

CGHD: Position Paper *Heritage and Identity*

updated version: October 2019

Collective and personal identities alike are firmly rooted in the past, and increasingly emphasized to strengthen narratives that encompass claims about belonging, rights, or ownership. Heritage, both tangible and intangible, can therefore have great impact on processes of inclusion as well as exclusion. How reference is made to the past, and how the link between heritage and identity takes shape, are core themes of the cluster *Heritage and Identity*.

Future research will concentrate on *Shared Heritage*, on how heritage connects people to place, to objects, and to each other. What heritage consists of is not a given, but subject to processes of claim making, assessment, and endorsement or rejection. Shared heritage emerges at the crossroads of complex societal discourses, which we intend to explore along two angles. The first angle emphasizes political and social processes of 'heritisation', the second one proceeds from the observation that material things play a crucial role in these processes.

1. Interpreting the past in the context of heritage (ICH). People create communities with reference to markers such as ethnicity, religion or language to progressively refer to the past using tangible and intangible heritage as markers for identity. How does this work? What kind of practices incorporate heritage in the self-image of the community? How is popular history created, and what role does popular culture play in this process? How do people adapt or abandon heritage over time? How do contemporary politics and heritage relate at a local level, but also at a national and international level? What happens when people migrate and how does that effect the development of heritage? What is the role of memory in the appreciation of heritage? We encourage LDE researchers and students to discuss heritage related practices, connections to place, and the political implications of the use of heritage in small-scale seminars as well as in joint courses and publications. In *Interpreting the past in the context of heritage* at least one research proposal with two or three LDE partners will be developed in 2020.

2. Tangible past and present (TPP). Detailing the link between heritage and identity we can observe that material things play a specific role and are central to 'heritisation' and its social and political implications. In the past and the present material heritage has been and continuous to be collected by museums and private persons. Comprehending the agency and materiality of objects, but also of architecture, city- and landscapes seems key to an increased appreciation of authenticity, craftsmanship, and feelings of belonging. In a rapidly changing world material items act as an anchor that can serve for identity creation and the assertion or claim making this encompasses. Crafting, consuming, and collecting things are all distinct routes of meaning-making. Heritage – in the form of architecture, design, or craft – is a potential instrument to bolster tradition, or social contestation and activism. Consequently, heritage affects notions of citizenship and can even create novel communities through which people can

identify. As with the *Interpreting the past in the context of heritage* track, small-scale seminars and intensive discussions within groups of LDE scholars will result in common products. In 2020 at least one research proposal relating to the *Tangible past and present track* will be written.

Procedures

Two instruments are important in building up a research community around these themes and to stimulate future research into heritage and identity. First, it is important to engage in activities that extend the CGHD network in order to build a fruitful network of researchers. We aim to further developing relationships with several academic courses in Leiden, Rotterdam and Delft. This is needed to strengthen research proposals, but also for PR and marketing reasons as the *Heritage and Identity* group explicitly aims to encourage the dissemination of knowledge.

23/11/2019

Dr. Erik de Maaker
Dr. Maikel Kijpers