


“Experiencing a Living Past”

Trends in Dutch castle museum
practices and the influence of
national cultural policy

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the recent trend in heritage in which the visitor experience has become central. Previously conservation and preservation were the main objectives in the management of Dutch castle museums, while visitor oriented approaches were viewed with skepticism and reserve. This is different from the situation today where many castle museums promise the visitor a true experience through a variety of presentations and events. The question why Dutch castle museums have adopted a new approach in which experience is central, is the main research question of this thesis. In order to answer this question this thesis will explore how different elements like government policy and changing discourses influence heritage trends and presentations. By researching the cultural policy of the Dutch government and placing this next to developments in the heritage sector, the influence of cultural policy on this ‘experience’ trend will become clear. This thesis argues that the increase of neoliberalism in cultural policy has contributed to this ‘experience’ trend by making visitor numbers and revenue central to the value of heritage.

Preface

I wrote this thesis as the final project of my masters programme Cultural History of Modern Europe at the University of Utrecht. I would like to thank a number of people for their support and advice during the writing process. My supervisor Gertjan Plets for his supportive feedback and encouragement. Norbert, Herma, my family and friends, who have helped me throughout the writing process with their endless support.

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Introduction

‘An experience for the whole family!’, ‘Experience the regal grandeur!’, ‘Relive the role of the Netherlands in the First World War’, ‘Discover’.¹ A glance at the website of museum Huis Doorn reveals an emphasis on offering the visitor a real experience. One technique employed by Huis Doorn to help achieve this ‘experience’ and ‘reliving’ of the past is live interpretation. Central to this technique are actors who perform to- or interact with visitors to interpret objects and history by providing a human context.² This can range from historic re-enactment, through to storytelling, living history and other forms of role-play like a costumed tour-guide. In 2019 Huis Doorn will for example host the Historic Festival Doorn. This festival, described as ‘the broadest Living History event in the Netherlands’ and ‘a true journey through past times’, will according to the website offer the public ‘a true time travel’, starting in antiquity and ending in the twentieth century.³

Huis Doorn can be placed in a wider trend in cultural heritage in which providing an ‘experience’ has become central. This is for example reflected by the language used in promotional texts as well as the growing number of events taking place in and around castles in the Netherlands.⁴ These events have not only changed in frequency but also in nature, with a striking growth in live interpretation events as well as more commercially driven activities like for example markets and fairs, father’s day barbeques and mother’s day high teas. In addition similar phrases as those employed by Huis Doorn are now widely used in promotional material, inviting the visitor to ‘emerge’ themselves, ‘crawl into the world of..’, and ‘experience up close ..’, ultimately leading to ‘a monumental experience for everyone’.⁵

Although Huis Doorn nowadays enthusiastically hosts a recurring large-scale live interpretation event, they have not always been in favor of employing this technique. In 1996 Huis Doorn for example considered living history to be an enjoyable practice, but not something they would want to implement in their museum. They were of the opinion that these

¹ <https://www.huisdoorn.nl/nl/>, accessed 15-05-2019. Original quotes in Dutch. Throughout this thesis all originally Dutch quotes have been translated into English.

² Debra Leighton, “‘Step Back in Time and Live the Legend’: Experiential Marketing and the Heritage Sector”, *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 12, no. 2. 2007: 117-125, 121.

³ <https://www.huisdoorn.nl/nl/agenda/historisch-festival-door/>, accessed 15-05-2019.

⁴ Emma Storm, *Castle Heritage: where static and dynamic practices meet*, Internship report NKS, 2018.

⁵ Other phrases include ‘discover how they lived in the middle ages’, ‘come face to face with..’, ‘meet lifelike knights and ladies’, *Middeleeuws Ammersoyen*, <http://middeleeuwsammersoyen.nl/>, accessed 20-05-2018, and ‘Slot Loevestein’, <https://www.slotloevestein.nl/#>, accessed 20-05-2018, ‘Muiderslot’, accessed 20-05-2018, <https://www.muiderslot.nl/>.

‘alternative’ presentations did not suit the castle and expressed curatorial concerns.⁶ Other castle museums expressed similar skepticism and explicitly opposed these ‘alternative’ presentations, sometimes mockingly dubbed ‘toeters en bellen musea’ (meaning something like ‘bells and whistles museums’).⁷ A common concern was the possible damage done to a site by allowing large numbers of visitors, as well as invasive alterations to the site needed to host these visitors, like sanitation facilities and fire alarms. This is still a concern in heritage debates today.⁸ What is notable however, is that these concerns no longer appear to prevent heritage managers of Dutch castle museums to adopt these ‘alternative’ approaches. When compared to the situation of today, the question arises why castle museums put their initial reservations aside and adapted their approaches resulting in the ‘experience trend’. This will be the central question of this thesis. I will research possible underlying processes of this trend and especially pay attention to the way these are linked to developments in government policy.

As this ‘experience’ trend is not exclusive to castle museums, but noticeable in the heritage sector as a whole, it has been quite extensively discussed in the literature. The trend has been linked to the beginning of the ‘heritage boom’ and explosive growth in museums in the eighties. Robert Lumley for example states that the desire to ‘show’ history by making the past into an experience was the key ingredient in the new generation of museums, reinforced by a visitor-centered approach.⁹ In addition, Christina Goulding notes that it seems that ‘heritage has undergone a process of industrialization’ referencing Robert Hewison’s phrase the ‘heritage industry’.¹⁰ With this phrase Hewison not only meant the growth of museums and heritage attractions, but also the way in which history, as interpreted by these museums, has become sanitized, entertaining, and inauthentic in order to appeal to popular tastes.¹¹

Like the statement by Hewison shows, the changes in the heritage sector put questions of historical representation firmly on the agenda. The way in which the past is interpreted by heritage professionals has been a major topic of discussion among historians and curators as well as marketing and tourism management specialists. A common critique has been that in

⁶ Martine Eerelman, “‘Heritage in Holland’: een onderzoek naar de presentatie van het verleden in vijf Utrechtse kastelen” (Doctoraalscriptie, Universiteit Utrecht, 1996), 59.

⁷ *De Volkskrant*, “Wilhelm II”, 25-08-2000.

⁸ Bouke van Gorp, ‘Tussen draagvlak en draagkracht. Toerisme als passende bestemming voor kastelen en buitenplaatsen?’, *Kasteel & Buitenplaats*, Vol. 19, no. 56, 2017.

⁹ Robert Lumley, ‘The debate on heritage reviewed’, in *Heritage, Museums and Galleries, an introductory reader*, ed. Gerard Corsane (Routledge: London, 2005), 25.

¹⁰ Christina Goulding, “The commodification of the past, postmodern pastiche, and the search for authentic experiences at contemporary heritage attractions”, *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 34 No. 7, 2000 pp. 835-853, 836, and Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (Matheun: London, 1987).

¹¹ Hewison, *The Heritage Industry*, 1987.

presentations of the past, authenticity has been sacrificed in order to draw in more visitors and provide the public with an exceptional experience.¹² From the late 1980s onward, concern has also been expressed about the way this ‘sanitizing’ of the past has led to the exclusion of gender, social class and ethnicity from the dominant discourse.¹³ In addition, Ludmilla Jordonova has added to this discussion by pointing out how in the presentation of the past ‘an exact facsimile is technically impossible, and many aspects of life cannot be conveyed through looking, smelling and listening—work, hunger, disease, war, death are obvious examples.’¹⁴ Others have spoken out in favor of new and different approaches in heritage presentations. Instead of historical accuracy, they state the importance of entertainment, accessibility, visitor interaction and making the past visible, audible and tangible to the public.¹⁵ In addition, especially in the heritage tourism field it has also been argued that an experience-focused approach could provide new means of sustainability for struggling heritage sites in times of less public funding.¹⁶

Changes in the heritage sector have been noticed by scholars of Dutch (castle) heritage as well. Although heritage presentations have not been the subject of extensive discussion in this specific field, the few scholars that have added to the discussion are critical of the trend. Hanneke Ronnes for example writes about what she dubs a ‘worrying trend’ in the field of castles and manor houses and their historical presentations.¹⁷ She points out a few (in her opinion) ‘problematic’ aspects, including the presentation of a static and generic historical narrative, the growing commercial exploitation as hotels and restaurants and the ‘infantilization’ of the castle by catering to the expectations of children.¹⁸ In addition, Bouke van Gorp is especially critical of tourism as a solution for heritage conservation in times of financial struggle.¹⁹

¹² See for example Hewison, *The Heritage Industry*, Hanneke Ronnes, “*De infantilisering van Kasteel en Buitenplaats*”, in Gietman, Conrad, J. K. S. Moes, and Daniël Rewijk. *Huis en habitus: over kastelen, buitenplaatsen en notabele levensvormen*. (Hilversum: Verloren, 2017).

¹³ See G. Porter, “*Putting your house in order: representations of women and domestic life*”, in Lumley, R. (Ed.), *The Museum Time Machine* (Routledge: London, 1988), T. Bennett “*Museums and the people*”, in Lumley, R. (Ed.), *The Museum Time Machine*, (Routledge: London, 1988), L. Garrison, “*The black industrial past in Britain*”, in Shore, P. and MacKenzie, R. (Eds), *The Excluded Past: Archaeology in Education*, (Unwin Hyman: London, 1990).

¹⁴ Ludmilla Jordanova, ‘Objects of knowledge: a historical perspective on museums’, in Vergo, P. (ed.), *The New Museology*, (London: Reaktion, 1989), 25/6.

¹⁵ Lumley, ‘The debate on heritage reviewed’, 23.

¹⁶ B. Garrod and A. Fyall, “Managing Heritage Tourism”, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27, no. 3: 682-708, 684. Leighton, “Step Back in Time and Live the Legend”, 117.

¹⁷ Ronnes, “*De infantilisering van Kasteel en Buitenplaats*”, 435.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 436, 437.

¹⁹ Van Gorp, ‘Tussen draagvlak en draagkracht’.

While the literature discusses changes and trends in the heritage sector and extensively discusses the problems and benefits of these changes, what remains absent is a discussion about the central question of this thesis: why heritage institutions, specifically Dutch castle museums, have adopted a new approach in presenting this heritage to the public, in which experience has become central. The recent financial crisis and extensive budget cuts by national government have led to public debate about government policy and its effect on the cultural sector.²⁰ Although both Ronnes and Van Gorp mention the influence of government policy on the recent developments in the heritage sector as well, they do not provide an in-depth analysis of the way these are actually connected.²¹ This thesis will therefore try to fill this gap and contribute to the existing literature by researching how different elements like government policy and changing discourses influence heritage trends and presentations, and in this way reveal a possible answer to the main question of this thesis. By researching the cultural policy of the Dutch government and placing this next to developments in the heritage sector, the influence of this policy on this ‘experience’ trend will become clear.

This thesis consists of three parts, resulting in three chapters and a conclusion. Firstly, three developments that are connected to this ‘experience’ trend will be explored. Central are the development of a postmodern consumer society, a changing heritage discourse and the expansion of neoliberalism in the cultural sector. This will provide context in which to place the recent developments in the heritage sector. The next chapter will discuss and analyze the cultural policy of the Dutch government in order to link changing government discourse to developments in the heritage sector. Although this thesis focusses on developments in castle heritage starting in the late twentieth century, this chapter provides a historical overview in order to better understand recent policy by linking it to its historical and social political context. Finally after establishing trends in Dutch cultural policy in chapter two, their contribution to recent trends in heritage will be further explored through a case study. In this case study heritage practices at (Castle) Museum Huis Doorn will be researched. Practices at Museum Huis Doorn will be analyzed in comparison to the framework of Dutch cultural policy provided in chapter two. In the conclusion the results of my this research will be discussed.

In order to come to a satisfying conclusion, a variety of sources have been consulted. While the first chapter relies on secondary literature, the second chapter is mostly based on primary source material consisting primarily of government policy documents or ‘nota’s’ in

²⁰ See for example: “Wat was het effect van de vorige plannen met cultuur?”, *NRC Handelsblad*, 09-06-2015.

²¹ Ronnes, “*De infantilisering van Kasteel en Buitenplaats*”, 439, 440, en Van Gorp, ‘Tussen draagvlak en draagkracht’, 5.

Dutch. In these documents the central goals of Dutch cultural policy are expressed and the means the appointed minister wants to employ to achieve these goals. In addition, these documents reveal assumptions underlying government policy in the shape of arguments used in these documents and are therefore helpful in analyzing government discourse. Besides these nota's, other official government documents, like Acts, Proceedings and Letters to Parliament can provide insight into cultural policy and government objectives. All these documents, both historical and contemporary, are available to the public online through an official government website.

In addition more informal sources like newspaper articles are able to aid in analyzing discourse by revealing opinions and theories underlying cultural policy, as well give insight into public opinion and reaction to this cultural policy. While it can be expected that statements by politicians in newspaper articles are in line with their government policy, they might help in providing a more nuanced image in addition to formal government documents. Finally it is important to note that up until the nineties, the term 'culture' was used in a broad sense in Dutch government documents, and usually meant the entirety of the Arts, cultural heritage, literature, media and architecture. Cultural heritage as a term was only introduced around the end of the eighties, when history and heritage became more prominent as a specific topic in government policy.

The final chapter and case study relies on a variety of primary source material. Annual reports by the foundation responsible for the management of the museum, as well as the volunteers foundation were consulted in order to trace their goals, activities and financial situation in recent years. However for periods in time where no annual reports were available additional sources have been consulted like newspaper articles and websites. These are able to provide some information about the activities of the museum, visitor numbers, and opinions of staff and management. A report commissioned by the Dutch government has proved useful as well in providing information about the state of the management and activities of Huis Doorn, as measured through government criteria. In addition recommendations by the Council for Culture, an independent body that advises the Dutch government and Parliament on the arts, culture and media, have been consulted as well. Finally, where necessary these sources are supplemented with secondary literature.

Chapter 1: Three Trends

*‘Although the different [age] groups seek their entertainment in varying locations, they all seem to take part in the same Erlebniskultur. In this pattern, activity, moment consumption and fads are encouraged by media and advertisement.’*²² Jos de Haan – Describing the Dutch public and their cultural-historical interest, 1997, (Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau).

The recent changes and trends in castle heritage, like providing the visitor with an ‘experience’, seem to be part of developments that have been taking place in the heritage sector as a whole over the last few decades. Since about the eighties the heritage sector has been subject to a variety of changes, which some have referred to as the ‘heritage boom’, while others speak of the rise of a true ‘heritage cult’.²³ In his book *The Heritage Crusade*, David Lowenthal notices how “All at once heritage is everywhere – in the news, in the movies, in the marketplace – in everything from galaxies to genes [...] One can barely move without bumping into a heritage site.”²⁴ This has not been the only trend in society however. As the quote by Jos de Haan above illustrates, a certain trend in regards to the cultural-historical interest and participation in The Netherlands has also been noticed. This chapter will further explore such developments in order to provide context for the developments in the heritage presentations.

Postmodern consumer society

One perspective used to analyze and explain these developments in the heritage sector has been to place them in relation to the development of postmodern society.²⁵ Christina Goulding provides a short and clear definition of postmodernism: ‘The idea of postmodernism rests on the proposition that we have entered a new phase or epoch, a post industrial age characterised by schizophrenic modes of space and time.’²⁶ From the end of the 1980s onwards this ‘new phase’ and its characteristics have been used to explain the explosive growth of the heritage sector. Marc Laenen for example argues that the moral, social and identity crisis experienced over the past decades is the main reason for the increased interest in

²² Jos de Haan, *Het gedeelde erfgoed: een onderzoek naar veranderingen in de cultuurhistorische belangstelling sinds het einde van de jaren zeventig* (Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 1997), 22.

²³ David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1.

²⁴ (Lowenthal) *Ibid.*, xiii.

²⁵ Goulding, “The commodification of the past”, 837.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

heritage and the past.²⁷ Likewise Harvey argues that time-space compression and globalization are fragmenting identities, which has resulted in xenophobia and reactionary place-bound politics in order to construct or retain a stable (place) identity.²⁸ The emergence of ‘local heritage’ is according to Harvey an attempt to ‘fix’ a stable identity.²⁹

Besides explaining the explosive growth of the heritage sector, postmodern society and its characteristics like large scale mass production and uniformity are also put forward as reasons for changes in the way this heritage is presented to the public. Described as a consumer society and society of the spectacle and the media, it has been suggested that in a postmodern society there is a constant search for stimulation through events and images.³⁰ Mike Featherstone for example mentions the general expansion of the cultural sphere within contemporary Western societies and the way

‘in which the consumption of signs becomes the major source of satisfaction ...this is evident in the forms of leisure consumption in which the emphasis is placed upon experiences and pleasure and the ways in which more traditional forms of high cultural consumption (museums and art galleries) become revamped to cater for wider audiences through hiding in the canonical art and educative formative presentations with an emphasis on the spectacular, the popular, the pleasurable and immediately accessible.’³¹

In a similar vein, Stephen Brown states that postmodern museum presentations ‘are characterised by the abandonment of traditional display cases, silent contemplation and the aura of priceless authenticity, and their replacement with an anti-elitist emphasis on participation, involvement, sound and lighting effects, performance and the creation of spectacular multimedia experiences.’³² Examples include the Jorvik centre in York in which ‘everything is meant to be authentic but, like the perfect simulacra that they are, nothing actually is, not even the smells.’³³

Finally it has been suggested that in this postmodern society ‘cultural production is driven back inside the mind resulting in a search for a historical past through pop images

²⁷ M. Laenen, “Looking for the future through the past”, in Uzzell, D. (Ed.), *Heritage Interpretation*, Vol. 1, Belhaven Press, London, 1989).

²⁸ D. Harvey, *The condition of postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989).

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Goulding, “The commodification of the past”, 838.

³¹ Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, (Sage: London, 1991), 96.

³² Stephen Brown, *Postmodern Marketing*, (Routledge: London, 1995), 74.

³³ *Ibid.*

and stereotypes.’³⁴ These pop images and stereotypes have been categorized by Ronnes as one of the trends taking place in Dutch castle heritage. In addition Van Gorp also places the changes in castle heritage in context of changes in society, like the rise of mass tourism and the current ‘experience economy’ in which ‘experience’ is even more valued.³⁵ According to Van Gorp the ‘classical’ presentations of castles no longer fit the expectations of the present-day visitors. Instead of passively viewing decorated rooms and displayed items behind a barrier with only a few information signs, visitors are invited to participate in activities like baking medieval bread, knights’ tournaments and swipe through varying multimedia to make the visit an unforgettable experience.³⁶

Changing discourse

The developments in the heritage sector could be connected to a changing heritage discourse. Some hold the opinion that heritage and our shared cultures should be available and accessible for everyone, and advocate for the adoption of visitor-centered approaches.³⁷ Others have argued that new approaches in heritage should not be so easily dismissed. Laurajane Smith has formulated the Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD) because in Smith’s view there is ‘no such thing as heritage’.³⁸ Instead she argues that there is a hegemonic discourse about heritage, ‘which acts to constitute the way we think, talk, and write about heritage.’³⁹ The AHD establishes and sanctions a top-down relationship between expert, heritage site and ‘visitor’, in which the expert ‘translates’ the site and its meanings to the visitor.⁴⁰ This means there is an absence of ‘action’ or critical engagement on the part of non-expert users of heritage. According to Smith this top-down relationship ‘obscures the sense of memory work, performativity and acts of remembrance that commentators such as Nora (1989), Urry (1996) and Bagnall (2003) identify as occurring at heritage sites.’⁴¹ While Smith agrees that some aspects of heritage tourism marketing and interpretation are a feature of real concern, she points out how the tourism critique of Hewison and others aids the AHD in constructing heritage visitors as passive

³⁴ Goulding, “The commodification of the past”, 839.

³⁵ Van Gorp, ‘Tussen draagvlak en draagkracht’, 4.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ G. Black, *The Engaging museum: developing museum for visitors involvement* (Routledge: Londen, 2005), 3-6 en Leighton, “‘Step Back in Time and Live the Legend’.

³⁸ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of heritage* (Routledge: London 2006), 11.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 34.

⁴¹ Ibid.

consumers. In addition, redefining heritage visitors as ‘tourists’ further distances heritage users from an ‘active sense of engagement with heritage sites.’⁴²

An example is according to Smith the critique and condemnation of heritage re-enactments and re-enactors as being amateurish, unauthentic, sanitized and escapist. While these activities may be viewed as an eccentric hobby, it is a process that according to Smith ‘nonetheless challenges the roles established for non-expert users of heritage’.⁴³ In addition, the strong reaction and condemnation towards such activities further highlights the degree ‘to which the AHD decrees that heritage is to be viewed from afar as an unchanging vista rather than actively used, remade and negotiated.’⁴⁴

Visitor numbers and neoliberalism

Another development that can be connected to the ‘experience’ trend is the increasing attention to visitor numbers and public opinion. Visitor numbers have become central in the evaluation of heritage and are considered to be an important indicator of what makes a ‘successful’ museum or heritage site.⁴⁵ This can for example be noticed in the increase of ‘blockbuster exhibitions’ employed as a strategy to attract large audiences.⁴⁶ Since 2012 there even exists a specific fund for such blockbuster projects with the name Blockbusterfonds (Blockbusterfund). In order to be applicable for their funding, they mention three main criteria. The first of these is that the project has to attract ‘a large audience’, for which they give specific target numbers.⁴⁷ As their second criterium they state that the project needs to attract a ‘wide variety of visitors’. With this they mean that an organization that usually attracts a regional public, now needs to attract a national audience, and an organization that usually attracts a national audience now needs to attract an international audience. Only their final criterium concerns itself with the content of the project, which needs to be a new and distinctive cultural initiative, that has not taken place in The Netherlands before.⁴⁸

However, as Van Gorp points out, tourism is not necessarily a ‘natural function’ of heritage.⁴⁹ Why then, has the value of a heritage site been connected to visitor numbers and has

⁴² Smith, *Uses of heritage*, 33.

⁴³ Ibid., 34.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Van Gorp, ‘Tussen draagvlak en draagkracht’, Ronnes, “*De infantilisering van Kasteel en Buitenplaats*”.

⁴⁶ ‘Festival en klassiek concert zelfde statussymbool als auto en horloge’:

<https://hendrikbeerda.nl/cultuursector-nederland>

⁴⁷ ‘Aanvragen’, <https://www.blockbusterfonds.nl/aanvragen/>

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Van Gorp, ‘Tussen draagvlak en draagkracht’, 4.

it become increasingly important to cater to a wider variety of ‘postmodern’ visitors. A possible explanation is the expansion of neoliberalism in the cultural sector. Encyclopedia Britannica defines neoliberalism as an ‘ideology and policy model that emphasizes the value of free market competition.’⁵⁰ However, its defining features are subject of considerable debate, making the term a ‘loose and shifting’ signifier.⁵¹ Wendy Brown refers to neoliberalism as ‘a peculiar form of reason that configures all aspects of existence in economic terms’.⁵² What she means by this is that neoliberal reason, which is ‘ubiquitous today in statecraft and the workplace, in jurisprudence, education, culture, and a vast range of quotidian activity’, is converting ‘the distinctly political character, meaning, and operation of democracy’s constituent elements into economic ones.’⁵³ In other words, the economization of political life and other previously noneconomic spheres and activities.

Van Gorp has noticed this development in the Dutch heritage field. She states that while we increasingly surround ourselves with heritage, its value has shifted to the ‘measurable’ and consequently economic meaning of this heritage. She continues that the discourse of the twenty-first century so far appears to be one of ‘self-sufficiency’, in which museums and heritage sites have to prove their ‘right to exist’, especially in financial terms. With the introduction of neoliberalism in the cultural sector, heritage has changed from a ‘merit good’ into an ‘economic good’.⁵⁴ Furthermore the increasing influence of the free market has been put forward as cause for changes in heritage presentations, especially the shifting of emphasis on education towards entertainment.⁵⁵ According to van Gorp the presentation of heritage to the public is influenced by the ‘commercial logic’ of visitor numbers and ‘revenue figures’. It has been argued that as a consequence, a simplified, sanitized and attractive presentation of the past is presented ‘for consumption’, as not to scare away or disturb visitors before they have visited gifts shops and restaurant facilities.⁵⁶

The earlier mentioned ‘blockbusterexhibitions’ could be seen as consequence of the expansion of neoliberalism in the cultural sector. An article in the Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* writes about the development of museums into ‘slick exhibition factories’ and ‘marketing machines’, that use blockbusterexhibitions to draw in ever growing crowds.⁵⁷ Many

⁵⁰ ‘Neoliberalism’, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/neoliberalism>

⁵¹ Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, (Zone Books: New York, 2017), 20.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 17.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Van Gorp, ‘Tussen draagvlak en draagkracht’, 5.

⁵⁵ Bouke van Gorp. *Bezienswaardig?: historisch-geografisch erfgoed in toeristische beeldvorming*, (Delft: Eburon, 2003), 63.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ ‘Dit is hoe musea jou naar binnen lokken’, *NRC Handelsblad*, 07-16-2016.

museum managers now speak about exhibitions in terms of ‘product’, while the museum itself has adopted its new role as cultural entrepreneur. With an increased budget for marketing, professional marketing companies and media and advertisement businesses are hired, to further advertise the museum’s ‘brand’ among the public.

The *NRC* article links these developments to the recent cuts in government funding and privatization of museums. Others have also been critical of recent government policy and its influence on heritage practices. Ronnes for example describes the increasing economic emphasis on heritage tourism and redevelopment of heritage in the Netherlands. She points out how government policy, expressed by the phrase ‘behoud door ontwikkeling’ (preservation through development) coined in 1999, is usually about ‘creating economic carriers’⁵⁸ The idea behind this phrase is that heritage sites should be independent and self-sufficient, which could for example be achieved through redevelopment. According to Ronnes, recent government policy confirms the image that heritage only has the ‘right to exist’ if it is economically viable.⁵⁹

To conclude, while the development in postmodern society provides context as to the general nature of the ‘experience’ trend, it does not necessarily explain why increasing visitor numbers and participation have become so important in heritage management. In this sense a new heritage discourse and the expansion of neoliberalism in the cultural sector promoted by the Dutch government could provide answers. This requires a closer look into developments in Dutch cultural policy, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

⁵⁸ Ronnes, “*De infantilisering van Kasteel en Buitenplaats*”, 439.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 440.

Chapter 2: Developments in Dutch cultural policy

This chapter provides an overview of Dutch cultural policy and an analysis of its major trends and developments. While this chapter starts in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, its emphasis will be on the period after the Second World War, when a more coherent cultural policy was formed. This policy can be traced in ‘(Cultuur)nota’s’, which would eventually be published every four years. In these nota’s the central goals of the Dutch cultural policy are expressed, as well as the means the minister wants to employ to achieve these goals. In addition, other government documents, as well as newspaper articles provide further insight into goals and motivations influencing cultural policy. Where necessary, these sources are supplemented with secondary literature, like for example the influential dissertation of Roel Pots on the relationship between the Dutch government and culture from the end of the eighteenth century until the end of the twentieth century.

The formation of a cultural policy

Questions about the role of the government concerning cultural life go back to the nineteenth century. In the last quarter of this century the national government became much more active in supporting this field. An influential figure on government policy was Victor de Stuers, who worried about the state of Dutch monuments and history. In an article by the name of ‘Holland op zijn smalst’ (which translates to something like ‘Dutch frugality’) De Stuers criticized the neglected monuments and history of the Netherlands, which he considered to be in a very bad state.⁶⁰ He was especially concerned about the destruction of monuments which he considered to be rampant, and that caused the ‘finest buildings to be violated and destructed’.⁶¹ According to De Stuers almost every church and building that were considered to have played a significant part in the history of the Netherlands, like for example the Binnenhof, were in a ‘pitiful state’.⁶² De Stuers therefore called for action and considered the solution to lie with the national government.⁶³ He proposed that the government should contribute ‘vigorously’ to the conservation of ‘our’ monuments and that they should ensure that the restoration of old buildings should happen ‘properly’.⁶⁴ His call for action was effective in that he was appointed

⁶⁰ V. de Stuers, ‘Holland op zijn smalst’ *De Gids* 37 (1873), 1, 320-403.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 332.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ De Stuers, ‘Iteretur Decoctum’, in: *De Gids*, 38 (1874), deel 4, november, 314-3.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 348.

as a civil servant in the Department of the Interior in 1875 as head of the department's art section, which allowed him to greatly intensify government support for cultural life.

At the same time both the progressive liberals as socialists increasingly employed cultural activities like libraries and exhibitions as a means to 'civilize the working classes'.⁶⁵ The progressive liberals were of the opinion that the government should play an active part in the 'cultural dispersion' and cultural education of the working class. This new civilization offensive contributed to growing governmental involvement. However, at the beginning of the twentieth century emphasis shifted more to private individuals and institutions, who continued to have a strong influence on the development of cultural policy throughout the interbellum.⁶⁶ Besides active individuals, the period after the First World War is according to Pots characterized by a retreating government.⁶⁷ An important influence on this development was pillarization (*verzuiling*), which led to greater concentration on one's own religious or ideological group. Instead of a strong government and national cultural policy, the dominant opinion was that the primary responsibility for cultural life should lie in 'one's own circle'.⁶⁸

Although the government became less active, attempts were made to encourage the interest of the Dutch public for their national cultural heritage. Examples of this are the compiling of various lists of 'Illustrated descriptions' of different regions in the Netherlands and an inventory of Dutch monuments of history and art from before 1850 (completed in 1933).⁶⁹ These lists consisted of maps, building plans, buildings and art-historical objects. In order to make this information more accessible to a broader public, an easily transportable book was published titled *Kunstreisboek voor Nederland* (Art-travel book for the Netherlands). The first edition was published in 1940, with a final edition appearing in 1987.⁷⁰

During the Second World War the relation between government and cultural life had changed quite radically as consequence of the German occupation. The role of the government in cultural life had increased, which influenced post-war policy and resulted in an active cultural policy and larger budgets being available.⁷¹ This continued during the Cold War. Initially, with the increasing costs of the Ministry of Defense, it was proposed to redirect funds from the cultural policy to the Ministry of Defense. However, as the Cold War became a 'culture war'

⁶⁵ R. Pots, *Cultuur, koningen en democraten. Overheid & cultuur in Nederland* (SUN: Nijmegen, 2000), 177.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 187-240.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Voorloopige lijst der Nederlandsche monumenten van geschiedenis en kunst. 1908 – 1933.*

⁷⁰ Rijkscommissie voor de Monumentenzorg. *Kunstreisboek voor Nederland I*, Amsterdam: Van Kampen, 1940.

⁷¹ Pots, *Cultuur, koningen en democraten*, 251.

the idea arose that cultural values needed to be defended against the advance of communism.⁷² Culture was considered to be a ‘moral defense of the nation against communism’, which made ‘the protection of our most highly intellectual and cultural goods’ a priority as well.⁷³ Together with the growing prosperity from 1955 onwards, this resulted in an increased budget for cultural policy from twelve million (Dutch) gulden in 1952 to more than sixty million in 1963.⁷⁴

In this time the social and geographical distribution of culture became an important goal in the cultural policy as well, making it a central aim to attract different layers of the population. In order to determine the results of this policy an investigation by sociologist H.M. Langeveld was conducted and published in 1962.⁷⁵ She concluded that in cultural activities the middle class population was represented, but the numbers of the working class were low. However, the working class did show interest in ‘mass culture, folk culture and kitsch’, but these should according to Langeveld not be included in the definition of culture.⁷⁶ This shows what would be considered a somewhat limited concept of ‘culture’ today.

The idea of the social distribution of culture remained a relevant topic in the coming decades, as well as the actual purpose and contribution of art and culture to society. During the sixties this purpose and contribution became linked to the general welfare of people. This is for example expressed by minister Cals in 1960 who stated that education, art and science should ‘in increasing matter’ contribute to the ‘mental and corporal wellbeing of the Dutch people.’⁷⁷ These ideas are in line with other opinions in the era of growing welfare ideals and attention to the quality of life besides material welfare. In this time cultural policy became part of a new ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work (CRM), further implementing cultural policy in the perspective of ‘welfare thinking’.⁷⁸ This view is for example expressed in a 1972 policy nota, as it states that art should not be in service of art, but in service of society and that it has ‘no other place’ than to be part of the welfare policy.⁷⁹

During the seventies the ‘social relevance’ of art and culture in society was still central in policy discussions. Harry van Doorn, minister of CRM in the government of Den Uyl, was of the opinion that the cultural policy was too similar to a ‘nineteenth century cultural sense that

⁷² Pots, *Cultuur, koningen en democraten*, 261.

⁷³ Quote in Pots, *Cultuur, koningen en democraten*, 261.

⁷⁴ Pots, *Cultuur, koningen en democraten*, 263.

⁷⁵ H.M. In ‘t Veld-Langeveld, ‘De sociale cultuurspreiding’, in: A.N.J. den Hollander, E.W. Hofstee e.a., *Drift enen Koers. Een halve eeuw sociale verandering in Nederland*. Gedenkboek Nederlandse Sociologen Vereniging. Assen 1962, 181-207, 182.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 182.

⁷⁷ Cals, *Handelingen 11, 1959-1960, Bijlagen*, 5700, vi (2), 14.

⁷⁸ Pots, *Cultuur, koningen en democraten*, 295.

⁷⁹ Ministerie van CRM, *Discussienota kunstbeleid*, Den Haag, 1972, xiii.

constricted itself to high art and a small elite.’⁸⁰ Van Doorn shared the opinion and findings of a UNESCO World Conference about cultural policy in Venice in 1970, which had led to an international consensus about the need of a broader and more dynamic concept of culture, as a base for policies.⁸¹ As a result three specific goals were formulated in regards to the cultural policy. A first goal was the development and conservation of art and culture, secondly to make art and culture accessible to the public and thirdly to encourage the public to actively participate in cultural activities.⁸²

It was also during the seventies that a notable change in museum policy occurred. In the early seventies Dutch museums were still very autonomous and quite independent from government interference. While the government provided subsidies, there were barely any conditions attached. In general, museum directors, including those of national museums, were pleased with their ability to determine the direction of their policy.⁸³ However the political discourse at the time also influenced museum policy, as questions arose about their contribution to the established ‘welfare goals’ and their social relevance in general. As a consequence of this discussion the policy document *Naar een nieuw museumbeleid* (1976) (Towards a new museum policy), placed museums like the cultural policy in a welfare context.⁸⁴ Museums were now expected to meet certain conditions, especially regarding their contribution to society.⁸⁵ The debate about the role of museums was therefore also concerned with the public function of museums and the development of educational activities. In this public debate about the ‘democratization of the museum’, two contrasting opinions were put forward that have remained central in discussions about the purpose of the museum. One group of professionals was of the opinion that the central task of the museum was researching, collecting and ultimately conserving the collection. Others however, argued that accessibility to these collections by the public should be central.⁸⁶ As a result of this discussion, there was more attention to educational activities in museums, which in turn led to a growth of employees concerning educational activities from a few dozen in 1967 to 322 in 1982.⁸⁷

⁸⁰ H.W. Van Doorn 'Toespraak van de minister van Cultuur, Recreatie en Maatschappelijk werk', 1976.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ministerie van CRM, *Nota Kunst en Kunstbeleid*, Den Haag, 1976.

⁸³ H. Overduin, *Het museum als obsessie*. Amsterdam 1988, 12.

⁸⁴ Ministerie van CRM, *Nota Naar een nieuw museumbeleid*, Den Haag, 1976.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Pots, *Cultuur, koningen en democraten*, 324.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

The introduction of 'market forces'

With the taking to office of the government headed by Ruud Lubbers (Christian democrat) in 1982, a change in cultural policy took place. The government Lubbers broke with the previous idea of a strong government and welfare policy.⁸⁸ In order to resolve the growing financial deficit, 'market forces' and 'efficiency' were introduced as possible solutions.⁸⁹ A driving force behind the restructuring of cultural policy was the Minister of the newly established department of Welfare, Public Health and Culture, Elco Brinkman. He expressed some of his ideas in an interview with Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* in 1983, while also attempting to nuance his image as a 'cold and distant manager'.⁹⁰ Brinkman expresses his worries about the subsidizing by the government of 'all kinds of things that one could barely consider to belong to the mediocre', as well as stating that 'in the field of the arts', the government should focus on quality and 'top-art', stimulating only the 'top level'.⁹¹

The influence of these opinions on cultural policy can be noticed in the document *Notitie Cultuurbeleid* published in 1985.⁹² The *Notitie Cultuurbeleid* was similar to previous policy in that it followed the three main objectives formulated in 1976, 'conservation, renewal and distribution of cultural values', which focused on making culture accessible to the public and promoting public participation in culture.⁹³ However, Brinkman took a different direction regarding the means to achieve these goals and differed in opinion about the criteria for government funding. The term 'social relevance', that had previously been central to cultural policy, was put aside as a criterium for government support and considered to belong to the past.⁹⁴ Its place was taken a new criterium: public opinion. Brinkman argued that in the evaluation of subsidy requests, the focus was put too exclusively on the quality of culture and art and too little on public interests. 'If it was ever argued that the lack of response from the public should be considered an indicator of quality, and thus as a ground for government subsidization, then those times are now definitely behind us.'⁹⁵ He proposed stricter conditions for the allocation of government subsidies. These would still adhere to the 'quality principle', but at the same time would take public interest into consideration.⁹⁶ In this sense, the concepts

⁸⁸ Ministerie van WVC, *Notitie Cultuurbeleid*, Den Haag, 1985.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 25, 26.

⁹⁰ 'Eelco Brinkman Contra de Papiermassa's', *NRC Handelsblad*, 22-01-1983.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Ministerie van WVC, *Notitie Cultuurbeleid*, Den Haag, 1985.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Ministerie van WVC, *Notitie Cultuurbeleid*, 17.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

of culture and quality were now more connected to popularity and a supply and demand principle.

The role of the government would be to help shape these stricter conditions, but should at the same time not be too involved, as was general government policy.⁹⁷ Instead a growing emphasis was placed on the (financial) contribution of individuals and businesses. Contributions of businesses in the form of sponsoring and other private fundraising were for example considered to be a ‘welcome addition’.⁹⁸ At the same time a greater degree of self-management of cultural institutions was encouraged, in order to stimulate them to function in a ‘more business-like manner.’⁹⁹ Finally the increasing internationalization had influence on Dutch cultural policy, as a renewed attention to national cultural identity was put back on the agenda. According to Brinkman, this should not lead to chauvinism, but a certain self-awareness for the ‘cultural face of our country’ would be preferable.¹⁰⁰

The *Notitie Cultuurbeleid* did not go without critique, most strongly from Frits Niessen (PvdA).¹⁰¹ However, by 1989 when Lubbers III took office with PvdA and the Cristian Democrats as ruling parties, these critiques did not prove to be of significance according to Pots.¹⁰² Instead, Brinkman’s policy and ideas remained influential in the coming period. This can for example be noticed in the adoption of The Cultural Policy Act (Wet op het specifiek cultuurbeleid) in 1993, of which Brinkman was according to Pots the most influential architect.¹⁰³ This act obliged the Minister of Education, Culture and Science to present a policy nota (*cultuurnota*) every four years, in which past policy is reviewed and guidelines for future cultural policy are addressed, including government spending for this period.

During Lubbers III Hedy D’Ancona (PvdA) served as minister of Welfare, Public Health and Culture, who for a large part continued the policy of Brinkman. A difference from previous policy however, is that D’Ancona made the conservation of ‘culture’ one of her priorities. The conservation of various cultural heritage collections and monuments had fallen behind over the years. In order to tackle the problems in the conservation and preservation of these collections the *Deltaplan voor het Cultuurbehoud* (Deltaplan for Cultural Conservation) was created.¹⁰⁴ As a result of this more than forty million Dutch gulden was made available

⁹⁷ Ministerie van WVC, *Notitie Cultuurbeleid*, 25.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁰¹ See for example: ‘Kamerleden vegen vloer aan met dunne cultuurnotitie Brinkman’ in *De Volkskrant*, 29-06-1985, en Pots, *Cultuur, koningen en democraten*, 328, 330.

¹⁰² Pots, *Cultuur, koningen en democraten*, 328, 330

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 329.

¹⁰⁴ Ministerie van WVC, *Deltaplan voor het Cultuurbehoud*, Den Haag, 1990.

from 1992 till 1995 to work to improve the conditions of conservation and management of various collections and monuments.¹⁰⁵

D'Ancona's nota *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992) continued with the same goals that were outlined in previous policy documents, namely participation and social distribution of 'culture' among the Dutch public, with the primary task of creating a flourishing cultural life in The Netherlands.¹⁰⁶ D'Ancona was of the opinion that the discussion of the quality of culture should be subject of public debate, stating that the voice of the public needed to be expressed more clearly.¹⁰⁷ She for example suggested that museums could take the preferences of the public into account. In this way the division between the elite and the 'common people' could be decreased.¹⁰⁸ As a result D'Ancona proposed that subsidy requests would need to conform to more stringent requirements, specifically regarding audience reach and attendance, making visitor numbers a priority. However, quality and diversity would remain criteria for government funding as well.¹⁰⁹

In *Investing in Culture* D'Ancona also described the role of 'the market' in comparison to the role of the government. In practice government policy would have a 'market complementing' or even 'market correcting' function.¹¹⁰ Cultural policy would make up for the shortcomings of the market, while striving for an 'acceptable cost-benefit ratio' and utilizing the possibilities 'the market' has to offer.¹¹¹ In addition it was suggested that cultural institutions should become more responsible for a 'substantial' income of their own in order to 'stimulate their social functioning.'¹¹² This for example resulted in regulations in which cultural institutions would have to earn at least fifteen percent of their total budget by themselves.¹¹³ Furthermore, D'Ancona stated that 'the granting of subsidies will more than before take on the character of an investment.'¹¹⁴ The terminology in these statements, as well as the overall policy shows the continuation and increase of a market oriented approach to cultural policy, which is confirmed by the goal of a 'closer cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Affairs.'¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁵ Pots, *Cultuur, koningen en democraten*, 337.

¹⁰⁶ Ministerie van WVC, *Investeren in Cultuur, Nota cultuurbeleid 1993 -1996*, Den Haag, 1992.

¹⁰⁷ Het Parool, 'Te weinig cultuurdeelname jongeren', 22-12-1993.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ministerie van WVC, *Investeren in Cultuur*, 51.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 26.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid., 51.

¹¹³ Pots, *Cultuur, koningen en democraten*, 338.

¹¹⁴ Ministerie van WVC, *Investeren in Cultuur*, 51.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

Privatization and Cultural Entrepreneurship

In the first Kok cabinet (1994 – 1998) headed by PvdA minister Wim Kok, Aad Nuis (D'66) became responsible for the cultural policy in the new ministry of Education, Culture and Science. He presented the first part of his Cultuurnota for the period 1997 – 2000 in 1995, titled *Pantser of Ruggengraat* (Armor or Backbone). This proved for a large part to be a continuation of the cultural policy of D'Ancona. However, an important development was the way cultural policy was now tasked with creating cohesion and solidarity in the multicultural society, with the goal of going from a *multicultural* society to an *intercultural* society.¹¹⁶ Besides more attention to intercultural projects and education in cultural institutions, an awareness of national identity and values and traditions were thought to further foster social cohesion. As a result of this (greater) emphasis on the historical identity of The Netherlands, the attention to cultural conservation set up by D'Ancona was continued and expanded.¹¹⁷ This new idea was summarized in the sentence 'The past is not dead. It lives more than ever.'¹¹⁸ Nuis argued that cultural-historical objects should not only be behind glass cases, but that the 'the vital function' of heritage for society should be strengthened.¹¹⁹ This was a change from previous policy. Previously cultural identity was not something that was knowingly created by cultural policy, but seen as a logical consequence of this policy. With Nuis this changed as he saw potential in an awareness of the past, and as such introduced historical identity and historical awareness as element of cultural politics.¹²⁰ Cultural heritage and national history were now considered as means to strengthen a national identity.

In this period, public participation remained a key element in cultural policy. However, in order to achieve this goal a new method was put forward: education. As a way to attract and involve a younger demographic, Nuis proposed to introduce the course 'culture-education' in schools. In addition, museums were encouraged to focus on becoming 'knowledge centers' for education.¹²¹ This was not the only new direction museums were encouraged to take. Since the end of the eighties there had an increase in the cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Affairs to bring tourism and culture closer together and to 'make better use of each other'.¹²² Nuis stated that he would continue this cooperation the coming years, in which special attention

¹¹⁶ Ministerie van OCW, *Panters of Ruggengraat, cultuurnota 1997-2000*, Den Haag, 1995, 21.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Pots, *Cultuur, koningen en democraten*, 343.

¹²¹ Ministerie van OCW, *Panters of Ruggengraat*, 11.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 31.

would go out to the development of ‘large-scale museum events of international allure’.¹²³ These would have a dual effect, both culturally and economically: ‘As touristic product these exhibitions position themselves in the growing market of cultural citytrips.’¹²⁴ This shows how the recent trend in blockbuster exhibitions was actually already a cultural policy goal in the mid-nineties.

Another major development in museum policy at this time was the introduction of the Act *Verzelfstandiging Rijksmuseum Diensten* (Privatization of National Museum Services) in 1993. National Museums had a unique position in the Dutch museum sector, as they were initially part of the National Government. This changed with the new act that concerned making the National Museums self-sufficient and independent from government. Collections and buildings remained property of the State, however, the management and exploitation were now handed over to a foundation. A construction was set up in which the collection and buildings were given to the foundation on loan for a certain period of time.

The increasing privatization and independence of cultural institutions continued under the Second cabinet-Kok (1998 – 2002), with Rick van der Ploeg as Secretary of State of Culture. As an economist, he did not have a background in culture. However, he did not consider this a disadvantage as he saw no contradiction between economy and culture: ‘many people think economy is about money, but in fact it is about value. Just like culture.’¹²⁵ Since Van der Ploeg was in part bound by the *Cultuurnota 1997 – 2000* there were no fundamental changes in cultural policy. This might not have been of much influence however, since the nota did not differ much from his own views. Attracting a younger, more diverse audience, education, market forces and internationalization were central in his policy as well. In his own words: ‘I want cultural entrepreneurship and attracting a new, younger public to be central in my policy.’¹²⁶ He was outspoken however about ‘elite culture’ and the lack of diversity in cultural institutions and was of the opinion that instead more attention should go to the a younger and more diverse public.¹²⁷ His goals can be summarized as ‘the furthering of multicultural society’, ‘communicating with a wider audience’, an emphasis on ‘market forces’ and prioritizing a young and diverse audience.¹²⁸

¹²³ Ministerie van OCW, *Panters of Ruggengraat*.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ *De Volkskrant*, 19 september 1998, 23.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Pots, *Cultuur, koningen en democraten*, 336.

¹²⁸ Ministerie van OCW, *Cultuur als Confrontatie, cultuurnota 2001-2004*, Den Haag, 1999.

In 1999 Van der Ploeg presented his *Cultuurnota Cultuur als confrontatie (Culture as confrontation)*. The central policy goal was a diversifying of both the audience as well as cultural activities. In addition ‘social reach’ became an important aspect as well, resulting in the proposition to make it a criterium for granting subsidies. In order to reach a wider audience, Van der Ploeg suggested that cultural institutions should take the wishes of the public into account, as well as function much more as cultural entrepreneurs. How this could be achieved is described in his nota *Cultureel Ondernemerschap (Cultural Entrepreneurship)* published in 1999. With this document Van der Ploeg hoped to prepare ‘culture makers and mediators’ in society of today.¹²⁹ According to Van der Ploeg the essence of cultural entrepreneurship is ‘foremost an attitude that is focused on getting as much artistic-cultural, business and social “rendement” (efficiency) out of cultural services.’¹³⁰ What this exactly entails is illustrated in the following quote:

‘Cultural entrepreneurship requires guts, an open and outward facing attitude, alertness in regards to utilizing chances and possibilities, using instruments and techniques from the commercial sector, not being afraid to walk new and unconventional paths, making cultural treasures available for new audiences, and making connections between subsidized and unsubsidized segments of cultural life. [...] The aim is to make “the best” popular, and “the popular” better.’¹³¹

These goals of Van der Ploeg were enforced through various tactics, like stricter subsidy requirements. Van der Ploeg for example asked the Raad van Cultuur (Council for Culture), which was responsible for giving advice in the granting of subsidies, to take his viewpoint on ‘social reach’ and a diverse public into account.¹³² The Council for Culture advised to end the subsidies of 38 institutions, but after protests this advice was somewhat revised.¹³³ In addition, Van der Ploeg proposed a bonus to institutions that spend at least 3% of their budget to target audience activities.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ Ministerie van OCW, *Nota Cultureel Ondernemerschap*, Den Haag, 1999.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² As dictated by the Cultural Policy Act, subsidy decisions of the Dutch government are based on advice by the national Council for Culture, in order for the Dutch government to remain neutral in assessing art and culture. The Minister or Secretary of Culture, however, makes the final decisions. Deviations from this advice are possible, but in general the Minister or Secretary follows the advice by the Council.

¹³³ Pots, *Cultuur, koningen en democraten*, 337.

¹³⁴ Quirine van der Hoeven, *Van Anciaux tot Zijlstra, cultuurbeleid en cultuurparticipatie in Nederland en Vlaanderen*, Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, Den Haag, 2012, 71, 73.

Creating 'Cultural Awareness' and the Economization of Culture

These ambitions changed slightly with Cabinet Balkenende II (2003 – 2006) when Medy van der Laan became Secretary of State for culture. While she also prioritized culture and the economy, cultural education and cultural diversity, an important difference was that she favored a more restrained government. This was in line with the general government policy of reducing regulations and bureaucracy.¹³⁵ Additional standpoints were discussed in the nota *Meer dan de som (More than the sum)*.¹³⁶ Central was the concept of 'cultural awareness', which Van der Laan considered to be essential in a multicultural society, and the ways this cultural awareness could be reinforced. The first solution was a clear break with Van der Ploeg's policy concerning specific 'target audiences'. Instead Van der Laan proposed to improve the role of culture in varying sectors like education, the economy, public space and leisure time. Secondly Van der Laan considered not only 'top art' to be of importance, but all segments of cultural life and the coherence between the different cultural activities. Finally deregulation as a general government policy goal was achieved by increasing the autonomy and responsibility of cultural institutions. According to Van der Laan 'Cultural institutions are not subsidiaries of the Ministry, but independent professional organizations that give shape to a flourishing cultural life based on their own responsibility.'¹³⁷ In practice this meant that while reaching a 'new audience' and 'cultural diversity' remained important criteria for subsidies, Van der Ploeg's bonus for target audiences was repealed.

In 2004 Van der Laan presented the *Cultuurnota 2005 – 2008. Meer dan de som (More Than the Sum)*. This was more similar to Van der Ploeg's policy than initially expected, as the broader themes were still the same: cultural education, a special attention to heritage collections and digitization and culture and the economy.¹³⁸ In order to discuss this last topic in depth, Van der Laan published another document in 2005 titled *Ons Creatieve Vermogen Brief cultuur en economie (Our Creative Capital, Letter culture and economy)*.¹³⁹ The main goal expressed in this letter was to increase the relationship between the economy, business and the cultural sector, for which a budget of 14,4 million euros was set aside.¹⁴⁰ Additional goals were to stimulate cultural institutions to develop a more business like structure and to encourage the

¹³⁵ Pots, *Cultuur, koningen en democraten*, 340, Van der Hoeven, *Van Anciaux tot Zijlstra*, 74.

¹³⁶ Ministerie van OCW, *Meer dan de Som, cultuurnota 2005 – 2008*, Den Haag, 2003.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹³⁸ Pots, *Cultuur, koningen en democraten*, 342.

¹³⁹ Ministerie van OCW, *Ons creatieve Vermogen, brief cultuur en economie*, Den Haag, 2005.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

‘economization of culture’.¹⁴¹ As possible means to achieve this it was proposed to pay more attention to entrepreneurship and decrease dependence on subsidies by adding extra incentives in the subsidy system. This last point was part of a change in the overall subsidy system, addressed in the document *Verschil maken. Herijking van de cultuurnotasystematiek (Making a Difference. Redefining the cultuurnota systematics)*.¹⁴² Subsidies would now be granted by different organizations. Various funds would judge the requests of small and medium sized institutions, while the larger, more prominent institutions would be judged by visitation committees.

The new subsidy system meant a change in museum policy and went together with an overall new museum strategy, presented in the nota *Bewaren om teweeg te brengen. Museale strategie*.¹⁴³ In an article in *NRC Handelsblad* Van der Laan expressed her views. She argued that museums should ‘renew and rejuvenate’, as they had done ‘the same thing’ for too long.¹⁴⁴ Conserving and displaying the collection was no longer enough: ‘They are too predictable. The visitor often gets what he expects: paintings on the wall, objects in display cases, a sign next to it. They don’t surprise.’¹⁴⁵ The main goal of the new museum strategy was therefore to ‘make them ready for the 21st century’ and place them ‘in the middle of society.’¹⁴⁶ This involved increasing accessibility and attracting a more diverse and larger audience. However, Van der Laan’s opinions on the state of museums led some strong critiques.¹⁴⁷ Some worried that this policy would have a negative effect on conservation and would turn museums into a ‘palace of amusement’, but Van der Laan did not share this fear.¹⁴⁸ Instead she argued that neither should the museum be ‘elevated as a cultural temple’ and stated that she preferred a balance between these two extremes.¹⁴⁹

Other elements discussed in this nota included the previously mentioned changes in the subsidy system. This meant that especially museums with long-term subsidies would be judged differently, as their functioning would be assessed by a visitation committee. In addition Van der Laan stated that museums would have to formulate their goals and performance more sharply, ‘within a suitable profile.’¹⁵⁰ Van der Laan also wanted to promote cultural

¹⁴¹ Ministerie van OCW, *Ons creatieve Vermogen*, 45.

¹⁴² Ministerie van OCW, *Verschil maken. Herijking van de cultuurnotasystematiek*, Den Haag, 2005.

¹⁴³ Ministerie van OCW, *Bewaren om teweeg te brengen. Museale strategie*, Den Haag, 2005.

¹⁴⁴ ‘Het gros van de rijksmusea is te voorspelbaar’, *NRC Handelsblad*, 02-12-2005.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ministerie van OCW, *Bewaren om teweeg te brengen*.

¹⁴⁷ See for example: ‘Wat mevrouw Van der Laan zegt, is heel erg’, *De Volkskrant*, 06-12-2005 en ‘Medy en Hedy’, *Het Financieele Dagblad*, 17-12-2005.

¹⁴⁸ Ministerie van OCW, *Bewaren om teweeg te brengen*, 8.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 10.

entrepreneurship by taking away the barriers that impeded museums to effectively work with private companies. In this way museums and businesses would be brought closer together.¹⁵¹ Finally Van der Laan proposed another role of museums, which was ‘to tell the story of Dutch history.’¹⁵² In 2005 the Council for Education had advised to develop a Dutch historical and cultural knowledge canon. Van der Laan saw potential in museums as being able to bring this ‘story of the Netherlands’ to the Dutch public and strengthen historical awareness.¹⁵³

In 2007 Ronald Plasterk (PvdA) became responsible for cultural policy as minister of Education, Culture and Science in the cabinet Balkenende IV, until its fall in 2010. In general his policy can be seen as a combination and continuation of past trends, like for example the social distribution of culture, attention to quality and aesthetics and more recent trends like cultural education, digitization, international cultural policy, audience reach and businesslike thinking.¹⁵⁴ The major themes in his *Cultuurnota Kunst van Leven (Art of Life)* were ‘excellence’, ‘innovation and e-culture’, ‘participation’, a ‘more beautiful Netherlands’ and ‘a strong cultural sector’.

The first theme ‘excellence’, once again put ‘quality’ forward as a criterium for government support. Instead of ‘a little bit for all’, which had according to Plasterk been part of cultural policy for too long, he proposed stricter requirements for subsidies with a special attention to quality and excellence.¹⁵⁵ This should lead to ‘more money for less projects.’¹⁵⁶ The second theme of innovation included the digitization of cultural heritage collections and making these available to the public. In this sense it could be seen as a continuation of the cultural conservation and preservation policy initiated under D’Ancona. Accessibility of culture was central in other themes as well, as the theme of participation entailed stimulating culture to reach more people. In order to achieve this the ‘10-point plan for cultural participation’ was introduced in which education, amateur art, digitization, accessibility and free entrance to museums for minors were central points. In addition a new foundation was established, the Foundation for Cultural participation.¹⁵⁷ While these themes had been part of cultural policy for some time, the goal of a ‘more beautiful Netherlands’ introduced esthetical notions back into cultural policy after a time of absence since the sixties. To achieve this goal it was proposed

¹⁵¹ Ministerie van OCW, *Bewaren om te weeg te brengen*.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 15, 16.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ Ministerie van OCW, *Kunst van leven, hoofdlijnen cultuurbeleid*, Den Haag, 2007.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

to increase the contribution of culture by modernizing historic preservation (monuments care) and develop an ‘ambitious’ architectural policy.¹⁵⁸

The final theme ‘a strong cultural sector’, is a continuation of cultural entrepreneurship and economization of culture policies. Plasterk defines ‘a strong cultural sector’ as ‘a sector that stands firmly on its own two feet and is anchored in society, ensures good governance and generates more income of their own.’¹⁵⁹ Plasterk set up the committee Cultuurprofijs (Cultural profit) in order to further develop this theme on the basis of two points: making connections between the cultural sector and other sectors in society and the possibilities of business improvements at cultural institutions, like improved marketing and more efficient production. The committee presented their advice *Meer draagvlak voor cultuur (More support for culture)* in 2008.¹⁶⁰ They advocated a strengthening of the relationship between cultural institutions and the market, individuals and businesses. In addition Plasterk considered cultural entrepreneurship and professionalization necessary in order to increase broader financial and social support for cultural institutions. Furthermore it was expected of subsidized institutions to increase their connection to the public, as well as capitalize on diversity to reach a wider audience and gain more support. This would require ‘a professional approach’ by the management of these institutions.¹⁶¹ The management would have to be able to ‘properly determine their intended audience, be aware of the position of their institution compared to the total offer of institutions and to reach the intended audience with a convincing production, programming, communication and marketing.’¹⁶²

Budget cuts and a culture of giving

So far we have seen a high degree of continuity in cultural policy. Main themes include, participation, accessibility, education, innovation, cultural entrepreneurship and the preservation of cultural heritage. There had been a relatively long period of gradual growth in the state budget regarding cultural policy, which came to an end with the economic crisis of 2008.¹⁶³ We have previously seen an increased attention to cultural entrepreneurship and market, especially in cases of budget cuts. This development culminated in the policy of State

¹⁵⁸ Ministerie van OCW, *Kunst van leven*, 2.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 21.

¹⁶⁰ Commissie Cultuurprofijs, *Meer draagvlak voor cultuur*, Den Haag, 2008.

¹⁶¹ Ministerie van OCW, *Kunst van leven*, 22.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Association of the Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends, "Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends," 20th edition, 2019. (Available under: www.culturalpolicies.net)

Secretary Halbe Zijlstra during the Rutte I Cabinet (2010-2012). Zijlstra presented his main vision and goals for the cultural policy of the coming period in the *Cultuurnota Meer dan kwaliteit: een nieuwe visie op cultuurbeleid* (*More than quality: a new vision on cultural policy*) in 2011.¹⁶⁴ Renewed attention to cultural entrepreneurship and budget cuts were central. Zijlstra argued for a radical change in which the cultural sector should decrease its dependence on government significantly, in this way legitimizing heavy budget cuts and subsequent policy. Instead of government funding, Zijlstra proposed that cultural institutions should increase their entrepreneurial efforts and devote more energy into obtaining private income. In light of this Zijlstra emphasized the opportunities of gifts and sponsorships by individuals and businesses. He therefore proposed that the government would stimulate a ‘*culture of giving*’ among individuals and businesses, while stimulating a ‘*culture of asking*’ among cultural institutions.¹⁶⁵

The nota discussed the outlines for budget cuts of 200 million euros, which had quite extensive consequences for the overall subsidy system. The cultural institutions directly funded by the state government, collectively form the so-called national basic infrastructure (BIS).¹⁶⁶ The composition of the BIS has not changed much in previous policy. However, as a result of the financial crisis and governmental budget cuts there was a strong decrease in the number of institutions that were incorporated in the BIS. In the period 2009-2012, 172 cultural institutions and seven public funds were part of the BIS. This number fell to 82 in the period 2013 – 2016 and slightly increased to 91 for the period 2017 -2020.¹⁶⁷ The total subsidy amount of the BIS and national funds has decreased in the period 2009 – 2017 with 23,1 percent.¹⁶⁸

In relation to these budget cuts, cultural entrepreneurship and market mechanisms were discussed. However, instead of suggesting these as ways to deal with less funding, they were put forward as ways of dealing with the ‘downsides’ of a dependence on subsidies and as solution to make cultural institutions less dependent on government in general.¹⁶⁹ One way to achieve this was by stricter subsidy requirements. If institutions wanted to be eligible for subsidies one requirement was that their achievements should be of a ‘high artistic quality’.¹⁷⁰ However, Zijlstra states that ‘this cabinet stands for more than just quality.’¹⁷¹ For this reason

¹⁶⁴ Ministerie van OCW, *Meer dan kwaliteit: een nieuwe visie op cultuurbeleid*, Den Haag, 2011.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 10.

¹⁶⁶ Association of the Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends, "Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends", 14.

¹⁶⁷ Boekmanstichting, *Feiten en cijfers, over kunst, cultuur en beleid in Nederland*, 2019, 10.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 11.

¹⁶⁹ Ministerie van OCW, *Meer dan kwaliteit*, 2-3.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 11.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

Zijlstra introduced an additional five criteria. These consisted of reaching a larger and more diverse audience, cultural entrepreneurship, participation and education, (inter)national importance of the collection and a focus on the ‘high-quality key points of the country.’¹⁷² In addition cultural institutions were urged to increase their self-generated revenue. To enforce this, an entry requirement for the BIS was introduced. Institutions would have to be responsible for a self-generated income of at least 17,5 percent, which should subsequently be increased with one percent every year. Finally to further stimulate cultural entrepreneurship in the cultural sector, Zijlstra initiated the Cultural Entrepreneurship Programme (2012 – 2016). Central was the development of programs and training courses concerning topics like positioning and branding, management and marketing.

As has become clear, this new vision on cultural policy revolved around functional pragmatism and market values. In comparison to previous policy there was a notable absence of attention to esthetical values and the contribution of culture to society. While internationalization, cultural education and innovation and talent made up half of the topics discussed, the other half concerned ‘market and government’, ‘giving to culture’, and ‘conditions for national financial support’.¹⁷³ This changed slightly when Jet Bussemaker became Minister of Culture in 2013. She reintroduced the value of culture for society as topic in cultural policy in the document *Cultuur beweegt; de betekenis van cultuur in een veranderende samenleving* (*Culture moves; the meaning of culture in a changing society*).¹⁷⁴ In this nota Bussemaker stressed the social value of culture and creativity in a changing society and their added value to the economy. Additional topics were discussed in the *Cultuurnota Ruimte voor Cultuur* (*Space for Culture*) presented in 2015.¹⁷⁵ These consisted of cultural education, talent development, social value, digitization, and international cultural policy.

Quality was still central, however Bussemaker states how she takes a broad view on the meaning of this concept. Originality, craftsmanship and innovation were paramount, but in Bussemaker’s opinion, quality was also about activities focused on society, like education, participation and talent development.¹⁷⁶ Although Bussemaker increased the overall budget with 18 million euro, she continued Zijlstra’s policy of encouraging cultural entrepreneurship, a culture of giving and the requirement of a certain percentage of self-generated income.

¹⁷² Ministerie van OCW, *Meer dan kwaliteit*.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ministerie van OCW, *Cultuur beweegt; de betekenis van cultuur in een veranderende samenleving*, Den Haag, 2013.

¹⁷⁵ Ministerie van OCW, *Ruimte voor Cultuur*, Den Haag, 2015.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 9.

Neoliberalism in Dutch Cultural Policy

During the sixties and seventies we can notice the influence of political discourse on cultural policy as this was now included in the welfare policy of the national government. This resulted in an attention to the social distribution of culture, accessibility and participation of the public in cultural activities. A change occurred in the eighties during a time of economic stagnation, when the government broke with the idea of a strong government and welfare policy. With Brinkman, Neoliberalism was introduced into the cultural policy of the Dutch government as market forces and efficiency were proposed as solutions in order to deal with the growing financial deficit. This meant public opinion became more important, which was in line with the emphasis Brinkman placed on the public function of culture as legitimization for government funding. D'Ancona continued this policy, which for example resulted in implementing specific conditions for audience reach and attendance. During this time attention to the contribution of culture to the economy also increased, which led to growing cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

The privatization of National Museums in this period was a result of the objectives of the ministry to make cultural institutions more independent from the national government and to encourage them to function more in a 'business-like manner'. Van der Ploeg formulated this more specifically as 'cultural entrepreneurship'. The aim of this was to once again increase attention to audience reach and attendance and increase the self-generated revenue of cultural institutions. The emphasis on the opinion of the public continued with Van der Laan who further encouraged the 'economization of culture.' Especially museums were in need of change according to Van der Laan, resulting in a new museum policy that favored public opinion. This is also an example changing views on public opinion and 'popularity', since these were no longer as easily dismissed as they had been in previous times. With this growing attention to public opinion and audience reach, visitor numbers became more important as measurement for the value of culture and cultural institutions. This was further enforced through changes in the subsidy system in which cultural institutions were now judged periodically on their contribution to the realization of these political objectives.

The developments that had started with Brinkman in the eighties, culminated in the policy of Zijlstra. Zijlstra proposed that cultural institutions should increase their entrepreneurial efforts and devote more energy into obtaining private income. While these objectives were not new, a difference is the way Zijlstra framed these: cultural institutions had

become too dependent on government, which is why cultural policy needed a radical change. No more attention was paid to the possible contributions of culture to society as legitimization for government funding. Instead culture and its dependence on government had become a problem, for which the necessary solution was cultural entrepreneurship and the market.

Chapter 3: ‘Experiencing a living past’ at Huis Doorn

Museum Huis Doorn has changed its museum policy in recent years. This chapter will explore these changes as well as the contribution of Dutch cultural policy to the developments in this museum policy. Annual reports by the foundation responsible for the management of the museum, as well as the volunteers foundation were consulted in order to trace their goals, activities and financial situation in recent years. However for periods in time where no annual reports were available additional sources have been consulted like newspaper articles and websites. These are able to provide some information about the activities of the museum, visitor numbers, and opinions of staff and management. In addition a study into the presentation of the past in five castle museums in the province of Utrecht has proved useful as well in getting a better picture of the situation in the nineties.

A general picture of the nineties

Some scholars have pointed out that especially in the case of ‘built’ or ‘monumental’ heritage, its protection and preservation is generally favored over and above its utility and adaptive value.¹⁷⁷ In this so-called ‘curatorial approach’, the ultimate goal is the conservation of the heritage site which in practice for example translates to ‘don’t touch’ signs at these sites.¹⁷⁸ This is why built heritage has according to certain scholars, tended to become static and isolated or even ‘fossilized’.¹⁷⁹ In their 2000 article Brian Garrod and Alan Fyall for example state that in the United Kingdom ‘indeed, many heritage managers do not even consider themselves to be in the “tourism business” preferring to view their role more as guardians of the national heritage than as providers of public access to it.’¹⁸⁰ This seems to reflect the situation in the Dutch castle sector to a certain extent up until the late-nineties.¹⁸¹

In her 1996 study about the presentation of the past in five castles in the province of Utrecht, Eerelman provides a general outline of what this presentation consisted of. History was presented in the shape of decorated rooms, often dedicated to a specific historical period or past inhabitants. These were sometimes accompanied by a discreetly placed text sign or additional

¹⁷⁷ Mike Robinson and Helaine Silverman, *Encounters with Popular Pasts: Cultural Heritage and Popular Culture*, (Cham: 2015), 3.

¹⁷⁸ B. Garrod and A. Fyall, “Managing Heritage Tourism”, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27, no. 3: 682-708, 684.

¹⁷⁹ See for example Robinson and Silverman, “Encounters”, 3.

¹⁸⁰ Garrod and Fyall, “Managing Heritage Tourism”, 684.

¹⁸¹ Eerelman, “Heritage in Holland”, 62.

objects displayed in glass cases. The public usually had access to the castle through a guided tour. In four of the five castle museums studied by Eerelman, a guided tour was for example a mandatory part in the museum visit. For additional information about the castle and their activities brochures were available.¹⁸² With some exceptions, the events at these locations consisted in general of the occasional classical concert, lecture or exhibition of which the subject related to the building or its former residents. Additional events were of a very incidental nature, and included for example Christmas markets or antiques and craft products fairs. According to Eerelman, the motivations behind the organization of these events included to promote the castle and its name among the public, to draw more visitors, and mainly to earn additional revenue.¹⁸³

While live interpretation was already quite common in the United Kingdom at this time and not unheard of in The Netherlands, none of the castles studied by Eerelman partook in living history, re-enactment or costumed storytelling events. Eerelman ascribes this to the existence of some sort of ‘aversion’ against non-traditional approaches, especially in the case of castle heritage.¹⁸⁴ The general opinion was that this type of event or practice did not suit castle museums. One manager for example stated that: ‘We don’t host any historical activities. Not that I am against responsible historical re-enactment events, but we just don’t initiate them ourselves. [...] It has to suit the location, it has to have a function and a use.’¹⁸⁵ Others expressed similar sentiments and would only consider live interpretation under certain conditions. These mainly concerned its effects on the image of the castle and the exact nature of the live interpretation, which should be ‘serious’ and not ‘just a play’.¹⁸⁶ One managers summed it up as follows: ‘It shouldn’t become a spectacle, so for example no public executions in the courtyard. Even though this would draw a large crowd... It should suit the castle, attract the public and provide publicity.’¹⁸⁷ In addition some expressed concern about the effect of such events on the fragile historical interior.

It has become clear that conservation and preservation are central aspects in the management of these museums in the nineties. While events were organized in order to gain some additional revenue, an important criterium was whether these events suited the museum, which in general meant that ‘spectacles’ were excluded. As one of Eerelman’s subjects, this

¹⁸² Eerelman, “Heritage in Holland”, 45.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 56.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 63.

¹⁸⁵ Quote in Eerelman, , “Heritage in Holland”, 56.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 58.

description applies to Huis Doorn. As mentioned in the introduction, Huis Doorn seems to have changed its approach overtime. This change in approach will be further explored in the case study below.

The history of Huis Doorn

The original structure of Museum Huis Doorn was built in the ninth century. This building was destroyed in first half of fourteenth century and then rebuilt as a fortified castle. In the sixteenth century the conditions of the building decayed, after which it has been renovated a number of times. The current neo-classical buildings appearance came to be during its last major renovation phase in the nineteenth century. During this time the park that surrounds the building was laid out as an English landscape garden.¹⁸⁸ Its most famous resident was the exiled German emperor Wilhelm II, who lived in the house from 1920 until his death in 1941. After the Second World War the Dutch government seized the manor house and its household effects, as ‘property of the enemy’.¹⁸⁹ This property was kept as possession of the State, with the intention to open Huis Doorn to the public as a museum. In 1956 the Foundation for the Management of Huis Doorn was established and the same year Huis Doorn opened its doors to the public. The building and its collection stayed property of the State, while the exploitation and management were handed over to the Foundation. A manager was responsible for the day to day management of the museum, and was employed for one day a week.¹⁹⁰ The interior of the house had not been changed since the death of Wilhelm II which was in line with the idea of the museum that the house should stay in this specific state as much as possible. This interior included tapestries, paintings, porcelains and silver, as well as personal items of Wilhelm II.

1990-2000

At the end of the eighties the former Ministry of Welfare, Public Health and Culture (WVC) considered the building to be in a poor state, making renovations of the building necessary. These renovations were made possible by the ministry of WVC that provided a subsidy of six million gulden.¹⁹¹ This was in line with the policy of minister D’Ancona who had made the preservation and conservation of culture one of the priorities in her cultural policy, which was

¹⁸⁸ Reinier Baarsen, “Het Huis Doorn”, *Jaarboek Monumentenzorg*, 2001.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

especially concerned with tackling the poor condition heritage collections and monuments were in.

The renovations of Huis Doorn were carried out from 1990 till 1992. During this time a curator was employed full time in order to aid in this major project. While (international) experts advised to limit changes to the building to a minimum, some alterations were made during these renovations. Especially the lower ground floor was subject to some extensive adjustments in order to enable exploitation of the museum more efficiently. These adjustments included a counter for ticket sales, a small coffee area and improved toilet facilities.¹⁹² After the reopening in 1992, Huis Doorn was exploited more intensively and professionally according Reinier Baarsen.¹⁹³ The initial temporary employment of the curator became a permanent one and he was aided in its efforts by the newly established volunteers association 'Friends of Huis Doorn'.¹⁹⁴ This meant that the staff of six was expanded with about a hundred volunteers in 1992, which increased to 140 in 1995.¹⁹⁵ Their activities included giving tours, managing the museum shop and assisting in the maintenance of the collection in the depot.

These renovations and subsequent alterations in order to allow for better exploitation of Huis Doorn, fit the government policy at the time in which audience reach and attendance had become more central. The renovations appear to have aided in these objectives, since in the year after opening Huis Doorn drew in more than 67.000 visitors, while before renovations this number had been around 50.000 to 55.000. Curator and manager Dick Verroen attributed this increase in visitors to the attention the re-opening had received and additional word of mouth promotion.¹⁹⁶

In 1995, the National Museums of the Netherlands were privatized by the Act *Verzelfstandiging Rijksmuseum Diensten*. However, this did not have radical consequences for Huis Doorn, since they already functioned under a construction in which the building and its collection were provided to the Foundation for the Management of Huis Doorn on loan. Curator Verroen considered other museums to be subject of more radical changes instead: 'look at the large amount of sponsors, dinners, concerts and receptions that other museums need in order to maintain their income.'¹⁹⁷ This statement implies that such events were not necessary for Huis Doorn. This could be an explanation for the absence of such events at the museum in this period.

¹⁹² Baarsen, "Het Huis Doorn", 32.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ "Huis Doorn zal na opknopbeurt authentiek ruiken", *Trouw*, 10-08-1992.

¹⁹⁶ "Goed jaar voor Huis Doorn", *Algemeen Dagblad*, 01-10-1993.

¹⁹⁷ "Doorns monument voor Duitse keizer drijft op vrijwilligers", *NRC Handelsblad*, 26-01-1996.

They had in essence functioned as a privatized museum since 1956, while receiving subsidies from the government for the conservation of the building and its collection, as well as its museum function. The statement by Verroen could mean that Huis Doorn were not dependent on the additional income events provided. Unfortunately annual reports of the Foundation for the Management of Huis Doorn were not available for this period, which means it remains difficult to further specify their objectives and revenue numbers.

Overall the approach of the museum can be considered to be quite static in the nineties. This is reflected by the study of Eerelman, as well as statement of curator Verroen in an article in 2000, saying that: 'Ofcourse Huis Doorn is a static whole, however we do organize exhibitions, lend our collections to others internationally and publish a catalogue almost every year.'¹⁹⁸

2000-2010

While Huis Doorn and its activities had stayed the same for the majority of the nineties, a change occurred at the turn of the century.¹⁹⁹ In 2000, during the cultural policy of Van der Ploeg, the Council for Culture advised to end the subsidy of 500.000 gulden for the museum function of Huis Doorn. Huis Doorn would keep its subsidy of 500.000 gulden for the management and conservation of the collection and the building for the next four years. Van der Ploeg initially agreed with this advice, which would mean museum Huis Doorn would have to close its door to the public, resulting in an additional loss of 250.000 gulden from entrance fees.²⁰⁰

The Council for culture advised end the subsidy for the museum function of Huis Doorn because they considered the collection to be 'limited', 'definitely not unique', and having 'no direct connection to The Netherlands and the history of The Netherlands.'²⁰¹ In addition the Council was of the opinion that the audience reach and visitor numbers (45.000) were too low and the museum did not 'do enough' in regards to its museum function.²⁰² Finally Dutch newspaper *Trouw* wrote an article with a cynical undertone about the governments motivations to withdraw the subsidy. According to this article another problem of the Council with Huis

¹⁹⁸ Collectie van Huis Doorn in gevaar ; 'Het is een uniek document humain', *NRC Handelsblad*, 22-08-2000.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ "Collectie Keizer Willhelm afgestoten, *NRC Handelsblad*, 22-08-2000.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid., Collectie van Huis Doorn in gevaar ; 'Het is een uniek document humain', *NRC Handelsblad*, 22-08-2000.

Doorn was that it did not practice ‘new policy’.²⁰³ With this was meant that the museum did not attract minorities and other specific target audiences ‘of “Haagse” nota writers’.²⁰⁴ The public of Huis Doorn consisted of quite an older and mostly white audience, causing a lack of the ‘loud noise of children playing.’²⁰⁵ For this reason, the article concluded, Huis Doorn did not receive any subsidies anymore.²⁰⁶

The advice of the Council for Culture and subsequent decision of Van der Ploeg are in line with his cultural policy that was focused on ‘social reach’ of cultural institutions and attracting a younger more diverse public. The influence of a greater emphasis on the historical identity of The Netherlands during the nineties can also be noticed, since the lack of connection to Dutch history was another reason to withdraw the subsidy. As stated in the previous chapter Van der Ploeg had explicitly asked the Council for Culture to take these topics into account when granting subsidies, resulting in a negative advice for Huis Doorn. However, because of a considerable amount of protests and critiques, this decision was reversed.²⁰⁷

In January 2003, Kees Reichardt became the new interim-manager of Huis Doorn, for two days a week. With a subsidy of 240.000 euro for the museum function of Huis Doorn, Reichardt set a new course, which was more in line with the cultural policy of the government. One of these theme’s was increasing the revenue of Huis Doorn. Reichardt’s proposed a few measures. For example establishing new partnerships with organizations in the Netherlands as well as in Germany, in order to finance Huis Doorn.²⁰⁸ Other ideas to increase revenue included asking a financial contribution by organizations and societies that made use of the park surrounding Huis Doorn, as well as instating entrance fees to the park as a whole. In addition the entrance fees to museum Huis Doorn had been raised to five euros for adults, while the fee for children was lowered from two to one euro. This can also be seen as attempt to attract a younger audience.

A second theme was attracting a larger audience as a whole. One way Reichardt proposed to achieve this was to pay more attention to the wishes of the audience, resulting in ‘silver, silver and more silver’, as Reichardt considered this to be what the audience of Huis

²⁰³ “Geen nieuw beleid en geen allochtonen ; Bedreigd museum; Intrekken subsidie doet vrezen voor huis Wilhelm II”, *Trouw*, 24-08-2000

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ See for example “Protesten tegen sluiting Huis Doorn ; 'Stuk erfgoed verdwijnt'”, *NRC Handelsblad*, 24-08-2000 and “Geschiedenis is aan v. d. Ploeg niet besteed”, *De Volkskrant*, 26-08-2000.

²⁰⁸ “Kees Reichardt nieuwe interim-directeur Huis Doorn 'Laat dat woord kasteel maar weg'”, *Utrechts Nieuwsblad*, 04-12-2002.

Doorn was looking for.²⁰⁹ In addition, while Wilhelm II would still remain central, Reichardt also planned to include broader subjects, like for example garden architecture and cultural political topics connected to the First World War and the Interbellum. The goal of this was to reach a wider audience.²¹⁰ These themes and measures can be seen as first steps towards the cultural entrepreneurship Van der Ploeg had advocated during his policy.

Since annual reports are not available for this period it is quite difficult to say to which extent these propositions were implemented and executed. However, the situation ten years later might provide some insight. The overall emphasis of Huis Doorn was still on Wilhelm II, reflected by their mission statement: ‘Huis Doorn is a historic estate with museum function, that embodies and exhibits the life and death of the German emperor Wilhelm II.’²¹¹ In this time visitor numbers had declined to 25.000 in 2012, meaning that whatever Huis Doorn was doing, it did not achieve its goal of reaching a wider audience. This was one of the reasons the Council of Culture advised against providing Huis Doorn with a subsidy in 2012. This would have some extensive consequences.

2010 – present

During the cultural policy of Halbe Zijlstra, which was characterized by budget cuts and a focus on cultural entrepreneurship, the Council for Culture again gave a negative advise on the subsidy request of Huis Doorn for the period of 2013-2016.²¹² Similar to the advice in 2000, the Council did not consider Huis Doorn to be of national or international importance. In addition they concluded that the activities program of Huis Doorn was mediocre. This time the advice of the Council was implemented. Huis Doorn would still receive a subsidy of 237.000 euro, but this was exclusively meant for the conservation of the collection and the building itself.²¹³

Huis Doorn was judged on a variety of topics: quality, public reach, cultural entrepreneurship, education and (inter)national importance. In regards to quality, the council considered Huis Doorn to be ‘mediocre’: it lacked a clear profile, and activities and marketing did not connect to the mission and vision of Huis Doorn. In regards to public reach the Council

²⁰⁹ “Kees Reichardt nieuwe interim-directeur Huis Doorn 'Laat dat woord kasteel maar weg’”, *Utrechts Nieuwsblad*, 04-12-2002.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Raad van Cultuur, *Slagen in Cultuur, culturele basisinfrastructuur 2013 – 2016*, Den Haag, 2012.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid., 234.

concluded that Huis Doorn was not concerned enough with making a connection to the public, instead their focus was too much on increasing their visitor numbers. The Council judged Huis Doorn negatively on cultural entrepreneurship as well, stating that Huis Doorn lacks an entrepreneurial vision that has a sight on new possibilities. In addition they worried about the revenue model of the museum and suggested that the marketing plan could be expanded. Finally they concluded that ‘It is a question whether the museum will succeed in binding business life, visitors and education to itself.’²¹⁴ Combined with the opinion that the museum was about the cultural history of Germany and therefore not of national importance to the Netherlands, the Council came to the advice not to grant a subsidy for the museum function of Huis Doorn.²¹⁵

The decision to withdraw the subsidy for the museum function of Huis Doorn naturally had consequences for the museum, which become clear through a variation of sources throughout the following years. Up until 2014 a report by the Erfgoedinspectie (Heritage Inspection) provides insight into some of these consequences. The Erfgoedinspectie visited Huis Doorn in 2014 as part of a multi-year research project into the conservation and management of the National collection (rijkscollectie), commissioned by the ministry of Education, Culture and Science. This research project focused on the following tasks: registration, conservation and management, safety, and visibility of the national collection and the administrative organization. As part of this research project the Erfgoedinspectie visited Huis Doorn and reviewed its policy plans for 2013-2016, which provides us with some information regarding the objectives of Huis Doorn.

An immediate consequence of the discontinuation of the subsidy for the museum function of Huis Doorn, was the dismissal by the Foundation Management of Huis Doorn of the director. An interim manager was employed for one day a week for a period of two years. In addition employees with a ‘public function’ were dismissed and the total number of employees was brought back to four.²¹⁶ However, by expanding the responsibilities of the 170 volunteers the museum managed to keep its doors open to the public. Initially this was brought back to two days a week in 2013, but this had already increased to five days a week in 2014.²¹⁷ This meant an increased dependence on volunteers however, which Huis Doorn considered to be a point of concern for the continuation of their daily activities.²¹⁸

²¹⁴ Raad van Cultuur, *Slagen in Cultuur*, 235.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 236.

²¹⁶ Ministerie van OCW, *Erfgoedinspectie: De staat van de rijkscollectie Museum Huis Doorn*, Den Haag, 2014, 5, 11.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 24 en Stichting Vrienden Huis Doorn, *Sociaal jaarverslag 2014*, Doorn, 2015.

²¹⁸ Ministerie van OCW, *Erfgoedinspectie*, 5.

Restoring the public function of the museum was the main objective in the museum policy plan of Huis Doorn for the period 2013-2016. In order to achieve this objective the museum decided to broaden their museum profile and position themselves as a memory site for World War I. This was expected to significantly contribute to their main objective.²¹⁹ In line with this new course, an exhibition was in preparation about World War I for the autumn of 2014. A former garage was renovated into a new exhibition pavilion, which was made possible by a subsidy of the Bankgiro Loterij of 450.000 euro.²²⁰ It was expected that this exhibition would increase the visitor numbers with around 10.000 a year, which in turn would lead to an increase in revenue.²²¹ In addition Huis Doorn formed partnerships with museum Paleis Het Loo and NIOD (Institute for war, holocaust and genocidal studies).

These policy plans were implemented and expanded on in the next few years. Huis Doorn increased its efforts in regards to hosting events in which its profiling as memory site for WWI can be noticed as well. Events in 2014 included the Europeana Collection Days, Living History Days, the opening of History Month, and the official opening of the new pavilion and its permanent exhibition about the story of the Netherlands in WWI ‘Tusschen Twee Vuuren’ (Between Two Fires) by Prinses Beatrix.²²² In all these events WWI was a central theme. The official opening of the pavilion for example included WWI re-enactors and some actors and a (mechanical) horse from the theater play War Horse. Likewise WWI was central in the large-scale re-enactment event, the Living History Days. Another similarity is the way in which effort has been made to involve the public and provide additional entertainment through re-enactment or stands with varying information about WWI.²²³

Another objective of Huis Doorn for this period concerned the topic of education. In order to improve their educational activities an additional volunteer committee was set up. One of their main tasks was to develop special programs for primary and secondary schools, with the goal of attracting at least sixty school classes to Huis Doorn in 2015.²²⁴ This suited their objective to increase overall visitor numbers as well as attracting new target audiences, specifically a younger public.²²⁵ In these efforts the Education committee was joined by the Marketing, Communication and Events committee of volunteers foundation. Their primary goal was creating publicity through the use of various marketing tools in order to bring Museum

²¹⁹ Ministerie van OCW, *Erfgoedinspectie*, 11, 23.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 23.

²²² Stichting Vrienden Huis Doorn, *Sociaal jaarverslag 2014*, 9.

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

Huis Doorn and the pavilion to the attention of the public. While traditional marketing tools like flyers and posters were still used, the committee increased their efforts to include social media (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn).²²⁶ These efforts should contribute to more first visits, more repeat visits and to the arrival of special target audiences.²²⁷ The new strategy seemed to have paid off as visitor numbers increased to 35.000 in 2014 and 36.000 in 2015, among which an increasing number of school classes.²²⁸

The Foundation for the Management of Huis Doorn was of the opinion that with the positioning of Huis Doorn as memory site of WWI, its mission and vision were in need of revision.²²⁹ With help from Hendrik Beerda Brand Consultancy, a company that specializes in branding strategies and marketing, the mission and vision of the museum have been ‘renewed, broadened, and sharpened.’²³⁰ Where Wilhelm II had previously been central to the mission statement, there was no mention of him in the revised edition, which was summarized to ‘Levend verleden ervaren’ (‘experiencing a living past’).²³¹ Their full mission:

‘Museum Huis Doorn enables the visitor to get to know and experience European court culture of the nineteenth century. In addition Museum Huis Doorn is the memory site of WWI in the Netherlands. It allows visitors to gain knowledge and experience what this war meant for the Dutch, partly in light of contemporary problems.’²³²

What stands out is the emphasis on the visitor experience. This is also repeated in their vision, which consists of five points. One of these points is letting visitors experience ‘history and Zeitgeist’, which they relate to the house as ‘document humain’, ‘living history events’ and activities that relate historical events to current theme’s in society.²³³ The connection between the past and the present has been a new choice in their museum policy as well. In their own words, ‘Huis Doorn does not only want to be memory site, but also a place of reflection on contemporary developments.’²³⁴ This has influenced their exhibitions topics and presentation of objects, which are now connected contemporary themes. For example the exhibitions ‘Op de

²²⁶ Stichting Vrienden Huis Doorn, *Sociaal jaarverslag 2014*, 10.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 2, en Stichting tot Beheer van Huis Doorn, *Jaarverslag 2015 Museum Huis Doorn*, Doorn 2016, 5.

²²⁹ Stichting tot Beheer van Huis Doorn, *Jaarverslag 2015*, 5.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

Vlucht' ('On the Run') in which a connection is made between past and present refugee stories.²³⁵

As previously mentioned, education and attracting a younger demographic had gotten a more central place in their museum policy, which led to the development of activities for children. In 2015 these consisted of three treasure hunts, including one for families that took place on the grounds of Huis Doorn, a special treasure hunt for children through Huis Doorn itself and an Easter eggs hunt with Easter.²³⁶ Other holidays were also utilized for special activities. On Koningsdag (Kingsday) Huis Doorn hosted a traditional Kingsday flea-market which included a variety of other activities like music, falconry demonstrations and a Kingsday themed tour through Huis Doorn. The Fifth of May Liberation Day celebrations at Huis Doorn were themed around military demonstrations like old military vehicles and a military Tattoo (Taptoe). In addition to these holiday events, 2015 also included the Living History Days, a historical film evening in cooperation with the EYE museum, a lecture and small concert by a children's choir.²³⁷

While Huis Doorn considered their events to be successful, they also concluded that they did not yet sufficiently contribute to improving the financial situation of Huis Doorn.²³⁸ For this reason, the management 'constantly asks itself how it can capitalize on the growing interest in the museum and WWI.'²³⁹ They mentioned organizing and facilitating events like Living History and Kingsday, as one way to achieve this. Another way to improve the financial situation was through partnerships and sponsors. Some organizations that contributed either financially or through other means for example included various organizations that concern themselves with refugees or WWI, a German organization Stiftung Preußische Schlosser und Garten, Paleis Het Loo and Rabobank Utrechtse Heuvelrug.²⁴⁰ Finally the management of Huis Doorn stated that 'The museum realizes that a good visitor analysis can lead to a targeted marketing policy, which leads to more visitors.'²⁴¹ For this reason they planned on expanding their public survey in order get a better picture of their audience and potential target groups.

Huis Doorn continued their museum policy in the following years. They increased their partnerships and sponsorships with commercial partners like for example Estate Events, supermarkets like Jumbo and Albert Heijn, and the Postcodeloterij. They further expanded their

²³⁵ Stichting tot Beheer van Huis Doorn, *Jaarverslag 2015*, 7.

²³⁶ Ibid. 10.

²³⁷ Ibid. 20.

²³⁸ Ibid. 5.

²³⁹ Ibid., ('hoe het klinkende munt kan slaan uit')

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 27.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 30.

events with a Christmas market, a theater play, children's tours through the castle and a table etiquette workshop.²⁴² 2016 also saw a doubling of school students from 1800 tot 3000, as well as expansion of their education programs. These were connected to their national status as memory site of WWI. There was an overall increase in visitors to 46.000, which the management attributed to 'successful "arrangements", events and exhibitions.'²⁴³ These developments continued and expanded in the coming years in a similar manner, which aided in their objective that Huis Doorn would not only be a memory site, but especially a 'site for activity and experience.'²⁴⁴

The end of 2016 meant the ending of the period 2013-2016 in which Huis Doorn did not receive a government subsidy for their function as a museum. What has become clear in this period is that Huis Doorn has changed its approach as a result of losing their government subsidy. The changes they have made are in line with government policy goals and criteria for receiving subsidies. The initial point of critique that Huis Doorn was not relevant for Dutch history has been overturned by positioning themselves as national memory site for WWI. They have since been included in the Dutch history canon, for the period of WWI.²⁴⁵ In addition they have increased their educational efforts as well as their public reach by focusing on target audiences like a younger demographic. To further these objects they have expanded their events, which went together with an increase in sponsorships and partners. Along with their overall marketing, promotion and positioning efforts, these can be seen as meeting the governments expectations in regards to cultural entrepreneurship, as well as improving their 'quality'. These changes in the museum policy of Huis Doorn and their future plans were judged positively by the Council for Culture since they now met the conditions for government funding. Following the advice of the Council, minister Bussenmaker agreed to grant a subsidy for their museum function of Huis Doorn once again.²⁴⁶

²⁴² Stichting tot Beheer van Huis Doorn, *Jaarverslag 2015*, 19.

²⁴³ Stichting tot Beheer van Huis Doorn, *Jaarverslag 2016*, 12, 13.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 5 en Stichting Vrienden Huis Doorn, *Sociaal jaarverslag 2017*, Doorn, 2018, en Stichting Vrienden Huis Doorn, *Sociaal jaarverslag 2018*, Doorn, 2019.

²⁴⁵ <https://www.huisdoorn.nl/nl/nieuws/museum-huis-doorn-onderdeel-van-de-canon-van-nederland/>

²⁴⁶ Raad van Cultuur, *Advies culturele basisinfrastructuur 2017-2020*, Den Haag, 2016.

Conclusion

There has been a development in heritage practices towards an approach in which the visitor experience is central. Castle museums in the Netherlands promise the visitor a true experience through a variety of presentations and events. This is different from the situation in the nineties, when conservation and preservation of the collection were the central objectives in castle museum management. A minimal amount of events were hosted and the overall presentation was focused on suiting the image of the castle museum. This meant ‘spectacles’ and alternative presentations like living history were excluded. This difference with the situation of today has led to the main question of this thesis: why heritage institutions, specifically Dutch castle museums, have adopted a new approach in presenting this heritage to the public, in which experience has become central.

Government policy has been influential in the development of this experience approach. After World War II the role of the government in cultural life increased. During the sixties and seventies we can notice the influence of political discourse on cultural policy as this was now placed in wider welfare thinking. Questions arose about the contribution of culture to society and welfare goals of the government. With this came attention to social distribution of culture, accessibility and participation in cultural activities. This political discourse influenced museum policy that had up until then be quite independent from government. During this time they were placed in welfare context, and were now expected to meet certain conditions, especially regarding their contribution to society. Attention was brought to the public function of museums, which resulted in the development of educational activities. Other topics were introduced and adjusted throughout the decades like public participation, quality, conservation of heritage, the contribution of culture to national identity, education, diversity, cultural entrepreneurship, internationalization and digitization. While these topics influenced policy objectives and subsidy criteria, and important development in government policy in regards to the ‘experience trend’ has been the expansion of neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism was introduced into the cultural policy by Brinkman who proposed market forces and efficiency as solutions in order to deal with the growing financial deficit. This policy was continued and expanded by subsequent ministers, which resulted in increasing privatization of cultural institutions and the introduction of the term cultural entrepreneurship. This culminated in the policy of Zijlstra, who had the aim to decrease a dependence on government and increase the self-generated revenue of cultural institutions. With this greater

emphasis on increasing self-generated income, public opinion and visitor numbers became increasingly more important in the evaluation of cultural institutions. This means cultural institutions had to cater to wider audiences. Here the context of the postmodern consumer society becomes relevant, as the present-day visitor might no longer be satisfied by classical presentations, instead looking for an experience. Therefore events have become more important as means to attract more visitors, and consequently increase revenue. In this sense the emphasis on cultural entrepreneurship and visitor numbers in cultural policy results in an approach in which experience is central in order to attract more visitors. Therefore this thesis argues the increase of neoliberalism in cultural policy has contributed to this ‘experience’ trend by making visitor numbers and revenue central to the value and evaluation of heritage.

We have seen this development in the museum policy of Huis Doorn. Museum Huis Doorn lost their subsidy for their museum function, based on the advice of the Council for Culture. The Council concluded Huis Doorn did not meet the conditions of the government in regards to receiving subsidy, since it lacked a clear profile, a connection to the public, an entrepreneurial vision and marketing strategies. As a result of this, Museum Huis Doorn had to adapt to their new circumstances. The subsequent changes in the museum policy of Huis Doorn were in line with cultural policy goals and criteria for receiving subsidies. They have positioned themselves as national memory site for WWI and adapted their mission and vision to emphasize experience. To further capitalize on this and increase visitor numbers and revenue, Huis Doorn has expanded their activities program with events ranging from re-enactment events to etiquette workshops. In addition new partnerships have been formed and sponsorships have increased, in order to aid in improving revenue. With the expansion of marketing strategies, Huis Doorn now meets the governments expectations regarding cultural entrepreneurship. The decision to grant Huis Doorn a subsidy for their museum function for the period 2017 – 2020 can be seen as reward for their efforts, as well as reinforcement of government objectives in their museum policy.

What has remained unanswered is to what extent museum castle managers have been influenced by changing discourses in heritage. The situation in the nineties fits the description of the Authoritative Heritage Discourse, in which there is a top-down relationship between expert, heritage site and ‘visitor’. At the same time, the condemnation of activities like re-enactments and heritage tourism further constructs the visitor as passive consumer. However the case study of Huis Doorn has not revealed further insight into this question, and might therefore be subject to further research. In any case, Smith and the AHD provide an interesting perspective for the discussion of these developments. She offers a nuanced image of this trend,

by discussing the value of other approaches to heritage, like re-enactment. It will be interesting to see if or how the 'experience' trend in the heritage sector will evolve in coming years, as well as what the experience of the past will be like in the future.

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