❧ Introduction

Jeroen Rodenberg, Pieter Wagenaar and Gert-Jan Burgers

The Importance of Participation

To determine which heritage sites within the Kingdom of the Netherlands could be nominated for consideration as a world heritage site, the State Secretary for Culture, Halbe Zijlstra, installed an expert committee on 8 March 2010. In assessing the eligibility of possible sites, the Committee applied the UNESCO guidelines; namely, 'authenticity', 'exceptionality' and 'universality'. Among the heritage sites proposed by the Committee was the Noordoostpolder, the world's largest polder. The heritage experts concluded that this polder represented an exponent of the twentieth-century ideal of social engineering. In designing the polder, after all, landscape planners and architects had drawn out the agricultural parcels in a consistent and coherent manner and used Chrystaller's 'central place theory' to plan the polder's central town and villages. These spatial characteristics are still visible and, according to the committee, of unique and universal value (Commissie Herziening Voorlopige Lijst Werelderfgoed 2010: 21–24, 41–42). After the Committee presented its tentative list, the State Secretary still had to approve it. He promised to do so provided there was sufficient local support. Although the mayor and aldermen of the municipality of the Noordoostpolder were initially in favour of placing the polder on the tentative list, the local community was divided on the plan. Opponents argued that a heritage label was being imposed on them from above that was inconsistent with their perception of the polder heritage, which was based on the agricultural use of the landscape. Nominating the polder as a world heritage site would impede their desire to scale up the outdated agricultural parcels. In the face of the growing resistance within the local community to the imposed heritage discourse, local administrative support quickly evaporated, and the State Secretary decided to remove the Noordoostpolder

from the list (Rodenberg 2015). The Noordoostpolder thus presents a remarkable – and for some heritage scholars within the school of Critical Heritage Studies perhaps hopeful – case, one in which an Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD) (Smith 2006) ultimately lost out in a decision-making process to a community discourse. Would things have turned out differently if the Noordoostpolder 'community' had been involved at an earlier stage? Would it have been possible to integrate their discourse and the AHD? If so, how does one achieve involvement of the local communities in governance?

Outline of the Volume

For several years, Heritage Studies scholars have been paying attention to participation in heritage governance; a phenomenon called 'interactive governance' in the discipline of Public Administration. An important explanation for this is the desire to enable communities to develop their own heritage discourse rather than being subjected to an AHD that is alien to them (see for example Smith 2006) or as a way to mitigate contestation (Korostelina 2019). Studies of such governance processes therefore abound, but, curiously, they seldom make use of Public Administration theory (PA). This is all the more striking given that scholars working in this academic discipline have been studying interactive governance for decades. For us, this is a reason to devote an entire book to the insights developed by students of public administration and how heritage scholars could draw from these.

The book is organized as follows. We begin with two theoretical chapters. The first provides an overview of PA thinking on interactive governance and forms the theoretical framework of the book. Yet, Public Administration is not the only scholarly discipline in which interactive governance is discussed. Political philosophers also have something to say, which is why we have added a second theoretical chapter. In it we demonstrate that interactive governance is often inspired by Habermasian notions of the ideal speech situation, something that has not gone without criticism in political philosophy. The remainder of the book consists of case studies. On the basis of these, we try to assess to what extent the concepts developed in PA are applicable to the field of heritage. However, theories about interactive governance are not the only benefits that can be drawn from PA. Indeed, heritage scholars are quite often concerned with governance. PA is therefore also relevant to those who are interested in more than just its interactive forms. This is why in the first chapter of the book, we offer a very brief and very

personal overview of other bodies of PA theory that may also be of benefit to Heritage Studies.

Fundamental Concepts

Before we go any further, we first need to clarify what we mean by some of the terms we use. The first one we need to deal with is 'public administration'. When we use the word without capitals we mean 'government' in its broadest sense.'Public Administration' with capitals is then the academic discipline studying it. [1]

The definition of 'governance' is somewhat trickier. In 1995, the Public Administration scholar Rhodes remarked that the word had changed in meaning and now referred to at least six new developments in public administration. These ranged from 'New Public Management' (NPM) to 'good governance', and from the minimal state to the way private companies are run (Rhodes 1996). We here use the term in the original sense of the word, to mean 'the act of governing' (Emerson, Nabatchi and Balogh 2011: 2). 'Interactive governance' will be defined in the second chapter of this book.

There are also two concepts that emerge from Heritage Studies we need to define. Without dwelling on the debates surrounding the concept of 'cultural heritage', we define it briefly as 'a social and cultural practice, enacted by communities and individuals, in which histories are selected or rejected' (Rodenberg and Wagenaar 2018: 2; cf. Smith 2006). The term 'Authorized Heritage Discourse', which has already been mentioned, was coined by Smith. It refers to a dominant heritage discourse, often articulated by experts, which exists at the expense of subaltern discourses (Smith 2006). Now we have made our concepts clear, it is time to take a closer look at what the field of PA has to offer Heritage Studies.

Jeroen Rodenberg has an MA in Medieval History and a MSc in Public Administration (Leiden University). He is a lecturer and Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Public Administration and Political Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, with research interests in heritage governance and policy and the history of public administration. He is involved in the pan-European research and training project on heritage planning HERILAND. Currently, he is completing his dissertational research on competing heritage policy discourses in decision-making processes.

Dr Pieter Wagenaar is an assistant professor at the Department of Public Administration and Political Sciences at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. His research interests are the history of administration and the administration

of history. At present, he is focused on interactive governance in the heritage sector. He is involved in the HERILAND project: a pan-European research and training network on cultural heritage in relation to Spatial Planning and Design.

Dr Gert-Jan Burgers has a chair in Heritage of Cultural Landscapes and Urban Environments at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. He is also director of CLUE+, the Vrije Universiteit interfaculty research institute for Culture, Cognition, History and Heritage, and project leader of the International Training Network HERILAND, Cultural Heritage and the Planning of European Landscapes, financed by the EU H2020 Marie Sklodowska Curie scheme.

NOTE

1. Iain McLean and Alistair McMillan, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics*, 3rd edn. (Oxford University Press 2009).

References

Commissie Herziening voorlopige lijst werelderfgoed. 2010. *Uitzonderlijk en universeel: Voorlopige lijst Unesco werelderfgoed Koninkrijk der Nederlanden.* [s.l].

Emerson, K., T. Nabatchi and S. Balogh. 2012. 'An Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance', *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 22(1): 1–29.

Korostelina, A.V. 2019. 'Understanding Values of Cultural Heritage within the Framework of Social Identity Conflicts', in E. Avrami, S. Macdonald, R. Mason and D. Myers (eds), *Values in Heritage Management: Emerging Approaches and Research Directions.* Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, pp. 83–96.

Rhodes, R.A.W. 1996. 'The New Governance: Governing without Government', *Political Studies* 44(4): 652–67.

Rodenberg, J. 2015. 'De bestuurlijke omgang met verleden, heden en toekomst: of hoe de Noordoostpolder geen Werelderfgoed werd', in R. van Diepen, W. van der Most and H. Pruntel (eds), *Polders peilen.* Lelystad: Stichting Uitgeverij De Twaalfde Provincie, pp. 130–53.

Rodenberg, J., and P. Wagenaar. 2018. 'Cultural Contestation: Heritage, Identity and the Role of Government', in J. Rodenberg and F.P. Wagenaar (eds), *Cultural Contestation: Heritage, Identity and the Role of Government.* Cham: Palgrave McMillan, pp. 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-91914-0_1.

Smith, L. 2006. *Uses of Heritage.* London and New York: Routledge.