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Assessing stakeholders' values and interests for archaeological Park Matilo and Castellum Hoge Woerd, the Netherlands

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ASSESSING STAKEHOLDERS' VALUES AND INTERESTS FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK MATILO AND CASTELLUM HOGE WOERD, THE NETHERLANDS

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Abstract

Heritage is a dynamic concept. The significance of heritage and the values attributed to it differ from person to person. This has influence on how we deal with heritage and the decisions we make in heritage preservation. In the heritage sector, values assessments have gained attention in academic research on international level. However, a better understanding of the values attributed to archaeological heritage by different groups of stakeholders is needed to better respond to the various perspectives on heritage values in heritage preservation and public archaeology projects. More knowledge about stakeholders' values and interest will also contribute to effective stakeholder engagement practices. This study contributes to this by means of a values assessment and stakeholder analysis of two case study projects, Archaeological Park Matilo in Leiden and Castellum Hoge Woerd in Utrecht.

Keywords

Heritage Values, Stakeholder Engagement, Archaeological Site Park, Roman Castellum, Heritage Preservation

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Introuduction

“One should wonder what identity really is”, a frustrated farmer living next to the archaeological site of the Hoge Woerd said. “Well, here identity is imposed on you. (...) The Romans are declared sacred and everything has to make way for it”. To this farmer, this particular site has a social value, as it is his home territory. He feels attached to the place because his grandfather started a fruit orchard at this location over a hundred years ago. He also values the location for economic reasons, because it is in his interest to maintain a prosperous business. Archaeologists, on the other hand, value the site for its historic and scientific significance, as it conveys a relation to the past and provides data for research. How can these diverging values and sometimes conflicting interests and contrasting ideas be united in heritage preservation projects?

Heritage is a dynamic concept (Frijhoff 2007) and the values attributed to heritage differ from person to person, change over time, and are influenced by political ambitions, social ideals, and economic strategies (e.g. Avrami et al. 2000; Duineveld and Kolen 2009). This has considerable influence on how people deal with heritage; values strongly shape the decisions that are made in spatial development, policy directions, and heritage preservation. Values-based management considers the creation of a dialogue with other stakeholders in cultural and spatial transformations as important, as well as the assessment of all the values attributed to heritage by different stakeholders with an interest in heritage preservation projects (e.g. Jerome 2014; Kolen 2008; Mason 2002; Myers et al. 2010).



Figure 1. Archaeological Park Matilo (Buro JP)

Participation in heritage management is not (yet?) common in the Netherlands, but this topic has gained more attention in academic research in the last few years (Duineveld 2007; Duineveld et al. 2008; Groenendijk 2015; Van den Dries 2014). From the literature, it seems that there is a discrepancy between studies about the benefit of value-centred heritage management and policies that stimulate participatory governance on the one hand, and the current practice in archaeological heritage management on the other. Although it is known that we have an interested and supportive audience (Van den Dries 2014), more understanding of the values attributed to archaeological heritage by different groups of stakeholders is needed for sustainable heritage management and effective community engagement.

For my master thesis in heritage management (Amsing 2015) I intended to identify for what reasons archaeological sites are valued and what the interests are of the stakeholders involved. Which values are prioritised by those in charge and what are the thoughts of stakeholders about this? I evaluated this for two case study projects, Archaeological Park Matilo in Leiden and Castellum Hoge Woerd in Utrecht. I chose these case studies, because they both concern archaeological site parks in the Netherlands situated in the middle of lively neighbourhoods. Also, in both projects a range of stakeholder groups were involved and both sites are part of the Roman Limes, which is on the World Heritage tentative list.

The case study projects

Archaeological Park Matilo in Leiden, which officially opened in September 2013, covers and protects the archaeological remains of the listed monument of the Roman *castellum* Matilo (fig. 1). The idea of the city council was to incorporate the archaeological monument in a park, a green area where people from the socially very different neighbourhoods of Roomburg and Meerburg could meet and recreate. Besides, it was hoped that the history of the site would add identity to the new neighbourhood of Roomburg, and that it would attract tourists to visit Leiden and Matilo too (Gemeente Leiden 2008 & 2009; Bureau Buiten 2012; Provincie Zuid-Holland 2014).

The archaeological site of De Hoge Woerd is situated in the relatively new city district Leidsche Rijn, West of Utrecht. The site is listed as a monument since the 1960s as it consists of a Roman *castellum* from around 50 CE on a meander of the river Rhine. The reconstructed *castellum* forms a park, named Castellum Hoge Woerd (fig. 2). It contains a museum (developed by the municipal Heritage Department), a restaurant, a city farm and a theatre (Projectbureau Leidsche Rijn 2007). Castellum Hoge Woerd opened in August 2015.



Figure 2. Castellum Hoge Woerd (Your Captain Luchtfotografie)

Methodology and data collection

Different kinds of stakeholder groups were involved in the two projects, from people involved because of their expertise, to public officials, volunteer representatives of groups of people (lay stakeholders), and the wider public. To understand their role in the development of the park, their values at stake, and their interests in the park, interviews were conducted, because they are sensitive to contextual relationships and therefore indispensable in research to heritage values (Mason 2002, 16). Questions related to what they found successful and less successful in the development of the park, their role in the project, what they cared about in relation to the park, and what recommendations they had for future projects.

Twenty interviews were conducted with selected stakeholders of local organisations and businesses, authoritative bodies, and community interest groups. In order to get a solid grip on the viewpoints of different stakeholders, representatives of the

most obvious and largest stakeholder groups were interviewed. Because of a possible subjectivity bias, additional interviews were held that led to the same results. Information gaps that could not be filled during the interview phase were investigated during an adjacent literature study.

To position the stakeholders, a division was made between direct/primary stakeholders and indirect/secondary stakeholders. In the development of Castellum Hoge Woerd, the municipal project manager, the State Service for Cultural Heritage (RCE), and the four-partner coalition (museum, theatre, restaurant, city farm) were the direct stakeholders. In Archaeological Park Matilo, similar parties formed the project management. They were the key players that were directly involved in governance, held power over decision-making, and formed the programs. Other stakeholders were indirect stakeholders. They had an interest in the park and values at stake, but they lacked the power to have a main voice in the decision-making process.

Comparing the degree of power or influence in the planning and decision-making process with the degree of interest in the project, further differentiated the groups of stakeholders. Commitment to the project, as demonstrated by the investment of time and resources and eagerness to engage in debates around the project, determines the degree of interest in the project of a certain stakeholder group. The resulting diagram (fig. 3) is commonly used to determine stakeholder engagement strategies (Fung 2006). Here, the diagram helps to understand who were the key players (high influence), the context setters (middle influence), and the crowd (low influence).¹

All kinds of values are attributed to the archaeological heritage sites. Values are positive characteristics that make a site important to that specific stakeholder. The stakeholders also have wide ranging interests, which are the underlying needs or wants that they hope to have fulfilled with respect to the site (Myers et al. 2010). Assessing the values and interests and comparing the assessment with the outcome of the projects, allowed for an analysis of the values that were prioritised in the development of the site parks, as well as the differences and similarities between the case study projects. In addition, the interview data provided contextual information about the thoughts and feelings of the stakeholders.

Results of the values assessment

The interviewees positively reviewed many things, like the archaeologically inspired designs of the park, small scale co-production projects, and the involvement of (partially) commercial parties. From the analysis, it is clear that for those in charge, the historical and scientific values of the site predominated. To them, these determine the significance of the sites and legitimised the development of the site parks. Both parks convey a relation to the past through the archaeologically inspired designs and the exhibitions about the history of the site. Paradoxically, the site parks preserve archaeological remains for future scientific research, but at the same time the monumental status prevents scientists from conducting archaeological research for many years to come.

In both site parks, the project management chose to put a strong focus on educational values as well. The capability of the archaeological site to teach visitors about the past is incorporated in both parks; the story of the past is translated into a contemporary visitor program, with workshops, guided tours, etc. Through these properties, archaeological heritage is associated with themes like natural environment and sustainability. Placing archaeology in a wider context makes it more interesting for a municipality to invest in an archaeological site park, because the

| | | Castellum Hoge Woerd | | | Archaeological park Matilo | | |
|--------------------------------|--------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Influence of stakeholder group | High | | Councillor | | | Councillor | |
| | | | State Service for Cultural Heritage | Municipal Project Manager | | State Service for Cultural Heritage | Municipal Project Manager |
| | Middle | | | Municipal Heritage Department | | | Municipal Heritage Department |
| | | | | Theatre, City Farm, Restaurant | | | |
| | Low | | Historical association | | | | Foundation for 'school gardens' |
| | | | Local Fruit Farmer | | | | Association for 'city gardens' |
| | | | Two community interest groups | | | Two community interest groups | |
| | | | Local residents | | | Local residents | |
| | | Low | Middle | High | Low | Middle | High |
| Interest of stakeholder group | | | | Interest of stakeholder group | | | |

Figure 3. Position of stakeholder groups (by author).

site serves as a multifunctional centre that attracts a wider spectrum of people and enterprises, and is therefore more likely to provide social and economic means to the location.

The multifunctionality of both site parks is particularly apparent in Utrecht, where cultural and economic values are more emphasised than in Leiden. Both parks provide cultural activities related to music, dance, and theatre, but in the Castellum, theatre Podium Hoge Woerd is committed to form a full program of performances. In Leiden, there is no long-term involvement of a similar commercial party and the community associations had difficulty with planning activities. The case studies indicate that the involvement of commercial parties, like a theatre and a restaurant, contributes to a sustainable exploitation concept for an archaeological site, which has the potential to make heritage profitable.

Including the social values of the indirect stakeholders turned out to be the most challenging in both projects. The site parks provide a public space where local people can meet, recreate, participate in social gatherings, and feel attached to. However, community interest groups would have wanted the project management to focus more strongly on other social values as well, like the transparency in information provision and open attitudes in communication strategies. It is the course of the project development that they are not content with, as they have the feeling they are not listened to, or that there is a lack of mutual understanding about, for example, the functions and design of the park.

Interestingly, the primary stakeholders were most positive about the level of community engagement they had achieved. In Leiden, the councillor said they “had very close contact with the neighbourhoods”. The councillor, however, noticed that local people had different ambitions; while he was very enthusiastic about the importance of the site in Roman history and its significance to Leiden, the residents were more interested in a soccer field for their children. And in Utrecht, where much effort was put in ‘place-making’ and local engagement prior to the project, the project manager noticed that some people responded to the project plan in a way like “great plan, but not in my backyard”.

What appeared to be successful in both projects are small-scale co-production projects. The trust of the project management in local organisations to develop parts of the park, like the kitchen gardens and artwork, stimulated feelings of shared ownership. These findings demonstrate that social

values not only include the potential functioning of a site as a public space, but also collective decision-making and community engagement throughout the project. Here, values-centred decision-making could contribute to effective stakeholder management in future projects, as the assessment of values and interests demands the involvement of stakeholders from the initial phase of the project.

These case studies illustrate that people value heritage for various reasons and define heritage differently. Social research has indicated that the assumption of cultural heritage as being a driver for identity is too general and not always a correct reflection of reality (Van Assche 2004). This can be observed in these case studies as well. In both projects, local authorities valued the incorporation of cultural heritage in spatial design. The councillor of Leiden believed that cultural heritage, including Roman history, is one of the characteristics of the identity of the new neighbourhood of Roomburg, and the Castellum is thought to add identity to the new city district of Leidsche Rijn, which was said to be still somewhat inanimate. However, whilst the projects have contributed to awareness of and appreciation for these archaeological sites, it is somewhat exaggerated to argue that Roman history is what people living in these neighbourhoods identify themselves with, as the fruit farmer made clear by saying that “identity is imposed on us”.

Conclusions

The case studies of Castellum Hoge Woerd in Utrecht and Archaeological Park Matilo in Leiden and the data collected by means of interviews with representatives of all stakeholder groups in the projects, indicate for what reasons archaeological sites are valued and what the interests are of the stakeholders involved. For those in charge, the historical and scientific values of the sites are prioritised, as they legitimised the construction of the archaeological site parks. However, the site parks were not realised because of archaeology only. From the case studies, it is apparent that local authorities and businesses are willing to invest in a project that places archaeology in a wider context and associate it with cultural, environmental, and educational values. Multifunctionality contributes to a sustainable concept for archaeological heritage preservation.

The historical significance of an archaeological site seems to be of least importance to stakeholder groups with an economic interest at stake. They are less interested in archaeology than they are in a healthy business model. Also, community interest groups

prioritise recreational and social values and they find it important to have a voice in the decision-making process. This underlines the importance of the values assessment per stakeholder group in an early stage of the project, because then values-centred choices can be made and sustainable outcomes are secured because the places created are appreciated by the people they are created for.

The insights from this study contribute to a better understanding of the values attributed to archaeological heritage by different groups of stakeholders. However, more data from a larger group of people about their views on archaeology would aid further research on heritage values and how the heritage sector could respond to this, both in the type of projects we initiate and the ways in which we engage with various stakeholders in heritage management.

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¹ The modes of communication (Fung 2006) and the level of participation on the 'participation ladder' (Van Houwelingen et. al. 2014), as well as the efforts of the direct stakeholders to engage with the indirect stakeholders are further elaborated upon in Amsing 2015. These analyses are not included in the present article, as exceeding the scope of this article.

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