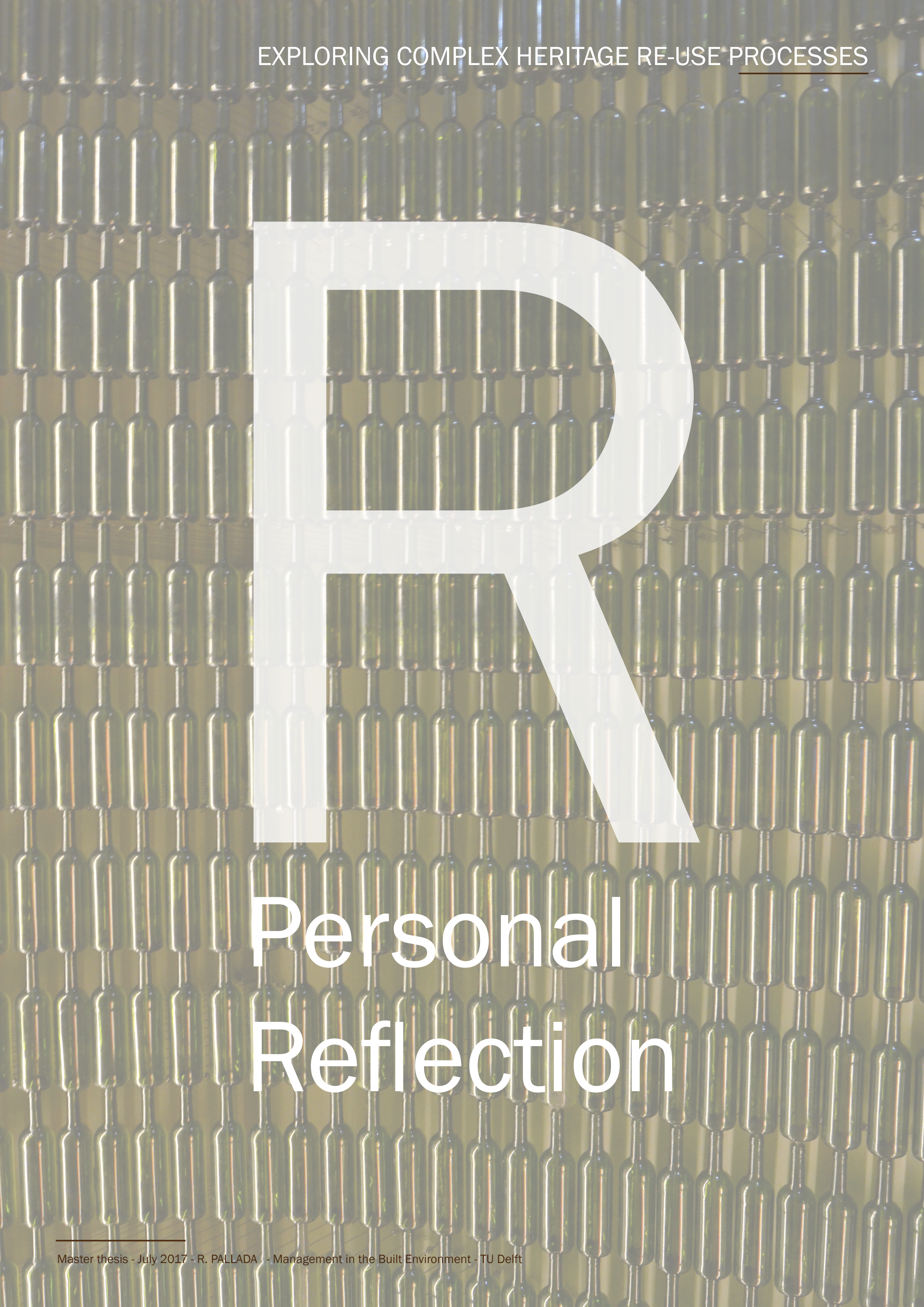

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Personal Reflection

Point of departure

As mentioned in the preface; I have a thing for heritage: The choice to graduate on a heritage related topic was therefore quickly made. The current problem of vacant heritage; changing regulations; discussions on challenges and successes; and the question about who is responsible for the vacancy were starting point for this research. My aim to find a solution for the vacancy of heritage was however very broad and needed to be scoped down. The demarcation of the research proposal took some time, as heritage involves many challenges that are in need of a solution. In the end, the scope was found with the help of the responsibility division model designed within my supervisor's PhD-thesis, which focuses on collaboration challenges due to unclear roles and responsibilities.

Research challenges

Being able to ask the author and designer of the responsibility division model about the way the model was constructed was very convenient, as it was not easy to understand all the layers involved in the model. For this research, the model needed to be translated into multi-organizational heritage re-use processes framework, which did not happen without troubles. The main trouble with this translation was that the model is based on the stakeholders within one organization alone. Furthermore there was not yet a clear description with steps that are executed in heritage re-use processes, so I had to base this on descriptions of new-built processes and re-use processes of contemporary buildings, which slightly differs from heritage re-use process steps. Furthermore challenging was the development of a general role division for stakeholders including assigned tasks and responsibilities according to literature descriptions and practical outcomes. Within literature, available role divisions are not always defined precisely enough to understand the collaboration on a detailed level. Described role divisions in literature furthermore seemed to be overlapping as well. As stakeholders are executing project roles, the definitions of stakeholder roles and project roles needed to be used independently to really understand possible bottlenecks.

Refining research aim

The framework was first meant as a prescriptive model that would explain how heritage re-use processes should be executed. However, at an early stage (after presenting the research proposal) I understood that this would not become possible. I would never obtain enough data to generalise and extract grounded conclusions to describe how it should be done, in six months' time: Prescriptive models and recommendations were out of my scope because I had too little knowledge and the complexity of the process was not sufficiently explained yet. A more in-depth description of the complexity of heritage re-use processes had to be made first. This ensured that I needed to adjust my research proposal accordingly. My supervisors advised me to focus on the first two or three research questions, instead of all five (defined within the research proposal). Due to the comments of my supervisors and my own struggles to link roles to stakeholders, tasks and responsibilities, the step from a descriptive model into a prescriptive model was skipped (question 5 of the research proposal).

The fieldwork

The interviews for two cases in Brabant were started immediately after the research proposal presentation. For this I fortunately was able to extract some detailed information and interesting contacts from my graduation internship company. The interviews gave insight in the way the independent organisations and stakeholders executed their jobs. It therefore increased the insight in heritage re-use processes for me personally: The interviews provided a great insight in how the re-use processes were executed; how the process is perceived by the different stakeholders; which tasks were executed by which stakeholders and which challenges the stakeholders came across. The developed collaboration framework offered a structured way to research the collaboration manner in heritage re-use processes in depth. It was used intensively after the first few interviews supplied the basic description of the process. The interviews restored my faith in the purpose of this research, as interviewees were enthusiastic about the topic and saw the added value.

Furthermore, it was very instructive to observe a project meeting between the owner of the CHV and the project leader of the Province of North Brabant (who owns a part of the complex as well), as it showed that the province had to deal with a lot of opinions from their different departments, that were not always aligned with each other, while they were negotiating with the owner of the CHV, who was trying to get as much as possible out of this meeting, as fast as possible.

Findings

The outcomes of the interviews were interesting, however, hard to compare: The processes seemed to differ to a great extent, especially when is focused on role and responsibility divisions. Therefore, two additional literature case studies were executed to substance my assumption that a clear overview on role and responsibility divisions would not be possible.

The focus group discussion left me with a lot of interesting views and answers, however, the question of who was benefitting in heritage re-use processes could not be answered with the data generated in this research. Therefore, question 4 of the research proposal was omitted as well.

After the conduction of all four case studies, a cross-case analysis and a discussion with experts in the development field, I came to the conclusion that it is indeed impossible to get a clear overview on the role and responsibility divisions for large heritage re-use processes because there are too many stakeholders involved: These stakeholder have different perspectives, which means that there is not one 'truth'. The roles have been changing during the projects and stakeholders changed their approaches multiple times. Furthermore, some stakeholders left the process, while others entered. These changes were mostly linked to changes in the context. Therefore, the methodology gave me enough insight to answer my research questions.

Additional findings

Additionally, the four case studies provided an interesting view on the manners used to deal with the complexity within these processes. The cross-case analysis revealed that the level of complexity within the collaboration can possibly be steered. This insight provided input for the discussion of this report, however, the discussed manners still need to be researched in depth to formalise the understanding of their contribution to the process.