

Editorial “Ethnographies of heritage and power”

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Introduction

This issue of International Journal of Heritage Studies is a result of the 2010 meeting of the Working Group on Cultural Heritage and Property from the *Société Internationale d’Ethnologie et Folklore*. The aim was to discuss, in a comprehensive way, the concepts, ideas and practices that inform the entwining of heritage and power while dealing with questions such as: What kind of power relations are woven into heritage and how? How are they recombined in specific contexts? How are they objectified within contemporary ‘globalizing dynamics’ (Sassen 2006). Papers with ethnographic grounds were especially welcome, but inquiries into theory were also expected. During two days the group members presented and discussed papers that dealt with a variety of topics and ethnographic and historical case studies that anchored themselves on the close intertwining of heritage and power. As co-organisers of the meeting, we took it as an obligation to publish the papers presented in Lisbon and Porto. This volume gathers a selection of the fifteen papers presented in the meeting. As co-organisers of the event and co-editors of this issue, we are very pleased with the opportunity to publish and thus showcase the work of the Working Group.

In 1974, Lefebvre published his *La Production de l’Espace* (English translation, *The Production of Space*, published in 1991), a work that is still one of the main pillars, even if not flawless, in the theorising of human space in the social sciences. In it, Lefebvre (1991, p. 26) states that space is a social product. In his understanding and analysis of space, Lefebvre overrides the formal codes of space by their contents; that is, by the social practices that are immanent to and generative of the spatial forms. The power relations are, for Lefebvre, subsumed by the relations of production, and are contained in space in the form of buildings and monuments. In his view: ‘Such frontal... expressions of these relations do not completely crowd out their more clandestine or underground aspects: all power must have its accomplices – and its police’ (Lefebvre 1991, p. 33) and, we add, its opponents. Space, for Lefebvre, is constituted by a conceptual triad: spatial practice; representations of space; and representational space (Lefebvre 1991, pp. 33, 39). ‘Spatial practice’ is the physical form of space. It reflects the reproduction of social relations through the production and reproduction of specific places or spatial constructions; it secretes, masters and appropriates a society’s space. ‘Representations of space’ correspond to abstract or planned spaces of professionals such as architects, planners and social engineers. This space is imposed and aims to control spatial practice: ‘the representation of space, in thrall to both knowledge and power, leaves only the narrowest leeway to representational spaces’ (Lefebvre 1991, p. 50). ‘Representational space’ is the ‘space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of “inhabitants” and “users”’ (Lefebvre 1991, p. 39). This is the space of resistance (and acquiescence) to the hegemony of spatial practices and representations of space, and it is ‘linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life’ (Lefebvre 1991, p. 33). And if, for Lefebvre, space in general is always a social product, we can say that heritage as a

specific kind of place displays that ‘being produced’ quality and the centrality of the power relations in the process of its coming to being to an exponential level.

There is rich ethnographic evidence that power is a central matter within the realm of heritage (Graham et al. 2000, Prats 2004, Smith 2004, 2006, Adams 2005, Peralta and Anico 2009, Macleod 2010, Silva 2011). However, the papers in this volume show that in fact it is not just a matter of power being a central matter within the realm of heritage; power is generative to heritage. This created-nature of heritage is clearly demonstrated by the fact that heritage’s coming to being almost always requires some form of legal enunciation, be it at a local, regional, national or world level. Heritage, when created, is also always a reality that belongs to somebody, although the property of cultural heritage is a problematic issue (Bendix and Hafstein 2009).

According to Vaivade (2010) ‘historic monument’, ‘cultural property’, ‘cultural heritage’ and ‘cultural rights’ are some of the terms that have been used historically in international law regarding the regulation of what is the broad domain of culture. These terms reflect the semantic aspect of law, namely, the understanding of culture, the role of a thing in a culture and the link between both persons and things (Vaivade 2010, p. 27). Thus, even when a heritage belonging is ascribed to the whole of the humanity – as it is with UNESCO’s heritage – it always belongs more clearly and more effectively to some than to others; it is the realm of the politics of identity that are ontological to heritage. Heritage, if always a product of legal enunciation, participates of the general characteristics of law; it is meaningful, systemic and axiological. Law is also perceived as a reference for protection and as prescribing what is the order to maintain. As such, we can state that heritage always breeds from power – the ability to create heritage and the ability to make it belong to some and not to others.

The understanding of the close relationship between heritage and social identity has had as consequence the enunciation of heritage as inhabited by dissonance and contestation (for instance, Tunbridge and Ashworth 1999, Graham et al. 2000, Santos 2002, Peralta and Anico 2009). This latter understanding of heritage is, nowadays, widely accepted, and perhaps we should take it as the natural precursor to moving into a re-understanding of heritage as a cultural practice, rather than simply a site (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, Harvey 2001, Smith 2006, Smith and Akagawa 2009, Bendix 2009). The understanding of heritage as a cultural practice leads us to the need to take the social agents and dynamics that constitute the heritage process as central in any reflection on it. Thus, not only does the making of heritage almost always involve some form of legal enunciation as mentioned previously, but the making of heritage involves differentially located agency. The creation of a heritage is likely to be triggered by individuals and social groups already in positions of relative power, especially politicians, while the management of heritage is likely to be handled by experts such as architects, archaeologists and museum curators. The conception of heritage as governmentality illustrates the point.

Formulated by Foucault, the notion of ‘governmentality’ represents the modern government of territories and populations that the state exerts through ‘technologies’ of power; that is, through practices inspired and justified by one or more scientific rationales, according to contingent ‘strategies’. In his theoretical formulation, the exercise of power is a ‘conduct of conduct’, that is, it is an action that defines the possibilities for action of others (Foucault 1991). This framework allows us to see heritage as a political act – an act of government. The understanding of heritage as governmentality is adopted by Smith (2004) to argue that in postcolonial settler societies such as Australia and the USA, archaeology functions as a technology of government through the state’s mobilisation of it as cultural resource management, in order to govern indigenous identities. Other authors

show that in European countries such as Portugal and France, architecture plays a similar disciplinary function through the state's mobilisation of it as an area of expertise and knowledge that help to define architecture as an object of touristic consumption and, therefore, to determine the conduct of individuals (Silva 2009, 2011, Hodges 2009).

In these cases, heritage is viewed in terms of state governmentality within the nation-state. However, heritage can also be viewed in terms of governmentality beyond the nation-state, as De Cesari (2010) points out. She adopts a governmentality approach to argue that Palestinian heritage practices constitute a form of non-state governmentality. The latter is part of a state-building project and an act of anti-colonial resistance, suspended between what scholars term 'transnational governmentality' and 'countergovernmentality', in which non-governmental organisations such as Riwaq – Centre for Architectural Conservation participate in the governance of Palestine by, for instance, restoring the national past and investing energy in knowledge production and the elaboration of policies for effective heritage preservation.

Although useful, governmentality theory is not without limitations in the study of heritage, as various anthropologists show. Smith (2004) notes that in Australia and the USA, governmentality fails to make room for resistance and contestation of indigenous people to the archaeological expertise and knowledge mobilised by the state as cultural resource management. Likewise, in his study of the transformation of domestic architecture into cultural heritage in a rural village in eastern Portugal, Silva (2011) argues that the 'conduct of conduct' is nowhere near as effective as its theoretical formulation might have us believe, as the making of heritage is marked by friction in the channels, interference in the conduct, contestation, resistance, and compromise. Ethnographic literature shows that cultural heritage is a major social arena of struggle between individuals and groups that make use of their power relations in order to promote their particular and often divergent interests or withdraw (Herzfeld 1991, Mitchell 2002, Prats 2004, 2009, Santos 2004, Silva 2009, 2011, Fabre 2010).

In his study of the relationships between power and culture, Wolf distinguishes four different modes through which power works in social relations. First is the capability of the person in a 'Nietzschean' sense. Second is the 'ability' of an ego to impose its will in interpersonal relations. Third is the 'tactical power' – power which controls the instrumentalities through which individuals and social groups circumscribe the actions of others within determinate settings. Fourth is the 'structural power' – power that not only operates within settings and domains, but also orchestrates the settings themselves (Wolf 1999, p. 5). Regarding Wolf, Yengoyan notes:

Wolf continually warns that there is no single source or essentialized entity through which and from which all power relations emanate. In this sense, culture is fully embedded in power relations, nothing is neutral in modes of control, and, thus, social structural relations are all marked by a differential defined by who controls what and who controls whom (Yengoyan 2001, p. x).

This pluralist and relational conception of power – also adopted by Foucault (1991) – provides a useful framework to analyse the relationships between heritage and power, for of course heritage is a cultural construct. Heritage studies can be defined at best as a very diverse and diversified study area attracting an array of social researchers such as sociologists, economists and historians to name but a few. Heritage studies is an area of interest to anthropologists not so much per se, but because heritage as a practice constitutes itself as an arena of social interaction that radicalises and heightens certain features of the social dynamics of the groups under study. As such, anthropological

knowledge provides a pertinent contribution to the discussion of heritage and power, in that it can reveal the ways power relations are woven into heritage at the local and, thus, micro-level. What types of power relations operate in heritage domains (both in favour and against)? How are they recombined in the daily practices of the social agents involved? Are these practices always overtly exerted or sometimes hidden? By whom? Why? These are some of the key questions that anthropologists might answer in their empirical studies over the subject. However, the anthropologist can also provide answers related to the other side of the equation: Does heritage generate power? Does it affect the power structure? In this respect, it is useful to follow the line of enquiry advocated by Hall (2010) regarding tourism studies. Following Domhoff, Hall identifies four key questions in power structure research that should be pursued in the study of tourism: Who benefits? Who sits? Who wins? Who has a reputation for power? (Hall 2010, p. 202).

The main contribution of the papers in this volume is to present ethnographic case studies that intend to answer some of these questions, thereby contributing to revealing 'the local specificity of a global heritage regime' (Bendix 2009, p. 255), as well as its complexity. Nevertheless, the studies are not limited to a local view. In the globalised world that we live in, very rarely are localities disentangled from the global. The papers in this issue of *International Journal of Heritage Studies* show how local realities do participate of the global although, according to different case studies, they do it differentially to a higher or lesser degree, with more grievous or less grievous consequences for different social groups. The ethnographies here gathered support two arguments: (1) that heritage is better understood when taken as a practice; and (2) that in order to understand locality fully one must not only not overlook but must actually take into consideration the 'globalizing dynamics' (Sassen 2006) at play on the local stage.

Thus, in Paula Mota Santos' paper, the first in this volume, we are made witness to how tourist-gear City Council guided walking tours to the old part of the city of Porto, a UNESCO World Heritage site, act towards the production of an old Porto-specific sense of place. Taking the participation in the tours as performance, namely, by also paying attention to the tours' non-scripted events and the phenomenologic quality of walking through Porto's old streets, Santos shows us how these tours constitute themselves as: (1) arenas for the weaving of a sense of belongingness to the city; and (2) as time-space in which is clearly visible the construction through the expert knowledge of the historians who study the city of the hegemonic sense of place of Old Porto. This latter sense of place is translated into the construction of the old city not only as a heritage place, but also as 'identity-origin place', the locale where Porto is more truly Porto and where modernity is seen as not being present.

In Ewa Klekot's paper we are given an account of the destinies of Warsaw's Royal Castle, an emblematic place for Polish identity. The several-decades-long narrative that Klekot so clearly outlines for us shows how closely the reconstruction of the Royal Castle was linked to wider systems: political and ideological, certainly, as Poland moved through different social-political regimes, but also, as the author underlines, to the different paradigms of conservation and restoration that suffered substantial changes in the second half of the twentieth century. Klekot's paper shows us, then, that the transformation of Warsaw's Royal Castle into a national monument proves to be a selective process resulting from the interplay of power relations and political ideologies that is carried out at the macro-level of administrative structures and at the micro-level of expert practices, and never barren of the weight of emotion.

In Cyril Isnart's paper we are faced with a very local and localised social world: the patron saint celebrations of a village in Southern France. But as the author proceeds with laying out the various strands weaved into the local piece presented, we are made

aware that we are facing social dynamics that are historically imbedded with transnational and transborder immigration fluxes between France and Italy and respective historic power imbalances. The author analyses the political speeches made during the celebrations to shed light on the relationships between clientelism as a social system and heritage as a resource deployed within the latter. Here is strong evidence that heritage can actually work as a multiplier of power, particularly of individual political power.

The case of the Sibaúma Quilombo in Brazil, discussed in the paper of Loloum and Lins, is a clear example of how what could be construed solely as a local issue – ethnic relations and related land tenure policies – is in fact taking paths that are shaped by the needs of a neo-liberal globalised market part of a de-industrialised economy that beholds tourism as the engine for local development and growth. The authors focus on the powers affecting land restitution projects within a framework of ethnic-oriented heritage policies in what was in the past a colonial territory heavily marked by slavery. The case presented reveals social divisions that are much more nuanced and complex and that go beyond the binary opposition between a minority ethnic identity (descendants of former slaves) and a hegemonic identity (represented by the big landowners). In the authors' view, together with ethnic difference, the social fractures encountered result from factors such as class difference, distrust of the State and divergent views on the positive or negative impact of assuming, in the twenty-first century, an identity related to a long-gone past (slavery).

In the final paper of the set, Rautenberg presents an analysis of two heritage-based local development projects situated in two different countries: the Rhondda Heritage Park in Wales and the Culture Commune in France, both in regions with a now defunct mining industry. Although apparently a result of very different public policies (one a museum and a place of memory – Wales; and the other a place of artistic production – France), the author leads us to pay attention mainly to the similarities between the two projects. In his view, from the 1990s onwards, and as a result of the importance of heritage in urban renewal, we have been seeing the emergence of a heritage regime in which several factors are intertwined – economy with culture; the past with the present; the local in the global – and how the city – or the region – takes over from the state in its role of main actor in the production of heritage.

With respect to the theme of this volume, heritage and power, the papers are, thus, characterised by a diversity of both ethnographic grounds and of focalisation. As editors of this volume of *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, we hope that the collection of essays is able somehow to provide its readers with both an understanding of the diverse scales and forms in which heritage and power are intertwined and of the unavoidability of contemplating issues of power whenever an understanding of issues of heritage is being sought.

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