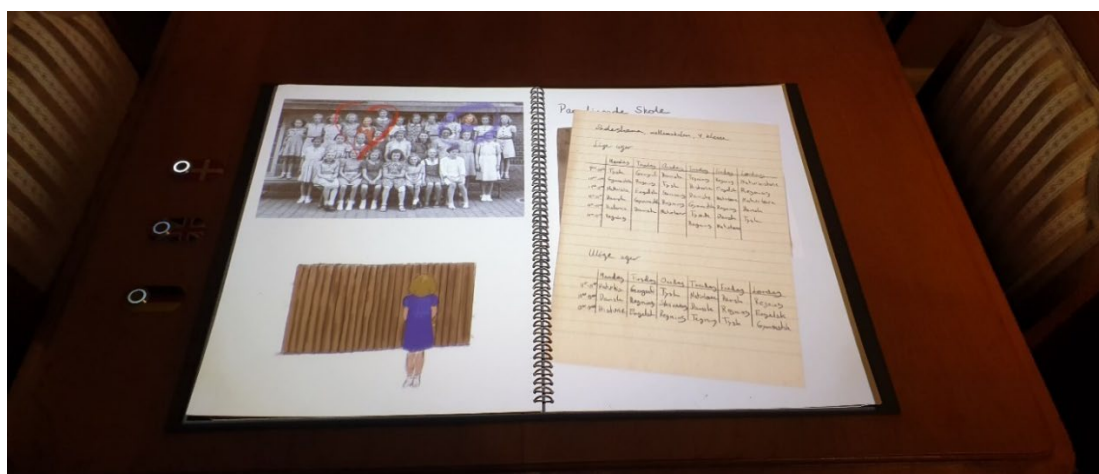
The combination of the physical objects such as the office desk, the wax doll and the pyjamas with the digital aspects create an extremely realistic atmosphere. To exemplify, the interrogation cell has a video running with a German criminal inspector (see the video recording of interrogation in appendix 1). The criminal inspector not only interrogates you, but he also reacts to the environment surrounding him such as the sounds of torture from the room next door.

The collaboration between the physical and the digital is also visible in the flat exhibition (appendix 6). The flat is arranged to look like a common flat during the 1940s. Additionally, there is a giant “diary” on the dining table. The diary is a digital implementation that tells the story of a young girl during the war. The diary is written from the young girl’s point of view in the shape of letters to her

Grandparents. As you flip each page you are presented with a new letter that adds to her story. The letters “come to live” through visualisation and sound. The letter is slowly written while being read out loud. Based upon the story of the given letter, certain animations and background noises are added to the diary. To see the digital element in real-time, a video recording of the last page of the diary can be found in appendix 7.



*The flat – Appendix 6*



*The diary – Appendix 7*

These are just a few examples of Besættelsesmuseet's use of physical objects and digital implementations. To see more examples of Besættelsesmuseet's exhibitions, go to appendix 1-12.

## 2.2 Dark tourism

As this study is centred around an occupation/war museum, the study falls into the categorisation of dark tourism research. Dark tourism is defined as “[...] *visitations to places where tragedies or historically noteworthy death has occurred and that continue to impact our lives*” (Tarlow 2005 cited in Stone 2006, p. 146). Nonetheless, dark tourism is not only driven by the desire to visit sites related to death and horror. Dark tourists often have a variety of different reasons as to why they wish to visit a dark tourism site. A common reason is the remembrance of the dead, history, national pride (Stone et al. 2018) or simply just a desire for leisure (Ivanova and Light 2018). The variety of motivations for visiting dark tourism sites can also be based on the specific site. Stone (2006) argues that dark tourism is a spectrum rather than a category. The darkest of dark tourism consists of sites of death, torture and suffering. The darkest sites are also often located at the original site and have a lower tourism infrastructure than other tourism sites do. On the lighter side of the spectrum, are sites that have a non-authentic location and higher tourism infrastructure. Additionally, the lighter sites are not directly linked to death and suffering (Stone 2006).

This spectrum of dark tourism is also visible in the case of Besættelsesmuseet. The museum has exhibitions that are clearly linked to the darker part of the spectrum but also exhibitions that are on the lighter part of the spectrum. To exemplify, the three prison cells (interrogation, torture and concentration camp) visualise the death, torture and horror that one could go through during the war. Additionally, the cells were in fact used for interrogation and torture which implies an authentic location (appendix 1-3). On the contrary, the flat did not showcase any direct link to death or suffering (appendix 6). The flat showcases the everyday life of ordinary people. The flat does include some aspects of suffering such as the diary on the dining table (appendix 7), but death and suffering are not the primary focus of the exhibition. Moreover, the flat is a constructed setting which entails a non-authentic location. It could be argued that the exhibitions related to everyday life and ordinary people are considered to be in the category of heritage tourism instead.

## 2.3 Heritage tourism

Heritage tourism entails travelling that has the aim to experience “[...] *the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present.*” (ACHP n.d.). To exemplify, heritage sites are often centred around “[...] *cultural environments, including*

*landscapes, the visual and performing arts and special lifestyles, values, traditions, and events.*” (Rosenfeld 2008, p. 1). Heritage can be categorised into three different categories. Firstly, are the tangible immovable resources. These resources are often historical buildings or landscapes of historical relevance. Next, are the moveable objects which are referred to as tangible movable resources. To exemplify, moveable objects are objects such as documents, pots, weapons, etc. i.e., objects that can be moved from place to place. Lastly, there are intangible resources which are resources such as “[...] *values, customs, ceremonies, lifestyles, and including experiences such as festivals, arts and cultural events.*” (Timothy et al. 2009, p. 3).

In relation to Besættelsesmuseet, the museum not only showcases the death and terror of the war, but also the human side of the war which falls into the category of heritage. For example, the museum has a wall of portraits of Germans (appendix 8). When the tourist presses one of the buttons, one of the Germans will tell their story and this story will be commented on by the other portraits. This exhibition presents a more personal perspective of what it was like to be a refugee or Major during the war. Additionally, the comments made by the other portraits provide an insight into how society judged or perceived these individuals. These personal perspectives can be placed into the category of intangible resources.



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Svabo, Larsen, Haldrup, and Berenholdt (2013) define an experience as “[...] *a process where people undergo the influence of things, environments, situations and events [...]*” (cited in Jernsand et al. 2015, p. 99). Thus, the experience is produced by the tourist interacting with the given surroundings (Jernsand et al. 2015; Jantzen 2013). The tourist will in other words have an active role in co-creating the experience while experiencing it.

Ørnbo, Sneppen and Würst (2008) divide the experience into three categories to attain a greater overview of the experience. The categories are the physical, mental and social experiences. The physical experience is how the tourist physically feels the experience. In other words, the physical experience takes our senses into account. The mental experience is when the tourist feels involved in the experience. To exemplify, when we have to think and act to be fully immersed in the experience. Finally, the social experience refers to “[...] *when the experience and involvement lead to empathy, interaction and communities.*” (Ørnbo et al. 2008, p. 27). In other words, when the experience is a launching point for social interactions, we have a social experience.

On a similar note, Tussyadiah (2014) states that a experience is not just built based on the surroundings but also the associations to “[...] *the senses, cognition, emotions, affect, and other values [...]*” (Tussyadiah 2014, p. 547) that the tourist has during the experience. Additionally, the tourist’s background or personal characteristics such as one’s “[...] *thoughts and feelings, their motivations, emotional and mental models, values, priorities, preferences, and inner conflicts [...]*” (Tussyadiah 2014, p. 547) greatly influence how an experience is being perceived and interacted with. To sum up, an experience consists of two different assumptions “*Firstly, experiencing is a coherent structure of present sensing and feeling informed by past experiences. [...]*” (Jantzen 2013, p. 146). Secondly, an experience provides the tourist with new sensuous experiences which alter or add to their previous experiences (Jantzen 2013)

These personal preferences are stressed throughout literature to be a vital element when designing experiences for consumers (Jernsand et al. 2015; Tussyadiah 2014; Ørnbo et al. 2008; Pearce and Zare 2010; Hird and Kvistgaard 2010; Jantzen 2013). To elaborate, the insight and understanding of one’s consumer will help ensure that the experience is perceived positively by the consumer (Tussyadiah 2014). Our memory or past experiences are what guides us to seek out certain experiences and the expectations that we establish based on our memories are what help us interpret the specific experience (Jantzen 2013). One way to accommodate the individuality of experiences is “[...] *to provide a series of units or modules that people can mix and match as they please and thus*

*become the producers of their own experiences*” (O’Dell cited in Jernsand et al. 2015, p. 103). By assuring that the tourists or visitors have many different options, the individual tourist will be able to create the exact experience that they wish for. The tourist can be considered as the real producer of the experience while designers, manufacturers or entertainers only provide the frames that an experience occurs in (Jantzen 2013).

As briefly mentioned, the senses are considered to be an important matter to reflect on when designing experiences. The five senses *sight, hearing, taste, smell* and *touch* are common to encounter in literature concerning experience design (Ørnbo et al. 2008; Pearce and Zare 2010; Tussyadiah 2014). Yet, Hird and Kvistgaard (2010) also consider the sixth sense as a valid sense. The sixth sense can also be referred to as the gut feeling. The sixth sense is more difficult to handle than the common five senses as this sense is simply about what makes the tourist feel good. As an outside researcher it is easier to determine what the tourist saw or touched during the experience, but how the experience made the tourist feel during and after is more complex (Hird and Kvistgaard 2010). Despite its complexity, it is crucial for experiences that the tourist feel good while experiencing.

One way to accommodate or speak to the tourist’s senses is through storytelling. Storytelling is the presentation of a given story related to a specific phenomenon (Mossberg 2008). The story will often consist of theatrical features such as characters, a plot, a climax and a resolution. Yet, storytelling can also refer to a specific theme that is the central idea for the phenomenon (Mossberg 2008). Storytelling can be used within many different areas of communication e.g., advertisement to tell the story of a brand or at tourism attractions. Storytelling is often used as an emotional connection between the phenomenon and the consumer (Hird and Kvistgaard 2010). As visitors are often driven by their emotions it is an important aspect to consider within tourism experiences. The use of storytelling immerses the consumer or visitor in the phenomenon at hand which creates a memorable and emotional imprint on the consumer (Mossberg 2008). Additionally, the consumer will often be more likely to be involved or interact if they feel immersed in the story. Besides the emotional aspect of storytelling, storytelling is also useful for creating a personality for a company, tourism attraction, etc. (Mossberg 2008). The story will help clarify the organisation's uniqueness which will differentiate them from others within the industry.

To sum up, experiences are complex and consist of many different aspects that all have to be taken into consideration before, during and after the actual experience. The experience does not only consist of one or two elements but of multiple elements which create one experience. Therefore, experiences

should be perceived as one entity (Jantzen 2013). In order to do so, you must understand each element and how they work with one another. This thesis aims to attain an understanding of the elements of authenticity and digitalisation in regard to tourism experiences. The following two sections (3.2 and 3.3) will present relevant literature concerning the two elements.

### 3.2 The concept of authenticity

The term authenticity can be used in various contexts. However, authenticity and its usefulness within the tourism field have been greatly critiqued because the tourists' motivations and experiences are often not related to the conventional concept of authenticity (Wang 1999). Touristic activities such as going to the beach or visiting an amusement park have no relation to the concept of conventional authenticity. Nonetheless, the sense of authenticity is of importance for the tourists' motivations and the experiences if the type of tourism deals with tourist activities or experiences such as ethnic, history, culture, heritage or dark tourism (Wang 1999) which is the case for this thesis.

Wang (1999) was one of the first researchers to consider elaborating the term authenticity related to tourism experiences. To clarify, Wang (1999) specifies three types of authenticities when dealing with tourism experiences: *objective*, *constructive* and *existential authenticity*. Firstly, *objective* authenticity refers to a sense of originality of an object. To clarify, if an object is the original it attains a certification of authenticity. This type of authenticity has often been linked to museums as you tour original objects when visiting a museum (Wang 1999). In fact, the term authenticity originates from museum usages in which experts would evaluate art and objects to determine whether the object was original or not (Wang 1999; Rickly and Vidon 2018). *Objective* authenticity can be related to the keywords original, genuine and real which all entail that the object has to be the real deal in order to be perceived as authentic. A copy or replica would therefore never be perceived as authentic (Rickly and Vidon 2018). “However, research into perceptions of authenticity has suggested tourism experiences have little or no relation to the originality of the objects toured and constructivist perspectives are particularly useful for elucidating these relationships.” (Rickly and Vidon 2018, p. 3). In other words, what the tourists feel or perceive as authentic is of greater relevance than what is conventional authentic.

This is referred to as *constructive* authenticity. Based upon the tourist's “[...] imagery, expectations, preferences, beliefs, powers, etc.” (Wang 1999, p. 352), the tourist projects authenticity onto an object. In other words, the sense of authenticity is symbolic to the tourists. By being symbolic the *constructed* authenticity rejects the binary understanding of authenticity and is instead considered to

be judged, emergent, contextual and interpreted (Rickly and Vidon 2018). This implies that the object and its authenticity will be perceived differently by tourists. Additionally, the symbolic nature of *constructive* authenticity also justifies that authenticity is based upon “[...] *stereotypical images, expectations, and cultural preferences* (Culler, 1981; Silver, 1993), while also demonstrating the agency of individuals and stakeholder groups in defining it in sometimes conflicting ways [...]” (Rickly and Vidon 2018, p. 4). Furthermore, *constructed* authenticity is often socially constructed which implies a social consensus of what is authentic and what is not (Wang 1999). In other words, there are no objective measurements to determine whether the object is authentic or not. This can also be referred to as “staged authenticity” which implies that the object or experience is inauthentic, but the tourist feels as if it is authentic. Accepting the “staged authenticity” could also be a result of the tourist’s search for entertainment (Rickly and Vidon 2018). This is also called postmodern authenticity. The tourist will accept the staged authenticity as it will result in a more entertaining or stimulating experience than the original (Rickly and Vidon 2018)

Finally, Wang (1999) describes *existential* authenticity. Unlike the previous two types, this type is not bound to an object but to a sense of being. This authenticity is ignited by activities that the tourist may participate in during his/her visit. “[...] *existential authenticity denotes a special state of Being in which one is true to oneself, and acts as a counterdose [sic] to the loss of “true self” in public roles and public spheres in modern Western society* (Berger 1973).” (Wang 1999). To elaborate, whether the experience makes the tourist feel a state of being your “true self” or not will be based upon the tourist’s assessment of the experience. Each individual tourist will have his/her own set of needs and expectations for the given experience which will impact whether the experience is deemed authentic or not. *Existential* authenticity is most often relevant in relation to nature, adventure and family tourism as the tourists seek a sense of their own authentic selves and intersubjective authenticity (Wang 1999).

Furthermore, existential authenticity can be separated into two different dimensions: intra-personal and inter-personal (Wang 1999). The intra-personal dimension refers to the bodily senses and self-making. The bodily senses refer to any bodily experience one may have during the experience or visit; whilst self-making implies how our self-identity creates an underlying motivation. As our daily lives can often be full of routines and set roles, we often wish to unwind to pursue a feeling of self-realisation through experiences (Wang 1999). On the other hand, the inter-personal dimension consists of family ties and touristic *communitas*. Family ties are a typical example of inter-personal authenticity. When travelling or experiencing with our family, a sense of ‘true-self’ or authentic

togetherness emerges. As the family is taken out of the context of daily life, they have been given the freedom to be authentic towards one another as their family bond is strengthened (Wang 1999). *Communitas* is also stated to have an impact on inter-personal authenticity. *Communitas* refers to a context free experience which deviates from everyday life tasks and where all are considered to be equals. The sense of *communitas* is often found within inter-personal relations between pilgrims as previous titles or occupations are forgotten and the bond to one another is based upon a shared feeling of humanity (Wang 1999). To summarise, *existential* authenticity is centred around how tourists feel about themselves in a specific given moment. El Kassar (2020) refers to this feeling as ‘being true to oneself’ and finding harmony within oneself.

Authenticity can also be categorised based on Cohen and Cohen’s (2012) definition of ‘cool’ and ‘hot’ authenticity (cited in Rickly and Vidon 2018). Similarly to *objective* authenticity, ‘cool’ authenticity is tied to a sense of scientific and ethical authentication. The ‘cool’ authenticity is connected to a physical object or site which have been accredited, approved and certified by experts (Rickly and Vidon 2018). The ‘hot’ authenticity can be compared to *constructive* and *existential* authenticity. ‘Hot’ authenticity is emotion-based and will be highly influenced by the tourist’s feelings and preconceived beliefs. To elaborate, the ‘hot’ authenticity is considered to be socially built and has an emic approach to the experience (Rickly and Vidon 2018).

As stated previously, the type of tourism at hand will greatly influence how relevant authenticity might be. This is further highlighted in Yi, Lin, Jin and Lou’s (2014) academic journal on authenticity within heritage tourism. The study clarifies how tangible and intangible resources are of importance when considering authenticity within heritage tourism. To clarify, tangible resources refer to landscapes, buildings and artefacts while intangible resources refer to folklore, traditions and culture (Yi et al. 2017). The preservation of tangible and intangible resources is vital for heritage tourism. If you were to remove a resource from its original context, the resource’s authenticity would most probably be impacted negatively. For instance, historic buildings or houses create a great authentic platform to experience aspects of the past whereas big, white and “sterile” museums are less of an authentic platform (Yi et al. 2017). Tourists will often wish to experience something of local character during vacations (Yi et al. 2017) which supports the relevance of authenticity when dealing with certain types of tourism.

Moreover, the study by Yi et al. (2017) also emphasises how “[...] *there is a cross-level link between national culture, tourists’ cultural interests, the authenticity tourists seek, and tourists’ cultural*

*motives [...]*” (Yi et al. 2017, p. 1033). The study presents an example of how reading Chinese poetry in a historical and cultural place will create more value and a sense of authenticity than if you were to read the poems at home. In other words, based on the tourist’s perceptions the poem and historical site are linked to one another which creates a deeper connection and sense of authenticity for the tourist. This “connection” is also of greater relevance when dealing with for instance gastronomy tourism. In the study ‘Understanding Authenticity Within Gastronomic Experiences’ by Gregorash (2018), it is emphasised how the overall judgment of authenticity always lies with the tourist. The study focuses on tourists who are already deeply interested in the food and food culture around the world which entails that they are quite knowledgeable of the topic at hand. Despite the fact that the perception of authenticity always will be individual, Gregorash (2018) does emphasise that there are certain criteria that the gastronomy tourists deem as important in regard to determining whether the food and experience are authentic. In relation to the experience itself, the following criteria were deemed of relevance: geography, simplicity, personal connection and historicism (Gregorash 2018). For example, if you were to eat sushi at a Japanese looking restaurant and the food was made with a sushi bamboo mat by a Japanese chef the experience would according to Gregorash (2018) be considered to be an authentic food experience. On the contrary, if you were served sushi in a Mexican restaurant made with an untraditional plastic sushi maker by a Caucasian chef, the sense of authenticity would be negatively impacted. Regarding the food itself, the following criteria were considered of importance: true, place, preparation, history, and ingredients. The experience and the food’s sense of authenticity are in other words constructed by the given criteria which implies that “[...]’ *There are various versions of authenticities regarding the same object*’[...]” (Wang 1999 cited in Gregorash 2018). Authenticity will in other words always be up for interpretation.

It can be argued that authenticity is turning into a state of mind that is created in the moment. This implies that authenticity will morph and evolve throughout time (Gregorash 2018).

Original tangible and intangible resources are no longer the sole distributor of the authentic. An authentic experience consists of many different aspects and can even be replaced by “fake” assets that the tourist might find more entertaining and engaging – also referred to as “staged authenticity”. Digital elements are for instance becoming a greater component in relation to authenticity. A lot of different tourism sites use digital elements in some way to improve the experience for the tourist.

For example, the study “Hyperreal Light Simulacra” by Jane Lovell (2018) showcases how the use of light projections can improve and/or create more value for a heritage site. In short, the light

projections or light shows were set on monumental, iconic, historic structures. The light made it possible to communicate an additional dimension of the architectural structure (Lovell 2018). The light projections were stated to create an additional affective atmosphere to the structure's historic sphere. Buildings or other architectural structures have throughout time changed purpose. The previous status as a mighty castle or stronghold has faded due to overfamiliarisation. The structures' authenticity relies on the age of the building and not the surrounding area (Lovell 2018). The lights can be used to re-establish or present the structures' previous times of glory. The lights are for instance useful to present the myth of origin related to the historical sites. The light shows are considered to be an approximation of the original object/structure. The lights are in other words a duplicate of the original object which has been slightly altered into something more (Lovell 2018). For example, the light projections are not only capable of telling stories about the site, but they can also replicate what once was. Old paintings that have vanished and fragile fabrics are just two examples of what the light projection can help "bring back to life". However, the light shows can be a negative influence on the site's sense of authenticity. For instance, if the light shows project something that is considered fiction or fantasy, the light show will Disney-fy the site and remove authenticity from the historic building (Lovell 2018). The term Disney-fy can also be connected to the previously mentioned postmodern authenticity in which the tourist is in search of entertainment instead of the authentic.

Nevertheless, the light show *"Some son et lumie`re performances strive to be objectively authentic, taking their narrative from original authorized heritage sources and recalling collective memories and local folklore."* (Lovell 2018, p. 197). By combining the heritage of the site with the light show, an in-betweenness is created. The visitor gets closer to the site and its history through these light projections than if there were no light show.

Based upon the gathered literature on authenticity, authenticity has become an everchanging and alternating concept. Whether a tourist will consider an experience authentic or not will according to literature be based upon their preconceived knowledge and perceptions. For example, aspects such as type of tourism destination, motivations and expectations will greatly impact how the tourists perceive the experience and its sense of authenticity. Furthermore, digital elements can also be used at historic tourism sites to substantiate a sense of authenticity. The following section will highlight literature and examples of how digitalisation has become a greater asset for tourism sites.

### 3.3 Digitalisation within the tourism sector

Digitalisation can be understood and used in numerous ways. This section will highlight the most relevant aspects of digitalisation within the tourism field. This overview of the literature concerning digitalisation will focus on the implementation of digital elements at tourism destinations which are related to dark and or heritage tourism as this thesis is centred around a war museum that can be placed into both categories.

Digitalisation can be referred to as “[...] *the adoption of digital technologies in business and society as well as the associated changes in the connectivity of individuals, organizations, and objects*” (Gartner 2016; Gimpel et al. 2018 cited in Urbach and Röglinger 2019, p. 1). As the quotations emphasise, digitalisation is the implementation of digital elements or technologies in everyday life. The adaptation or implementation of digital technologies can be divided into three different periods. The first phase of digitalisation is referred to as the *Sales and Marketing* phase (1990-2000). Within the field of business and also tourism, digitalisation or more specifically the Internet made it possible for companies and tourism destinations to use online platforms as a marketing source. Moreover, information was easily accessed online, and web-based reservation systems made the process of booking a trip much easier for the tourist (Dregde 2019). In the second phase 2 (2000-2010), the Internet’s role as the key source of information was consolidated – especially within the field of tourism. Additionally, the Internet advanced its technology and established virtual marketplaces in which customers could purchase more or less anything (Dregde 2019). The final phase (2010-present) has been especially centred around the interconnectivity between the digital and physical world. The third phase is dominated by technology such as social media, wearable technologies, Web 2.0, mobile apps, and augmented<sup>1</sup> and virtual reality (Dregde 2019). This study lies within the realm of the third phase as the digital implementations at Besættelsesmuseet are also centred around interconnectivity between the digital and physical world.

The evolution of digitalisation or technology has according to Härting, Haarhoff, Härtle and Stiefl (2019) had a great impact on the tourism industry. The digital elements can help satisfy the needs of tourists throughout all the stages of a tourism experience (Härting et al. 2019). To exemplify, before the experience the tourist has easy access to information and booking systems, during the experience

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<sup>1</sup> “*Augmented reality (AR) involves overlaying visual, auditory, or other sensory information onto the world in order to enhance one's experience.*” (Hayes 2020)

the tourist might interact with digital elements at the tourism site, and after the visit, the tourist has the option to evaluate his/her opinion of the experience on social media.

This importance of technology is also highlighted in da Costa Liberato, González and de Azevedo Liberato's (2018) study on the smart destination Porto. The study examined the importance of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the city of Porto. The study concluded that access to the internet was of great importance before and during the trip. For example, the study stressed that during a trip, tourists value free access to the internet at places like the airport and hotels. By providing access to the internet, it was easier for the tourists to navigate and plan the trip during their stay in Porto which resulted in a better experience for the tourists (da Costa Liberato et al. 2018). ICT is a very broad term that entails a big assortment of different technologies (Techopedia 2020). In Da Costa Liberato's (et al. 2018) study the main focus was on technologies that provided the tourist with specific information related to their visit to Porto; whereas this specific thesis aims to look into ICTs which the tourist physically interacts with when they visit a certain destination such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality or robots (Pratt 2019). The following section will present a variety of literature that deals with interactive ICTs at tourism destinations. This is also referred to as digitally enhanced tourism (Benyon et al. 2014). The use of technologies at tourism destinations "[...] *further improve the quality or extent of a tourist experience (Uriely 2005).*" (Uriely 2005 cited in Benyon et al. 2014 p. 522) as the tourist is able to be actively immersed in the experience which had previously been unobtainable (Benyon et al. 2014).

Benyon (2014) use the house of Edgar Allen Poe as an example of a scenario in which digital elements can improve and make a tourism experience immersive. By implementing GPS coordinates and near-field communication (NFC) at the destination, it would be possible to create location-based triggered events (Benyon et al. 2014). To clarify, the tourist will carry a mobile device which will be triggered to do certain commands at certain locations. By adding this additional dimension to the experience, the experience invokes an emotional and engaging experience for the tourist (Benyon et al. 2014).

Digitalisation can also be used as an engaging source of information. For instance, this thesis was further motivated by an article and a video regarding two concentration camps from World War II which highlight how digitalisation or digital elements can help create a deeper understanding of history. The article by Ruth Ellen Gruber (2012) describes how an iPad/iPhone app can be used to relive the story of the Jewish city Oswiecim, Poland also known as the hometown of Auschwitz. "[...] *the app includes augmented reality, testimonies of survivors, an audio-guide of the town's*

*Jewish heritage sites and 3D models of the destroyed Great Synagogue.*” (Gruber 2012). The app is a useful tool to educate and communicate about the city’s state before the holocaust and all the destructions and horrors that followed after Auschwitz was built. Similarly, the video by EU Science and Innovation (2016) was also centred around how augmented reality could be used to experience historic sites. The video clip showcased the old site of the concentration camp in Bergen-Belsen in Germany. The building of the concentration camp itself was destroyed and now the site is nothing more than a green area. The video shows how a special iPad is used to recreate the old buildings and surrounding area. Along with the digitally created buildings on the iPad, the device also provides stories and information about the site (EU Science and Innovation 2016). In the video, the historian Stephanie Billib emphasises how the digital element can help keep the story alive and provide visitors with an understanding of the place. Billib stated that without the digital element it is difficult for the visitors to comprehend what has actually happened at the site (EU Science and Innovation 2016). Moreover, the video also stressed that the digital elements create a sense of freedom for the visitor. There is no guide that the visitors have to follow. The visitor gets to create his/her own path and spend however long they wish at the site (EU Science and Innovation 2016).

Even though digitalisation does have its benefits, it is important to implement digital elements with caution. When creating a blended space between the physical and the digital world there must be a sense of naturalness. The digital content must be appropriate for the given physical space (Benyon et al. 2014). Each physical site or space has a certain set of characteristics which entails a sense of sensitivity to the implementation of digital elements.

For instance, docugames related to rather sensitive events such as 9/11 and Chernobyl have been perceived as inappropriate by certain audiences. In short, a docugame is a computer game that allows the player to play through some type of historical event (Hassapopoulou 2018). These games are at times also categorised as virtual tourism. The docugames regarding 9/11 and Chernobyl have been highly critiqued as they are considered inappropriate. To exemplify, the 9/11 game (called 08:46) was banned from online digital gaming platforms as it was perceived to be an “[...] *anti-American trivialization of 9/11 through the mechanisms play.*” (Hassapopoulou 2018, p. 380). Moreover, many gamers that played the game had emotional breakdowns after playing as the game simply became too real for them (Hassapopoulou 2018) - for a visual example see Reality Check VR (2015) minute mark: 11:45-12:56). Hassapopoulou (2018) stresses that when dealing with docugames the ethical standards are higher due to the incorporation of involving the player. This implies that there is a rather large taboo concerning collectively traumatic events (Hassapopoulou 2018). Furthermore, despite the

aims of improving the visual quality to make the videogames as realistic as possible, it is not beneficial for docugames to be too realistic. On the contrary, ensuring that the docugames have a fourth wall such as not being too realistic is beneficial because this safely distances the user from the game and thereby does not overwhelm “[...] *the user’s ability for independent thinking.*” (Hassapopoulou 2018, p. 384). These aspects can also be of relevance when implementing digital elements at a destination or site if the destination is related to a collectively traumatic event. To summarise, by ensuring the fourth wall to digital implementations the traumatic event is kept at a safe distance.

The use of digital elements can also affect the authenticity of an experience. Valentina Kirova (2012) examined the use of digital elements within wine tourism and discovered that the digital elements could complicate the experience. The digital implementations at the winery did create value for the tourists’ experiences as the elements made the experience more interactive and engaging. Additionally, the tourist was also given “free reign” during their experience as they could pick and choose what they wanted to spend their time on because they did not have to follow a guide. Nonetheless, the tourists desired a more traditional experience (Kirova 2012). The digital elements were at times considered ‘childlike’ and untraditional. Wine tourism is often defined by its “[...] *ancestral traditions and culture that highlights the terroir, the winescape, wine tasting, and gastronomy.*” (Kirova 2012, p. 648). Hence, these traditions and cultures do not cooperate nicely with the use of digital elements. In other words, there is a contrast between the grounded traditional values and terroir related to wine tourism and the modern technology at the site. This creates cognitive dissonance in the visitor’s mind (Kirova 2012). Kirova’s (2012) study emphasises how digital elements should be implemented with care within tourism. The tourist’s desires and expectations of a certain tourism experience should be taken into consideration when implementing digital elements. Moreover, the destination’s attributes or connotations should also be taken into account. For example, if the destination is rooted in some type of tradition or culture the digital elements must not overshadow the ‘original’ attributes of the destination, but on the contrary support the traditional attributes in some way. Similarly, to the consideration regarding docugames there must be a balance between the digital world and reality.

### 3.4 Literature summary

The literature review provided a necessary insight into the three terms experience, authenticity and digitalisation. The review highlighted how experience and authenticity are two touristic terms that are both heavily influenced by the tourists’ individual preferences. In regard to experiences, tourists

will have different preferences and motivations in relation to what they wish to experience and how they wish to experience it. Likewise, the perception of authenticity is also a question of how the tourist perceives and understands authenticity. There is no objective understanding of what is authentic and what is not.

On the other hand, digitalisation is a more tangible term that refers to digital elements. These elements can be used to adapt to the tourists' desires and needs. Thereby, enhancing the experience or possibly the sense of authenticity.

## 4. Philosophy of science

As emphasised in the literature review, the tourist is of greatest importance when dealing with tourist experiences and authenticity. Therefore, it was deemed optimal to conduct this study with a phenomenological approach. The philosophy of phenomenology will be further discussed in the following section.

### 4.1 Phenomenology

In the 1900s, phenomenology was introduced by philosopher Edward Husserl (Giorgi 2009). This social science is considered to be an approach that seeks to understand an individual's sense-making framework (Daymon and Holloway 2011). In other words, phenomenology examines how individuals interpret phenomena such as events, experiences and objects.

Phenomenology is centred around phenomena (Zahavi 2018) which can be defined as “[...] *anything that can present itself to consciousness [...]*” (Giorgi 2009, p.10). To elaborate, phenomena are something that we encounter in our lives whether it is physical or immaterial objects. It is important to note that phenomenology is focused on *how* rather than *what*. To clarify, within phenomenology *what* object is being dealt with is not of greater importance, but *how* the given object “[...] *shows or displays itself, i.e., in how it appears.*” (Zahavi 2018, p. 9) is vital. An object is never isolated but always embedded in some type of context (Zahavi 2018).

Context can be defined as “*The situation within which something exists or happens, and that can help explain it.*” (Cambridge Dictionary n.d.a.). Nonetheless, the concept of context does not only refer to a physical situation. Context in temporal terms entails how “*We encounter the present on the basis of the past, and with plans and expectations for the future.*” (Zahavi 2018, p. 13). To elaborate, how we experience a given object is influenced by the situation we are in, our previous experiences and

preconceived knowledge. This is also referred to as the individual's *lifeworld*. In brief, "*The lifeworld is, unsurprisingly, the world we live in.*" (Zahavi 2018, p. 51). The *lifeworld* is constructed based on our everyday lives, routines, experiences, etc. (Giorgi 2009). This implies that a *lifeworld* is unique to each person. As the *lifeworld* is unique to each individual, phenomenology has the ontological approach that a singular objective reality does not exist (Giorgi 2009). The reality will be unique and individually influenced by the *lifeworlds* we live in.

According to Daymon and Holloway (2011), when doing research rooted in phenomenology the researcher will aim to attain an insight into the individual's perceptions of their experiences with a specific phenomenon. These phenomena are often everyday events, yet they are examined critically to attain a new understanding of the phenomena and not rely on previous beliefs (Daymon and Holloway 2011).

In regard to data sources, the phenomenologist Max van Manen states that a variety of different data sources can be utilised when doing phenomenological research (cited in Ehrich 2005). To exemplify, sources such as one's own personal experience, a phenomenon's etymology, experiential descriptions in literature and art, experiential descriptions from interviews or observations and phenomenological literature (Ehrich 2005) are all data sources that are considered to be legitimate ways to attain an understanding of a given phenomenon.

Despite the fact that phenomenology is rooted in the individual's experience, the concept of intersubjectivity rose from Husserl's original work. The notion of intersubjectivity entails that we do not exist independently in this world but have a shared world that we experience in (Daymon and Holloway 2011). This implies that the individual's *lifeworld* is impacted by the social context in which they live (Cal and Tehmarn 2016).

#### 4.1.1 Hermeneutical phenomenology

From the concept of intersubjectivity, a variety of different branches of phenomenology emerged. One of them being hermeneutical phenomenology. Martin Heidegger was one of the first philosophers to develop the concept of hermeneutical phenomenology (Cal Tehmarn 2016). In contrast to Husserl, Heidegger's epistemological view on phenomenology was that an individual cannot be completely separated from the outside world. Additionally, an individual cannot fully bracket one's biases, values or assumptions when perceiving an object or attaining new information (Cal Tehmarn 2016). By not being able to bracket oneself, hermeneutical phenomenology is considered to be interpretative, unlike the original phenomenology which is descriptive. According

to Heidegger “[...] *to be human is to interpret and that every encounter with a phenomenon requires an interpretation that is influenced by one’s background or historicity [sic].*” (cited in Cal and Tehmarn 2016, p. 9). To clarify, the act of interpretation is necessary for human beings to understand a given phenomenon. The interpretation is based upon the individual's historicity which is defined as “[...] *a person’s history or background, [that] includes what a culture gives a person from birth and is handed down, presenting ways of understanding the world.*” (Lavery 2003, p. 24). This background is the base of how humans interpret.

Furthermore, Heidegger’s work was especially influenced by the hermeneutic philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey which led to the introduction of the hermeneutical circle within phenomenology to gain a deeper understanding of phenomena (Cal and Tehmarn 2016). The implementation of the hermeneutical circle is in alignment with the thought that one’s background is the base of how we understand.

#### 4.1.1.1 Hermeneutical circle

The hermeneutical circle is a hermeneutical method to interpret text or other aspects of life (see figure 1). The method illustrates how it is necessary to understand the parts in order to understand the entirety and by understanding the entirety a new understanding of the parts is attained and so on (Kerdeman 2014). In other words, our interpretations and understandings of the parts and the whole are continuously changing through the circular motion.

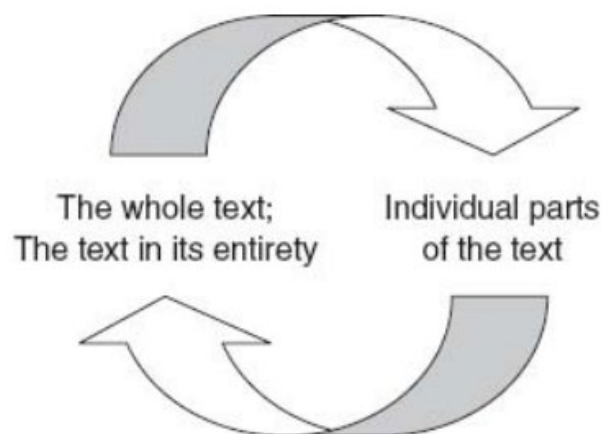


Figure 1: Hermeneutical circle

(Schwandt 2007, p. 2)

To elaborate, Charles Guignon (2012) describes the process of circular understanding as such:

*“It starts out from our general sense of what things are all about, uses that background of understanding in order to interpret particular phenomena, and on the basis of these concrete interpretations revises its initial general sense of what things mean. (cited in Cal and Tehmarn 2016, p. 10)*

To clarify, the process of the hermeneutical circle in relation to phenomenology begins with a phenomenon that the individual has an initial understanding of. By examining and interpreting the given phenomenon, a new understanding of its context is reached which alters the understanding of the phenomenon itself.

#### 4.2 Use of phenomenology within this study

As this thesis aims to attain an insight into the museum's and visitors' perception of authenticity and digital implementation, the phenomenological approach is considered to be the best option for this given study. To elaborate, the thesis will examine how Besættelsesmuseet and its visitors perceive the phenomena of authenticity, digital elements and the relation between the two. As stated in section 3.4, the concept of authenticity is based on individual perceptions and cannot be put into a certain definition. Hence, the use of phenomenology as a philosophy is preferred.

Moreover, the study is aimed to have a hermeneutical understanding process. To clarify, the thesis was originally inspired by a personal experience at the museum during the summer of 2021. This first visit provided me with an initial understanding of the museum and the sense of authenticity that I experienced. This understanding was renewed after an interview with the leader and the curator of the museum on 6. April 2022. The interview provided me with new knowledge about the museum and its choices regarding digital usage. After the interview, an observation was conducted which again resulted in a new understanding of the museum and its exhibitions. On 9. and 13. April 2022 a second round of interviews was conducted with the visitors at the museum. Once again, this gathering of data entailed a new understanding of authenticity and the museum. Finally, as the analysis is made the interpretation of all the data will result in a new understanding.

#### 4.3 Limitations of phenomenology

Nonetheless, from an objective or positivistic standpoint, the philosophy does come with a set of limitations. The greatest limitation that comes with phenomenology is the fact that the researcher will always influence the study in terms of interpretations. Phenomenology acknowledged that the researcher would have some preconceived notions that will impact how the researcher understands

and interprets the *lifeworlds* of participants. The conclusion based upon these interpretations will for some scholars imply that the conclusion is useless. However, this is not a greater concern as phenomenology stresses that there is no objective reality, and that all data is interpreted in some way in order to understand what the data means.

Furthermore, the *lifeworlds* of the interview participants are also considered a limitation. As a researcher, you only get a partial insight into the participants' *lifeworlds*. The partial insight entails that the researcher might not attain all aspects of the participant's lifeworld that may or may not have influenced how the participant perceives the world. Additionally, as phenomenology is centred around individual perceptions, phenomenological studies are often very specific and cannot be applied to a wider demographic. However, this is not considered to be of importance as the thesis is made in order to attain an insight into the case of Besættelsesmuseet.

## 5. Theory

In the following chapter, the theory concerning the Service Quality model (SERVQUAL) by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) will be presented. The model will be used as a base for the analysis because the model offers a tangible structure that is deemed beneficial since this thesis focuses on a rather intangible term namely authenticity. The structuralisation of authenticity will provide the researcher and reader with a manageable overview of the data collected.

### 5.1 SERVQUAL - Gap analysis

The Service Quality theory emphasises how it is impossible for a service provider to guess exactly what a consumer wants in relation to quality service as the perception of quality will be based upon the consumer's needs and preconceived notions (Parasuraman et al. 1985). If their expectations of the service are met, then it will be considered quality service (Parasuraman et al. 1985). In other words, if the provider attains information about the consumers' expectations of a certain service, the provider can improve their services and thereby ensure quality.

SERVQUAL was initially formed within the disconfirmation paradigm, “[...] which proposes that dissatisfaction arises when service expectations are not met.” (Cassidy-Smith et al. 2007, p. 7). Additionally, the theory originates from a qualitative approach as interviews and focus groups were initially used to examine the quality of service (Parasuraman et al. 1985). As a result of the qualitative interviews and focus group interviews a SERVQUAL model was formed (see figure 2).

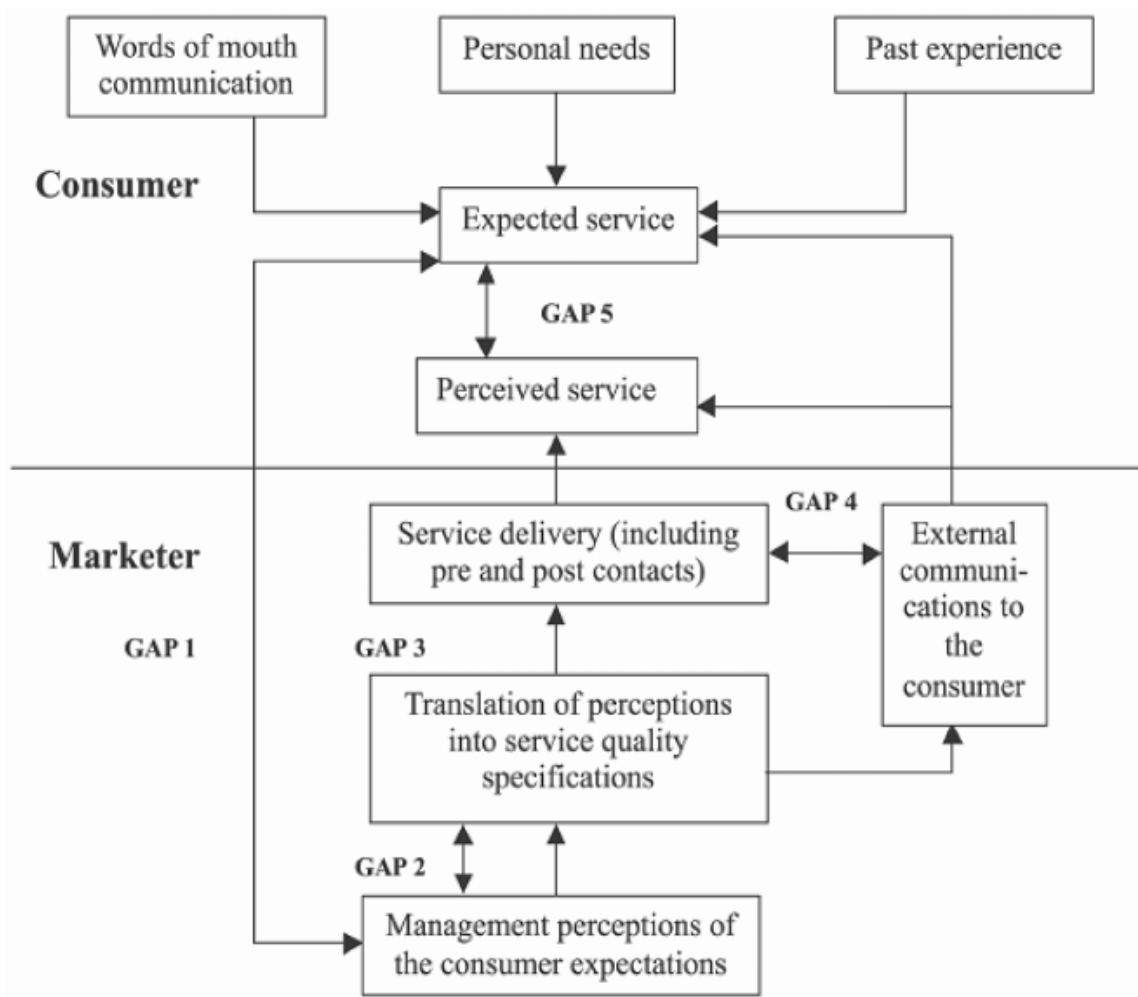


Figure 2: Service Quality Model (SERVQUAL)

(Parasuraman et al. 1985, p. 44)

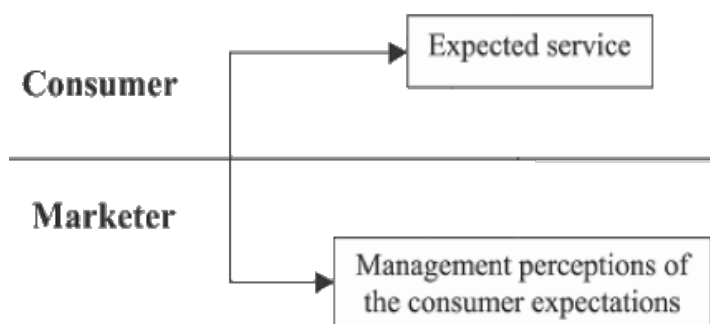
The model is split into two sections: the marketer (also referred to as the provider) and the consumer (Parasuraman et al. 1985). Within the marketer's section there are the following aspects of service: *Management perceptions of the consumer expectation*, *Translation of perceptions into service quality specifications*, *Service delivery (including pre and post contacts)* and *External communications to the consumer*. The consumer's sections entail *Expected service*, *Words of mouth communication*, *Personal needs*, *Past experience* and *Perceived Service*. In between these aspects of service, five gaps can be found which influence the quality of service (Parasuraman et al. 1985).

In the following sections, each of the five gaps will be presented through text and visuals.

### 5.1.1 Gap 1 – Consumer expectation - management perception gap (Knowledge Gap or Listening Gap)

The first gap is between the consumer and the marketer. It is referred to as the knowledge gap as the gap is centred around the lack of knowledge about the consumer's expectations. In other words, gap 1 arises when the marketer is not aware of its consumers' expectations, hence

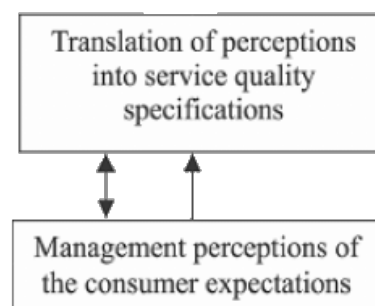
resulting in a service that does not live up to the consumer's expectations (Parasuraman et al. 1985; International Encyclopedia of Hospitality Management 2010).



### 5.1.2 Gap 2 – Management perception - service quality specification gap (The Design gap)

The second gap measures “[...] how well the service design specifications match up to management's perception of customer expectations.” (International Encyclopedia of Hospitality Management 2010, p. 279). This gap is

**Marketer**

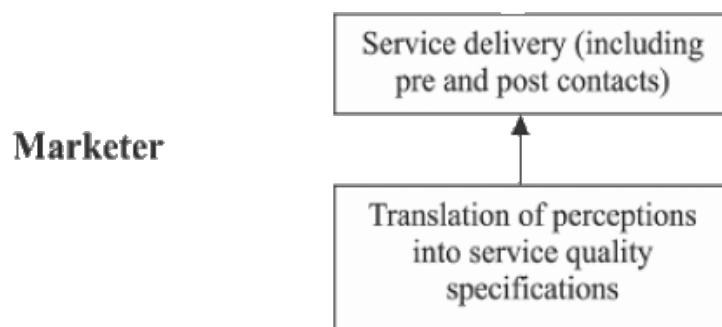


highly influenced by whether the management considers quality as an important aspect of service and whether the marketer has the resources to actually provide the service (Parasuraman et al. 1985; International Encyclopedia of Hospitality Management 2010). For example, a hotel may be aware that their customers wish to check into their hotel rooms quickly, but the hotel might not have the resources to clean the rooms any faster (International Encyclopedia of Hospitality Management 2010).

### 5.1.3 Gap 3 – Service quality specifications – service delivery gap (The Performance Gap)

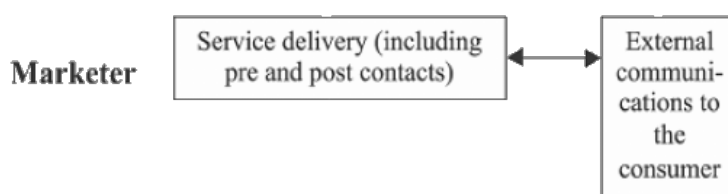
The third gap focuses on whether the marketer is capable of performing or delivering the service that was initially promised. This gap involves many different variables related to the provision of service (Parasuraman et al. 1985; International Encyclopedia of

Hospitality Management 2010). For instance, in regard to the staff, they must have a certain skill set, be trained for a specific task and have the “right” personality traits. In relation to tangibles, the objects must be able to match the demand of the consumers.



### 5.1.4 Gap 4 – Service delivery– external communication gap (The Communication Gap)

The fourth gap is a mismatch between what the marketers promise explicitly or implicitly through external communication and what they actually deliver. The



gap often occurs when advertising makes unrealistic promises – also referred to as overpromising (Parasuraman et al. 1985; International Encyclopedia of Hospitality Management 2010). The growth of social media and tourism websites such as TripAdvisor may have influenced the aspect of overpromising. What the provider itself communicates about the service through advertisement might differ significantly from what previous visitors have to say about the service online. In relation to tourism, Mpinganjira (2017) stresses how social media is the preferred source of information for travellers and that it has a vital influence on how travellers organise a trip. Tourists might actually completely avoid a certain experience or service if the destination has poor reviews online. In other words, communication’s importance has increased since the theory was originally developed.

### 5.1.5 Gap 5 – Expected service – perceived service (The Consumer Gap)

The final gap is an accumulation of all the

four previous ones (Parasuraman et al.

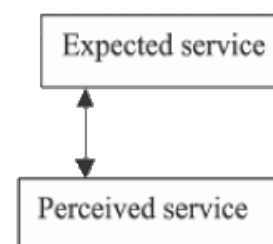
1985). This gap visualises the difference

between the consumer's expectations before

the service and how they actually perceive

the service (International Encyclopedia of Hospitality Management 2010). Furthermore, the perceived service is evaluated based on five different dimensions which will be presented in the following section.

**Consumer**



## 5.2 The five dimensions of quality

The research by Parasuraman (et al. 1985) proposed five relevant dimensions of service quality within all service industries. The five dimensions are *reliability*, *responsiveness*, *assurance*, *empathy*, and *tangibles* (Parasuraman et al. 1985). Firstly, “*Reliability is defined as the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.*” (International Encyclopedia of Hospitality Management 2010, p 279). Being able to deliver what the provider initially promised the consumer, is considered to be the most vital factor when dealing with service quality. Secondly, is the willingness of the provider to help a consumer in a specific situation – also referred to as *responsiveness*. Time is of the essence when dealing with *responsiveness* since the consumers are often more pleased with getting help fast than waiting for longer periods of time (International Encyclopedia of Hospitality Management 2010). In relation to being willing to help the consumers, the provider must also have the skillset to do so. Having the proper knowledge and skills to help out consumers is referred to as *assurance*. The importance of *assurance* is often increased in high-risk services such as auto repairing or medical services (International Encyclopedia of Hospitality Management 2010). Number four on the list is *empathy*. “*Empathy is defined as the caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers.*” (International Encyclopedia of Hospitality Management 2010, p. 280). As previously mentioned, consumers have very individual needs and expectations for a given service. Therefore, they also wish to feel that they are treated as individuals in relation to their service (International Encyclopedia of Hospitality Management 2010). Lastly, are the *tangibles*. The *tangibles* are the physical facilities of the service e.g., buildings, interior, personnel, etc. (International Encyclopedia of Hospitality Management 2010). Additionally, the *tangibles* level of quality is also of relevance. For instance, if a hotel room has all the equipment needed for an overnight stay but the room is dirty and old fashioned (i.e., low quality) the service would be considered low.

### 5.3 The use of SERVQUAL

Despite its age, the SERVQUAL model is still used as a measuring or analysis tool to this day. Additionally, the theory has been used within various contexts within the field of the service industry. To exemplify, SERVQUAL has been used in studies concerning internet banking (Raza et al. 2020), healthcare (Mohsin 2010) and student satisfaction (Gregory 2019). To elaborate, Gregory (2019) used the SERVQUAL theory concerning the five dimensions of quality to measure student satisfaction in a cohort-based doctoral program. The model would provide the “[...] *program with specific, actionable information that could be used to improve the program.*” (Gregory 2019, p. 788). The study stresses how respondents are often unwilling or ill-equipped to specifically state what they are dissatisfied with in relation to a programme or service. Yet, by using the model, the study clarified what specific areas of service the university had to improve in order to be in alignment with the students’ expectations and desires (Gregory 2019).

The SERVQUAL has also been used within the research field of tourism. Quality services are of great importance when dealing with tourism. Especially since the tourism industry has become increasingly competitive (Bhat 2012). Moreover, quality service is especially important in tourism as it is a major factor in relation to whether tourists wish to visit again. By ensuring quality service, the tourist is more likely to have a memorable experience (Bhat 2012). If the tourist has a memorable experience, it is more likely that they will speak positively about the destination or site with friends and family or perhaps post positive reviews online which could lead to new tourists in the future.

In the case study by Bhat (2012), it was highlighted that the SERVQUAL theory needed to be slightly altered in order to suit the given case at hand. This resulted in only four out of the five dimensions being used to measure the destination’s level of quality service – namely: *assurance*, *tangibility*, *responsiveness* and *reliability*. This contradicts the previous belief from Parasuraman (et al. 1985) that the model was universal to use. Babakus and Boller’s (1992) suggest that the model should be altered depending on which sector of service is being examined (cited in Bhat 2012).

### 5.4 Critique of SERVQUAL

The fact that Parasuraman (et al. 1985) believed that the SERVQUAL model was able to be used universally in all sectors of the service industry is also one of the biggest critiques of the theory (Gregory 2019; Bhat 2012; Moshin 2010; Buttle 1996). The theory is considered to be too generic and not specific enough. Moreover, SERVQUAL is created to measure external consumers’ expectations and perceptions and not for internal use (Large and König 2009). The requirements for

internal and external consumers will undoubtedly differ which entails that the model cannot be used generically in all sectors (Large and König 2009). Nonetheless, as the model is rather generic it can be altered or added to in order to fit the given sector at hand (Bhat 2012; Large and König 2009; Moshin 2010). Further, “[...] *SERVQUAL is proved to be a useful and reliable method considering a wide range of applications in the literature.*” (Behdioğlu et al. 2019, p. 314). In other words, the model can be used as a launching pad which can then be modified to fit a specific focus.

Similarly, this thesis has a very specific aim: to discover the consumers’ or visitors’ perceptions of authenticity and its possible relation to digitalisation at Besættelsesmuseet. Therefore, I do not consider the critiques concerning SERVQUAL being too generic as problematic since it has been clear throughout the literature that the model can easily be modified. The SERVQUAL will also be slightly modified for this thesis before and after its usage. The pre-modification will be further discussed in section 5.5 and the post-modification will be discussed in section 8.1.

SERVQUAL has also been criticised for only focusing on the consumers and their perceptions of what service quality is. For instance, the model does not include financial factors as a determining factor for quality service (Morrison Coulthard 2004). Nonetheless, I intend to solely focus on the consumer and their perceptions related to authenticity and the use of digital elements. I am fully aware that other elements are of relevance when measuring service quality, yet my focus will be on the perceptions of the consumer.

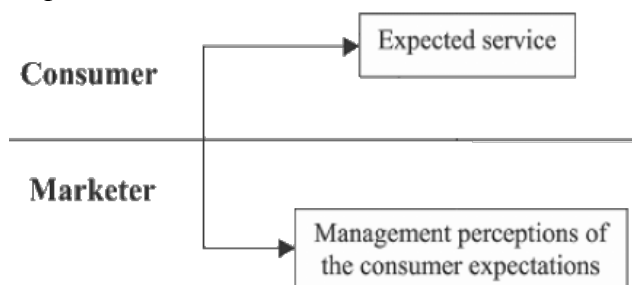
### 5.5 Modification of SERVQUAL before data collecting

As previously mentioned, the SERVQUAL model will be modified for this specific thesis. As stated previously the model is made to establish quality service. “*A service’s intention is to undertake certain functions to provide value to the business [...]*” (Jones 2005, p. 89). To clarify, a service is a transaction of a function that will create money or any other type of value for a business or organisation. Similarly, Cambridge Dictionary defines a service as “*the act of dealing with customers in a shop, restaurant, or hotel by taking their orders, showing or selling them goods, etc.*” (n.d.b). In short, service can be categorised as a simple trade between two parties. On the contrary, authenticity is not considered to be as simple and easily categorised. In section 3.2, it was established that authenticity has a very broad and dynamic classification. The perception of authenticity is individual and complex whereas service is a more universal concept. The difference in complexity of the two terms is the main reason for a modification of the SERVQUAL model. The complexity will especially be clear in the questioning of the visitors at Besættelsesmuseet (appendix 15). To exemplify, if the

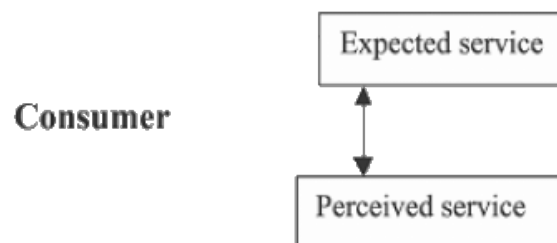
study aimed to clarify the level of service quality a possible interview guide would consist of questions such as “How was the service?”, “How would rate the service’s quality on a scale from 1-5?” and “Was the service from the staff satisfactory?”. The term ‘service’ is not needed to be redefined for the questioning as there is an underlying universal understanding of what a service is. On the contrary, authenticity does not have the same simplistic nature as service do which implies that the questions have to be more in-depth and complex at times.

Due to the complex nature of authenticity, it was deemed necessary to create new gaps that specifically focus on the perception of authenticity and its relation to digitalisation. First and foremost, the original gaps 1 and 5 are perceived as relevant for this study as they are centred around the provider’s and visitors’ perceptions of a service or experience. By looking into the first gap, you will be able to clarify any overall difference between the provider’s and the visitors’ perceptions of an experience, while the fifth gap will be a culmination of the visitors’ previous expectations and perceived experience at the museum. Nonetheless, to truly examine the perceptions of authenticity and digitalisation, this study will work with three additional gaps which are presented in the following sections.

*Gap 1*

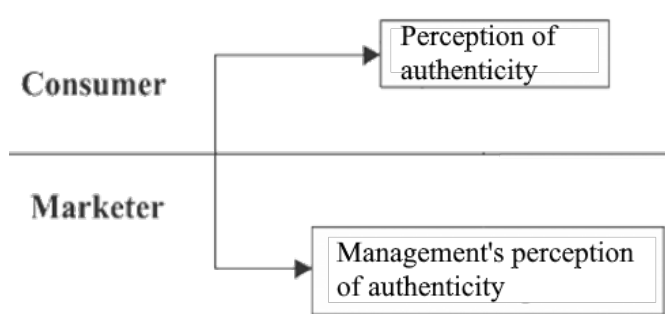


*Gap 5*



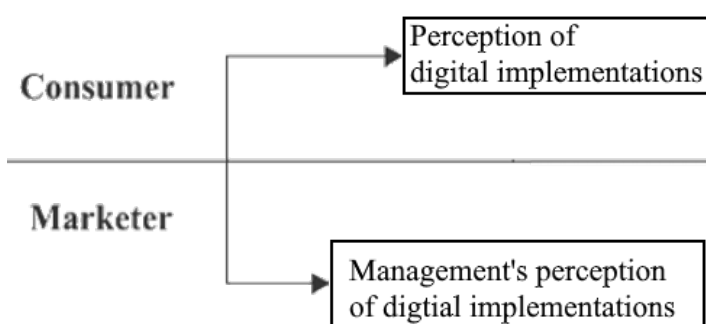
### 5.5.1 Gap A – Perception of authenticity

From previous research (section 3.2) it was established that what is considered to be authentic is determined individually. Therefore, gap A will be added to the model for this thesis. This gap is focused on the provider's and visitors' perceptions of authenticity. This gap will help visualise any differences between the provider's and visitor's perceptions as well as emphasise the importance of authenticity for Besættelsesmuseet. By attaining insight into the museum's and visitors' perceptions of authenticity, it will be possible to determine any gaps between the two parties. If the museum's perception is in alignment with the visitors', it is more likely that the visitors will have an authentic experience.



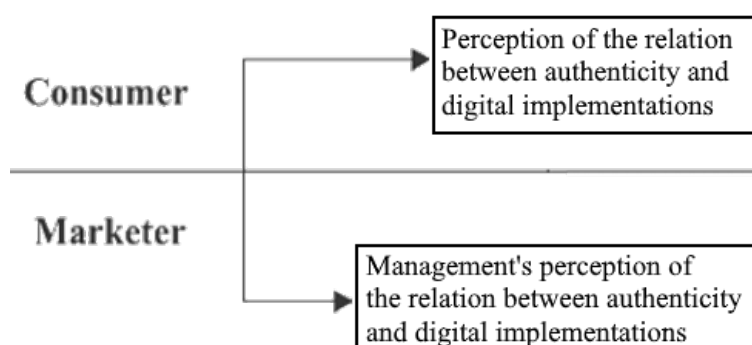
### 5.5.2 Gap D – Perception of digital implementation

Next is the aspect of digitalisation. Gap D will aim to highlight the perceptions of the museum's use of digital elements. This gap is added to determine if the digital elements are perceived to positively influence the experience. Gap D was inspired by the article by Kirova (2012) mentioned in section 3.3. The article highlights how digital elements can positively and negatively impact an experience. To exemplify, the digital elements were perceived to create an engaging and interactive aspect to the experience which was considered positive. However, the digital elements were also perceived as childish and untraditional which negatively impact the experience. Thereby, it was considered essential to establish how the digital elements were perceived at Besættelsesmuseet. Similar to gap A, gap D will also look into the perceptions of the museum and the visitors in order to clarify whether the two parties have any contradictions within their perceptions of digital implementations.



### 5.5.3 Gap AD – Perception of the relation between authenticity and digital implementations

Finally, is the gap which stresses whether the digital elements can be related to authenticity in a positive manner. Gap AD will investigate whether the museum considers its use of digital elements to create a sense of authenticity for its visitors and if this



sense of digital authenticity is also what the visitors experience. Gap AD is based upon the data gathered throughout chapter 3 regarding experience, authenticity and digitalisation. To elaborate, digitalisation has had a positive influence on the tourism industry because the digital elements add new components to the tourist experience before, during and after. Yet, whether these components create an authentic experience is unknown as authenticity is based upon personal notions.

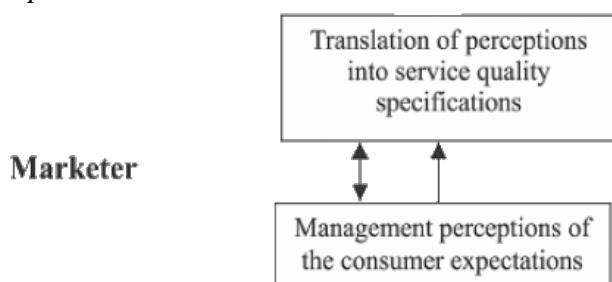
### 5.5.4 The five dimensions of quality

In regard to the five dimensions of quality, the two aspects of *tangibles* and *reliability* will be of somewhat relevance in this thesis. As the focus of this thesis is to highlight the perceptions of authenticity and its relation to digital elements, the main focus will be on the gaps between the provider's and visitors' perceptions of the given topics. However, the dimension of *tangibles* is considered to be the most important dimension of the five dimensions as this study is centred around the use of digital elements or digital *tangibles*. Moreover, *reliability* is considered to be of indirect importance. *Reliability* focuses on what the provider promises the visitors prior to their experience which is not directly connected to this thesis. However, the visitors' preconceived expectations in relation to the experience and authenticity are relevant for this study. Since the preconceived expectations are often shaped by some kind of information or promise from the given site the dimension of *reliability* might be of somewhat relevance.

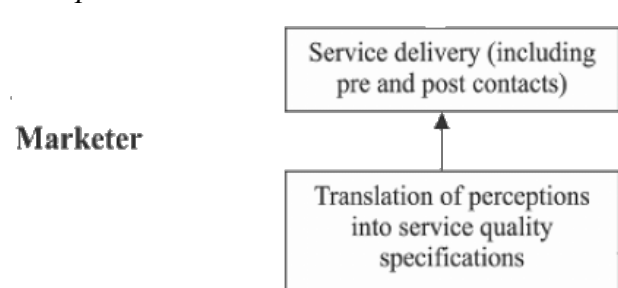
### 5.5.5 The exclusion of original gaps

As the focus of the thesis is the relation between authenticity and digitalisation, gaps 2 and 3 are considered to be of less relevance for the thesis. I do acknowledge that when dealing with the quality of digital elements the factors regarding design specifications (gap 2) and being able to perform as the elements should (gap 3) are of great importance as these factors more or less determine whether the digital element is considered to be good or bad. Nonetheless, this study does not focus on the quality of the digital elements. Gaps 2 and 3 might have an indirect effect on the visitors' perception, but I will not look further into these two aspects.

#### Gap 2

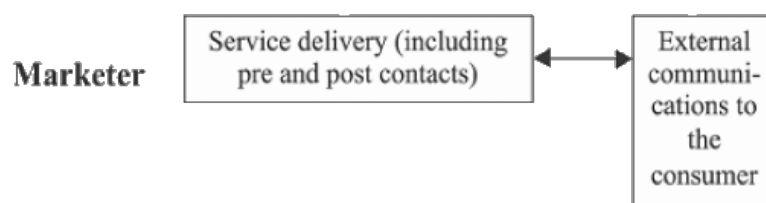


#### Gap 3



Moreover, the fourth gap concerning the gap between external communication and the actual delivered service will also not be of greater use for this study. The communication gap will mostly highlight any "promises" made through advertisement and whether these promises are in alignment with the actual service. The museum does aim to document and communicate the time period of the World War II occupation in Aarhus (Besættelsesmuseet n.d.), yet the way the museum externally communicate does not directly impact the relation between authenticity and digitalisation.

#### Gap 4



Further, in relation to Parasuraman's (et al. 1985) five dimensions of quality the three dimensions of *assurance*, *empathy* and *responsiveness* will not be of greater use for this thesis either. The three dimensions are all targeted toward people and their ability to accommodate the consumer. Based on my previous experience, the staff at Besættelsesmuseet does not have a greater role in relation to the

sense of authenticity or digital elements. The three dimensions would on the contrary have been relevant if the museum used real people to act like they were from the WWII era similarly to how Den Gamle By has volunteering actors and actresses walking around the grounds to re-enact how life was in the olden days (Den Gamle By n.d.)

#### 5.5.6 Model prior to data collection

The modifications made above are based upon the current knowledge attained regarding experience design, authenticity, digitalisation and the model itself. To clarify, the modifications are based upon the current perceptions and evaluations of what might be of importance when trying to determine whether there is a connection between authenticity and digitalisation. As this process is done before collecting any data, it is likely that after collecting data new areas of relevance might be discovered which will be added to the modification of the model later (see section 8.1).

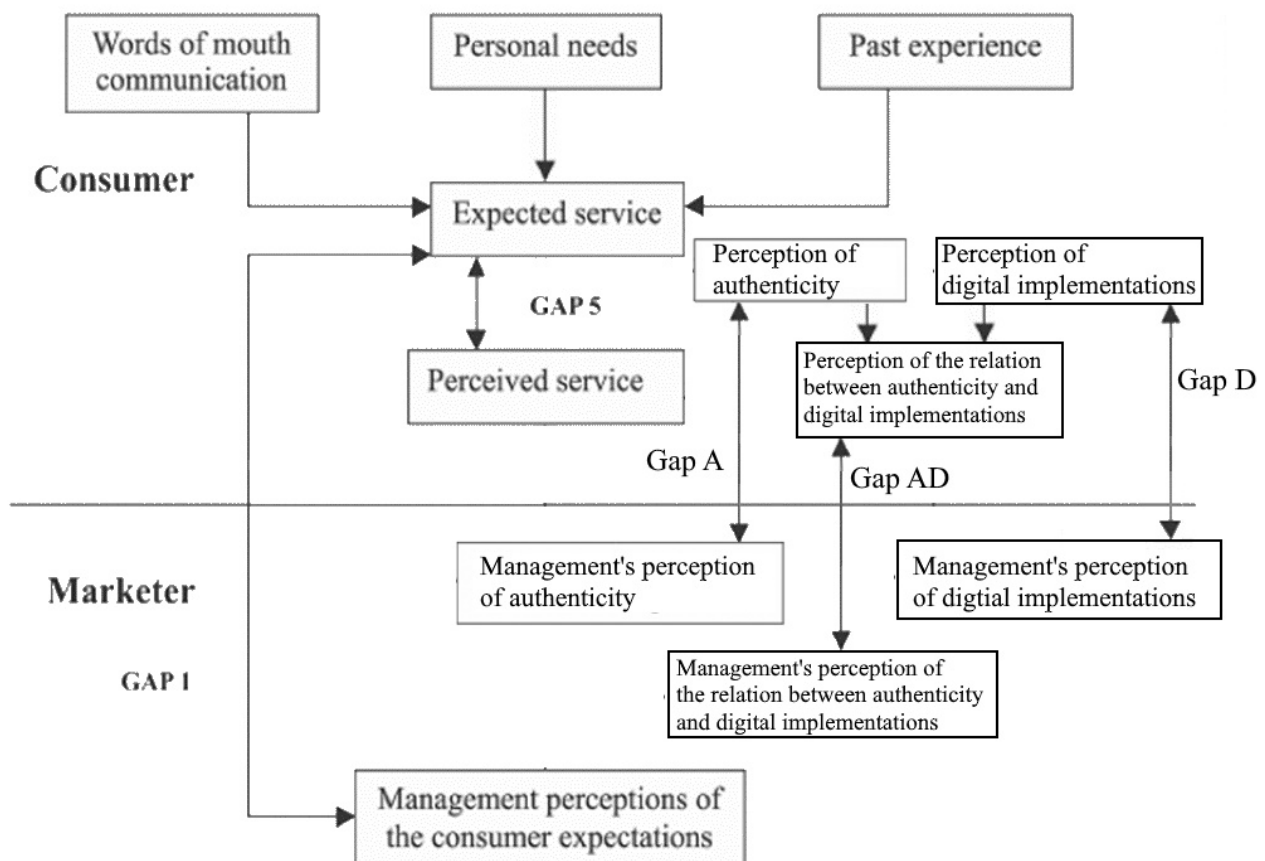


Figure 3: Modification of Service Quality Model (SERVQUAL)

## 6. Methods

The following chapter will present the methodological considerations made for this thesis. As it was discovered in the literature review (chapter 3), this thesis is dealing with dynamic concepts that are evidently based on individual perceptions. Therefore, this thesis will have a qualitative approach in the gathering of data. The following sections will go into further detail regarding the thesis' research approach, qualitative methods and the two methods of data gathering – observations and interviews. Additionally, the approach of sampling interviews will also be presented. Lastly, is the section of coding which portrays the approach to understanding and coding the gathered data.

### 6.1 The abductive approach

First of all, this thesis will have an abductive research approach. The abductive approach resonates from an observation, phenomenon or a case that has surprised the researcher or made him/her wonder in some way. *“In abductive reasoning, the researcher's thinking is led, or, more actively, directed, in an inferential process, from the surprise toward its possible explanation(s).”* (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, p. 28). In other words, the researcher will try to attain an understanding of the surprise through theory and the collection of data. The abductive approach focuses on reaching an explanation for the phenomenon of surprise (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012). To exemplify, this study originated from a personal experience at Besættelsesmuseet in regard to the museum's sense of authenticity. This thesis will through data, theory and analysis work towards a qualified interpretation or understanding of Besættelsesmuseet's sense of authenticity and the possible influence of digital implementations.

### 6.2 Qualitative methods

Based upon the sampling of literature regarding experience, authenticity and digitalisation, the use of qualitative methods was deemed to be best suited for this thesis. Moreover, the thesis' phenomenological approach is also in alignment with the use of qualitative methods. This section will give a brief introduction to the qualitative method and present its limitations and benefits in relation to this thesis.

The information that is attained through qualitative methods is in-depth and individualised data that presents specific information concerning a phenomenon. To rephrase, the method is not centred around numerical data but on data which produces rich descriptions or explanations (Mack et al. 2005). Because of its rich and in-depth nature, the method is *“[...] especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors[sic], and social contexts of*

*particular populations.*” (Mack et al. 2005, p.1). To accentuate, complex human concepts such as thoughts, emotions, experiences, etc. are easier to understand and analyse when using qualitative methods.

Compared to quantitative research, qualitative research is more flexible and iterative as the study design can be altered as it is being used (Mack et al. 2005). To exemplify, in qualitative research semi-structured methods are often used to gather data such as interviews, focus groups and participant observations. These semi-structured methods have a set structure prior to the gathering of data yet can be altered by the researcher during the gathering. The methods of data sampling will often consist of open-ended questions which results in in-depth and individualised data (Mack et al. 2005).

#### 6.2.1 Limitations of qualitative methods

As with all methods, the qualitative methods do entail a certain number of limitations. For example, the method’s small sample size is often criticised. Researchers within quantitative research would state that when having a small sample size, the research cannot confirm or deny any hypotheses regarding a phenomenon (Mack et al. 2005). The small sample size and not being able to confirm or deny hypotheses also influence the perception of the research’s reliability. Additionally, in qualitative methods, the researcher is an active participant which in the eyes of quantitative researchers impacts the research reliability negatively as the researcher is not being objective (Mack et al. 2005). Nevertheless, these limitations are not considered to be of greater influence on this thesis. Firstly, the aim of this study is not centred around a hypothesis to be confirmed or denied. On the contrary, the aim is to attain descriptions and knowledge about a specific phenomenon which can provide an insight into how others think and perceive it. Moreover, within phenomenological and qualitative research seeking one objective truth is not considered prosperous as no such thing exists (Tracy 2010). Therefore, the limitations of qualitative research are not considered to be of greater influence.

### 6.3 Observation

As stated previously (see chapter 1) this study was initially inspired by a visit to Besættelsesmuseet during the summer of 2021. Despite having clear memories of the museum, it was deemed necessary to observe the museum anew and collect concrete data about the exhibitions at the museum. *“Observation is a strategy in qualitative research that helps researchers to become familiar with an online or conventional setting by systematically and ethically recording what they see and hear ‘in the field’.* (Daymon and Holloway 2013, p. 258). As the quote highlights, observing the museum will re-familiarise the setting whilst being properly recorded. Observations are often used in qualitative research as a secondary method in collaboration with a primary method such as interviews or focus

groups. To elaborate, the researcher would first observe how a person acts and then interview them to understand why they acted in a certain way (Daymon and Holloway 2013).

Similarly, this thesis' primary method for data collecting will be interviews and the observations will have a supportive role. The observation will gather data regarding the museum itself and its exhibitions. The observations will not be of any of the visitors. Thereby, there are no greater ethical considerations other than being allowed by the museum to observe and record at the museum.

It is deemed a necessity to gather information regarding the museum as it will be used as a basis for the interviews before, during and after. To clarify, the observations will help shape the interview guide (before), will make conversation with the interviewees easier (during) and the interpretation of the data from the interviews will be based upon these observations (after). Moreover, the observations are also made for the sake of the reader of this thesis. The reader may not have visited the museum which will make it close to impossible for the reader to imagine the exhibitions at the museum. By using photos and video recordings from the observations in the thesis, it will be easier for the reader to become acquainted with the museum.

#### 6.4 Interview

As stated above, the primary method for data collecting will be interviewing. Qualitative interviews are considered to be one of the key methods within human and social science (Brinkman 2013). Interviews are defined as an interchange of opinions between people concerning a given subject. Commonly, interviews are used to learn about how others “[...] *experience the world, how they think, act, feel and develop as individuals and in groups* [...]” (Brinkmann 2013, p.1). This entails that the interviewee's perceptions and notions are of greatest importance. As this study aims to attain an understanding of Besættelsesmuseet and its visitors' perception of authenticity, the use of interviews was deemed to be best suited.

Conversations are an essential part of humanity. Through conversations, we entail rich and indispensable knowledge concerning personal and social aspects (Brinkman 2013). The familiarity with conversations has formed a connotation that interviewing is easy and simple as we have already mastered the techniques of interviewing i.e., asking questions and recording. Nonetheless, the process before and after the interviews is what is truly challenging to master (Brinkman 2013). The researcher has to prepare and structure the interviews and afterwards the data must be interpreted and analysed.

Despite the fact that the interviewees are of greatest importance, the researcher will undoubtedly shape the interview before, during and after. The interview guide created by the researcher will

structure the interview prior to the actual interview and during the interview, the researcher will be able to provide new questions that will lead the interviewee to discuss certain subjects or go into further details. Throughout the interviews, the researcher should avoid leading the interviewees to a specific opinion. Nonetheless, it is impossible to ask non-leading questions as the question will always lead in a certain direction. After the interview, the researcher will have an active role in interpreting the data gathered (Brinkman 2013).

For the data gathering, a semi-structured approach will be used. The semi-structured interview “[...] is defined as an interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena.” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008 cited in Brinkman 2013, p. 21). Based upon this quote the keywords for a semi-structured interview are (1) purpose, (2) descriptions, (3) life world, and (4) interpretation of meaning.

Firstly, the *purpose* of an interview is what differentiates an interview from a casual conversation. A casual conversation does not necessarily have a set purpose, whereas an interview always aims to produce knowledge (Brinkman 2013). The knowledge produced is the *descriptions* that the interviewee provides throughout the interview. The interviewee’s *descriptions* provide the researcher with an insight and new understanding of how the given interviewee perceives and experience the world or a given phenomenon. Next, is the *lifeworld*. As stated earlier in chapter 4, how we perceive phenomena will always be highly influenced by our *lifeworlds*. To recap, *lifeworlds* refer to our daily life and the preconceived notions that we have attained throughout our lives. Lastly, is the *interpretation of meaning*. In relation to the interviewees being influenced by their *lifeworld*, the researcher is also impacted by his/her background. The researcher can never truly remove himself/herself from the research. The researcher is constantly interpreting and analysing the knowledge gained from an interview. Moreover, how the interviewees perceive phenomena is contradictory and not transparent. One perception can lead to multiple readings and interpretations (Brinkman 2013).

To clarify, in this thesis the *purpose* will be to attain an insight into the visitors’ perception of authenticity and the possible relation with digital elements. The visitors’ *descriptions* will be able to provide such an insight. Their *descriptions* will be impacted by their *lifeworld* and lastly, the descriptions will be *interpreted* in order to achieve an understanding of the visitors’ perceptions.

In relation to structure of the interviews, the semi-structured approach provides the researcher with a set structure similar to the structured interviews in the shape of an interview guide. Yet, it also allows

the researcher to deviate from the guide to go into further detail with certain topics (Brinkman 2013). By being able to create a leeway for follow up questions, the semi-structured interview has better opportunities for knowledge-producing compared to the structured interview. The researcher is also given a greater opportunity to be an active and visible knowledge-producer throughout the process. Additionally, an interview is never a hundred per cent structured “[...] *because people always say things that spill beyond the structure, before the interview starts and when the recorder has been turned off. [...]*” (Parker 2005 cited in Brinkman 2013). These ‘spills’ are often considered to be of most importance as they help the researcher understand the interviewee’s answers.

The interviews will be conducted individually (one-on-one). First and foremost, conducting interviews individually is often easier to control than if you were to conduct a focus group interview with 6-10 people. Furthermore, when trying to understand “[...] *aspects of people’s lives that are personal, sensitive, or even taboo, it is preferable to use individual interviews that allow for more confidentiality and often make it easier for the interviewer to create an atmosphere of trust and discretion.*” (Brinkman 2013, p. 27). As the thesis aims to attain the individual’s personal opinion about authenticity and the implementation of digitalisation, it was deemed beneficial to conduct the interviews individually since experiencing is a very individual experience. You experience on your own and whether you like the experience or not is up to you. It is true that you often experience in the company of others, but one’s perception of the experience will always be individual. Therefore, a group interview was not considered beneficial as the opinion of an experience is not directly shaped socially but primarily shaped individually.

Two rounds of interviews will be conducted for this thesis. First, an interview with a representative from Besættelsesmuseet will be made and secondly, a random selection of visitors will be interviewed about their experiences at the museum. For these two rounds of interviews two interview guides have been made (appendix 14 and 15). Both interview guides have been inspired by Michael Patton’s (2002) categorisation of questions (cited in Daymon and Holloway 2011). The categorisation being “[...] *questions about experience and behaviour; opinions and value; feelings; knowledge; senses (related to experience but more specifically to what has been seen, felt and heard); and to a lesser extent, background and demographics.*” (Michael Patton 2002 cited in Daymon and Holloway 2011, p. 228). To exemplify, in the interview guide for the museum’s representative the question ‘What do you believe that your visitors expect when visiting Besættelsesmuseet?’ (appendix 14) falls into the category of *opinions and value* whereas the question ‘Describe your experience with three words.’ in the second interview guide (appendix 15) falls into the category of *experience and behaviour*. As the

semi-structured interview allows deviation from the interview guide it is likely that the pre-set questions will not always adhere to the set structure, nor is it guaranteed that questions made to follow up on certain topics will follow Patton's categories.

The interview with the representative from the museum will be fully planned in advance while the interviews with the visitors will be more randomised. To elaborate, the dates for the second round of interviews will be set in advance, but the interviewees will not be known in advance as they will be selected at the museum after their visit. Since the interviewees are selected right after their visit, the difficulties concerning human memory will not be a greater hindrance to the interviews. To elaborate, human memories based upon past experiences tend to be altered or influenced by external factors after the experience (Braun-LaTour et al. 2006; Wood 2020). As the interviews are conducted right after the experience, their perceptions and memory of the museum will be fresh.

In regard to the documentation of my findings, the interviews will be recorded with the permission of the interviewee and notes will be made to document the findings. Transcription is considered the most effective way of recording data especially when a study is centred around textual aspects or dialogue (Daymon and Holloway 2011). However, this thesis does not have roots in textual analysis or conversation analysis. This thesis is centred around the topics, codes and opinions that the interviewees state throughout the interviews. Therefore, the use of recordings and note taking is considered to be satisfactory.

#### 6.4.1 Considerations after conducting interviews

Despite the theoretical considerations made prior to the interviewing, I realised during the interviews that what is theoretically advised does not always work in reality. The greatest deviation was related to the decision to make individual interviews. Individual interviewing was selected to ensure that the interviewee would give his/her honest opinion without any outside influence. This was especially important in regard to attaining the interviewee's perception of authenticity. However, it was not always possible to do the interviews in a one-on-one setting. For example, in interviews 5, 9, 10, 11, 14 and 16 (appendix 15.5, 15.9, 15.10, 15.10, 15.14 and 15.6) the interviews were made with two visitors. Often the pair would be a parent and child. The interviews were intended to only be with the parent, yet the parent endorsed the child to answer the questions as well. Further, interview 6 (appendix 15.6) was with a man that had visited the museum with a group of friends. The interview was primarily with the man, but the group had a tendency to add comments during the interview. The number of comments grew at the final question 'Any last remarks'. Despite my original intentions,

the interviews with multiple interviewees created an interesting dynamic and provided me with additional knowledge that I would not have attained by interviewing one person.

Moreover, the museum was not suited for interviewing individually. The museum is rather small and compact which meant that there was always some background noise or physical interruptions during the interviews. These background noises and interruptions are evident in the recordings, but not to a greater extent.

Furthermore, the interview guide for the visitors (appendix 15) included a number of questions in which the visitors had to evaluate their experience on a scale from 1 to 5 of which 5 was 'to a great extent'. Nonetheless, when asked the visitors would often reply with words and descriptions of their experiences and not a specific number. The intention of the questions was to provide the visitors with a simple tool to evaluate their experiences whilst providing the researcher with a simplistic overview of their perceptions. However, the interviewees seemed to prefer describing their experiences instead of evaluating them.

### 6.5 Sampling

As stated in section 6.4, this study will consist of two rounds of interviews. Firstly, an interview with a representative from the museum will be made. The representative is the leader of the museum and the curator Søren Tange Rasmussen (Besættelsesmuseet 2021a). As the leader and curator of the museum, Søren Tange Rasmussen has an in-depth knowledge of the museum and its decision-making.

The second round of interviews will be with the visitors at Besættelsesmuseet. For the sampling of interviewees for round two, a set of parameters and dimensions were established prior to the interviewing. Firstly, is the *setting* of the interviews which is also referred to as "[...] *the conditions or sites within which the rest of your data is situated.*" (Daymon and Holloway 2011, p. 210). As the aim is to interview visitors from Besættelsesmuseet, the setting of the interviews will be the museum. By interviewing the interviewees after their visit, it is ensured that they have visited the museum and that the memory of the experience is clear. Secondly, is the aspect of *time*. Time can entail "[...] *stages or sequences, or different rhythms of time, or to specific times of the day or in the calendar.*" (Daymon and Holloway 2011, p. 210). The time and date of the interviews have in collaboration with Søren Tange Rasmussen been planned in advance. The first interview session was planned to be on the 9. April 2022 from 11-15. The date was selected for two reasons. Firstly, the date was a Saturday which Rasmussen deemed to be one of the most visited days during the week. Secondly, 9. April is the anniversary date of the German invasion of Denmark during WW2 which Rasmussen deemed to

be an additional reason for the visitors to visit the museum. The second interview session was on the 13. April 2022 from 11-15. As the date was Wednesday during the Easter holidays the museum expected more visitors than usual. Lastly, is the dimension of *people* which emphasises the interviewees' experience with the given phenomenon (Daymon and Holloway 2011). As stated previously, the interviewees that will be selected for the second round of interviewees will be visitors at Besættelsesmuseet in given the timeframe.

The strategy for the sampling of interviewees will be a *convenience* strategy also referred to as an *opportunistic* sampling strategy. As the name entails the *convenience* strategy is when you sample based on what is convenient (Daymon and Holloway 2011). In other words, if an opportunity arises it must be taken at that specific moment as the opportunity will disappear. This strategy of sampling has been criticised for its convenience aspect as it does not take theoretical considerations into account (Aarhus Universitet n.d.). To elaborate, the strategy of *convenience* does not include a target group to examine which implies that the sampled data will not be able to provide any concrete information about the target group. On the contrary, strategies such as *homogeneous* sampling seek out individuals that are a part of the same group or share certain characteristics (Daymon and Holloway 2011). By seeking out individuals of a certain group, the data will be able to provide an insight into how this particular group perceives a given phenomenon.

However, due to the nature of this thesis, sampling strategies such as *homogenous* or *heterogeneous* were deemed to be a hindrance to the data collection. As the interviews are set at Besættelsesmuseet within a certain time limit the process of sampling based on certain criteria or characteristics would be time-consuming and it is a possibility that there would be no guests at the museum that would be a match for the sampling characteristics which would result in no sampled data. The sampled interviewees are therefore simply sampled based upon who visited the museum during the set time and who agreed to be interviewed after their visit.

Furthermore, despite it not being capable of producing generalisations about certain target groups, the *convenience* strategy is considered beneficial for certain research (Aarhus Universitet n.d.) such as research that is time-limited, that depends on proximity and has little to no sampling criteria (QuestionPro 2021). As stated previously, this thesis is time and location limited and the sampling of interviewees is not based upon a long list of criteria which makes *convenience* sampling beneficial for this thesis. Hence, the reason for selecting the *convenience* strategy.

### 6.5.1 Overview of sampled interviewees

<i>Date</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Interviews gathered</i>
09/04/2022	11:00-15:00	8 interviews
13/04/2022	11:00-15:00	8 interviews

## 6.6 Coding

The data gathered from both rounds of interviews will be coded prior to being analysed. *“A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data.”* (Saldanã 2013, p. 3). Coding data provides the researcher with an overview of the data gathered and acts as the critical link between the actual data and its meaning. For this thesis, the strategy of ‘theming the data’ will be used. A theme can help capture and unify the meaning and identity of an experience (Saldanã 2013). This unification helps the researcher understand the whole experience by gathering the small parts of the experience. The process can be compared to the hermeneutic circle (section 4.1.1.1). To clarify, the data that are related to the theme are gathered and categorised into one entity that creates a new overall understanding of the given theme. The strategy of using thematic coding is preferred when trying to understand a phenomenon (Saldanã 2013). Additionally, the coding strategy is especially preferred when conducting phenomenological research that for instance examines *“[...] a participant’s psychological world of beliefs, constructs, identity development, and emotional experiences [...]”* (Saldanã 2013, p. 176) which is the case for this thesis.

The codes or themes that are used in thematic coding are not predefined categories but generated from the collected data (Saldanã 2013). The codes for this thesis will be based upon the data gathered regarding the SERVQUAL and more specifically the modification made in section 5.5. The codes are presented in the table below. Each gap was given a keyword to simplify the process of coding. Moreover, if any of the data gathered from the interviews does not fit into any of the codes made on the basis of the modified SERVQUAL, a new theme/code will emerge.

## 6.6.1 Table of codes

Gap	Relation in the SERVQUAL	Keyword / Code
<b>Gap 1 - Consumer expectation - management perception gap</b>	The gap between what the consumer expects to experience and what the provider perceives to be the consumer's expectations.	Expectation
<b>Gap 5 – Expected service – perceived service</b>	The relation between the consumer's expectation and the actual experience.	Experience
<b>Gap A – Perception of authenticity</b>	The gap between the consumer's and provider's perception of authenticity.	Authenticity
<b>Gap D – Perception of digital implementation</b>	The gap between the consumer's and provider's perception of digital implementation.	Digitalisation
<b>Gap AD – Perception of the relation between authenticity and digital implementations</b>	The relation between authenticity and digital implements from the consumer's and provider's perspectives.	Relation between authenticity and digitalisation

On the basis of 'theming the data', the interviewees' answers will be organised into the codes which will clarify the museum's and the visitors' perceptions related to authenticity. Moreover, the codes will be a launching point to present the gathered data. Subsequently, the two data sets will be compared in order to draw parallels between the data.

## 7. Analysis

The following chapter will consist of five sections that will present each of the gaps showcased in section 5.5. The five gaps are Gap 1, Gap 5, Gap A, Gap D and Gap AD. The structure for each section will be similar. Firstly, a presentation of the museum's perception of the given subject will be made. Subsequently, the visitors' perceptions will be presented. Finally, the gap will be presented to clarify any gaps or overlaps between the two parties' perceptions.

### 7.1 Gap 1 Consumer expectation - management perception gap

#### 7.1.1 Museum's perspective

As stated previously, the first gap considers the expectation gap that might arise between provider and visitor. Søren Tange Rasmussen described Besættelsesmuseet as a museum about World War II and local history. The primary objective of the museum is to present the entire occupation period and not just the resistance. This implies that the museum does not only focus on the warfare and guns, but also on the people that were affected by the war (appendix 14). The museum aims to actualise the occupations period and the different issues or concerns that were of relevance at the time. The museum is specially targeted toward people who do not know that much about the war or occupation before their visit. Rasmussen emphasised that the museum is trying to communicate the history of the war in a language that is approachable to all visitors no matter what preconceived knowledge they may have (appendix 14). One of the approaches that the museum uses to do so is the use of digital elements. The digital elements make it possible for the visitor to 'get into the mindset' of the people that lived during the war. Further, Rasmussen stressed that the digital elements offer a type of narrative that is more appealing to the younger generation (appendix 14).

Moreover, the museum has the goal of having an engaging, debating, educational and social environment within the museum. Rasmussen deemed that the museum has achieved such an environment. Therefore, the visitors can expect an experience at Besættelsesmuseet that has an atmosphere that is made to be social. Besættelsesmuseet wishes to avoid the "shh"-atmosphere which Rasmussen compared to a library atmosphere. The visitors should be able to share their experiences and discuss the dilemmas that the museum portrays. Each of the museum's rooms does have a certain soundtrack that gives the room a certain mood, but there has to be room for conversation as well (appendix 14).

To sum up, the museum has the preconception that a visitor can expect to visit a museum that is centred around World War II yet tell the stories of people and the obstacles and emotions that they

faced throughout the war. Moreover, the visitors will gain a social experience that allows them to engage with one another. In other words, the visitor will attain new knowledge, get closer to the human side of the story through digital elements and share their experience with others.

Søren Tange Rasmussen was asked to evaluate whether he believed these descriptions of the museum lived up to the visitors' actual experience. On a scale from 1-5 where 5 is 'to a great extent', Rasmussen deemed the museum to be at a 4 in regard to living up to the visitors' expectations. He based this evaluation on feedback that he or the staff had heard from visitors. A majority of the visitors that they have talked to are positively surprised and even get more from the experience than they first expected (appendix 14).

#### *7.1.1.1 Codes regarding expectations based on the museum's perspective:*

- Attain new knowledge about:
  - World War II
  - The occupation in Aarhus
  - The people
  - The dilemmas that people were faced with during the war
- Interaction with digital elements
- Approachable content no matter what preconceived knowledge the visitor has
- Social experience (engaging, debating, educational and social environment)

#### *7.1.2 Visitors' perspective*

The visitors' replies to what they expected before their visit was more diverse than initially expected. A variety of different expectations were mentioned throughout the 16 interviews. However, in six of the interviews, it was stated that the visitors did not have any expectations prior to their visit to Besættelsesmuseet (appendix 15.4, 15.6, 15.11, 15.12, 15.15 and 15.16). By not having any expectations it was considered irrelevant to ask them whether the experience had lived to their expectations. Yet, a few of the interviewees that did not initially state any expectations stressed that they had had a great experience at the museum despite their lack of expectations.

The remaining part of the interviewees all had some sort of expectation before their visit. In four of the interviews, a desire for learning more about the war, occupation and resistance in general or in specific relation to Aarhus was mentioned. Additionally, learning more about the German police (Gestapo) was also mentioned as an expectation for the visit (appendix 15.5, 15.6, 15.7, and 15.9). Furthermore, in two of the interviews, the expectations of the visitors were based on previous

experiences. To illustrate, in interview 14, the interviewee stated that she and her daughter previously had visited Frihedsmuseet<sup>2</sup> in Copenhagen and therefore expected to attain similar knowledge at Besættelsesmuseet (appendix 15.14). Similarly, in interview 16 the expectations of one of the visitors were based on a World War II museum that he had visited in Lithuania (appendix 15.16). These expectations based on previous experiences support the claim stated in section 3.1 that *“Our memory or past experiences are what guides us to seek out certain experiences and the expectations that we establish based on our memories are what help us interpret the specific experience (Jantzen 2013).”* (section 3.1, p. 13). In other words, the memories that these visitors have had at the previous museums have shaped their expectations for Besættelsesmuseet.

As stated in section 3.1, tourists are shaped by their personal preferences. This was further highlighted in some of the visitors’ expectations as they were very specific. To exemplify, in interview 3 the interviewee was an employee at Nationalmuseet in Copenhagen (appendix 15.3). Therefore, he had some very technical expectations for the museum that he looked for during his visit. Additionally, he decided to visit the museum because Besættelsesmuseet is nominated for the European Museum of the Year Award 2022.

In regard to the more technical side of the museum, two of the visitors were expecting interactive exhibitions as they had heard about the museum’s usage of digital elements (appendix 15.7) and in particular the interrogation room (appendix 15.13). Moreover, the narrations that the museum provides through these digital elements were also an expectation of one of the visitors (appendix 15.8). These very specific expectations or desires to experience something emphasises that the preferences of a tourist are very individual.

Finally, a handful of the visitors had visited the museum before and therefore did not provide any specific expectations prior to their visit (appendix 15.1, 15.2 and 15.10). This also underlines the notion of one’s expectation relying on previous experience. Nonetheless, some of the visitors that had previously visited stated that they were looking forward to seeing the museum after it had been rebuilt (appendix 15.1, 15.2, 15.3 and 15.13).

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<sup>2</sup> Frihedsmuseet “[...] tells the story about the Danish resistance during the German occupation of Denmark 1940 – 1945.” (Frihedsmuseet n.d.)

### *7.1.1.1 Codes regarding the visitors' expectations*

- No expectations
- Attain new knowledge about:
  - World War II
  - The occupation
  - The resistance
  - Gestapo
- Similar to other museums
- Technical aspects of the museum
- Interaction with digital elements
  - Interrogation room
- Approachable content (narrator)
- Rebuilding of the museum.

### *7.1.3 Gap between the museum's and visitors' expectations*

Based upon the codes gathered from the two parties' perceptions, the gap of expectation between the museum and its visitors is rather small. Søren Tange Rasmussen stated that the museum is about the second World War, the occupation and the people affected by the war, which were in alignment with the visitors' initial expectations. As stated in the section above, the visitors wished to gain new knowledge about the war, occupation, resistance and the Gestapo during their visit which falls into the same codes or categories as what the museum envisioned could be expected.

Moreover, the aspect of interactivity was also mentioned by both parties. Based on the interview with Rasmussen, it was clear that Besættelsesmuseet has had many considerations in regard to the museum's storytelling. To elaborate, the museum was very conscious of the narrative of each room. The story had to be clear and easy to understand for the visitors despite their previous knowledge. This expectation of the museum being approachable was also mentioned as an expectation by one of the visitors. In relation to attaining this narrative, the museum uses digital interactive elements to provide approachable content. The use of digital elements is a big part of the museum and therefore the museum believes that its visitors expect to interact with such digital elements. This expectation was in fact stated by a few of the visitors. Hence, the gap between museum and visitor was nonexciting.

The museum and visitors did have some minor differences or gaps concerning their expectations. Firstly, the museum is very focused on providing a social experience for its visitors. Therefore, Rasmussen emphasised during the interview that the visitors could expect to visit a museum in which they had the opportunity to talk to one another. However, the visitors did not explicitly state in their interviews that they expected a social experience. This difference implies a gap between the museum's perception and the visitors.

Secondly, there was a rather big group of visitors that did not have any specific expectations. It is likely that the visitors simply visited the museum without any greater expectations. This non-expectation does not clarify any gap between the two.

## 7.2 Gap 5 – Expected service – perceived service

### 7.2.1 Visitors' expectations

The fifth gap concerns the gap between the visitors' expectations and their actual experience. As previously stated in section 7.1.2, the visitors had a variety of expectations prior to their visit. To recap, a part of the visitors that were interviewed did not initially have any expectations for their visit while a handful of other visitors stated that they expected to hear and learn more about World War II, the occupation, resistance and Gestapo. Additionally, a few of the visitors expected that the museum would have exhibitions that consisted of digital and/or interactive elements. Moreover, some of the visitors had visited the museum in the past and simply desired to see the museum after it had been rebuilt. Similarly, in two of the interviews, the visitors' expectations relied on previous experiences they had at similar museums.

#### 7.2.1.1 Codes regarding the visitors' expectations

- No expectations
- Attain new knowledge about:
  - World War II
  - The occupation
  - The resistance
  - Gestapo
- Similar to other museums
- Technical aspects of the museum
- Interaction with digital elements
  - Interrogation room

- Approachable content (narrator)
- Rebuilding of the museum.

### 7.2.2 Visitors' experience

In regard to the actual experience that the visitors had, the visitors were asked to rate on a scale from 1 to 5 of which 5 is “to a great extent” how well their experience had lived up to their expectations. As stated in section 7.2.1, the visitors that did not have any expectations were not asked to rate their experience. Moreover, not all of the interviewees provided a specific number on the scale but instead described whether they considered their experience to live up to their expectations or not. The visitors that did rate how well their experience had lived up to their expectations resulted in an average of 4,5 (appendix 15.2, 15.4, 15.5, 15.7, 15.13 and 15.16). In other words, the experience had lived up to their expectations to a great extent. The visitors that did not provide any specific rating had a similar evaluation of their experience. To exemplify, in interview 9 the visitors stated that the experience was good and that it had been in great alignment with their initial expectations (appendix 15.9). Another visitor stated how her preconceived interest in the war and the occupation had been fulfilled during her visit (appendix 15.13). She had a personal relation to the occupation period as her grandfather was a member of the terror group Peter-gruppen. In short, Peter-gruppen was a terror organisation during 1943-1945 made to act as the counterpart for the Danish resistance movement (Danmarks Historien 2012). This specific interest in the occupation also supports the claim that tourists are highly driven by individual preferences and preconceived knowledge.

Moreover, the visitors were also asked to describe their experience in three words. The visitors were asked to provide these descriptions as it made it possible to compare the visitors' expectations with their actual experience. The rating system described above did not provide any deeper insight into the visitors' actual experience. Some of the visitors provided more than three words while others struggled to come up with three words. The words that were used the most to describe the visitors' experience were related to learning. Words such as informative, knowledge or learning were mentioned 11 times throughout the interviews (appendix 15. 5, 15.6, 15.7, 15.8, 15.10, 15.11, 15.12, 15.13, 15.14 and 15.16). The second biggest group of words used to describe the visitors' experience were words that are categorised as ‘positive’. The visitors mentioned these positive inflicted words eight times during the interviews (appendix 15.2, 15.3, 15.6, 15.12, 15.13, 15.14, 15.15 and 15.16). To exemplify, words such as good, surprising, fascinating and enlightening were used to describe the experiences. Similarly, the word exciting was mentioned an additional five times during the interviews (appendix 15.7, 15.9, 15.10, 15.11 and 15.14).

Besides, the visitors also highlighted how their experience at the museum had been historical and interactive. The historical aspect was mentioned four times (appendix 15.8 and 15.16) while the interactive aspect was mentioned three times (appendix 15.2, 15.7 and 15.16). The museum's focus on people was also mentioned twice in relation to the visitors' experience (appendix 15.6 and 15.10). Two of the visitors also mentioned the size of the museum as a part of their experience. As previously stated, the museum is rather small. Yet, the two visitors spoke positively of the museum size as the museum had a lot to offer despite its size and it made the experience at the museum more manageable (appendix 15.1 and 15.3).

The remaining words that were chosen to describe the visitors' experience did not fit into a specific category (appendix 15.1, 15.4, 15.8, 15.9 and 15.12). To exemplify, in interview 4 the visitor stated that his experience had been highly impacted by a language barrier as the museum's primary language is Danish (appendix 15.4). Additionally, in interview 9 the visitors used a lot of “negative” words such as overwhelming, violent and scary (appendix 15.9). One visitor also highlighted that the museum had a really good use of mediation (appendix 15.8)

#### *7.2.2.1 Codes regarding the visitors' expectations*

- Learning
- Positive
- Exciting
- Historical
- Interactive
- People
- Diversity

#### *7.2.3 Gap between the visitors' expectations and actual experience*

The gap between the visitors' expectations and their actual experience is considered to not be of greater size. Firstly, the majority of visitors rated their experience to have matched their expectations to a great extent. Secondly, when comparing the codes gathered regarding the visitors' expectations and their experience they are more or less matched with each other. For instance, a great part of the visitors that were interviewed stated that they expected to learn more in regard to the war, occupation and resistance movement. The visitors were then asked to describe their experience in which words related to learning were mentioned 11 times which indicates that the initial expectation of learning was fulfilled. Additionally, the visitors also described their experience as historical which also

matches the expectation of learning more about the war. The interactive aspect of the museum is also considered to be matching in regard to the visitors' expectations and actual experience.

The codes concerning the visitors' expectations such as "Similar to other museums" and "Rebuilding of the museum" did not provide any specific information in regard to the visitors' expectations. Therefore, they did not have any direct link to any of the codes that are generated from the descriptions of the experience which indicates a gap. However, there were almost no negative descriptions regarding the visitors' experience which implies that the expectations that the visitors had attained through previous experience were to a certain extent fulfilled.

Similarly, many of the visitors did not have any specific expectations prior to their visit which made it rather difficult to determine whether the experience lived up to their expectations or not. Nonetheless, when asked to describe the experience they had had at the museum, the majority of the visitors had nothing negative to say about their experience. Therefore, I argue that despite not stating any specific expectations the visitor still had an experience that fulfilled their needs and desires at that given moment. Thereby, attaining a positive experience. Additionally, it is likely that the visitors did in fact have some type of expectation for their visit, but the visitors had not made any grand considerations regarding the visit in advance. Further, it is also a possibility that the visitors went "blank" when they were interviewed resulting in them stating that they did not have any expectations.

There was only one visitor that seemed unhappy or unimpressed with his visit. In interview 4, the visitor stated that his expectations did live up to the experience but that he was challenged due to a language barrier (appendix 15.4). He was provided with an English guidebook, but he thought it was difficult to immerse himself in the exhibitions when he had to use the guidebook.

To summarise, the majority of visitors rated or emphasised that the experience had lived up to their initial expectations to a great extent. Additionally, the descriptions of the visitors' experiences at Besættelsesmuseet matched nicely with their initial expectations. Moreover, the descriptions of the experiences were primarily positive which implied that the visitors were happy with their experience despite any prior expectations.

### 7.3 Gap A – Perception of authenticity

#### 7.3.1 Museum's perception of authenticity

As described in section 5.5.1, gap A deals with the perception of authenticity. The gap aims to clarify the two parties' perception of authenticity. In order to establish Besættelsesmuseet's perception of authenticity, Søren Tange Rasmussen was asked to state what Besættelsesmuseet as an organisation

considered authentic. The intention of the question was to attain an overall perception of the concept and not one that was tied to any specific phenomenon. However, Rasmussen answered the question strictly related to Besættelsesmuseet. First of all, it was stressed that it is very important for Besættelsesmuseet to be considered as authentic as they are a museum that deals with historical material.

According to Rasmussen, Besættelsesmuseet is an authentic site that consists of tangible immovable and moveable resources as well as intangible resources. As stated in section 2.3, tangible immovable resources refer to buildings or landscapes and tangible moveable resources refer to objects such as documents or paintings while intangible resources refer to traditions, values or lifestyles. To exemplify, the building of the museum is an authentic tangible immovable resource because it was used as Gestapo's headquarters during the war. Additionally, the museum has aimed to maintain the rooms and cells' original appearance to ensure authenticity. The building has been used for different purposes throughout time which has slightly altered the appearance, but the museum has tried to recreate the physical aesthetic. Furthermore, Rasmussen stated that the originality of the building provides the visitors with a more valuable and authentic experience (appendix 14). In regard to the tangible moveable objects, the museum has many different objects in their exhibition related to the war such as guns (appendix 1), torture devices (appendix 2) and uniforms. The tangible resources can be referred to as *objectively* authentic. As stated by Wang (1999) in section 3.2, *objective* authenticity is when the object is determined by professional researchers to be the original. Moreover, these tangible resources can also be labelled as 'cool' based on Ricky and Vidon's (2018) thoughts of authenticity. To elaborate, 'cool' authenticity "[...] is tied to a sense of scientific and etic authentication. The 'cool' authenticity is connected to a physical object or site which have been accredited, approved and certified by experts (Ricky and Vidon 2018)." (section 3.2, p. 17).

Besides providing the visitors with an authentic frame, the museum also aims to provide an authentic presentation of intangible resources at the museum that cannot just be attained through physical objects. The museum wishes for its visitors to immerse themselves in history and learn more about life during WWII. The immersive atmosphere is attained by using the original objects as well as using digital elements. For example, in the three prison cells (appendix 1-3) there is a certain use of digital sounds and visuals to create a specific atmosphere and make the visitor feel closer to the history. The sounds and visuals are not originals but created to provide a sense of authenticity. Similarly, the personas for the ID card (appendix 12) are also created by the museum. To elaborate, the people that the personas reflect are not real but made by the museum. However, Rasmussen emphasised during

his interview that the museum spends a lot of time and resources to ensure that the museum showcases the different aspects of the war as close to reality as possible (appendix 14). The digital materials that the museum use are based on real experiences and recollections from the war that has been thoroughly researched in advance. Rasmussen referred to this concept as ‘authentic fiction’.

This ‘authentic fiction’ does not only apply to the digital elements. The exhibition of the flat (appendix 6) is also fictional with the aim of being authentic. The exhibition is a fake setting that showcases what a traditional rooftop flat looked like in the 1940s. Despite its fictional origin, the flat is still considered an authentic exhibition by the museum (appendix 14). This type of recreation in regard to sound and visuals can be compared to *constructive* (Wang 1999) and hot authenticity (Ricky and Vidon 2018). To elaborate, the sense of authenticity is projected onto these produced exhibitions or objects as they align with the beliefs and thoughts the museum has in relation to the given topic.

To sum up, the museum’s perception of what is authentic is when something is real or reflects reality. Besættelsesmuseet values being truthful to history and transparent concerning their choices to present history. The museum uses a lot of original material from the war period, yet also implements elements which are not from that time period. Nonetheless, the implemented elements are thoroughly researched to ensure that despite their “lack” of origin they are still an authentic part of the museum.

#### 7.3.1.1 Codes regarding the museum’s perception of authenticity

- Tangible immovable resources
  - Building
  - Cells
- Tangible moveable resources
  - Guns
  - Uniforms
  - Etc.
- Intangible resources
  - Persona
  - Life during WWII
- Historically accurate
  - Reflects history
- Getting closer to history

### 7.3.2 Visitors' perception of authenticity

Based on the interviews, it was established that all the interviewees considered authenticity to be immensely important in regard to Besættelsesmuseet. As the museum deals with historical material, the visitors deem it a must that the museum is authentic. As discovered in section 3.2, authenticity is a term that will highly rely on the individual preconceived notions.

Therefore, the visitors were also asked to state how they define or perceive authenticity. In general, the visitors' definitions of authenticity were very similar. All of the visitors stated that when something is authentic "it is what it is". To elaborate, the phenomenon at hand has to be true to what it is and visualise its original nature. The word 'accuracy' was also used to accentuate how the visitors expect authentic objects to be accurate and truthful to their nature. A majority of the visitors stated that this sense of "realness" was of greatest importance when dealing with history. Authenticity could only be attained in a historical context if the history were presented accurately. The sense of seeing was often mentioned in relation to accurate authenticity. According to the visitors, being able to "see" the past provided them with a greater sense of authenticity as it can be difficult to imagine aspects of the past (appendix 15.1, 15.3, 15.4, 15.6, 15.7, 15.10, 15.12, 15.14 and 15.15). This desire to see indicates the desire for a physical experience. A physical experience is when a tourist is able to experience something with one of the five senses (Ørnbo et al. 2008). Nonetheless, what the visitors see still has to be true and real. The visitors emphasised during the interviews that if something felt constructed or staged it did not have the same sense of authenticity (appendix 15.4, 15.5, 15.12 and 15.13).

The visitors also highlighted in the interviews that getting closer to the story was also perceived to create a sense of authenticity. By getting closer to history and its detail, the visitors have a more authentic perception or experience (appendix 15.3, 15.5, 15.6, 15.8, 15.9, 15.10 and 15.13). In interview 9, the visitor expressed that getting a realistic face of a person that was involved in the war made the experience more authentic (appendix 15.9). Moreover, a few of the visitors highlighted that feeling like a part of the actual history also created a greater sense of authenticity.

The aspect of being true and accurate was the primary perception of what the visitors considered authentic. In order to attain more concrete examples of what the visitors perceive as authentic, the visitors were asked whether they considered Besættelsesmuseet to be authentic and then give any examples of what they especially thought was authentic about the museum.

Firstly, only one of the visitors did not perceive the museum as authentic (appendix 15.16). When asked whether he considered the museum to be authentic he stated “Maybe”. He followed up by saying that the experience was nothing like entering Auschwitz where it feels as if nothing has changed since the war. As an archaeology student, he did appreciate that the building and cells were historically correct, but he considered the museum to be a bit too modern for his taste. Nonetheless, the remaining interviewees stated that they perceived Besættelsesmuseet as authentic (appendix 15.1-15.15).

The majority of their examples of what made the museum especially authentic were related to the first three cells (appendix 1-3). The visitors highlighted the fact that the cells were the real cells that were used during the war which made the experience more authentic (appendix 15.4, 15.5, 15.8, 15.9, 15.10, 15.12, 15.13, 15.14 and 15.16). In interview 12, the visitor stated that you could almost hear the screams in the walls (appendix 15.12). Perceiving the cells as contributing to the sense of authenticity can be associated with *objective* authenticity. The fact that the cells are the real cells is the main reason for its authentic feeling. Furthermore, the story throughout the three cells was also stated to feel authentic. To clarify, going from the digital interrogation (appendix 1) with the German officer to the torture chamber (appendix 2) and lastly to the concentration camps made it feel real for the visitors (appendix 3). To elaborate, the journey of a prisoner is visualised throughout the cells which provide the visitor with an in-depth understanding of what it was like during the war.

The appreciation of an in-depth understanding was also mentioned in regard to hearing more personal stories from the war. In five of the interviews, the interviewees emphasised how the personal stories provided them with a different, more palpable and personified angle of the war (appendix 15.1, 15.5, 15.6, 15.7, 15.10 and 15.13). The ID cards (appendix 12) and the wall of Germans (appendix 8) were stressed as exhibitions that really provided an in-depth and personal viewpoint of the war. The ID cards strictly provide a personal point of view while the wall of Germans also added society's perceptions to the mix.

In relation to the personal point of view, the flat (appendix 6) was also stated in two of the interviews to feel especially authentic (appendix 15.9 and 15.15). Despite the flat not being a real home, the flat provides the visitors with a visual of what life was like during the war.

To summarise, the visitors' perception of authenticity primarily stems from originality. In other words, when a building or object is the original it provides the visitors with a sense of authenticity. This was further highlighted in the visitors' examples of what they considered to be especially

authentic at Besættelsesmuseet. The majority of the visitors mentioned the cells as especially authentic as they were the cells that were used during the war. Moreover, the visitors also stressed that the storyline presented throughout the three cells also made the experience more authentic. They attained an "under the skin" experience by walking through the cells as they walked in the footsteps of a prisoner. This sense of getting close to the story was also mentioned as an indicator of authenticity. By getting closer to the more personal aspects of the war through ID cards or the wall of Germans, the experience at Besættelsesmuseet was more authentic as the visitors attained a point of view from a human perspective.

#### *7.3.2.1 Codes regarding the museum's perception of authenticity*

- True and accurate (it is what it is)
- Getting closer to history
- Cells
- Personal stories
  - ID-cards
  - The wall of Germans
- Flat

#### *7.3.3 Gap between perceptions of authenticity*

By comparing the museum's and visitors' perception of authenticity, it is deemed that there is no gap between the two parties. The perceptions are predominantly in alignment which implies that visiting Besættelsesmuseet offers an authentic experience. As stated in the section above, the visitors stated that for them authenticity stems from originality and accuracy. By knowing that the building, objects and stories are not fictional but accurate and truthful to history, the museum is experienced as authentic. This is matched by the museum's aim to be historically accurate. The museum spends a lot of time and resources doing research that ensures that the exhibitions are historically accurate. Additionally, both parties use the building or cells as examples of this accuracy.

Furthermore, both parties also mentioned the aspect of getting close to the story as an indicator of authenticity. Using their research, the museum attempts to provide the visitors with a close-up experience. The museum showcases a more personal perspective of the war through different tools such as the personas. The visitors also highlight this personal perspective as an especially authentic part of the museum. They emphasised that getting the personal perspective provided a new way of

perceiving the war and getting it from a person's point of view provides a relatable and authentic frame.

Finally, the museum was very devoted to providing an authentic experience for its visitors as Besættelsesmuseet is a museum that deals with history. Based on the visitors' statements, it was clear that the visitors not only expected the museum to be authentic but also considered their experience at the museum to have been authentic. In other words, the museum has provided its visitors with an authentic experience that has suited their personal preferences and needs, thereby resulting in a positive and authentic experience.

## 7.4 Gap D – Perception of digital implementation

### 7.4.1 Museum's perception of digital implementation

As this study is centred on the use of digital implementations, it was a necessity to work with a gap related to digitalisation. Gap D aims to visualise the perceptions of digital implementations at Besættelsesmuseet. In the following section, the museum's use of digital elements and the museum's reasoning for using the elements will be presented.

The museum's use of digital elements was visualised and presented in section 2.1. To recap, the museum uses a lot of different digital elements throughout its exhibitions such as videos, sounds and interactive exhibitions. To exemplify, in the interrogation room you are interrogated by a German Criminal inspector (appendix 1), in the museum section about "Germans in Aarhus" there is an interactive wall with portraits of Germans that tell their stories (appendix 8) and throughout the museum, there are ID card scanners (appendix 5).

The main reason for implementing the digital elements is to add features to the experience that could not be attained otherwise. Rasmussen emphasised during his interview that the museum works based on the principle that if digital implementations are not necessary then they will not be used (appendix 14). In other words, the museum only uses digital implementations when it is the only and best option to create a certain experience. For example, the ID cards could have been made as small books that would be handed out to the visitors, but this communication tool would not provide the visitor with the same immersive experience. The ID cards activate multiple of the visitors' senses which creates a more dramatic and almost cinematic story (appendix 14). The activation of multiple senses is a constant feature at the museum. Each room in the museum has its own specific sound that is implemented to heighten the experience for the visitors. In other words, the sound element adds another layer to the experience.

The additional layers of digital implementations also provide a more human side to the museum's storytelling. Rasmussen used the wall of Germans as an example of the humanity that the digital elements provide (appendix 14). The actors of the Germans make the story come to life and make the stories more relatable. For example, on the wall, there is a portrait of a female German soldier. She is young and ordinary. By visualising the German soldier as an ordinary female, the museum humanises the soldiers which makes it easier for visitors to relate to and understand their stories.

In short, Besættelsesmuseet uses the digital implementations as a way to present the story of World War II through a new perspective with multiple layers.

#### *7.4.1.1 Codes regarding the museum's perception of digital implementations*

- New features to the experience
- New perspectives/understandings
  - Human perspective

#### *7.4.2 Visitors' perception of digital implementation*

In regard to the visitors' perception, the visitors were predominantly happy with the museum's use of digital implementations. In seven of the interviews, the visitors expressed how the implementation of digital elements improved their experience (appendix 15.1, 15.7, 15.8, 15.9, 15.12, 15.14 and 15.16). The added digital elements made the experience more dimensional. The visitors highlighted how they felt more engaged with the experience because of the digital elements. Moreover, the elements of sounds and visuals were beneficial as they made the experience more approachable. The elements were stated to make the history easier to understand whilst being entertaining. The visitors felt immersed and wanted to continue learning more. Additionally, they did not get mentally tired during their experience as they could switch between reading, listening, thinking and touching. Only one visitor expressed that he strictly preferred reading when visiting a museum (appendix 15.4).

The multidimensional aspect that the digital implementations provide also resulted in the visitors attaining a sense of feeling closer to the war (appendix 15.5, 15.6, 15.7, 15.14 and 15.15). Through the use of digital elements, the visitors gained access to a different person's mindset and experiences which improved the experience. In interview 6, the diary (appendix 7) was used as an example of getting into the mindset of another person (appendix 15.6). The diary showcases the war through the eyes of a young girl. The young girl writes in her diary and reads it out loud. The visitor stated that seeing and hearing her story with this "childish" approach had made him very emotional.

Despite the general appreciation of the digital implementations, the visitors emphasised that the experience should not solely be digital (appendix 15.10, 15.11, 15.13). According to the visitors, there must be a balance between the traditional and the new. To elaborate, the museum must have physical objects as well such as guns and uniforms. If the experience was solely digital, the experience would not have the right impression. To recapitulate, the digital implementations create new sensuous layers to the experience as well as generate a sense of closeness to the history. Nonetheless, the digital implementations must be balanced and not be an overwhelming aspect of the museum.

#### *7.4.2.1 Codes regarding the visitors' perception of digital implementations*

- Bettering the experience (layers)
- Getting close to the story
- A balance between old and new

#### *7.4.3 Gap between perceptions of digital implementation*

Besættelsesmuseet's initial intention with implementing digital elements was to add layers to the experience at the museum that could not be achieved through traditional physical objects. Rasmussen used the ID cards as one of the examples in which digital implementations can add a new layer to the experience. Correspondingly, the visitors emphasised that the digital elements at the museum bettered the experience as the elements contributed to a multidimensional experience. To elaborate, the experience activated multiple of the visitors' senses and also provide the visitors with the opportunity to take charge during their visit. The aspect of senses was also stated in section 3.1 as a great part of experiencing. Using or activating multiple senses during an experience heightens and improves an experience according to literature.

The sensuous experiences also resulted in the visitors feeling close to history. The visitors would express how they felt as if they had been a part of the war. By hearing the personal histories of people through the digital elements of sound and visuals, the visitors attained a new and personal perspective of the war. The aspect of closeness was also stated by Rasmussen as being one of the reasons why Besættelsesmuseet uses digital implementations. The personal side of the story would not have been achieved in the same cinematic and sensuous manner without the use of digital implementations. The additional layers that the digital elements provide can be compared to Ørnbo, Sneppen and Würst (2008) categorisation of a mental experience. A mental experience is defined as an experience where the tourist feels involved with the experience (section 3.1). Correspondingly, the visitors at Besættelsesmuseet felt involved and immersed with history due to the museum's use of digital elements.

Nonetheless, the visitors deem that the use of digital implementations must be balanced. The experience at the museum cannot be a sole digital and mental experience but must also include physical objects. The visitors emphasised that they considered the museum to be well-balanced as it is. This desire for a balance correlate nicely with the museum's aim of only using digital elements when it is the best option for the desired effect.

As the museum's and visitors' perceptions of the use of digital implementations can be interconnected, the gap between the two is deemed to be small. Additionally, the museum's intentions are reflected in the visitors' descriptions of their experiences. Yet, the museum should be cautious of its use of digital implementations. Besættelsesmuseet should not overuse digital elements as this would impact the balance between the traditional physical object and the digital implementations. Nevertheless, it seems that the museum is very cautious of their use of digital implementations as they only use it when deemed appropriate.

## 7.5 Gap AD – Perception of the relation between authenticity and digital implementations

### 7.5.1 Museum's perception of relation between authenticity and digital implementation

The final gap deals with the perceptions of whether there is a relation between authenticity and digital implementations. As stated previously, the museum uses digital implementations as a way to provide their visitors with additional features. Moreover, the digital implementations are also used to ensure a sense of immersion or closeness with history. However, feeling immersed in a story does not directly imply authenticity. Rasmussen has previously stressed that being authentic and historically correct was of greatest importance in regard to the museum's exhibitions (appendix 14). Hence, the digital implementations are also aimed to contribute to a sense of authenticity.

All the digital elements are made on the basis of thorough research. The wall of Germans is for instance mentioned as a digital element which provides an authentic perception of the lives of Germans during the war. Despite the stories being fictional, the stories provide a realistic demonstration of what life was like during the war. Rasmussen describes this in-betweenness as a 'border country between fiction and facts' (translated by the author). Moreover, the stories become cinematic and sensuous through the use of digital implementations (appendix 14).

Similarly, the museum also uses documentaries to visualise people's actual experiences during the war. The documentaries consist of interviews with people who had experienced the war and footage that showcase these experiences. Rasmussen commented that despite the risk of lapse of memory, the

statements from the interviews have been historically examined. Using memory as a source can be historically problematic, yet it provides a sense of reality and authenticity (appendix 14).

To review, digital implementations are perceived by the museum as a contributor to authenticity at Besættelsesmuseet. To elaborate, the implementations are not the core distributor of an authentic experience, but a contributing part of the authentic atmosphere at the museum. The digital implementations make it possible for the visitors to attain a more in-depth perspective of the war which non-digital elements would not be able to provide. However, the digital elements are dependent on the non-digital elements as they create a foundation for the stories told through the digital elements.

Moreover, Rasmussen emphasised that the museum's biggest wish is that their visitors can remember what they have experienced and learned at the museum as the museum deals with serious topics that to this day are still relevant. According to Rasmussen, the digital implementations are a powerful communication tool as it makes it easier for the visitors to attain an in-depth understanding of the war which creates stronger memories (appendix 14). Additionally, as the visitors are able to debate and discuss their experiences with one another they add additional value to the experience which makes it more memorable.

#### *7.5.1.1 Codes regarding the museum's perception of the relation between authenticity and digital implementation*

- Contributor
- Based on real stories
- Reflects reality
- Powerful communication tool

#### *7.5.2 Visitors' perspective of relation between authenticity and digital implementation*

The majority of the visitors have a positive perception of the use of digital implementations at Besættelsesmuseet. Furthermore, when the visitors were asked whether these digital implementations created a sense of authenticity to their visit, the majority of visitors also agreed that the digital elements created an additional layer of authenticity to their experience (appendix 15.1, 15.2, 15.3, 15.5, 15.6, 15.7, 15.8, 15.9, 15.10, 15.13, 15.14, 15.15, 15.16). The visitors emphasised that the digital elements improved their experience by creating a more personal and living experience. The aspect of sound is often mentioned as a contributor to authenticity. By being able to hear personal stories and the voices of those stories, the stories become more authentic for the visitors as they feel close to the specific person's life (appendix 15.1, 15.2, 15.9, 15.13 and 15.15).

In relation to feeling close to the stories, the digital implementations are also expressed by the visitors to bring the stories to life. The stories are not just written out on a poster but have dimension which creates a more dynamic and living atmosphere. As stated previously, some of the visitors stated that the stories are so lifelike that they are emotionally invested in the stories. Additionally, some of the visitors highlighted that by getting up close to these lifelike stories, it makes it easier for them to understand the war. They do not have to imagine how it was as they are presented with visuals and sound that reflect history (appendix 15.6, 15.7, 15.10, 15.11, 15.12, 15.13 and 15.16). Despite being reflections of history, the visitors accept these implementations as authentic.

On a more practical side, the digital implementations are also stated to be a great tool of communication. The visitors stressed that they did not get bored or tired during their visit as they were stimulated by different features. They were not obliged to read all the time which made the visitors more attracted to the story (appendix 15.8, 15.10, 15.14 and 15.16). This aspect was highlighted in interview 10 to be especially important as this was more appealing to the younger generation (appendix 15.10). Similarly, the use of digital implementations was stated in interview 16 to modernise authenticity by presenting authentic stories through a new perspective (appendix 16).

Nevertheless, a few of the visitors did not see a direct link between the digital implementations and authenticity (appendix 15.4, 15.5, 15.11 and 15.12). For instance, in interview 5 the visitors stated that there had to be a mix between the traditional historical objects and the digital implementations. To elaborate, only relying on digital implementations would not produce an authentic experience. In interviews 4 and 11, the interviewees stated that the use of digital elements felt a bit “forced” and almost “gimmicky” (appendix 15.4 and 15.12). Nevertheless, they acknowledged that the digital implementations were a new way to present history, but they preferred a more traditional approach.

To sum up, the majority of the visitors stated that they attained an authentic experience through the digital implementations at the museum. The digital elements created a more in-depth, personal and living presentation of the war than what could have been achieved through traditional physical exhibitions. Additionally, the visitors also perceived the content as more approachable. They did not tire from their visit as they were able to experience with multiple senses. The aspect of being approachable was even highlighted by the visitors who perceived the digital elements as less authentic.

#### *7.5.1.1 Codes regarding the visitors' perception of the relation between authenticity and digital implementation*

- Personal experience
- Comes to life
- Reflects reality
- Approachable
- Does not work alone

#### *7.5.3 Gap between the perceptions of authenticity in relation to digital implementations*

The gap related to the parties' perceptions of authenticity in relation to digital implementations is deemed to be of insignificant size. In other words, the museum and visitors have similar perceptions of how the digital implementations impact the museum's sense of authenticity.

Firstly, the visitors mainly highlighted how the digital implementations support a sense of authenticity as the implementations provide a multidimensional experience. To exemplify, the digital implementation was specially complimented for supplying a personal perception of the war. The more personal approach invoked the visitors' emotions and created stories that felt alive. As stated in section 7.4.1, this closeness was also one of the reasons why the museum implemented digital elements.

Secondly, the digital implementations were also complimented by the visitors for reflecting reality in an authentic manner. The visitors were especially pleased with the element of sound that the digital implementations provide as it creates an additional authentic layer to the experience. This added layer of authenticity correlates nicely with the museum's desire to reflect reality historically correct. The digital sounds and visuals that the museum use, are all used to deliver an accurate presentation of what life was like during WWII.

Nonetheless, both parties agree that the authentic atmosphere at the museum cannot be solely produced through digital implementations. As stressed in section 7.4.1, Besættelsesmuseet only uses digital elements when it is the most beneficial option. There has to be a balance between the digital and physical elements in order to create an authentic experience. Likewise, the visitors also accentuated that the digital implementations cannot stand alone in regard to creating an authentic experience. During the two rounds of interviews, the parties indicated that the balance of the traditional and the digital is necessary due to the museum's historical relevance. The museum deals with a real historical event and should therefore have some sort of physical connection to the event.

On a different note, both parties emphasised that the use of digital implementations makes the historical content more approachable. It is not necessary for the visitors to have any specified knowledge to attain an in-depth understanding of the war. Nor do the visitors have to spend all their time reading to get an insight perspective. The visitors have different opportunities to attain this new knowledge because of the digital implementations which are considered beneficial by the museum and the visitors.

To recapitulate, the digital implementations are a contributor to the creation of an authentic experience at Besættelsesmuseet. The digital implementations are a great additional feature for the traditional physical exhibitions as the digital implementations add new sensuous layers to the experience. Moreover, the digital implementations are a powerful tool of communication as the historical content becomes easier for the visitors to process and understand despite their previous knowledge of the subject.

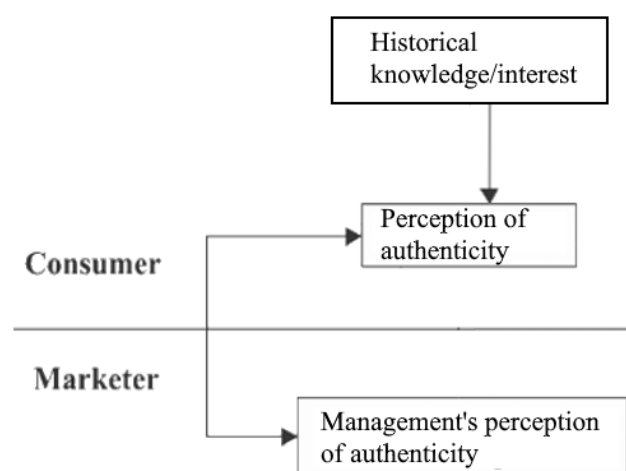
## 8. Theoretical considerations

This small chapter will present some of the theoretical considerations that have occurred during and after processing the data for this thesis.

This thesis supports the claim highlighted in section 3.2 that authenticity is a concept which relies on an individual's perceptions. Despite the overall agreement between the museum and visitors, the interviews clearly indicated that the visitors all have different ways of experiencing and perceiving authenticity. Additionally, the differences between the visitors were especially evident in the "spills" during the interview. As stated in section 6.3, when conducting interviews some of the data might spill before or after the interview. In other words, the additional data is not a part of the official interview, but rather small talk made before or after the interview. For example, the interviewees would state their love and interest in history or even tell personal anecdotes from their own experiences.

### 8.1 The SERVQUAL

These personalised additional stories made me consider whether it would have been beneficial to look deeper into how the visitors' historical knowledge or interest in the war impacted their perception of authenticity. The original SERVQUAL model visualises three different elements which create the foundation of a consumer's perceptions (see figure 1, p. 32). The elements are words of mouth communication, personal needs and past experiences. Similarly, a category of historical knowledge could be added to the model as a foundation for the visitors' perceptions of authenticity. The added gap or category would have further emphasised how the individual tourist's preferences are the primary reasoning for how they perceive.



## 9. Conclusion

This study has clarified that the implementation of digital elements is a contributing factor to the creation of authenticity at Besættelsesmuseet. To elaborate, on the basis of the SERVQUAL model the study aimed to clarify any possible gaps between Besættelsesmuseet and its visitors. Due to the rather generic nature of the SERVQUAL model, the model was modified based on a literature review of the concepts of experience, authenticity and digitalisation. As a consequence, the following gaps were included as they were deemed to be of relevance in regard to Besættelsesmuseet's historical background and its implementation of digital elements: gap 1, gap 5, gap A, gap D and gap AD. Gaps 1 and 5 were originally a part of the SERVQUAL model whilst gaps A, D and AD were added during the modification.

To recap, the first gap deals with the expectations of the visitors and how the museum and visitors perceive these expectations. Next, gap 5 deals with how the visitors' experience and prior expectations align with one another. Gap A is focused on the parties' perception of authenticity in general and in regard to the museum. The following gap, D, presents the perception of digital implementations. Lastly, gap AD concerns the museum's and visitors' perceptions of the relation between authenticity and digital implementation.

The aforementioned gaps answer the first part of the thesis' research question namely "*Based on the SERVQUAL model, which gaps occur due to Besættelsesmuseet's historical background and its implementation of digital elements [...]*". In regard to the last part of the question "*and how are the visitors' sense of authenticity of the museum influenced by these gaps?*", an additional three sub questions were made to attain an in depth understanding:

1. *How do the museum and the visitors at Besættelsesmuseet perceive authenticity?*
2. *How do the museum and the visitors perceive the use of digital implementations?*
3. *In which way do the digital implementations create or support a sense of authenticity at Besættelsesmuseet based on the museum's and visitors' perceptions?*

In order to answer the added questions, the five gaps were analysed. The two original gaps (1 and 5) did not have any direct influence on the perception of authenticity. Nonetheless, the two gaps did highlight the perception of the overall experience for the visitors. To elucidate, gap 1 clarified that the visitors' initial expectations were aligned with what Besættelsesmuseet considered to be expected prior to a visit to the museum. In other words, the gap between the two parties was rather small due to their similar perceptions. Additionally, gap 5 visualised that the visitors' experiences lived up to

their initial expectations which made the gap inconsequential. To accentuate, the visitors' overall experience at the museum was positively received. On the contrary, the additional three gaps (A, D and AD) did have a direct connection to the three sub questions related to the sense of authenticity.

The first sub question in relation to authenticity can be answered with gap A. Gap A indicated that the museum and the visitors have a similar perception of what authenticity is. The analysis indicates that the most important indicator of authenticity is when an object or phenomenon is what it is. The object or phenomenon has to be true and historically accurate for the object or phenomenon to be perceived as authentic. The tangible aspects of the museum such as the building and prison cells were especially highlighted as creating a sense of authenticity at the museum. Additionally, the more personal side of the museum was also stated to provide the visitors with a more authentic feeling. Getting close to history through personal stories and perceptions was emphasised by both parties to be a contributor to authenticity. The personal perceptions were according to the museum and visitors attained through a variety of different digital elements which lead to the second sub question.

As showcased in section 2.1, Besættelsesmuseet uses a variety of different digital implementations. The museum's main reason for implementing digital elements was to provide its visitors with an up-close experience of the war while adding new sensuous layers to the experience. Similarly, the visitors also stated that they perceived the digital implementations positively as these added new elements to the experience. Additionally, the visitors also stressed that the digital elements provided them with a personal and up-close perception of the war that they did not attain through the traditional physical objects. To exemplify, the digital elements such as the use of sound, the ID cards and the wall of Germans were highlighted as some of the elements which made the experience feel personal. To clarify, gap D expressed an almost non-existing gap between the museum's and the visitors' perception of the use of digital elements.

The final sub question can be answered by gap AD. There is an overall consensus between the museum and its visitors that the digital implementations create an additional layer of authenticity to the experience. As the material used in the digital implementations is thoroughly researched, the digital elements are perceived as authentic. However, the museum and its visitors stressed that authenticity cannot be solely produced through digital elements at Besættelsesmuseet. The digital implementations are a contributor to the sense of authenticity but are dependent on the traditional physical objects at the museum which creates the overall authentic atmosphere. The museum and its visitors indicate throughout the interviews that the museum's historical background is the main reason

why the museum cannot be fully digital. The museum must respect history and include real elements from the given time period.

To sum up, the digital implementations influence Besættelsesmuseet's sense of authenticity in a positive manner. Nonetheless, the visitors emphasised that a balance between traditional physical objects and the digital elements was necessary. To exemplify, the actual prison cells (appendix 1) created a general sense of authenticity while the digital interrogation and added sound effects produced an additional sensuous layer to the experience which made the experience feel even more authentic and up-close for the visitors. In the case of Besættelsesmuseet, the experience cannot just be digital as the base of the authentic feeling stems from the physical objects.

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