The Obscuring of Working Class Heritage in the Province of Groningen, The Netherlands

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Private citizens are of course entitled to save their own past, but when preservation becomes a public act, supported by public funds, it must attend to everyone’s past.

- Herbert J. Gans, 1975

The struggle of people against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.

- M. Kundera [1996, p.5]
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I. Abstract

Working class heritage, defined as the use of the material remains of working class life as a cultural, political, and economic resource in the present, has heretofore been obscured in the Province of Groningen, The Netherlands. But to what extent has this obscuration taken place? Who is responsible for it? And how has this occurred in the country where, according to Ashworth & Kuipers (2004), a greater percentage of the land area has been conserved for heritage purposes than anywhere else in the world? In order to answer these questions, scholarship on working class heritage is reviewed, Dutch heritage policy and The Netherlands' National Monument Register are analyzed, and a typology of working class heritage and a set of indicators of its obscuration are developed and applied to sites of working class heritage in the province. Halting and reducing the obscuration of working class heritage in Groningen is imperative because has the potential to activate and inform ongoing labor struggles and help working class people build pride in a classist, postindustrial era.

II. Introduction

“Suddenly, cultural heritage is everywhere” (Lowenthal, 1996, ix). These words were disdainfully exclaimed by David Lowenthal, a leading cultural historian, in reaction to the meteoric rise of “cultural heritage” in popular discourse during the 1990s. Since this time, scholarship on heritage has also experienced a boom of its own (Bendix, 2008). For instance, according to Google Scholar, the text in which Lowenthal wrote these words has been cited 1,184 times.¹ In addition, the effects of this heritage boom have extended far beyond academic circles as heritage has been increasingly recognized as an effective tool in the both the establishment of positive and economically profitable regional identities, and in the attempts of states to foster nationalism among their citizens (Ashworth & Voogd, 1990; Ashworth, 2011).

¹http://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=lowenthal+heritage+crusade&btnG=&hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C14
III. Research Problem, Goal, & Questions

In the service of such nation-building projects, states often marginalize or even erase alternative heritages with varying degrees of intentionality. One such heritage is that of the working class. In The Netherlands a greater percentage of the land area is conserved for heritage purposes than in any other country (Ashworth & Kuipers). However, working class heritage is only very rarely the object of this strong national commitment to heritage conservation. This omission is particularly grievous in the Province of Groningen as the material remains of working class life are particularly abundant there. It was with this in mind that the following research goal of determining the extent of the obscuration of working class heritage in the province was formulated. This was then translated into the following research question: to what extent is working class heritage in the province of Groningen obscured? Subsidiary questions include: By whom? How? And why? As will be discussed below, the last of these is particularly difficult to answer.

IV. Present in the Landscape, but Obscured from View

Factories, social housing complexes and other material remains of working class life are inscribed on national heritage lists, physically preserved (in terms of their brick and mortar) and adaptively reused with greater frequency in The Netherlands than in most other countries. However, in Groningen and the rest of the country, this heritage and others - both on and off the Monument Register - are virtually never interpreted in terms of their socio-historical importance. Instead, the Cultural Heritage Agency and other state actors have focused on the architectonic aspects of heritage. This privileges expert knowledge.

In addition, when the state does interpret heritage, it does to the extent that the heritage fits into more nationally palatable themes. In the case of the material remains, they are often interpreted as Industrial Heritage, which thrusts the buildings, their owners, and notions of progress to the forefront, obscuring the working class Dimension of these Places. In the majority of interviews conducted
for this project, interviewees expressed confusion at the term “working class heritage” and attempted to equate it with industrial heritage, but although working class and industrial heritage may overlap in the workplace, the latter represents a sanitization of the other as it scrubs the workplace clean of all traces of workers’ experiences and resistances. In tandem with these two nationally ordained heritages, working class heritage in Groningen is also eclipsed at the provincial and Municipal levels by efforts to brand city and province with Medieval and Hanseatic heritage (For an illustration of how these three types of heritage work to eclipse that of labor, refer to Figure 1 in the Appendix). Thus, while present in the landscape, working class heritage in the province of Groningen, The Netherlands is obscured from view.

Among other factors, this is due to the heritage policy and management practices of the Cultural Heritage Agency (RCE), and other state actors in the realm of heritage. Specifically, opportunities for public involvement in the monument designation and other heritage-related decision-making processes are virtually nonexistent. Consequently, calls that emerge from the public for the state to interpret a site in terms of its working class history or allocate funds for the conservation work to be done on a building that, while architecturally unimpressive, is important to a working class community, are rarely heard.

V. Why does Working Class Heritage in Groningen matter?

The neglect of both labor heritage and the voice of lay people in state-directed heritage planning must be rectified for a number of reasons. First of all, as Silverman (2011) notes, “Heritage is not simply past-looking, building upon dead remains excavated by archaeologists…rather than using the present to interpret ancient material remains, it is the study of the present as the present in terms of its materialized pathologies of class, race bias, economic disparities, conflict, labor, and human rights – issues of great importance to any engaged person today” (p.18). Thus, heritage matters because it speaks of the issues of today. Second, beyond being current, as Harrison (2010) highlights, heritage can
play an active role in a community by “bringing people together to emphasize shared values” (p.38). The material remains of working class life could serve this valuable function for members of the working class in Groningen, and, as a result, foster a higher level of class-consciousness.

Third, working class heritage also has the power to effect societal change. According to Harrison (2010), other types of heritage are also capable of this as “by drawing on the past and creating a new significance for its races and memories, people can transform and reconfigure the ways in which their societies operate” (p.38). Denis Byrne has taken this idea even further, arguing for “a new model: heritage as social action” (2008, p.163). Of course, a working class heritage of social action is one that upends unequal socioeconomic power relations and activates and informs ongoing labor struggles. This would constitute a move from memory to action, an invigoration and education of continued struggles for workers’ rights and better working conditions through the memorialization of past generations of workers’ experiences, movements, strikes with the objective of creating meaningful change for the future (Sevcenko, 2010). In the past few years, such an application of heritage has generated considerable excitement, but whether heritage is truly critical in ongoing struggles for workers’ rights, remains to be seen. Perhaps even though such an association may create an active heritage, it may also result in a “petrified, canonized” civil rights (Jones, 2003, p.253; see also Appadurai & Breckenridge, 1999 on the concept of “active heritage”). This is an issue that requires greater attention, and research should be carried out that evaluates whether heritage has indeed made a valuable contribution to civil rights struggles and if time would be better spent directly agitating for the latter instead of memorializing places where this has been done by others in the past.

Furthermore, similar “calls to action,” have also been made by scholars in fields other than that of Critical Heritage Studies (CHS; see below) from which much of scholarship cited above has emerged, but they do not appear to have heard each other. The most pertinent scholarly disconnect here is between CHS and the work of scholars in the fields of Historic Preservation and Urban
Planning, most notably Gail Lee Dubrow and Dolores Hayden, who have advocated for a more inclusive and socially just historic preservation and Leonie Sandercock, who has discussed the necessity of increasing the visibility of “sites of insurgency” (See Dubrow, 1998; Hayden, 1995; Sandercock, 1998). For examples, Although Laurajane Smith, one of the most prolific and forward-thinking of the CHS scholars, cited both Dubrow and Hayden in her landmark text, Uses of Heritage (2006), she did not refer to the work of Sandercock, and Google Scholar searches for “Critical Heritage Studies” and the names of these three Historic Preservation/Planning scholars revealed only one work citing both CHS and Sandercock, two citing it with Hayden, and none that mention both CHS and Dubrow. This research attempts to bridge the gap between these two groupings of scholars.

Fourth, as scholars on both sides of this academic gap have recognized, working class heritage has the potential to serve as a tool working class people in Groningen and beyond can use to build pride in a classist, postindustrial era. As Smith, Schackel, & Campbell (2011) have demonstrated, this heritage has certainly been used in this way in various locations in the UK, the US, and Sweden. In addition to these more social justice-oriented applications of working class heritage, there is also an economic angle to its preservation, particularly where it overlaps with industrial heritage, in the form of heritage tourism. As van der Aa (2005) emphasizes, this “can offer an alternative source of income when regions have lost their traditional source of income. For instance, the deindustrialization process has led to the creation of ‘industrial heritage sites’ (Hewison 1987). Local authorities can use the “valuable legacy of redundant sites” to give the local economy a boost when manufacturing jobs have been lost” (p.5).

Lastly, and most simply, as Tim Strangleman (2012), a sociologist who contributes to the Smith, Schackel, Campbell (2011) text, puts it, “Former factories and other buildings cannot all be saved of course, but some should, and historical sites should include the stories of labor – both in the sense of the work itself and the trade union movement — and of working-class people. Without
physical reminders of previous ways of living and being in the world, our ability to read the past is impoverished.” Clearly, working class heritage in the province of Groningen matters very much indeed, and, thus, its obscuration must be brought to a halt and reversed.

VI. Methodology

In seeking to determine to what extent working class heritage in the Province of Groningen has been obscured, several different methods have been utilized. Although they are primarily of a qualitative nature, the National Monument Register of The Netherlands is the object of some light quantitative analysis. Prior to undertaking an analysis however, extensive background research was conducted on topics including working class heritage and CHS and cultural heritage more broadly, historic preservation, heritage planning in The Netherlands and Groningen, and various aspects of the history of Groningen. In the course of conducting this research, several Dutch heritage policy documents were identified and subsequently analyzed.

While continuing with both of these endeavors, a number of in-depth interviews were conducted. These interviews were the product of cold-calling, the snowball effect, and entreaties to “gatekeepers.” During the time interviews were being conducted the issue of to what extent working class heritage in Groningen has access to financial incentives for preservation - now minimized as one of the indicators of a site’s level of obscuration – was the lens through which this research was being conducted. Consequently, the majority of interviews were with individuals who had knowledge of heritage-related financial incentives, and more often then not, these were experts in the field of heritage, museum directors, and scholars, and not local communities of working class people. This has proved to be a major deficiency in this research as interviews are critical to gaining an understand of how working class people in Groningen conceive of and utilize the material remains of past generations of working classes. This, in turn, is critical to determining whether the actions of the state with regard to working class heritage can be accurately labeled obscuration.
While interviews were still being conducted, analysis of the monument register and sites of working class heritage both on and off of this list commenced. The monument register has been examined through the use of a searchable online database, a Microsoft Access database, and a GIS shapefile of national monuments provided by the Cultural Heritage Agency of The Netherlands. These resources were examined in order to get a sense of both what The Netherlands intends to present as its national heritage and to determine the extent to which sites of working class heritage throughout the country but in Groningen in particular are incorporated into this. These objectives were pursued through both extensive keyword searches and the browsing of specific RCE-identified categories of heritage in the database of monuments as well as through a number of different queries performed using ArcGIS. It was quickly discovered that virtually no sites on the Register were interpreted in terms of their association with working class history and that Register entries included very little socio-historical description overall. However, even with scant information to work from, a number of sites in Groningen that fit the definition of working class heritage were identified. In addition, GIS was also used with the intention of identifying patterns and variables in the designation of sites of working class heritage.

Drawing on the Monument Register and knowledge of interviewees, but also other resources including a document outlining a historic walking tour of Groningen compiled by a labor union (Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging, 1998), an interactive map of local monuments designated by the City of Groningen (Gemeente Groningen, 2013), the website of an organization concerned with regional industrial heritage (SIEN-N, 2013), a guide produced by the Province of Groningen on “The Traces of Industrial Heritage in East Groningen,” (Provincie Groningen, 1996), and a number of other resources, an inventory of working class heritage sites in the province was compiled (See Appendix). This inventory is far from complete, but it provides a good starting point should future researchers seek to examine working class heritage in Groningen. As this inventory was being built, numerous sites were visited in a
series of cycling trips throughout the province. These site visits formed the bases of an analysis of site of working class heritage in Groningen, which was conducted utilizing a typology of tangible, immovable working class heritage and a set of six indicators of obscuration that were the product of both the literature review and field research described above (See Figure 2 and Table 1 in Appendix, respectively).

VII. Terminology

Before proceeding to the analysis described above, however, it is necessary to discuss some of the terminology that this research employs.

Cultural Heritage

The traditional or mainstream definition given to heritage is generally along the lines of “the material remains of a culture.” However, the definitions formulated by leading scholars in the field differ considerably from this. The analysis described below has proceeded with the following definition provided by Ashworth, Graham, & Tunbridge (2007) in mind: “The use of the past as cultural, political, and economic resource for the present” (p.3). This definition has been selected because of its focus on use, the present, and the potential for heritage to be used as a resource, which all correlate with the above explanation of why working class heritage is important.

In addition to the wide range of definitions for heritage, the issue is further confused by its status as one paradigm among many for dealing with the historic built environment (See Figure 3 for an illustration of how the heritage paradigm relates to two others). However, heritage is distinguished by these other approaches by both its warmer embrace of intangible aspects and an emphasis on use and purpose.

Heritage Planning

In The Netherlands, the term most frequently used to refer to any form of engagement with tangible and intangible cultural resources is “heritage planning.” This term is virtually absent in the American context where practitioners and scholars have continued to use “historic preservation,” even though the many of
the activities it is considered to encompass are quite the opposite of the “mothballing” and “anti-change” connotations of “preservation.” In The Netherlands, “preservation” is employed far more judiciously as a means of referring to “protective intervention to maintain the current condition of an artifact, building or ensemble” (Ashworth, 2011, p.4). On the other hand, heritage planning can be defined as “the management of the contemporary uses of the past for present purposes” (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2000, p.142). Any sort of designation or even the state actions and policies that work to obscure sites of working class heritage could be considered “heritage planning.”

**Working Class Heritage**

After an extensive review of literature on working class heritage, and drawing on the presentist formulation of heritage advocated by Ashworth, Graham, & Tunbridge (2007) in particular, working class heritage has been defined as follows: the use of the tangible and intangible remains of working class life as a resource for the present. This definition includes intangible forms of heritage such as songs, poetry, traditions, and the like are some of the most powerful expressions of working class heritage (See Mizell-Nelson, 2011; Bowan & Pickering, 2011; Attfield, 2011). Examples of tangible traces include factories, mines, social housing complexes, sites of strikes and other labor union activities, and places of recreation and social life, ranging from public swimming pools to saloons.

In addition to having varying levels of tangibility, working class heritage can either be moveable (i.e. trade union banners; see Wray, 2011) or immoveable (buildings; see below). However, the following analysis focuses on tangible, immoveable working class heritage and only considers intangible and moveable forms insofar as they are related to a specific place. This has only been done in the interest of attaining some measure of focus and it is recommended that future researchers delve into the sorely under-studied realms of intangible and moveable working class heritage in Groningen and beyond.

All of these types of heritage could also be labeled as vernacular, and indeed, some who have written on the subject favor this term (Ruggles, 2013).
For example, this was the term Herbet Gans (see prefacing quote) employed during his 1975 battle over the New York Landmarks Ordinance that was fought against Ida B. Huxtable, a distinguished architectural critic, in the pages of the *New York Times* editorial section (1975, Feb. 25). As Hayden (1995) puts it, Gans classified “buildings by social use, referring to definitions of social class and accessibility and implying tenements, sweatshops, saloons, and public bathhouses” (p.4). Throughout the course of this paper, the term “vernacular” will also be used in a similar fashion. This is being highlighted here because in the realm of architectural history that Huxtable operated in, “vernacular” is used not to refer to buildings associated with certain uses and groups, but to refer to all buildings classified by architectural style or typology and for which the architect is unknown (Hayden, 1995).

Since the Gans-Huxtable debate, the body of scholarship on vernacular heritage has grown considerably. Tunbridge, Ashworth, & Graham (2012) locate this development within a larger trend of “growing specialist heritage perspectives” and highlight a recent issue of the *International Journal of Heritage Studies* that focused exclusively on working class heritage as evidence of this (Schackel, Smith, & Campbell, 2011). The very same editors of this issue also edited a text on working class heritage released that same year that contained additional works on a wide range of aspects of working class heritage (Smith, Schackel, & Campbell, 2011). Others who have written on working class heritage – although not in Groningen or even The Netherlands as the only scholars to make even passing reference to it are G.J. Ashworth and his collaborators – include Hayden (1995), Schackel (2004) Robertson (2008), West (2010), and Barrett (2012). Thus, given this proliferation of scholarship on working class heritage in recent years, it was a surprise that no works focusing on that in The Netherlands, let alone in Groningen, could be found.

Not only is literature on the subject lacking, but references to Arbeiderklasse Erfgoed (“Working class heritage”) of any kind are almost entirely absent in The Netherlands. It is absent in the literature, absent in policy documents, absent in the Monument Register, and absent in lay knowledge. In
fact, none of the individuals interviewed in the course of conducting this research knew the term. This was not the result of issues of miscommunication or poor translation because the concept was discussed with each individual at length. Tellingly, the only instances of “arbeiderklasse erfgoed” found, appeared in material on the websites of Belgian heritage organizations.

VIII. Theoretical Framework

*Heritage Studies*

This research seeks to position itself within the growing discipline of “Heritage Studies.” This can be broadly defined as the full range of scholarly inquiry into natural and cultural heritage. According to Silverman (2011), “the field of heritage studies burst onto the academic scene in the late 1980s” and she credits several key works including David Lowenthal’s (1985) *The Past Is A Foreign Country* (see above) and Robert Hewison’s (1987) *The Heritage Industry* with establishing it as a “discrete albeit multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary field” (p. 3). In fact, the field is so loosely assembled of scholars originating in such a wide range of other disciplines that Tunbridge, Ashworth, & Graham (2012) raise the question of whether a community of practice labeled “heritage studies” even exists and respond with “up to a point, but no further” (p.1) Referring to the *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, the major journal for scholars of heritage, they remark that it “has yet to cement an unequivocal community of practice in heritage” (p.1). Thus, it is into an ever-changing primordial soup of heritage studies that this research seeks to be added.

*Critical Heritage Studies (CHS)*

The terms “critical theory” and “critical studies” have proliferated across the social sciences with disciplines ranging from sociology to linguistics all developing “critical” arms. As in these other fields, the “critical” branch of heritage studies, focuses on issues including: race, colonialism/postcolonialism, gender, globalization, human rights, identity, nationalism, power dynamics, marginalization, resistance, voice, and class. As the name indicates scholars of this subfield critically examine the relation of such issues to heritage, and pose
questions similar to those with which this research also grapples such as, “How does heritage continue to generate new forms of marginality, reinforcing and contributing to class relations?” (West, 2010). More broadly, as the Association of Critical Heritage Studies (2013) notes, CHS vigorously questions “the received wisdom of what heritage is” as well as the “conservative cultural and economic power relations that outdated understandings of heritage seem to underpin, and invites “the active participation of people and communities who to date have been marginalized in the creation and management of ‘heritage’” (p.1). The Association goes on to assert,

Heritage is, as much as anything, a political act and we need to ask serious questions about the power relations that ‘heritage’ has all too often been invoked to sustain. Nationalism, imperialism, colonialism, cultural elitism, Western triumphalism, social exclusion based on class and ethnicity, and the fetishising of expert knowledge have all exerted strong influences on how heritage is used, defined and managed. We argue that a truly critical heritage studies will ask many uncomfortable questions of traditional ways of thinking about and doing heritage, and that the interests of the marginalised and excluded will be brought to the forefront when posing these questions. (Association of Critical Heritage Studies, 2013, p.1).

This research seeks to do exactly that with working class heritage in Groningen, and thus, contribute to this emerging subfield.

**Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD)**

One of the central theoretical constructs employed by scholars of CHS is Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHS). This concept was originated by Laurjane Smith (2006) to refer to the “set of texts and practices that dictate the ways in which heritage is defined and employed within any contemporary western society” (Benton, 2010, p.3). As for the Dutch AHD, perhaps Ashworth, Graham, and Tunbridge (2007) characterize it best:

The style and period of building restoration overwhelmingly favoured in the Netherlands by the responsible national agency [RCE] was that of the seventeenth-century – the so-called “golden age” of international economic trading dominance and cultural
achievement. The selection of monuments and interpretations emphasized the structures and ideas of a merchant class located predominately in the western provinces... The image portrayed, and reinforced by the Dutch genre painters of the period was a sober, diligent, commercial, self-governing, essentially Protestant, urban merchant class, which contrasted with the tyrannical, feudal, Catholic Hapsburgs... This national school of urban conservation, supplemented in rural areas by the polder landscape with its dijks, canals and windmills of the same historical period, become the epitome of “Dutchness” both internally and as projected to the world” (pp.167).

This image is also clearly present in The Netherland’s world heritage sites (van der Aa, 2005).

Missing from the picture is, of course, working class heritage. The Dutch certainly are not alone in their failure to incorporate this heritage into the AHD, but the attention paid to working class heritage in most other Western European countries does outstrip that in The Netherlands. In England, in particular, there is a growing recognition of the exclusion of working class heritage and efforts are underway there to make the invisible (working class heritage and the active uses that working class communities and labor organizations are putting it to), visible (Smith, Shackel, & Campbell, 2011; Sandercock, 1998). However, it is still quite far removed from becoming entrenched in the AHD and Smith, Shackel, & Campbell (2011) argue that it is futile to attempt to make it a part of official heritage regime and even counterproductive to the preservation of working class heritage by those to whom it belongs.

To some extent, however, this research challenged this position. To invoke the words of Gans (1975) once again, “private citizens” such as the working class people in the Province of Groningen are “entitled to save their own past, but when preservation becomes a public act, supported with public funds, it must attend to everyone’s past” (quoted in Hayden, 1995, p.3). In addition, insofar as working class heritage has the potential to be translated into “heritage as social action,” it necessitates a “bottom-up” approach (West, 2010, p.39). What is the “up” in this phrase other than the interpretation and protection that only official monument designation can confer upon heritage sites? In order to
truly move from the bottom, up then the power of the state must be harnessed by those endeavoring to advance the cause of working class heritage. While the approach that Smith, Shackel, & Campbell (2011) recommend would avoid the distortion and cooption that state involvement can bring, it cannot deliver the level of interpretation and preservation – and the funding these activities require – that working class heritage needs.

**Bourdieu’s (1984) Concept of Cultural Capital**

According to Harrison (2010),

> Being able to connect one’s self to the past, and to the collective past of others via the recollection or recreation of specific memories and histories, is a form of cultural capital that relates to heritage. For example, if an individual can make a connection between their past and the heritage that is promoted as an aspect of their community’s past, it gives them a connection they can use to ‘purchase’ privilege in social interactions. In Pierre Bourdieu’s (1984) concept of ‘cultural capital’… the skills and knowledge that people accumulate in the course of their lives can be employed culturally in a way that is similar to economic capital. Cultural capital might be understood to be similar to prestige or ‘know-how’: the ability to ‘get along’ and acquire more influence and status (p.38).

It is also a process that the RCE could tap into in that by marketing working class heritage as chic – which would not be difficult given that “radical chic” has long proved to be lucrative (see Wolfe, 1970) – it could generate greater consumption – whether it be in touristic visits or some other form – of working class heritage. In this way, the RCE as well as provinces, municipalities, and – most critically – local communities could profit from it. However, currently, it is appears that working class heritage is virtually worthless in terms of cultural capital at the national, provincial, and municipal levels.

**The Right to Cultural Heritage**

According to a number of documents promulgated by several international bodies, everyone has a right to cultural heritage. For example, Article 2 of the Fribourg Draft Protocol (1994) states that:

> Everyone, both individually and collectively, has a right to the
protection of his cultural heritage in all its forms. This implies:
— the right to respect of all cultural assets specific to the various
communities to which the individual belongs;
— the right not to be unduly separated from mankind's common
heritage comprising the totality of cultures accompanied by respect
for their specific characteristics (quoted in Blake, 2000, p.81).

This brings up the following question: Is it a violation of one’s right to cultural
heritage if that heritage is ignored by the state in which ones lives and is eclipsed
by the state’s support of other heritages? Not quite. Working class people in The
Netherlands have not been deprived of their right to cultural heritage. Even
though its policies and actions may contribute to the obscuration of labor
heritage, the government is not actively preventing people from accessing it.
However, to refer back to the words of Herbert Gans that preceded this analysis,
the state does have some duty to be equitable in its treatment of heritage. When
a state identifies its official heritage, it should not merely focus on that of the
majority but incorporate that of minorities as well. Cultural heritage is not merely
the province of the majority.

Among the other theoretical constructs and concepts that have informed
this assessment of the preservation and interpretation of working class heritage
in Groningen include the “Power of Place” (Hayden, 1995), the “Heritage
Industry” (Hewison, 1987), and the “Interocular Field” (Appadurai &
Breckenridge, 1999).

IX. Background: The Dutch Heritage Regime, Groningen, &
the Working Class

The Dutch Heritage Regime

The actor at the center of the Dutch Heritage Regime, is the Rijksdienst
voor Het Cultureel Erfgoed (“Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands,” RCE),
which has been referred to extensively above. The RCE is part of the Ministry of
Education, Culture and Science, and its mission is to “protect the Netherlands’
most important movable and immovable heritage” (RCE, 2013). The Agency
works to achieve this by researching historic buildings, incorporating its specialist knowledge into legislation and rules designed to protect and develop heritage, designating national monuments, and educating the public about cultural heritage” (RCE, 2013; for more on the RCE and the national government’s role in and instruments of heritage management, refer to Table 2 in the Appendix).

The RCE is at the heart of a powerful heritage regime that includes myriad governmental, pseudo-governmental, and non-governmental heritage organizations. The strengths of this system include investment in the historic fabric, adaptive reuse, integration of heritage and spatial planning policy, and a high level of public support for heritage preservation. Among the evidence of this is the popularity of a television program by the name of Restauratie (“Restoration”), that centered on the preservation of heritage sites and gave the viewing public the opportunity to vote for a heritage site in a competition for a restoration grant (Groote & Haartsen, 2008).

However, there are also some significant deficiencies in heritage management in The Netherlands. First of all, although some form of social marginalization or exclusion is evident in the heritage practices of virtually every country, The Netherlands has been slower than others with highly developed heritage regimes to adjust its heritage policies and practices in response to CHS. According to Tunbridge, Ashworth, & Graham (2012), that CHS “is no mere intellectual fashion is clear from government agencies who not so long ago were concerned only with the collection, preservation and maintenance of exhibits, most usually reflecting the lifestyles of social and political elites but who now have adopted the attainment of social inclusivity and the avoidance of its opposite exclusivity as a mantra” (p.5-6). Unfortunately, the RCE is not among the government agencies who have done so, and the authors’ prediction that “those to whom intangible heritage resources and post-colonial heritage perspectives have the most vivid everyday meaning, will increasingly direct the heritage agenda,” is quite a bit farther off from being realized in The Netherlands than it is elsewhere (Tunbridge, Ashworth, & Graham, 2012, p.6).
Another important issue is financial incentives for heritage preservation. According to Pickard (2002), as funds for heritage-related activities are far from infinite, many countries are struggling with the decision of how to divide them between ‘authentic restoration that respects the changes of time and originality of materials or methods’ and ‘conservative repair and timely maintenance’ (pp.355-356). Pickard argues that most countries will lean more towards the latter, and although it is not clear if The Netherlands does indeed do so, it certainly has one of the most advanced systems for regular maintenance and repair of historic monument in Monumentenwacht (“Monument Care”). This service, which was inaugurated in 1973 with the aim of establishing a better-maintained heritagescape, operates as follows: Monument Watch offers owners of national monuments the option of subscribing to an annual structural inspection for a small fee. Following the inspection, the monument’s owner receives a report on its technical state and the owner can then decide whether to restore, repair or maintain it. These reports are also accepted by the RCE as technical proof of the need for grant assistance when a Monument Watch subscriber applies for a grant (Pickard, 2009).

In addition to Monumentenwacht, grant-aide mechanisms for heritage management include restoration grants (administered by the National Restoration Fund) and maintenance grants (of up to 50 percent of costs). According to Pickard (2009), “Grant aid is provided for protected historic country seats, allowing the owner to apply for payment for the maintenance of objects situated in the grounds,” but these funds cannot be used for maintenance on farm villas and their outbuildings (pp.102-104). Thus, although these funds cannot be used to preserve and interpret farm laborers’ housing on the agricultural estates of Groningen, it is at least equitable in that the main houses of the wealthy farmers also cannot benefit from them.

Furthermore, the grant system is dependent upon whether an owner is liable to pay tax because, for example, a foundation cannot deduct costs from tax if it is not liable. Grant aid is most commonly at twenty percent where tax relief is also claimed but can be fifty percent where tax relief does not apply (Pickard,
Although the adjustment of heritage-related tax reductions in accordance with tax relief seems logical, it is conceivable that wealthy owners of national monuments benefit more from this mechanism than do lower-income owners who receive tax relief and, thus, receive a smaller reduction in their taxes owed for the burden of living in a historic house. For instance Additional research should be done to determine whether or not this is an inequitable funding mechanism. Lastly, regarding protective legislation, as is true in the US and many other European countries, there are also a number of laws and regulations that both restrict how owners of national monuments can alter their properties and outline sanctions for when unauthorized or destructive alterations are made. The latter include reparations measures, such as returning the monument to the pre-unauthorized work condition, and it is not unusual for Dutch police to halt damaging actions to historic buildings (Pickard, 2002).

The Groninger Context

Having discussed the heritage regime in The Netherlands, it is now necessary to explore how this plays out with respect to identity formation in the Province and City of Groningen. A problem with regional identities is that they are essentializing. The development of unitary regional identities – with the aim of creating an economically profitable place brand – is bolstered by EU policies, and a motto of the EU has been “unity in diversity,” but in the realm of heritage this has more-often played out as diversity in unity, as one identity is made to stand for all. In the case of Groningen, this has been its identity as a member of the Hanseatic League, and it has been pursued at the heritage level so assiduously that it has eclipsed other heritages such as that of the working class. G.J. Ashworth (2013), one of the world’s top heritage scholars and a resident of Groningen has characterized Groningen as both a “working class town” and a “strong socialist town,” but this identity of Groningen is not evident at the level of official heritage.

Who is the Dutch Working Class?

Does cultural heritage belong to its originators and their descendants or does it belong to all society? (During, 2010). What if the heirs apparent of this
heritage are not true descendants of the heritage’s originators and what if they exhibit no demonstrable interest in this heritage? Both of these questions are relevant to the Province of Groningen and the material remains of working class life located within its borders. Regarding the first question, the lack of participatory mechanisms in the planning and designation process indicate that the state views heritage as belonging all of society and the claims of minority groups as secondary to this. As for the latter question, the changes in the working class over time and the difficulty in defining the present-day iteration of it as a result of a lack of data on income levels, purportedly low levels of income segregation, the cooption of labor union, the end of pillarization and subsequent disownment of its material traces, make defining the present-day working classes of Groningen, as well as establishing them as the heirs apparent of the material remains of past generations of working class people, difficult.

In addition, the evidence collected in the course of this research that attests to an investment in the pieces of the built environment associated with labor history by working class communities and individuals throughout the province is scant, at best. In fact, one interviewee went so far as to exclaim, “Dutch people are not interested in working class heritage!” However, there is a bit of evidence to the contrary, and perhaps the strongest example of this is a document produced by the Groningen chapter of the Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging (FNV) that outlines a walking tour of buildings associated with labor union history in Groningen (FNV, 1998).

According to the document’s foreword, the board of the local chapter surveyed the built landscape of the city and created an inventory of buildings and monuments that are either visually dominant or of special significance to the Union because of historical events that occurred at them. From this inventory, a walk/cycle route of 4.5 kilometers was created. Among the buildings included on the walk is Hoendiepskade 26, which was the location of the union offices at the time the guide was compiled. Other evidence of interest in this form of heritage includes the existence of organizations such as the Industrial Heritage of North

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2 The Netherlands does not collect data on income in its census.
Netherlands (SIEN-N) and websites such as Het Verhaal van Groningen (“The Story of Groningen”), a digital repository of “stories” about the Province of Groningen that anyone can add to, Beeldbank Groningen (“Groningen Image Bank”), an extensive repository of historic photographs from throughout the province, and Staat in Groningen (“Is in Groningen”), a digital art and architecture guide for the city of Groningen that includes information on a number of sites of working class heritage. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that working class communities in other countries have made extensive use of their heritage (See Smith, Shackel, & Campbell, 2011), but on the basis of this and the few pieces of evidence collected one can do no more than hypothesize that those in Groningen have done the same.

Of course, proof of such an investment is critical to the obscuration thesis being advanced because if working class people and the rest of the Groningen public are not interested in working class heritage, the one could argue that the state is not obscuring it, but that it is not preserving and interpreting it because there is no demand for it. However, to safely argue that no such demand exists, the state would have to open up the heritage planning process to public participation. It is also recommended that future research be done in local settings to determine if working class communities are invested in the material remains of past generations of working classes that are located within their midst. The working class is not monolithic. This can be an obstacle in the preservation of working class heritage as some working class communities may not consider the heritages of past generations, other industries, or other locations to also be there heritage and this reduces the chances of a site reaching the critical max of support that is necessary for it to be designated and preserved.

X. Policy Analysis

A number of policies structure and guide the heritage regime outlined above. Their combined effect has been to exclude the working class communities described above and the public as a whole from the heritage designation process. These policies include the following: Cultural Heritage Preservation Act (1984/2002/2009), Monument & Historic Buildings Act (1988/2011), the
Belvedere Memorandum (1999), “Character in Focus: Vision for Heritage & Spatial Planning (Ministry of Culture, Education, & Science, 2011), and “Decree amending the Spatial Planning Decree…” (2011). Among the many ways in which these policy documents have shaped heritage planning practice in The Netherlands are that they have made it the exclusive province of elites as there are few opportunities for public participation. This has begun to change in recent years, but progress has been slow. To illustrate this, the Belvedere Memorandum is examined in greater detail.

**The Belvedere Memorandum (1999)**

Four Dutch government ministries (Education and Culture, Agriculture, Planning, and Environment and Transport) collaborated with two heritage organizations (the Netherlands Department for Conservation and the National Service for Archeological Heritage) to create this document, which advocates “conservation through development.” This implies the maintenance of heritage in tandem with continued spatial development, and this inaugurated an intertwining of heritage policy and spatial policy that continues today. Specifically, Belvedere recommends using “space in such a way that an object of cultural and/or historic importance is given a place and will contribute to the quality of its newly created surroundings” (Belvedere, 1999, p.1). The implementation of this recommendation has been coordinated by the Belvidere Project Office since 2000, and it is funded through a number of channels including national government and EU contributions as well as co-financing with local and regional authorities and private sector parties (Belvedere, p.68).

However, amidst all of this funding and innovative policy formulation, there are few opportunities for public participation in the Belvedere program. In fact, participation is only mentioned on four pages in this eighty-one page document, and almost always this is in reference to the involvement of regional authorities, “cultural history organizations,” and private sector parties. The sole reference to public participation enjoins “private citizens” to share in the responsibility for maintaining and strengthening the quality of the human environment,” and participation is listed as being among the ways “this responsibility can be
addressed” (Belvedere, 1999, p.14). However, the document fails to outline how this sort of participation might occur.

As detailed in Groote & Haartsen (2008), one example of a specific Belvedere initiative that failed to incorporate a mechanism for public participation was the creation of an “Atlas of Spatial Identity.” In order to determine the content of the Atlas, a questionnaire was sent out to 400 individuals, virtually all of whom were planners and policymakers. The results of the questionnaire indicated that these elites viewed the aesthetic and structural components of heritage as being more important than the “representations of, and meanings and narratives that are ascribed to the places and landscapes” (Groote & Haartsen, 2008, p.191). Ashworth & Kuipers (2001) have criticized the Belvedere for continuing to privilege elite views of heritage over those of local people, and Groote & Haartsen (2008) conclude that Belvedere is “a potentially dangerous strategy that can only be of use for the cultural and political elite” (p. 191).

However, in Belvedere’s later years (its incentive program ended in 2009), by virtue of how it tethered heritage policy to spatial policy, opportunities for public interpretation began to increase due to changes in the latter. In fact, according to Janssen et al. (2012),

XI. Analysis of Monument Register

According to Ashworth & Kuipers (2004), “With the exception of a few small island states, it is safe to say that the Netherlands has the densest concentration of protected structures and most extensive coverage of conserved areas in the world.” Indeed, in a country with an area of 16,309 miles², there are 63,904 historic sites listed on the National Monument Register, which means that there roughly 4 national monuments per square mile in The Netherlands (Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, 2013). To compare, in the United States, there are only roughly 0.2 properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places per square mile (National Park Service, 2013). Clearly, a large portion of the built environment in the Netherlands is conserved for heritage purposes, and the purpose of this GIS and textual analysis of the National Monument Register
will be to determine to what extent working class heritage in The Netherlands and in Groningen in particular shares in this.

For the textual analysis, I also used the following search terms to locate national monuments that could be labeled working class heritage: Volkswoningbouw (“public housing”), arbeider, (“worker”), arbeid, (“labor”), Arbeiderswoning (“workers’ housing”), landarbeiderswoning (“farm laborer housing”), arbeidersklasse/werkende class/arbeiders/arbeidende klasse (“working class), staking(“strike”), vakbond (“labor union”), and a number of others. This analysis revealed that dispiritingly few national monuments are interpreted in terms of their relation to labor history and working class life. For instance, out of the 2,772 national monuments in the province, searches for arbeiderswoning in Groningen turned up zero results and there was only one hit for arbeidersbeweging (“labor movement”).

As for the GIS analysis, it allows for the visualization of this obscuration as well as the ability to compare monuments of working class heritage in Groningen to those in other provinces and investigate the degree to which working class heritage has been obscured from a spatial perspective. The three main GIS datasets used in this analysis are TOP10NL for the Province of Groningen, a shapefile of national monuments from the Cultural Heritage Agency of The Netherlands (RCE), and a shapefile of province boundaries. The first two maps (see Appendix) created for this analysis necessitated the use of both the monument and province boundaries shapefiles as well as data on population. They are both choropleth maps, with the first depicting the percentage of national monuments in each province, and the second, the percentage of the national population in each province. The purpose of these two maps is to evaluate to what extent Groningen is over- or under-represented in the monument register relative to its population. This serves as a baseline with which to compare working class heritage in Groningen. In addition, according to Ashworth (2008), the image of Groningen in The Netherlands has long been one of “spatial peripherality” and cultural “backwardness,” and it “has only a weakly developed image as a tourism destination on national and international markets” (p.164). As
a result, one would expect Groningen to have few national monuments relative to the rest of the apparently more central and culturally vibrant areas of The Netherlands.

As the comparison between Maps 1 & 2 reveals, the Province of Groningen is slightly overrepresented in the monument register in relation to its population. This is also true of several other provinces, such as Utrecht, but others such as Zuid-Holland are underrepresented. This indicates that, in terms of tourism-generating national monuments, the Province of Groningen is not quite the “cultural backwater” it is made out to be. However, the amount of national monuments in Groningen (2770, 4.4%) is still considerably less than that of provinces like Zuid-Holland (9181, 14.6%), and out of all twelve provinces, it ranks as tenth in this respect. This indicates that the perception of Groningen as being culturally peripheral is validated when one considers that the bulk of national monuments are located in the eastern and southern provinces that include major cities like Amsterdam and Rotterdam.

In addition, this image of cultural backwardness may also be tied to the characterization of Groningen as “the working class province” of The Netherlands (Ashworth, 2008). This is because, as described above, working class culture is not worth much “cultural capital.” In order to determine whether this image of The Netherlands as the “working class province” was reflected in the National Monument Register, I first had to identify monuments of working class heritage. This is not a category of heritage recognized by the RCE – which further evinces its neglect – and thus, identification proved to be more complicated. In order to delineate it, a series of large “select by attributes” queries were performed on the shapefile of monuments. These were based on the fields of “original function,” “subcategory,” and “main category.” The result is by no means a complete list of working class heritage on the monument register as there are likely other monuments that have an association with working class history, but this was not evident in the GIS data. The descriptive spatial statistics tool of “Mean Center” was then applied to the resulting layer of monuments of working class heritage. Surprisingly, the mean center of working class monuments is nowhere near
Groningen, but is actually located farther to the south in the province of Gelderland (See Map 3). To determine if, at the very least, the mean center of working class monuments is closer to Groningen than the mean center of all monuments, the latter was also calculated. However, as evident in Map 3, the mean center of all monuments is actually slightly closer to Groningen. In addition, the provinces were symbolized by the percentage of working class monuments located with their borders, and this revealed that – according to the methods used to create this map – Groningen is not among those provinces that account for a high percentage of monuments of working class heritage (See Map 3).

Finally, Map 4 examines working class heritage in the Province of Groningen more closely. This map was created using the monuments shapefile in combination with the previously discussed textual analysis as well as through the geocoding of additional undesignated sites of working class heritage identified through the process described in the Methodology section above.

**Discussion of Results of GIS Analysis**

Map 3 is surprising given that Groningen is generally perceived as being a working class province, but the mean center of monuments of working class heritage is much farther south than the province, and according to the method used to identify working class monuments for this map, the province possesses relatively few designated monuments of working class heritage. In fact, comparison to Map 2 reveals that working class monuments are no more present in Groningen than other types of monuments. This could be interpreted to mean that either the perception of Groningen is incorrect or that working class heritage in the province of Groningen has not been designated on the National Monument Register and preserved on the order that it has been in other provinces. This latter interpretation would support the argument that working class heritage in the Province of Groningen is obscured.

Although the analysis of the monument register performed in the creation of Map 4 revealed that there are more working class monuments in Groningen than depicted in Map 3, as evident in the map, working class monuments still only account for a small portion of monuments in Groningen. In addition, Map 4
also reveals some variables that impact the designation of monuments of working class heritage. For instance, the highest concentration of working class monuments is in the City of Groningen, the population center for the province, and this could be interpreted to mean that there is a direct relationship between population density and the designation of working class heritage as national monuments. This is particularly true of working class heritage sites that are “Places of Social & Economic Activity” as all but one are located in the city of Groningen. Additional spatial analysis techniques could be utilized to determine the exact impact of variables such as distance from the city of Groningen and original site function on chances of designation and level of obscuration (See Table 3 in Appendix). Although this analysis has not conclusively proved that working class heritage in the province of Groningen is obscured, it is hoped that the RCE could draw upon this research to designate additional sites of working class heritage in Groningen as national monuments so that they can benefit from the higher level of visibility and preservation that this status affords them.

XII. Site Analysis

A Typology of Tangible, Immovable Working Class Heritage

The typology developed in order to facilitate this analysis of sites of working class heritage in the Province of Groningen is as follows: Places of Residence, Places of Work, and Places of Social, Economic, & Political Activity (See Figure 2 in Appendix). This typology is based on the above analysis of the monument register, interviews, and a literature. The decision to term them “places” was deliberately made in order to invoke Hayden’s (1995) work on the “power of place.” In the course of doing background research for this analysis, no similar typology of working class heritage could be located, but the typology is indebted to Benton (2010) for his development of a typology of heritage more broadly. The categories are quite broad, and, thus, very different monuments have been classified in the same category. This is particularly true of the third category, which is far too broad, and it is recommended that future researchers of working class heritage in the province divide and reformulate this type in order to attain greater clarity.
Indicators of Obscuration

Through interviews, a literature review, and the analysis of the monument register, a set of indicators were developed in order to evaluate the obscuration of places of residence, places of work, and places of social, economic, and political activity in the Province of Groningen. These indicators are summarized in Table 1 in the Appendix. Regarding indicator 3, the amount of socio-historical description in the monument register entry, the more specific issue is the extent to which the entry related the site to labor and working class histories. For off-site interpretation, digital/online presence of the sites was evaluated and the primary sources for this were Het Verhaal van Groningen and the other websites listed in the “Who is the Dutch Working Class?” section above. Key sources referred to in the formulation of these indicators include Phillips & Stein (2011) who developed indicators of the success of historic preservation in fostering community economic development in a US context.

Places of Residence

The majority of the sites of working class heritage classified in this category are social housing complexes. This is unsurprising given that 35 percent of the Dutch housing stock is “social housing” compared to 10 percent non-social housing rented and 55 percent owner-occupied (Heins, 2012). There is also more social housing in Groningen than in the rest of The Netherlands (Ashworth, 2013). One of the most interesting sites classified under this type is Het Blauwe Dorp or “the Blue Village,” which were one of the earliest examples of social housing and Groningen, and they are additionally distinctive because of the combination of the density of the neighborhood and the fact that their architectural form is derived from farm houses, which typically do not appear in such close groupings. The level of obscuration of this site is overall quite low due to the wealth of information available on it online as well as a high level of general knowledge about the site due to residents’ struggle to save the edge houses of the neighborhood from demolition. However, there is no on-sight interpretation, and virtually all other sites in this category were significantly less well-preserved and interpreted.
Places of Work

This class primarily includes the remnants of the province’s agro-industrial enterprises. One of the most interesting examples is De Toekomst, a strawboard factory in Scheemda, a village in the eastern part of Groningen. This hulking building has not been in active use for quite some time, and a great deal of restoration funds were recently lavished upon it in the late 2000s with the aim of developing it into an industrial park. However, the building remains vacant today. When this site is compared to examples of places of work closer to the central city of Groningen, it appears that the variable of distance from the center of the region’s population is inversely correlated with a building’s chances of adaptive reuse. In other words, De Toekomst is less likely to benefit from adaptive reuse because it is relatively far away from the city of Groningen. Despite this worrying situation, De Toekomst has received more attention than just about any place of work surveyed in this analysis. For instance, a large book of photographs of De Toekomst has been published. Although workers are conspicuously absent from the compendium, they are front and center on a well-designed website on the history of the factory and the paperboard history as a whole (See www.terugnaardetoekomst.nl/).

Places of Social, Economic, & Political Activity

An analysis of this type of working class heritage is forthcoming.

XIII. Discussion

Through an analysis of sites of working class heritage using the typology and indicators described above, a set of variable that influence the extent to which a site is obscured were identified and are summarized in Table 4 in the Appendix.

There does not appear to be a demonstrable market demand for working class heritage, but a heritage such as that of the working class that invokes a narrative of resistance and activism is most definitely marketable. This is evident in the current generation of college-aged students who have taken to dressing up in the accoutrements of activism or watching viral videos sermonizing about the
evils of a Ugandan warlord. This is also a demand that could be manufactured. According to Groote & Haartsen (2008), two professors at the Rijkuniversiteit Groningen, “If a commodity is to be consumed, it has first to be produced. So we may expect agents to spend time, money, or other resources on the production or reproduction of such historical narratives, in order to have them consumed as heritage. As the spending of resources is involved, it is logical that participating agents will have a specific purpose – heritage narratives are not produced for nothing or for fun, but in order to, for example, preserve cultural values, attract tourists and tourist spending, or to reinforce specific place identities” (p.181).

XIV. Conclusion

Recommendations

Considering all that has been said above, it is recommended that the RCE and other agencies at the provincial and municipal levels reform national, provincial, and municipal monument designation processes to allow for and encourage greater public involvement. In Groningen, the processes of heritage creation, or “heritagization,” must be democratized through a conscious rejection of “elite cultural narratives” and an embrace of “the heritage insights of people, communities, and cultures,” such as the working class, “that have been marginalized in formulating heritage policy” (Association of Critical Heritage Studies, 2013). As for how to do this, Restauratie, the aforementioned television program on heritage where the public was able to vote for a heritage site to receive a restoration grant, may prove instructive. As Groote & Haartsen (2008) observe, “in Restoration, the decisive votes are in the hands of lay people,” but “the (pre)selection of the buildings was done by heritage organizations – by people from professional or expert discourses. Some building were already listed as monuments” (pp. 188-189). The RCE need not completely forsake expert knowledge, but should instead meld it with lay knowledge and interests to create a more effective program of heritage management. Lastly, the involvement of the public and working class communities is doubly imperative if the RCE is to designate working class heritage or the heritage of other traditionally disempowered groups because government involvement with in such matters
often carries with it the potential for distortion and cooption. If the RCE were to interpret sites in terms of working class heritage without the involvement of the very populations descended from it, this would be tantamount to cooption.

Secondly, the Monument Register and other official lists of heritage should be revised to incorporate social history – and in the case of working class heritage, labor history and the voices of working class people past and present – into the monument entries. In addition, the Monument Register and other official lists of heritage should be revised to incorporate social history – and in the case of working class heritage, labor history and the voices of working class people past and present – into the monument entries. This interpretation of monuments should then be translated into other on-site and off-site mediums as this would significantly boost the potential of monuments to educate their passersby on labor history and other topics. Revising the Monument Register would also be more true to the spirit of heritage as it is a continuous, dynamic process that does not belong frozen in a digital database of heritage, sealed off from all edits (Harrison, 2010). When it comes to heritage, there can be no last word, and thus, the RCE should allow for expansions and alteration of register entries. As stated above in the section on “theoretical framework,” if the RCE were to argue otherwise, it would reveal itself to have the sort of “outdated understanding of heritage” that the Association of Cultural Heritage Studies (2013) condemns for being the product of unequal cultural and economic power relations as well as a means through which they are perpetuated.

By initiating such a program of Monument Register entry enrichment, The Netherlands would be able to continue to advance its highly developed system of cultural heritage management and begin to remedy the ills of social exclusion and inadequate socio-historical interpretation that plague it without designating additional monuments to fill “deficits” in working class and other types of heritage. The avoidance of additional designations might strike a chord with the RCE as it has been criticized for bestowing monument status and other sorts of heritage-induced protections on an unreasonably large proportion of The Netherlands’ land area.
For example, several scholars including Ashworth (1991; 1999; 2002; 2011). Bogie et al. (1999) and Kuipers (2002; 2005) have warned of the “problems of success” with the management of built heritage in The Netherlands. Although the high percentage of land area in The Netherlands that is designated for heritage purposes was remarked upon above with wonder, Bogie et al. (1999) pejoratively refer to The Netherlands as “the Country of Monuments” (p.25). In addition, other scholars have remarked on the dangers of the over-designation of historic sites more generally with Baer (1995) dramatically referring to such a situation as a “conservation time-bomb.” According to Kuipers (2005), the success of Dutch heritage management carries a bomb-like danger with it because it can result in “low occupancy rates and even vacancy, especially in the central areas of historical tourist cities;” “a growing financial burden on present and future governments for maintenance;” “restrictions on urban change and redevelopment, the loss of alternative opportunities and ultimately the ‘fossilization’ of large parts of the city that have become little more than open-air museums for historical architecture” (p.1).

Be that as it may, this research also recommends that the RCE at least investigate the potential of surveying and designating additional sites of working class heritage as monuments in order to correct for the imbalances in the Register. In addition, as salient as the “problems of success” argument might be, it must not be used to justify the continued exclusion of sites of working class heritage from receiving the same benefits and protections that “high culture” historic sites enjoy as a result of designation.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the RCE as well as provincial, municipal, and non-profit heritage organizations explore the potential of improving the on-sight interpretation of sites of working class heritage through the use of recently emerged technologies in the heritage field such as QR Codes and Historypin. QR or “Quick Response” Codes are a type of barcode that smartphones and other devices can scan to access images and other content. In the context of heritage, QR codes can function as telescopes to the past as one can view historic images or other sorts of interpretive content relating to, for
example, a building that one is standing in front. This is a low cost way of improving the on-sight interpretation of not only working class heritage sites but all monuments, and in the City of Groningen there would no need to worry about educating people on how QR codes work as residents are already familiar with QR Codes due to their heavy use by the city’s tourism office and commercial establishments (Groninger Internet Courant, 2012).

Similar to QR Codes, Historypin overlays present-day views with historic images. However, unlike QR Codes where this occurs out in the field, with Historypin the overlay occurs online in Google Maps “street view” (see Figure 3 in Appendix). Several historic buildings in the City of Groningen have already found their way onto the Historypin website, and with this ground work already laid, the RCE might find it advantageous to link its content to this exciting new platform for sharing of heritage-related information. This would certainly make the RCE’S cumbersome national monument register database more dynamic and accessible to the public. The inaccessibility of the current RCE website is indicated by the existence of another site (rijksmonumenten.nl) that was created for the express purpose of “providing[ing] more accessibility to Dutch national monuments” (Elk ICT Services, 2013).

Another way for Dutch heritage agencies to improve the visibility and interpretation of working class heritage sites would be to create a heritage trail. This could be pursued in tandem with European efforts to establish a trail of industrial heritage in Europe (See Hospers, 2002), or a non-profit heritage organization, such as SIEN-N would be well-suited to taking up this task as they have already developed similar heritage trails for industrial heritage. Perhaps the RCE, SIEN-N, or other heritage organization could also collaborate with the FNV to strengthen the “Rode Spoor” they have created. Clearly, there is a multitude of exciting ways that the RCE and other heritage organizations could advance the cause of working class heritage and improve the overall system of heritage management in Groningen and beyond.

Limitations & Suggestions for Future Research
As discussed at length above, a major deficiency of this analysis is that, while the potential of working class heritage in the Province of Groningen to be put to productive use has been established, no evidence has been located that conclusively proves that working class people or any other sector of the public are interested in the materials remains of working class life. Proving that such an interest exists would require a narrower focus on a specific municipality or neighborhood in the province and extensive engagement with its residents. This is exactly the approach taken by many of the contributors to the aforementioned volume on working class heritage edited by Smith, Schackel, & Campbell (2011). For instance, Smith & Campbell (2011) conducted numerous interviews with residents of Castleford, an ex-coal-mining town in the UK, between 2003 and 2009 and found that “heritage has been used to assert self-worth and self-respect at both individual and community levels” (p.85). Notwithstanding the comparatively lower level of industrialization in Groningen, there is no reason why such research could not be conducted in The Netherlands, and it must be done if heritage planning in The Netherlands is to continue to improve and if the inspirational and educational power of its working class heritage is to be unlocked.

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Figures

Figure 1. A Tripartite Eclipse

Figure 2. A Typology of Tangible, Immoveable Working Class Heritage

Figure 3. Three major paradigms for dealing with the historic built environment (adapted from Ashworth, 2011, p.4)
Figure 4. “Pinning” a historic image of Groningen Central Station in Historypin

Tables

Table 1. Indicators of Obscuration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Measure</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Degree of Preservation</td>
<td>Demolished; Low; Medium; High</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Level of Designation</td>
<td>National; Provincial; Municipal</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Amount of Socio-Historical Description in Monument Register Entry</td>
<td>None; Low; Medium; High</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. On-Site Interpretation</td>
<td>None; Low; Medium; High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Off-site interpretation</td>
<td>None; Low; Medium; High</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Financial Incentives</td>
<td>None; Some; All</td>
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</table>

Table 2. Overview of national government’s role and responsibilities (adapted from Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2012)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Instruments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Manages legal framework for the careful, development-oriented approach to heritage in regional processes | Monuments and Historic Buildings Act [Monumentenwet]  
Spatial Planning Decree [Ruimtelijke ordening]  
Environmental Permitting (General Provisions) Decree [Wabo]  
Building regulations  
Regulations pertaining to environmental impact reports |
| Designates or appoints cultural heritage of national significance    | Monuments and Historic Buildings Act [Monumentenwet]  
National Policy Strategy for Infrastructure and Spatial Planning, and spatial planning order in council |
| Is responsible for world heritage and in this role sets rules / reaches result agreements | Spatial planning order in council [Ambt van land]  
Monuments and Historic Buildings Act [Monumentenwet]  
Administrative agreements concerning municipalities and provinces |
| Bears responsibility for well-reasoned, careful handling of cultural heritage (of national, regional and local significance) for national government property, government projects and (land-use) plans | Spatial Planning Act [Amb], Spatial Planning Decree [Amb], Road Route Act [Lerouw], Wabo, Water Act Framework  
National land-use plans [Ruimteplanner]  
National Government Protocol for Cultural Heritage |
| Facilitates preservation and development of cultural heritage with money and knowledge | Programme funds for reforming the preservation of heritage sites  
Programma Vondst en Restauratie [MoMo] (including government subsidies for the preservation of heritage sites [Amb])  
Knowledge center role of National Department for Cultural Heritage [KNC]  
Regional centers |
| Is a partner to international treaties                               | Agreement on World Heritage  
Treaty of Granada  
Treaty of Valtetta  
Treaty of Florence (IEC) |

### Table 3. Indicating the Obscuration of Sites of Working Class Heritage

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Site (Name &amp; Address)</th>
<th>Degree of Preservation</th>
<th>Level of Designation</th>
<th>Register Entry: Socio-Historical</th>
<th>On-Site Interpretation</th>
<th>Off-site Interpretation</th>
<th>Financial Incentives Access</th>
<th>Financial Incentives Acquisition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Het Blauwe Dorp (Graspad 2)</td>
<td>High; original function</td>
<td>National (483465)</td>
<td>Municipal (516205)</td>
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<td>Holthuis (Brickworks in Muntendam)</td>
<td>High; adaptively reused</td>
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<td>Yes - 4 million</td>
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<td>Winschoten Furniture/Rainwear Manufacturing Factory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phaff Fruitwine Factory (Winschoten)</td>
<td>Vacant; boarded up</td>
<td>National (516292, 516293)</td>
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<td>Relation to WC Heritage somewhat evident</td>
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<td>Intangible Heritage (Folk song, tradition, etc.)</td>
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Map 3

Monuments of Working Class Heritage in The Netherlands: Mean Center & Percent by Province

Legend
- Red Circle: Mean Center (National Monuments)
- Black Circle: Mean Center (Monuments of Working Class Heritage)
- Blue Circles: Monument of Working Class Heritage

Monuments of Working Class Heritage (%)

- 1.794386
- 1.764007 - 6.260159
- 6.260159 - 9.70176
- 9.70176 - 14.285985
- 14.285985 - 20.300977

0 12.5 25 50 Miles
Map 4
Sites of Working Class Heritage in the Province of Groningen, The Netherlands

Legend:
- Places of Social & Economic Activity
- Places of Work
- Places of Resistance
- Municipal Boundaries
- Streets
- Waterways
- Other Monuments

Scale: 0 - 20 Miles