

**Port City Cultures, Values, or Maritime Mindsets  
How to Define and Assess what Makes Port Cities Special**

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## **PORT CITY CULTURES, VALUES, OR MARITIME MINDSETS: HOW TO DEFINE AND ASSESS WHAT MAKES PORT CITIES SPECIAL**

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## EDITORIAL

# Port City Cultures, Values, and Maritime Mindsets: Defining What Makes Port Cities Special

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## Introduction

Many scholars consider port cities a particular type of city - one where urban space is especially influenced by maritime developments, economies, and technologies. They point to their location at the border of land and sea, their global connections, their port-related infrastructure or cosmopolitanism. Although the concept of a port city appears clear on first sight, a definition remains elusive. The scale, form, and space, as well as the political, economic, social and cultural structure of port cities and larger port city territories vary extensively around the world. Scholars concerned with port cities often segregate themselves into groups with different temporal, spatial, and disciplinary perspectives.<sup>1</sup> There is a need

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<sup>1</sup> Carola Hein, "Port Cityscapes: Conference and Research Contributions on Port Cities," *Planning Perspectives* 31, no. 2 (2016): 313–26, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02665433.2015.1119714>.

for an overarching discussion that connects past, present, and future, that links multiple scales from the building to the region, and that includes social and cultural dimensions in the planning of port city territories. Such a discussion should facilitate much needed transitions to more inclusive and sustainable port city territories. To advance the development of an integrated discussion on port city development, this series of two special issues argues that we need to explore the specific values, mindsets, and cultures that drive socio-spatial developments.

Advancing knowledge of port cities and their future development must start with an acknowledgement of the complexity of the topic and the need for definitions, classifications, and methodologies. In a book review essay in 1985, the maritime historian Frank Broeze pointed out that historians have used the term port city “loosely and inconclusively”.<sup>2</sup> As Broeze explained, geographers have been much clearer in their attempt to develop theoretical approaches for understanding the port city. However, their approaches lack “crucial social and political dimensions and they do not relate to the overall evolution of the city”.<sup>3</sup> Broeze highlighted a key difficulty of any attempt to define port cities: Such an investigation can’t be limited to purely economic factors—it also must consider political, social, and cultural elements and how they are written into space.

Other scholars have continued the debate and attempted to provide clarity by developing categories or pointing to existing lacunae. Scholars following Broeze have focused on Asian port cities.<sup>4</sup> Other scholars have attempted to develop additional typologies. Liverpool historian Robert Lee stressed the relative importance of port cities in the social-economic and demographic development of Western Europe since the eighteenth century. According to Lee, these cities share a range of social-demographic, economic, and ideological characteristics, which justifies the adoption of a port typology.<sup>5</sup> Lee’s port typology is very useful as it helps us look for generic socio-economic factors in a historical and comparative port-city framework. While Lee brings in a spatial dimension when he addresses the consequences of migration and segregation, space does not play an important role in his typology. He also does not address the question of whether port cities share a particular port city culture.

Planners and landscape architects have taken a more spatial approach to gain better understanding of the multiple issues of port cities, including

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2 Frank Broeze, “Port Cities: The Search for an Identity,” *Journal of Urban History* 11, no. 2 (February 1985): 210, <https://doi.org/10.1177/009614428501100204>.

3 Ibid., 213.

4 Frank Broeze, ed., *Brides of the Sea: Port Cities of Asia from the 16th-20th Centuries* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press; New South Wales University Press, 1989); Frank Broeze, *Gateways of Asia: Port Cities of Asia in the 13th - 20th Centuries* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1997).

5 Robert Lee, “The Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics of Port Cities: A Typology for Comparative Analysis?,” *Urban History* 25, no. 2 (August 1998): 147–72, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S096392680000078X>.

issues around water, design and heritage, and their cultural dimensions. The spatial port typology introduced by Diana Brand<sup>6</sup> is a case in point. She maps maritime functions onto urban space typologies, for which she has coined the term 'bluespace', "a place where a space or social activity has an edge condition, or adjacency, which is coastal and where the context is urban in character".<sup>7</sup> Beatrice Moretti employs the notion of 'portuality' to identify the threshold zones between port and city.<sup>8</sup> A special issue of the journal *Urban Planning* explores the theme of porosity in port cities.<sup>9</sup> Thinking through how cultural practices and the spatial dynamics of port city regions are entangled is a key objective of this special issue and its sequel. The special issue is organized in three parts: the first explores questions of port cities and cosmopolitan culture; the second, spaces of port city architecture, planning, and imagery; and the third, heritagization. Together the papers explore a broad range of themes, briefly outlined here. They also raise many questions that merit investigation.

The study of port city culture(s) invites researchers to reconceptualize 'culture' and move beyond the association of culture with bounded communities and systems of thought. We argue that culture is not only located in collective social identities of port cities and citizens, but also in port cities' spatial and infrastructural characteristics. Given the social histories of spatial and infrastructural developments of port cities, it is important to stretch the concept of 'infrastructure' to include social, regulatory and technological features and analyse their interrelations.<sup>10</sup> In recent approaches, culture is seen as 1) hybrid and travelling across social networks, 2) embedded in material and spatial practices, and 3) as a key resource for future making.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, in addressing the challenges of port city futures, culture must be considered as including more than folklore and stereotypes of sailor towns but all the material and spatial practices, those visual representations, symbols, values, and popular narratives that relate to past, present, and future port-city transformations.<sup>12</sup>

Port city culture has a distinct cosmopolitan dimension. Port cities are (scalar) localized hubs defined by their global connections and heterogeneous

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6 Diane Brand, "Bluespace: A Typological Matrix for Port Cities," *Urban Design International* 12, no. 2–3 (June 2007): 69–85, <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.udi.9000195>.

7 Diane Brand, "Embracing Sea and Land: Ceremonial Tides in Lisbon's Waterfront Squares 1600–1800," *Journal of Urban Design* 17, no. 1 (February 2012): 64, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2011.646250>.

8 Beatrice Moretti, *Beyond the Port City: The Condition of Portuality and the Threshold's Field* (Berlin: JOVIS Verlag, 2020).

9 Carola Hein, ed., "Planning for Porosity: Exploring Port City Development through the Lens of Boundaries and Flows," *Urban Planning* 6, no. 3 (2021), <https://www.cogitatiopress.com/urbanplanning/pages/view/nextissues#PortCities>.

10 Brian Larkin, "The Politics and Poetics of Infrastructure," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 42, no. 1 (October 21, 2013): 327–43, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-092412-155522>.

11 Arjun Appadurai, "The Future as Cultural Fact: Essays on the Global Condition," *Rassegna Italiana Di Sociologia* 14, no. 4 (2013): 649–50.

12 Maciej Kowalewski, "Images and Spaces of Port Cities in Transition," *Space and Culture* 24, no. 1 (February 2021): 53–65, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1206331218783940>.

networks. Their cultural contours are characterized by superdiversity,<sup>13</sup> as well as efforts to establish shared interests in branding port-cities' distinctiveness.<sup>14</sup> According to Brad Beaven, leader of the Port Towns & Urban Cultures research group in Portsmouth, port culture refers to a particular kind of urban maritime culture, as evidenced by studies of the waterfront and those of the urban representations and imagery of port cities. Such studies often emphasize a dangerous and chaotic life on the waterfront associated with sailor towns.<sup>15</sup>

Historically, the working waterfront has been an informal contact zone in a context of asymmetric sociocultural relations and a contested place in need of social disciplinary actions. The maritime archaeologist Christer Westerdahl introduced the notion of "maritime cultural landscape"<sup>16</sup> and the historians Jerry Bentley, Renate Bridenthal, and Kären Wigen coined the term seascapes.<sup>17</sup> The planning historian Carola Hein has proposed the concept of the port cityscape, emphasizing the spatial impact of port activities on a discontinuous space and highlighting the ways in which spatial ordering is culturally engrained. Within a globalized context, local culture has been rediscovered as "an indicator of uniqueness in the course of regeneration strategies and image campaigns," but also as a driver of future development.<sup>18</sup> This focus prompts questions concerning a sense of community; of identities, belonging, and social diversity; and of how to locate shared values amid multiple value orientations motivated by diverse socio-economic interests.<sup>19</sup>

Port cities are spatial hubs that host very diverse social groups often associated with histories of mobility. Does this imply that port cities should be seen as marked by openness, vitality, connectivity, centrality, and diversity, or as a combination of cosmopolitan orientations which do not exclude

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13 Paul van de Laar and Arie van der Schoor, "Rotterdam's Superdiversity from a Historical Perspective (1600–1980)," in *Coming to Terms with Superdiversity*, ed. Peter Scholten, Maurice Crul, and Paul van de Laar, IMISCOE Research Series (Cham: Springer, 2019), 21–55, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96041-8\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96041-8_2).

14 Günter Warsewa, "The Role of Local Culture in the Transformation of the Port-City," *RETE. Portus Plus*, 2011, 1–13.

15 Brad Beaven, Karl Bell, and Robert James, eds., *Port Towns and Urban Cultures: International Histories of the Waterfront, c. 1700–2000* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-48316-4>.

16 Christer Westerdahl, "The Maritime Cultural Landscape," *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 21, no. 1 (1992): 5–14.

17 Jerry H. Bentley, Renate Bridenthal, and Karen Wigen, *Seascapes: Maritime Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Transoceanic Exchanges* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007).

18 Günter Warsewa, "The Transformation of Port Cities: Local Culture and the Post-Industrial Maritime City," *WIT Transactions on The Built Environment*, 2017, 149–59.

19 Peter Geschiere, *The Perils of Belonging: Autochthony, Citizenship, and Exclusion in Africa and Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226289663.001.0001>; Anna L. Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt7s1xk>; David Graeber, "It Is Value That Brings Universes into Being," *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 3, no. 2 (June 2013): 219–43, <https://doi.org/10.14318/hau3.2.012>.

other, more parochial identifications?<sup>20</sup> Or does this question focus too strongly on ethnic origins at the expense of attention to class differences? How does academia itself play a role in (mis)representing identity issues and how can we be more reflexive and critical of the representations of port cities and their social contours?<sup>21</sup>

This special issue addresses these questions giving attention to cultural exchanges, multilayered processes of identity politics, and how these fit with wider port city dynamics. Identities are expressed in social dynamics and in socio-spatial connections. The latter is taken up in a discussion of the following questions: Is port city culture per se linked to the maritime transport functions of ports, or can it also be expressed in other sea-linked practices such as fishing, or does it involve a collective awareness of land-water connections, an awareness which makes the port city special? How does port city culture change when the spatial organization of port cities changes? How is port city culture cultivated, devalued, forgotten? Can port city culture be reinvented—for example, through the process of port city branding? These questions indicate that identities are social constructs based on histories; they are dependent on contexts and can be influenced by deliberate processes of identity making.

The papers further explore issues of spatialization and port city prominence. They pay particular attention to the articulation of spatial and cultural dynamics. When new infrastructure was needed to accommodate huge containerships, port development began taking place beyond the bounds of the city, rendering (parts of) waterfronts in the heart of the city redundant. In many port cities, traditional port areas became sites for the staging of culture through cultural events and creative industries. In Rotterdam, this 'culturalisation' of space was part of efforts to transform Rotterdam's image—from a city of work to a city of culture Patricia van Ulzen, *Imagine a Metropolis: Rotterdam's Creative Class, 1970-2000*.<sup>22</sup> In this manner, port city spaces can acquire new values, in ways that sometimes highlight maritime histories and sometimes move away from them (temporarily).

Each location has effectively found a culture-specific way of responding to or steering maritime practices and of creating spatial patterns, sometimes over centuries. Planning futures are guided by societal and cultural values, and the professionals involved in these kinds of spatial/cultural transitions participate in specific 'urban planning cultures.' The result is a maritime mindset that supports the workings of the port, facilitates water-based, shipping-related interventions; alternatively, its absence can lead

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20 Henk Driessen, "Mediterranean Port Cities: Cosmopolitanism Reconsidered," *History and Anthropology* 16, no. 1 (2005): 129–41, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0275720042000316669>.

21 Alice Mah, *Port Cities and Global Legacies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137283146>.

22 Patricia van Ulzen, *Imagine a Metropolis: Rotterdam's Creative Class, 1970-2000* (Rotterdam: nai010 publishers, 2007).

to opposition against port- and shipping-related practices (dredging, infrastructure for logistics, new warehouses). These maritime mindsets are often supported by a generalized engagement with water; water-based sports can help promote a maritime mindset through the awareness of wind and water conditions or the needs of ships, and ultimately support a port's operation. Members of the PortCityFutures research group have been working on the theme of maritime mindsets,<sup>23</sup> exploring mental maps and deep mapping to better understand the interconnection between space, society, and culture.

This spatial approach raises numerous questions, such as: How does the planning of infrastructure or the re-purposing of abandoned docklands express choices about what is seen as important to keep, emphasize, or obliterate? Culture informs the production of space and the (professional) practices of architects and planners involved in building the ports of the future. Designers and professionals, whose job it is to outline promises for futures Simone Abram and Gisa Weszkalnys, *Elusive Promises: Planning in the Contemporary World*, vol. 11<sup>24</sup> constitute an important field of study for understanding port cities and the way their futures are envisioned. Infrastructure and spatial arrangements express societal values, cultural ambitions, and visions for futures. In the port city of Rotterdam, for instance, the water-land connection was an important value for planners who considered how to keep the ties between the city and the river Maas in times when new transport technologies required port infrastructure to be built away from the city.<sup>25</sup>

The linkages between culture and social identities, as well as between culture and spaces, are saturated with temporal references. The histories of people and places matter for understanding identity politics and related dynamics in the port cityscape. To analyze the role of culture in these processes, it is important to place futurity rather than pastness at the heart of thinking about culture.<sup>26</sup> The sense of pastness confined culture to 'tradition', to that which contrasted with the modern and with development, and as something to be preserved. Currently, culture is foremost seen as a source of aspirations for the future. This does not render attention to culture as traditions, as heritage, obsolete. On the contrary, culture involves a dialogue between aspirations for the future and a valuing of the past.

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23 Thomas van den Brink, "Mapping Maritime Mindsets: Deep Maps from Inspiration to Feasibility," *PortCityFutures* (blog), November 9, 2020, <https://www.portcityfutures.nl/news/mapping-maritime-mindsets-deep-maps-from-inspiration-to-feasibility>; Maurice Hartevelde, "Mapping Maritime Mindsets: Mental Maps," *PortCityFutures* (blog), July 28, 2020, <https://www.portcityfutures.nl/news/mapping-maritime-mindsets-mental-maps>.

24 Simone Abram and Gisa Weszkalnys, eds., *Elusive Promises: Planning in the Contemporary World*, vol. 11 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013).

25 Han Meyer, *City and Port: Urban Planning as a Cultural Venture in London, Barcelona, New York, and Rotterdam : Changing Relations between Public Urban Space and Large-Scale Infrastructure* (Utrecht: International Books, 1999).

26 Appadurai, "The Future as Cultural Fact: Essays on the Global Condition," 194.

Valuing the past also includes debating the heritage of port areas that no longer serve. Heritagization is a societal process in the present in which it is decided what from the past is worth attention as signs of pride or as a warning for future generations. Port city heritage thus plays an important part in designing future port city territories and in (re)shaping the relationships between different port city communities.<sup>27</sup> Such an understanding of heritage is in line with current developments around the UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach from 2011 and the New Urban Agenda from 2016. Heritage as an expression of culture can effectively promote sustainable development and adaptive strategies in a dynamic setting. Such an approach, not driven by nostalgia, may contribute to a more dynamic understanding of port city culture and help establish heritage as a future-oriented practice that reaches beyond the waterfront.

Heritagization in port cities, making futures by treasuring aspects of the past, is extremely relevant for sustainable development, but also a sensitive matter. Port cities with all their diversity and global connections are places marked by dynamic histories of innovation but also by inequalities and societal problems. What to select as heritage, whom to involve in selection processes, and how to interpret the histories that particular places or objects represent are issues that are often politicized. Does heritagization of abandoned docks serve to celebrate technological histories with a key role for the private dock entrepreneurs, or does it also highlight daily labor practices and the histories of class inequalities? Do specific places in a port city serve to showcase the port city in itself or does it also represent ways in which the port city has been implicated in histories of slavery and colonial expansion? Even though answers are never simple, these questions show how heritagization has the potential to contribute to alternative awareness and innovative futures.

The rethinking of culture in port cities as part of global networks, as expressed in material practices and attributed with the capacity to shape futures, makes culture a key concern and vibrant topic to address for port cities and their futures. The contributors to this special issue single out one or more of the issues elaborated above; most do so in the form of case studies.

## **Port cities and the construction of cosmopolitan culture**

Didem Yerli examines how academics have framed port city dynamics in the largest port cities of the Eastern Mediterranean - Constantinople (Istanbul), Salonica (Thessaloniki) and Smyrna (Izmir) - which were

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27 Tianchen Dai, Carola Hein, and Dan Baciu, "Understanding How Words Matter for Port Heritage: Towards a Network Perspective," *PortCityFutures* (blog), January 26, 2021, <https://www.portcityfutures.nl/news/understanding-how-words-matter-for-port-heritage-towards-a-network-perspective>.



meeting points of 'East' and 'West'. The distinction between East and West that she makes resonates with longer histories of representation (e.g. marked by Orientalism),<sup>28</sup> but Yerli also shows how the interpretation of port cities as 'cosmopolitan' puts an emphasis on elitist identities and does insufficient justice to the importance of class and labor in identity formation. She states that attention to conviviality, the way people live together in the city, may provide a more inclusive frame of representation. This makes it possible to move beyond attention to segregation and distinctions between 'us' and 'the other' and to incorporate in the analysis factors and actors that made it possible to exist, or fail to exist, together.

The contribution by Alissa Diesch and Jes Hansen is also concerned with relations between port cities, but in a very different and more painful way. The author argues that attention to port cities should not be singular but relational: ports obtain their identities and various characteristics due to connections with other ports. The article presents the inequalities in the relations between two relatively small port cities, one located in Europe (Flensburg, in what was once Denmark, now Germany) and the other in the Caribbean (Charlotte Amalie, Danish West Indies, now part of the US territory of the Virgin Islands). The shared history of both cities, which still shapes their cultural and physical spaces, is analyzed with a focus on the ports as spaces of interaction and potential hybridization.

Enrico Tommarchi addresses the important question of how to make or unmake maritime mindsets. His contribution focuses on the cities of Rotterdam and Valencia, both characterized by a spatial disconnect between city and port as an effect of containerization in shipping. With containerization, the vacated waterfronts became targets for regeneration projects. Tommarchi is asking how the plans for providing these spaces with new cultural meaning were directed by maritime values. Should the new spaces profile maritime histories and port functions and, if so, how was this established? If not, what were the reasons and what was the process of moving away from specific port-related histories? The analysis uses the distinction between remaritimisation and (cultural) demaritimisation to describe these planning processes.

## **Urban and architectural monuments for port city prominence**

The contribution by Hilde Sennema and Paul van de Laar puts at center stage the relation between engineering projects and cultural expressions of societal values. The article analyzes how the building of the New Waterway, the shipping canal which made it possible for ships to approach Rotterdam directly, became an icon and how, over time, it has played a key role in narratives of Rotterdam's progress, modernism, and

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28 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin, 1978).

resilience. Methodologically, the article is interesting too. Four different types of cultural expressions serve to trace this process of iconification: a monument, a diorama, and two theatrical plays.

Nadia (Nina) Alaily-Mattar, Mina Akhavan, and Carola Hein analyze newspaper reporting during the inception stage of the prestigious architectural project of the Elbphilharmonie on the waterfront of Hamburg. This example of star architecture, defined as projects which transform a city's profile owing to the reputation of the architects, aims to contribute to the narrative of the city's commitment to the port, the maritime context, and the Elbe river. The article shows, on the basis of innovative research methods for analyzing journalistic sources, the role of newspapers in the creation of these narratives in the early stages when the building of this center for culture was not yet approved. The article compares the case in Hamburg to narratives featuring star architecture in major port cities in Germany, the UK, Spain, and Italy.

## Heritagization as future practice

The article by Melcher Ruhkopf takes the ship called 'Peking' as the point of departure for studying a process of heritagization. At first sight the boat brings the reader back to Hamburg, only to open up interesting interpretations of what this ship (potentially) symbolizes. With its involvement in the history of saltpeter extraction in Chili, which it transported to Hamburg, the boat epitomizes colonial histories of inequalities. These historical inequalities, so a group of curators argue, persist in the present. Awareness – as an effort of decolonization – could lead to better futures. This view is only one of several: others involved in this process of heritagization focus more on the ship as an emblem of the port city of Hamburg and the heroic voyages of seafarers. Interestingly, the article provides an analytical framework for understanding how these valorizations can co-exist. The analysis leaves in suspense whether the radical decolonial reading will remain a marginal interpretation or will gain momentum. The way perspectives will or will not become hegemonic will depend on developments in societal debates more broadly.

Fabien Jacob's article, focusing on Quebec City, pursues the heritagization of colonial histories within a port city where different spaces compete for attention. Jacob considers the whole set of societal actors involved in singling out valuable places in Quebec City. He analyzes the procedures and performances (e.g., meetings) through which cultural sites that characterize the history of Quebec City are selected. Importantly, the old port is hardly valued in this process and not given a formal status as a heritage site. Rather than the old port area being preserved, it has been emptied of most of its historic elements and transformed into a front of "international style" buildings typical of waterfronts along the U.S. East Coast.

Saskia Tideman's article focuses on heritagization of the industrial Docklands in Hull. Her analysis identifies distinct views of the past by non-shareholding stakeholders and investors: the first seek dock preservation as evidence of their contribution to Hull's growth, while investors prefer a romanticized maritime narrative. These competing readings of the past show how working-class heritage is often marginalized and, Tideman argues, this inhibits more inclusive ways of future making. Instead of choosing between alternative narratives, heritagization should acknowledge discordant readings of the past. The author also shows the diverse readings the different docks allow: one is representative of labor histories of dock workers, another of historical changes in the fishing industry.

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## MAIN SECTION

# What Kind of ‘Cosmopolitics’? Studying the Eastern Mediterranean Port Cities between East and West

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to problematize traditional views on Eastern Mediterranean port cities, and their so-called cosmopolitan nature during the long nineteenth century. To do so, this paper focuses on the production and effects of the East-West dichotomy, in three port cities of the region: Constantinople, Smyrna and Salonica. The main aim of this contribution is to elicit debate for further research about port city systems and emphasize the obstacles this dichotomy brings in the field. In doing so, this paper also contributes to the growing need for new perspectives on cosmopolitanism studies of the present and the future by examining the nature of co-existence in the past.

## KEYWORDS

*Eastern Mediterranean; Port Cities; Cosmopolitics; Urban Studies; Historical Sociology*

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## Introduction

In recent studies of the Mediterranean region, historians have claimed that nineteenth-century Mediterranean port cities have played a particularly important role in the emergence of today's global economic system by virtue of the microcosmos they constituted between East and West civilizations.<sup>1</sup> This is a compelling assumption that has been neither elaborated nor discussed in respect to the agents that structured the port city system. In fact, until the advance of modern means of communication, port cities were indispensable sites of cultural influence. Consequently, the Mediterranean has long been studied as a medium of communication between two civilizations. Its port cities were seen as the hubs that enabled the flow of goods and ideas through ethno-religiously segmented networks.<sup>2</sup> In such a framing, the port cities of the Eastern Mediterranean in particular, due to their diversity of religions, emerge as the embodiment of a hybrid region. Consequently, there has been much discussion about the cosmopolitan past of these port cities and the cosmopolitics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the region. This article takes the claim "the Mediterranean Sea is a passage between the East and West" a step further by arguing that this dichotomy was a product of the cosmos of these port cities and, therefore, should not be applied uncritically as a panacea in future cases within the context of cosmopolitics studies. In doing so, this paper aims to open a perspective from which to study port city networks and their culturalization in a cyclic and a tautologic manner, rather than as a passage between civilizations. The main aim of this contribution is to elicit debate for further research about port city systems while responding to the growing need for new perspectives in cosmopolitanism studies of the present and the future. To do so, this paper investigates the largest port cities of the Eastern Mediterranean region; Constantinople (Istanbul), Salonica (Thessaloniki) and Smyrna (Izmir) as case studies. After looking at the politics of dichotomy in these port cities, consequently, this paper highlights the conflicts that should be taken into consideration for bridging different port cities as unique social spaces.

## The two sides of the Eastern Mediterranean port: a conceptual framing

A cosmopolitan person can be vaguely defined as a person who is at home all over the world. For Jacques Derrida, the very essence of ethics rests on a foundation of hospitality, of readiness to welcome the other into

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1 For examples see: Carolyn Cartier, "Cosmopolitics and the Maritime World City," *Geographical Review* 89, no. 2 (April 1999): 278–89, <https://doi.org/10.2307/216092>; Daniel Goffman, Edhem Eldem, and Bruce Masters, *The Ottoman City between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

2 Henk Driessen, "Mediterranean Port Cities: Cosmopolitanism Reconsidered," *History and Anthropology* 16, no. 1 (2005): 129–41, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0275720042000316669>.

one's 'home'.<sup>3</sup> The various and processual definitions of cosmopolitanism emerge from the premise that there is an 'other' which is socio-culturally defined and that the concept of cosmopolitanism would be a remedy for the friction which exists between the other and the self. Indisputably, this idea aims to perceive all human beings as a part of a single community. In other respects, East-West dichotomy in sociology is based on the perception that humanity is made of two artificial sets of clearly demarcated cultural entities.<sup>4</sup> The idea is entirely reflected in examples provided by Samuel Huntington when he argues that: "Villages, regions, ethnic groups, all have distinct cultures of different levels of cultural heterogeneity. The culture of a village in southern Italy may be different from that of a village in northern Italy, but both will share a common Italian culture that distinguishes them from German villages".<sup>5</sup> According to Huntington the future of global politics will be dominated by the clash of these two civilizations, or more simply the clash between East and West.<sup>6</sup> In such a scenario, the Eastern Mediterranean region appears as a physical space where agents co-created this dichotomy while existing in one cosmos. However, this paper argues that co-existence per se is not insufficient to constitute a cosmopolite environment, but, it could have triggered the implications of 'cosmopolitics'.

Malte Fuhrmann in his book, *Port Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean*, writes "Cultural historians now tend to highlight the fact that cultures in contact do not manage to remain aloof from one another, but undergo fundamental change in the process, creating in-between zones and hybridity".<sup>7</sup> Geo-politically, the Eastern Mediterranean region has been the in-between zone within whose borders Eastern and Western civilizations had co-existed. This characterization notwithstanding, defining the exact borders of the Eastern Mediterranean region is impossible, and necessarily politically biased. For instance, historian Fernand Braudel draws the boundaries of the Mediterranean through botany, describing it as the place which lies within the limits of the olive trees until they give way to the palm groves.<sup>8</sup> To Braudel, the separation seems to emerge from a geographical difference that has influenced the socio-cultural and socio-economic development of civilizations. For sociologist Pierre Bourdieu this understanding ignores the fact that human beings are biological beings and social agents who are constituted as such through their interdependent

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3 Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, trans. Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes, Thinking in Action (London: Routledge, 2001).

4 Ibid.

5 Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," in *Readings in Globalization: Key Concepts and Major Debates*, ed. George Ritzer and Zeynep Atalay (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 24.

6 Ibid., 23.

7 Malte Fuhrmann, *Port Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean: Urban Culture in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 23, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108769716>.

8 Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1949).

relation to a social space.<sup>9</sup> This does not mean that there is no clear distinction between physical space and social space, but that social space is an abstract space constructed by the ensembles (economic, bureaucratic, social, etc.) emerging from the unequal distribution of various modes of capital.<sup>10</sup>

Jürgen Osterhammel writes that not everything originates with the steam engine and the French Revolution, but instead each defining element of the era was affected directly by the transformative power it brought with it. Osterhammel paints a picture of a world increasingly connected by the telegraph, the steamship, and the railways.<sup>11</sup> As a matter of fact, nineteenth-century Mediterranean port cities had long been argued, by the above-mentioned scholars, to have played a particularly important role in the emergence of today's global economic system together with its liberal cosmopolitanism. However, Henk Driessen argues rightly that further anthropological and historical research is needed to reframe what we really mean by the "liberal cosmopolitanism" or the "cultural pluralism" of the past, and accordingly, that further discussion is needed to understand how these phenomena can contribute to today's definition of multiculturalism.<sup>12</sup> Alike, this paper tries to address the question of how did the individuals of the past engage with the so-called "liberal cosmopolitanism" of the port cities? Is multiculturalism or cosmopolitanism only limited to the condition of inhabiting East and West together in one cosmos? Looking closely at the transcultural exchanges in Ottoman port cities may provide insights about this growing cosmopolitan nostalgia for the port cities of the Eastern Mediterranean.

## Ottoman port city 'Cosmopolitanism'

Nineteenth century modernism manifests itself best in the urban scene through the physical transformations it brought into the socio-cultural fabric of the city life. Nineteenth century Constantinople was one of the largest imperial port cities<sup>13</sup> but was not the only port city administrated by the Ottomans. The Eastern Mediterranean was home to several port towns and cities hosting different compositions of ethno-religious communities. These cities were governed by the Ottoman administration, from Constantinople, for the direct benefit of the Ottoman State, including,

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9 Pierre Bourdieu, "The Social Space and the Genesis of Groups," *Theory and Society* 14, no. 6 (November 1985): 723–44, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00174048>.

10 Etienne Gehin and Pierre Bourdieu, "La distinction, critique sociale du jugement," *Revue Française de Sociologie* 21, no. 3 (1980): 439–44, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3320934>.

11 Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 904–6, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400849949>.

12 Driessen, "Mediterranean Port Cities," 138–39.

13 Zeynep Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986), <https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520337510>.



FIG. 1 Old port of Constantinople and the surrounding faubourgs during the nineteenth century, by German cartographer C. Stolpe, dating 1880, ©Harvard Library<sup>15</sup>

and especially, its military. The Ottomans, however, were not modern capitalists aiming at an unlimited and free market in their port cities. They were concerned with the maintenance of the port city as a system while expanding their legacy in the area they controlled.<sup>14</sup> Under this imbalanced and pragmatism administration, the main port cities such as Salonica and Smyrna were scenes of flow of people, goods and ideas. The flow of people was not entirely based on mobility within the imperial borders. It also brought many travelers and European experts to these port cities [Figs. 1-2-3].

14 Nükhet Varlik, "Plague, Conflict, and Negotiation: The Jewish Broadcloth Weavers of Salonica and the Ottoman Central Administration in the Late Sixteenth Century," *Jewish History* 28, no. 3-4 (2014): 281-84, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10835-014-9219-9>.

15 C. Stolpe, "Plan von Constantinopel mit den Vorstädten, dem Hafen, und einem Theile des Bosphorus", Lorentz & Keil, 1882. From: Harvard Digital Map Collection, Harvard University. Accessed on 03-06-2021: <https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/scanned-maps/catalog/44-990096520370203941>



FIG. 2 Closer look from Figure 1, of the Galata Port and its ‘modern’ neighbourhood Pera, Beiglu (1) across Topkapı (Jeni Serai meaning new palace) (2). Port region of Galata can be seen below Pera (3), ©Harvard Library.



FIG. 3 Postcard showing the busy port district Karakeui and Galata Bridge that spans the Golden Horn in Constantinople. The bridge is the third construction that was built by the French company Forges et Chantiers de la Mediteranée in 1875 and used until 1912<sup>16</sup>, ©Library of Congress.

There is no other capital city in Europe that composes the common city of diverse groups and still retains their characters as distinct as in Constantinople. Education, which everywhere else unites children and

16 “Kara-Keui (Galata) and view of Pera, Constantinople,” Detroit Publishing Company, (1905), from the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington. Accessed on 03-06-2021: <http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/ppmsc.06062/>

youth in common centers, by expanding ideas, and by gradually establishing bonds of union and fraternity, has tended so far to distance all rapprochements in this capital, because each national family maintains at its expense its school of home, where education is given in the mother tongue and where efforts are made to maintain religious traditions and political prejudices.<sup>17</sup>

The first director of Le Lycée de Galatasaray (the Galata Palace Imperial School) known as Monsieur de Salve wrote the lines above during his employment between 1868 to 1871. At the time, the vast majority of the great powers of the nineteenth century endorsed an expansion of their ideas abroad through the tool of educational institutions. Many of these states invested their own funds into this venture, while others depended on private endeavors. Undoubtedly, the residents of Eastern Mediterranean port cities like Constantinople bore witness to the expansion of this “educational imperialism and enlightenment” first-hand.<sup>18</sup> Studying the hybrid social sphere of these port cities, therefore, requires a deep understanding of the emergence of organized and modern education.

The same narrative of Constantinople’s cosmopolitanism beset by friction is reflected in the book of Edmondo De Amicis (1846-1908), Italian writer and traveler, when he argues:

To recover from this condition of amazement, one has only to dive into one of the thousand alleys that wind about the flanks of the hills of Stamboul (Istanbul). Here there reigns profound peace, and here can be contemplated in tranquility every aspect of that mysterious and jealous East, which on the other side of the Golden Horn is only seen in fugitive glimpses, amidst the noisy confusion of European life. Here everything is oriental.<sup>19</sup>

De Amicis visited Constantinople in 1874 and dedicated a book to his travel, at a time when ever more European travelers were making their way to this easily accessible Orient, and they were ‘fascinated’ to see the traces of East (Orient) and West (Europe) in one social sphere in a capital port city. The texts written by travelers who had been to Eastern Mediterranean port cities are products of a complex process that started out with certain ideological baggage and positioning. Consequently, the voyages reflected

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17 Translated by the author of the paper, from the original: “Dans aucune autre capitale de l’Europe, les divers groupes composant la cité commune ne conservent des caractères aussi tranchés et aussi dissemblables qu’à Constantinople. L’éducation, qui partout ailleurs réunit les enfants et les jeunes gens dans des centres communs et, en élargissant les idées, établit peu à peu des liens d’union et de fraternité, a tendu plutôt jusqu’ici à éloigner tout rapprochement, parce que chaque famille nationale entretient à ses frais ses maisons d’éducation, où l’enseignement est donné dans la langue maternelle et où on s’efforce de maintenir les traditions religieuses et les préventions politiques.” Ernest de Salve-Villedieu, “Le lycée impérial de Galata-Sérai,” *Revue des deux mondes*, no. 5 (1874): 1.

18 Fuhrmann, *Port Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean*, 219.

19 Edmondo De Amicis, *Constantinople*, trans. Caroline Tilton, Stamboul ed. (New York; London: Putnam’s, 1896), 32.

and recorded in these accounts contribute to the formation of certain stereotypes.<sup>20</sup>

Daniel Goffman states that starting from the seventeenth century, Smyrna became a colonial port city rather than a small village. The neglect of the Ottoman authorities in port cities offered actors from Italy, the Netherlands, England and France the opportunity to create a 'free market'<sup>21</sup> in the otherwise strictly statist Ottoman lands.<sup>22</sup>

During the second half of the nineteenth century, Ottoman production of raw materials and manufactured goods had increased significantly. The port cities enabled the flow of these goods to faraway lands. At the beginning of the twentieth century Smyrna on its own secured 43% of all exports and 20% of all imports within the whole of the Empire.<sup>23</sup> Salonica, on the other hand, was the main manufacturer and the exporter of textiles in the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>24</sup> The city experienced a decisive uprising especially in the 1880s due to factory-building activity. According to the accounts given by Donald Quataert, entrepreneurs founded a whole range of new businesses from distilleries and soap works to factories for construction materials and new tobacco businesses. Salonica's port had reliable ties with other Mediterranean port cities such as Smyrna, Trieste, Vienna, Genoa, and Marseille, as well as commercial lines to Paris and London.<sup>25</sup> The accelerated circulation of various goods transformed life in these cities. From the 1870s to the 1890s, the volume of trade increased by 25.8% in Salonica. In Constantinople, growth was as big as 32% and in Smyrna 19.4%.<sup>26</sup> Figure 4 and Figure 5 [Figs. 4-5] demonstrates a trade card published by the biscuit company Pernot headquartered in Dijon, France. The card illustrates Constantinople as one of the biggest ports of the world where factories of Pernot were shipping their products, using the maritime routes. Consequently, urban inequalities became more visible as the class dimension was added to the already ethno-religiously segmented society. The Eastern Mediterranean port cities were not just the

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20 For further examples see the website of Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation which presents a large collection of traveller accounts in the Eastern Mediterranean from fifteen to twentieth century: <http://eng.travelogues.gr/>

21 Goffman calls this system of free market "pocket of *laissez-faireism*".

22 Goffman, Eldem, and Masters, *The Ottoman City between East and West*, 82–90.

23 Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu, *İzmir tarihinden kesitler* (İzmir: İzmir Yayıncılık, 2000); Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu, *Balta Limanı'na giden yol: Osmanlı-İngiliz iktisâdî münâsebetleri* (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1974); Abdullah Martal, *Belgelerle Osmanlı döneminde İzmir* (İzmir: Yazıt Yayıncılık, 2007).

24 Kate Fleet, "The Via Egnatia under Ottoman Rule (1380–1699): The Menzilhanes of the Sol Kol in the Late 17th/Early 18th Century. Halcyon Days in Crete II," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 62, no. 2 (1999): 362–63, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0041977X00017043>.

25 Donald Quataert, ed., *Manufacturing in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, 1500-1950*, SUNY Series in the Social and Economic History of the Middle East (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994).

26 Giannēs Karatzoglou, *The Imperial Ottoman Bank in Salonica: The First 25 Years, 1864-1890* (Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives & Research Centre, 2003), 6.



FIG. 4 Front of the trade card advertising Pernot biscuits in the port of Constantinople. Author's collection.



FIG. 5 Back of the trade card introducing the port of Constantinople and the products being exported. Some of the raw products listed are: Wool, silk, cotton, cereals, oilseeds, copper, olive oil, wax, camel hair, opium, gum, rose essence. Author's collection.

hub of the commercial bourgeoisie but also home to sizable and growing middle and working classes.<sup>27</sup>

The three port cities had their distinct composition of ethno-religious groups depending on the flow of people before and during the long nineteenth century. While the capital Constantinople remained much like a microcosm of the Empire, Smyrna and Salonica had their own particular composition of ethno-religious groups.<sup>28</sup> Beginning of the 1840s, within a couple of decades, Smyrna became the largest city after Constantinople

27 Athanasios Gekas, "Class and Cosmopolitanism: The Historiographical Fortunes of Merchants in Eastern Mediterranean Ports," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 24, no. 2 (2009): 95–114, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518960903487966>.

28 Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century*.





FIG. 6

Lively photos of two different districts from Smyrna, at the end of the nineteenth century, ©SALT Research<sup>33</sup>

On the left: View from the Frank Street

On the right: View from the Bazar Square

with growing number of immigrants from all over the Empire as well as from outside the imperial borders.<sup>29</sup> According to the official registers drawn up in 1890, Muslims constituted 44% of Smyrna's residents, followed closely by Orthodox-Greeks with 26%, foreigners (immigrants mostly from Europe) with 19% and a roughly equal proportions of Jews and Armenians.<sup>30</sup> This plural social make-up was reflected in the city's physical organization. Residential neighborhoods bore testament to this diversity. Greek, Muslim, Armenian, Jewish and 'Frankish' (*frenk*, i.e. European) neighborhoods were interlocked with one another.<sup>31</sup> The commercial boom resulted in high demand for wage labor. The industrial workforce in the city was fulfilled in high majority by 'Rum' (Greek Orthodox) people and by low percentage of Armenians, Jews, and later on by Muslim. The agricultural industries mostly employed seasonal workers during the harvest. For instance, fig sorting and packing required three months of work per year and was done mostly by female seasonal workers.<sup>32</sup> [Figs. 6-7]

29 Sibel Zandi-Sayek, *Ottoman Izmir: The Rise of a Cosmopolitan Port, 1840/1880* (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 24–25, <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10534325>.

30 Vital Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie, géographie administrative : statistique, descriptive et raisonnée de chaque province de l'Asie Mineure* (Paris: Leroux, 1890), 440, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k415003j>.

31 Zandi-Sayek, *Ottoman Izmir*, 11.

32 Ellinor Morack, "Turkifying Poverty, or: The Phantom Pain of Izmir's Lost Christian Working Class, 1924–26," *Middle Eastern Studies* 55, no. 4 (2019): 499–518, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263206.2018.1559157>.

33 "Rue Franque, Smyrne," SALT Research, Photograph and Postcard Archive. Accessed on 03-06-2021: <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/102632>; "Place du Bazar, Smyrne," SALT Research, Photograph and Postcard Archive. Accessed on 03-06-2021: <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/121333>



FIG. 7 Female fig sorters in Smyrna market, ©SALT Research.<sup>34</sup>

A census carried out by the authorities in Salonica shows that in the year 1831 the total male population of the city breaks down into 44.6% Jewish, 33.7% Muslims<sup>35</sup> and 21.7% Christian Orthodox, with 22.7% of the whole population being foreign. This classification was purely based on religion and in fact did not reflect the reality of the cosmos in the city. According to a document discovered by Meropi Anastassiadou, in the municipal census of 1890 there were seventeen ethno-religious groups defined.<sup>36</sup> Identities were therefore dynamic but being reframed in the hands of political authorities based on their agendas. However, the urban fabric of the port cities was not segregated only based on these identities. The growing working-class, increased suppression and violence of the palace, the city's developing character as an industrial and commercial hub made these port cities a thriving urban sphere for political unions. In Salonica, a socialist workers' federation was formed by a group of Jewish workers, in 1909, which attracted members from other port cities and ethno-religious identities. The networks of Salonica also gave fuel to the spread of French nationalism.<sup>37</sup> The Ottoman opposition movement known as *Jeune Turcs*,

34 "Travail de figues, Smyrne" SALT Research, Photograph and Postcard Archive. Accessed on 03-06-2021:

<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/196944>

35 The number of Muslims also includes high number of crypto-Jews (converts).

36 Méropi Anastassiadou, *Salonique, 1830-1912: une ville ottomane à l'âge des Réformes* (Leiden, NY: Brill, 1997), 58.

37 Mark Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews 1430-1950* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2006).

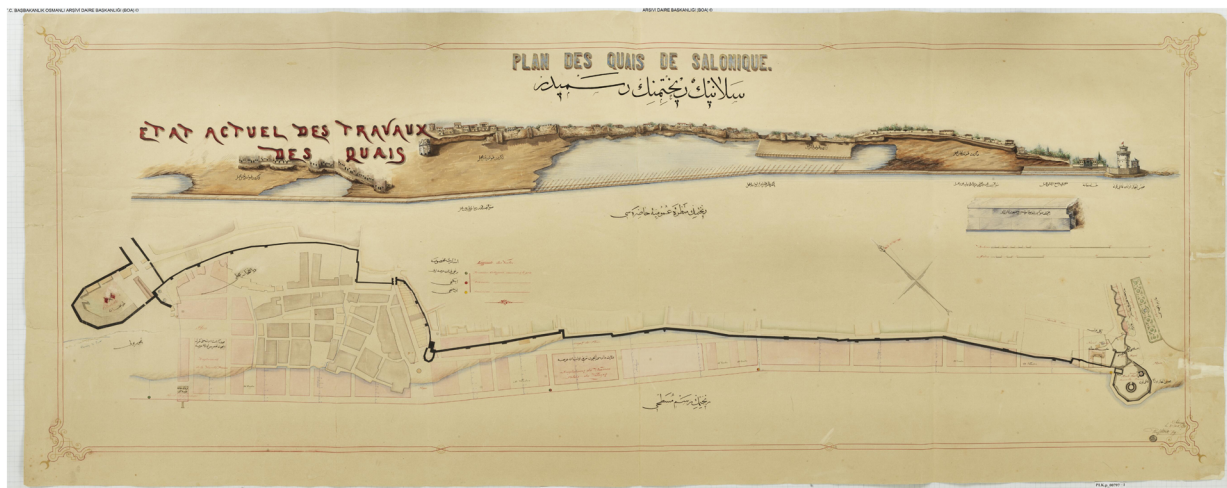


FIG. 8 The dock plan and illustration of Salonica, dating 1872. The plan ends on the right with Tour Blanche and does not include the areas in the East of the city that were developed and populated at the end of the nineteenth century, ©Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı [Ottoman Archives].

also partly started as an Ottoman-Muslim secret union in Salonica and evolved into the nationalist ruling elite of Turkey after the establishment of Turkish Republic in 1923.<sup>38</sup> Yet the question remains: What factors united individuals from these various subdivisions within port cities? [Fig. 8]

To a certain extent, what united these groups of people was the French language and French-language press which functioned almost like a 'common forum' in and between the port cities.<sup>40</sup> The Francophone newspapers on private initiative started in the 1820s in Smyrna, the first of which having been published under the name *Smyrnee*,<sup>41</sup> followed by a boom in Francophone publishing in Salonica at the end of the century, where the oldest journal bore the title *Journal de Salonique*.<sup>42</sup> In these cities, literacy in French was already high among those who had received modern education. The readership was thus not limited to the foreign residents of the cities but reached also Greek, Armenian, Judeo-Spanish and Ottoman-Turkish speaking people. Fuhrmann writes "The French-language press was a mark of distinction, of 'cultural capital' that played a part in the construction of contemporary gender and class identities."<sup>43</sup> This privileged group's access to new French ideas was enabled by the increase in printing activities, the expansion of French-language education and new maritime lines that eased the flow of 'new' Western ideas. Consequently, the

38 Erik-Jan Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building: From the Ottoman Empire to Atatürk's Turkey* (London; New York: I.B.Tauris, 2010), <https://doi.org/10.5040/9780755610761>.

39 "Plan des quais de Salonique", from: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi [Ottoman Archives], Plan, Proje ve Krokiler, Document No:797, 19-10-1288 [1872].

40 Fuhrmann, *Port Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean*, 234.

41 *Ibid.*, 235.

42 *Journal de Salonique: publication bi-hebdomadaire, politique, commerciale et littéraire*, Director: Saadi Levy, (1895-1910). Issues are open access on BnF Gallica,

43 *Ibid.*, 241



Object 1: Article on the first page of the journal about the construction of the new port, 14 November 1895

Cie des **MESSAGERIES MARITIMES**

**Paquebots Poste Français**  
**Départ du 8 Décembre 1895**  
 de Salonique pour Marseille  
 touchant à Syra et Calamata Bagdad  
 et relevant directement sans capitains  
 transbordement pour Galetti  
 Le Havre et Londres  
 Pour tous renseignements s'adresser à l'Agence.

Object 2: Information about the depart date of the post ship from Salonica to Marseille, 7 December 1895

**HOTEL IMPÉRIAL**  
 sur le quai

Situation exceptionnelle. Vue magnifique sur le golfe et les monts Olympe.

Chambres et appartements meublés, à la journée et au mois. Arrangements pour séjour prolongé. Pension complète depuis 8 francs par jour.

Cuisines soignées. Mets turcs et européens. Restaurant à l'entresol. Service à la carte et à prix fixe.

Object 3: Advertisement of the Imperial Hotel with the view of the dock, 17 January 1898

**Mouvement du Port**

Le *Brilla* parti vendredi dernier de Marseille arrive aujourd'hui dans notre port, il repart demain directement pour Constantinople.

Le vapeur anglais *Rertie* venant de Taranto sur lest arrive demain à Salonique pour charger des céréales à destination d'Anvers. Départ le 30 courant.

Le *Naxos* de la Deutsche Levante-Line arrive aujourd'hui de Hambourg et repart pour la même destination après avoir chargé des céréales.

Le *Sofia* de la Navigation à vapeur de l'Archipel, Hadji Daout Farkouh, part lundi prochain 24 courant pour Alexandrie, touchant Cavalla, Lagos, Dédégatch, Lemnos, Metelin, Smyrne, Chio Leror, Rhodes, et Constantinople (par transbordement à Smyrne)

Le *Criti* de la Cie Hellénique D. P. Goudi arrive aujourd'hui du Pirécet repart ce soir pour Volo et le Pirée.

Le *Douro* des Mess. Mar. arrivera de Constantinople Dimanche prochain 24 courant et repartira le même jour pour Syra, Katakalo, Marseille, Havre et Londres.

Le vapeur hellénique *Eleni* de la Cie Pantaleon arrive aujourd'hui de Smyrne et de Lemnos et repart ce soir à 5 heures pour Cavalla, Lagos, Dédégatch, Metelin et Smyrne.

L'*Achille* du Lloyd autrichien arrive aujourd'hui de Trieste et repart ce soir à 8 heures pour Cavala, Lagos, Dédégatch, Dardanelles Gallipoli, Rodosto, Constantinople et la Mer Noire.

Le *Criti* de la Cie Ottomane Courdji arrive demain de Constantinople et repart le même jour à 3 heures du soir pour Volo d'où il sera de retour dimanche 24 Novembre et continuera le même jour pour Constantinople.

Object 4: A regular section on the newspaper regarding the movement of the port, 21 November 1895

FIG. 9 Excerpts about the port of Salonica from Journal de Salonique, ©BnF, Paris.

common narratives shared within and among the Eastern Mediterranean port cities were conformed to and reproduced the lines of the dichotomies between East and West, traditional and modern, old and new. [Fig. 9] Scholars have long studied the conditions within Ottoman port cities as urban spheres in which two different fields of ideas lived together in separate spheres.<sup>44</sup> Analyses strictly based on this dualistic view have failed to notice the trans-cultural and trans-communal relations between the agents in these port cities.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, this dualistic view perceives old and new or East and West as different spheres separated strictly from each other with clear boundaries. As anthropologist Lynne Nakano puts it "The East-West dichotomy is based on the assumption that cultures and civilizations are self-contained, internally consistent entities."<sup>46</sup> As a matter of fact, the cosmos in the Eastern Mediterranean port cities

44 For an overview of the works on Ottoman modernization see: Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Türkiye'de çağdaş düşünce tarihi* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2015).

45 Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

46 Lynne Y. Nakano, "Writing for Common Ground: Rethinking Audience and Purpose in Japan Anthropology," in *Dismantling the East-West Dichotomy: Essays in Honour of Jan Van Bremen*, ed. Joy Hendry and Heung Wah Wong (New York: Routledge, 2006), 191, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203968697>.

falsifies the idea that the East and West lived in separate spheres without any exchange, or that their co-existence in the port cities can be flagged as liberal cosmopolitanism.

## History of port cities: a practice of rethinking on cosmopolitics?

To gain an initial sense of how the Eastern Mediterranean embodied the passage between two sides of the historically constituted dichotomy of civilizations, this paper looked at the three major port cities of the region. Carola Hein defines port city regions as 'fuzzy territories' engaged in the flow of goods, people and ideas that surpass institutional boundaries, lacking the strong and supportive governance systems that generally characterize states.<sup>47</sup> The cases we have focused on correspond to these tautologic definitions of port city regions during their long nineteenth century. What made these port cities an object of interest for social historians and anthropologists is the social, economic, and political transformation they faced at the turn of the twentieth century. Studies focused on analyzing nation-state formation, homogenization and violent state culture in the Eastern Mediterranean should benefit from a wider study of port cities as a connected system of their own. Although throughout the last twenty years there has been a growing interest in the port cities of the Eastern Mediterranean and so-called Ottoman cosmopolitanism, there is still a need for global and unifying perspectives in the field. Indeed, the purpose of this paper has been to look at the dichotomy produced and practiced in these port cities as it relates to the concept of Ottoman cosmopolitanism.

As noted by a number of authors,<sup>48</sup> Ottoman cosmopolitanism has often been adopted rather uncritically or by connecting several definitions of the concept within a region. Ulrike Freitag, on the other hand, has argued that the phenomenon of Ottoman port cities could be framed as 'conviviality' as living together rather than being subsumed under the flag of cosmopolitanism.<sup>49</sup> This perspective allows us to focus primarily on living together, conflict and daily life within a urban sphere, and therefore permits us not only to understand the interactions between 'us' and 'the other' but also the agents that made it possible to exist, or fail to exist, together.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, conceptualizing Ottoman port cities under the flag of

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47 Carola Hein, "The Port Cityscape: Spatial and Institutional Approaches to Port City Relationships," *PORTUSplus* 8 (2019), <https://portusplus.org/index.php/pp/article/view/190>.

48 Will Hanley, "Grieving Cosmopolitanism in Middle East Studies," *History Compass* 6, no. 5 (2008): 1346–67, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-0542.2008.00545.x>; Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen, eds., *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context and Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

49 Ulrike Freitag, "'Cosmopolitanism' and 'Conviviality'? Some Conceptual Considerations Concerning the Late Ottoman Empire," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 17, no. 4 (2014): 375–91, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549413510417>.

50 Brad Erickson, "Utopian Virtues: Muslim Neighbors, Ritual Sociality, and the Politics of 'Convivència,'" *American Ethnologist* 38, no. 1 (2011): 124, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1425.2010.01296.x>.

cosmopolitanism fails to recognize contemporary class struggles in Eastern Mediterranean port cities, along the lines of Eastern and Western norms, namely the emergence of a working and middle class.<sup>51</sup> The dichotomy produced in Eastern Mediterranean port cities therefore was blended into this “non-elitist concept of conviviality”<sup>52</sup> rather than being an indispensable part of Ottoman cosmopolitanism.

In the introduction of *Waterfronts in Post-Industrial Cities*, Richard Marshall states that waterfronts have their unique complexity offering “remarkable opportunities to define and describe a contemporary view of life”.<sup>53</sup> Likewise, Alice Mah explores three post-industrial port cities (Liverpool, New Orleans and Marseille), and demonstrates us how neo-liberal policies marginalized port city systems and people living within. She uses the expression of ‘the blue’ and ‘the black’ to elaborate on the mixed representations of these port cities as progressive versus exotic urban structures with high level of crime and poverty.<sup>54</sup> This contemporary example demonstrates us that ‘dichotomy’ was not unique to Eastern Mediterranean port cities, but, is a common feature of port city systems.<sup>55</sup>

Modifying the history shaped by the East-West dichotomy is not the purpose of this paper. On the contrary, we took the popular claim of Ottoman port city cosmopolitanism and its romanticism or nostalgia to demonstrate the misinterpretation of the port city system and elaborate on the dichotomic understanding of the port cities of the Eastern Mediterranean. Such discussions and perspectives will enable us to rebuild and design future port cities in respect to the notion of living together as individuals rather than groups or poles while creating a tautologic perspective for port city histories. In fact, future planning should not be based on removing the traces of the less glorious facets of the past. Designing the future should offer accommodation and negotiation with the past as a whole. Otherwise, we fall into the trap of designing and re-inventing the past for the benefit of the political agendas of certain powerful groups.

## Conclusion

This paper argues that, for a better understanding of inclusive movement of cosmopolitanism, it is important to differentiate between various modes of contact throughout history and the possible conflicts resulting from them. As the growing interest of scholars in the field demonstrates,

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51 Freitag, “Cosmopolitanism’ and ‘Conviviality?’”

52 Ibid.

53 Richard Marshall, ed., *Waterfronts in Post-Industrial Cities* (Conference: “Waterfronts in Post Industrial Cities, London; New York: Spon Press, 2001), 9.

54 Alice Mah, *Port Cities and Global Legacies: Urban Identity, Waterfront Work, and Radicalism* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137283146>.

55 For wider application of the understanding of dichotomy see the material prepared by PortCityFutures on the dualities of port city regions. Dualities, PortCityFutures. Accessed on: <https://www.portcityfutures.nl/dualities>

the situation of nineteenth century port cities has the potential to shed light on today's economic and political order. Nonetheless, flagging Eastern Mediterranean port cities as the first form of cosmopolitanism does not enlighten us about the values attached to the encounters between the agents existing therein. Cosmopolitan leanings should not be reduced to the number of languages spoken, the religions practiced, or to the accommodation of both sides of the Eastern and Western dichotomy in a single social sphere. Likewise, the idea of cosmopolitanism should not be understood just as conviviality or co-existence.

In comparing the three major port cities of the Eastern Mediterranean, this paper argued that the contemporary form of East-West dichotomy is a political division rather than a geographical one, and that the dichotomy was forged especially during the nineteenth century through encounters in the port cities of the region. With the spread of French language, ideas and life style, the agents in these cities were culturally segmented along lines of modern versus traditional or Eastern versus Western. Such bifurcations also accounted for the class inequalities which does not fall necessarily into ethno-religious segmentation.

Additionally, as this paper attempted to demonstrate with these albeit limited examples, among acts motivated by this dualistic way of thinking does not separate into two neat spheres that manifest necessarily in two contradictory camps. This conflicting situation is often neglected when debating social segregation and urban inequalities. As a result, actions conducted in the name of cosmopolitics are dictated by the demands placed on them by the historical surroundings, namely the dualistic way of thinking inherited from the originators of this dichotomy.

In conclusion, while Eastern Mediterranean cosmopolitanism should not be romanticized as an ideal that failed with the emergence of the nation-state paradigm, port city systems and the values associated with them should be studied to overcome the cultural dichotomy in contemporary cosmopolitan studies, and to re-think all port cities in a more tautologic, cyclic and globally connected manner.

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## MAIN SECTION

# From Harbor to Harbor: Postcolonial Relations and Agencies

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## ABSTRACT

The comparative reading of postcolonial spaces of port cities on both sides of the trading poles offer a new understanding of their cultures and urban structures and reveal overlooked relations on a global level. The harbors have been key sites in the transfer of goods, people and cultures, the connection of distant but related worlds as well as the execution of power. These spaces hence need to be read relationally. They are formed by and represent uneven power relations of the colonial past and the corresponding agency of this construct up to the present day. As such, a correlated study of port cities may reveal a deeper understanding of them. Flensburg and Charlotte Amalie are the two poles of a post-colonial relation that is not yet analyzed systematically. They are connected by a shared history that still powerfully shapes their cultural and physical spaces. The significance of their past as two extremes in the Danish colonial empire is analyzed through the lens of cultural theories from the Caribbean and post-colonial urban theories. As a case study, this research frames a novel view of the past and present relation between Europe and the Caribbean, with a particular focus on the ports as spaces of interaction and potential hybridization.

## KEYWORDS

*Charlotte Amalie; Danish West Indies; Flensburg; Historic Urban Centers; Post-Colonial*

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FIG. 1 Map of Charlotte Amalie (Caribbean) and Flensburg (Baltic Sea). Graphic by Alissa Diesch

Harbors are important knots in the networks of exchange, connecting to large-scale and close-by environments. Port cities, therefore, potentially have a particular, cosmopolitan culture which can be revealed only in the context of multiple scales. Harbors receive input from spaces far away and spread their local products, people and ideas on a global level. Working on the postcolonial spaces in the city of Flensburg in a research and design studio of architecture and urbanism and following the paradigm of periphery by Schröder as a “rediscovery of places beyond the metropolis,”<sup>1</sup> the paper proposes a comparative reading of Flensburg and Charlotte Amalie. The interconnection and hybridization of both port cultures are based on the cultural and physical postcolonial spaces as “materiality of place, the imaginative spatialities of desire and a cultural politics of territory are fundamental parts of colonial and postcolonial formations in the present”.<sup>2</sup> Because “[p]ort cities are cosmopolitan, but the scholarship about them is often parochial,”<sup>3</sup> a correlated analysis of linked harbor cities reveals ignored power relations and a new framework for reading historic urban structures.

Flensburg in the Baltic Sea and Charlotte Amalie in the Caribbean are two small but very different and spatially distant port cities. They are deeply connected through their history and ports but not yet analyzed coherently. By comparatively studying the two cities—linking cross-references and embracing their complexities—multi-layered aspects of past and future cosmopolitanisms emerge. These specific characteristics are a product of their port activities and hence they appear particularly clearly in these environments. Using—as a starting point—the history of the cities, a focus is put on the contemporary spaces and contextualization to show the still

1 Jörg Schröder, “Open Habitat,” in *Dynamics of Periphery*, ed. Jörg Schröder, et. al. (Berlin: Jovis, 2018), 13

2 Jane Jacobs, *Edge of Empire*. (London, New York: Routledge, 1996), X

3 Josef W. Konvitz, “Port Cities and Urban History,” *Journal of Urban History* 19/3 (1993): 115

active agencies of the colonial past and through that, to trace the creation and transformation of port culture in the pairing.

By employing a range of postcolonial theories by Said, Bhabha, King, Jacobs and Yeoh, the text suggests an explorative approximation of the cities under their postcolonial influence as well as their role as a port city in the past and present to open up new questions and further research [Fig. 1].

## Flensburg

Flensburg is a German port city on the Baltic Sea, but until 1864 the city belonged to Denmark. From the middle ages on, Flensburg had been a city of merchants with the harbor as the region's economic center. This legacy shapes the spatial and cultural reality of the city until today. While it was not a formal part of the Hanseatic League, a commercial confederation of merchant guilds and market towns around the Baltic Sea and Europe's north-west, it still maintained strong trading relations to the league. While Flensburg profited from the trade, Denmark has been described by scholars as a colony of the Hanseatic League, which worked with the same colonialists ideas from the 16<sup>th</sup> century on, forcing Denmark to export agricultural products to repurchase them as finished products.<sup>4</sup> The 15<sup>th</sup> century put an end to the thriving previous century through the plague, the Dano-Hanseatic-War, storm surges and a major fire which left the people of Flensburg impoverished.<sup>5</sup> Only a century later though, Flensburg, through the downfall of the Hanseatic League, obtained a new role, turning into a dominant figure in actively executing trade relations and becoming one of the most important market towns in the Scandinavian realm. Quickly, the range of the city expanded to Greenland for whaling, followed by trading routes into the Mediterranean Sea where the merchants accessed new markets and connected the city to new ideas and cultural resources.<sup>6</sup> Following this significant expansion, Flensburg's shipping companies started their first ventures into the Caribbean, where the Kingdom of Denmark from 1666 on, held a colony known as the Danish West Indies.

From the 18<sup>th</sup> century on, Flensburg was a city characterized by its active colonial trade, profiting directly from the Caribbean plantation economy, which relied on slavery to produce sugarcane and molasses under the Danish imperial order.<sup>7</sup> Having become the second biggest harbor in

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4 Svend Karup, "Räuber oder Vorbild? Die Hanse aus dänischer Sicht", in *Praxis Geschichte (Hanse und Handel)* 14/1 (2001): 37

5 Flensburg Gesellschaft für Flensburger Stadtgeschichte ed., *Geschichte einer Grenzstadt*. Flensburg, 1966, 44

6 *ibid.*, 51

7 *ibid.*, 225-233



FIG. 2 Flensburg and its historic urban structure. Graphic by Jes Hansen for Master Studio "Cosmopolitan Habitats" 2020

the Danish *helstaten*,<sup>8</sup> Flensburg was of major importance in the trade with the former Danish West Indies and was directly linked to its imperial exploitation. Many ships reached Flensburg from the Caribbean harbors of Fredriksted, Christianssted, or Charlotte Amalie during this time, mainly importing sugar and resources for the rum production. While the city firstly focused on refining sugar for the local and European market, it began turning to the production of "rum blend" after the industrialization of Copenhagen and Hamburg made the refining uneconomical.<sup>9</sup> This absence of industrialization and the upholding of artisan methods in the city, had a major influence on the preservation of Flensburg's 18th century cityscape, which is still visible today. While in other harbor cities small-scale structures were demolished for the new spatial requirements,

8 The Danish *helstaten* describes the overall territory controlled by Denmark between 1773 and the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 1864.

9 Flensburg Gesellschaft ed., *Geschichte einer Grenzstadt*, 339.

the Kaufmannshöfe (traders yards) and the general harbor structure of Flensburg survived, conserving the colonial spatial reality.

In contrast to Charlotte Amalie, the role as a pole in the Danish colonial empire was seized much earlier. In 1864 at the end of the Second Schleswig War, Flensburg became part of Prussia. Through that, Flensburg lost its trading rights with the Danish colonies and while it was still possible to import the resources for the rum production from Jamaica, the rising costs made the trade increasingly uninteresting.<sup>10</sup> As a direct result, the former twenty rum producers in the city were reduced to one still producing today. Although the colonial trade lost its economic importance for the city of Flensburg over 150 years ago, the traces of this chapter of the city's history molded its socio-cultural self-conception and its spatial configuration in a long-lasting way. The years since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were marked by the constant reduction of maritime trade links until the current loss of status of commercial port, as proven by the decreasing cargo turnover. The former flourishing harbor is now occupied by sail ships and historic ships hinting at its past and providing a backdrop to the touristic marketing image of the Rum-City [Fig. 2].

## Charlotte Amalie

Today Charlotte Amalie, situated on the island of St. Thomas, is the capital of the American Virgin Islands. However, the island has been a Danish colony for several centuries. With the arrival of Europeans to the "New World" at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the entire region of the Caribbean experienced a stark transformation into a territory of transit and exchange while at the same time being fully altered in its population and environment. This holds true for St. Thomas and its surrounding isles. Columbus himself visited the island, initiating its destiny of becoming a territory in use of the "Old World". As the site of global connection and exchange, the harbor has since then played a decisive role and is, therefore, an ideal scenario to analyze general dynamics of postcolonial agency.

The indigenous population of St. Thomas quickly diminished after the contact with Europeans due to murder and diseases. Little is known of how they have used the bay that would become the port of the island and about its role in the dawn of colonial rule. After several decades of being used as a stopover by different seafarers and pirates, in 1666, the Danish took over the island, using it as a geo-strategic location in the colonial game.<sup>11</sup> In 1672 the first port town was erected to protect the harbor and it soon began receiving African slaves to get started on another benefit of colonialism: the exploitation of the land, in this case the sugar cane production and its by-product rum. Up to 50.000 African slaves arrived on the

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10 *ibid.*, 356.

11 Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Saint Thomas," Encyclopædia Britannica (2018)

island during the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century, becoming the largest part of the local population, while the power and economic benefits remained in the hands of the European minority.<sup>12</sup> Danes, but also planters, traders, merchants, sailors, and craftsmen from other European nations without a foothold in the Caribbean, had also been attracted by the colonial niche outside the huge regional empires of France, Spain and England.<sup>13</sup> Sugar was a profitable business until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the abolition of slavery and the introduction of sugar beet in Europe caused a decline for this industry. The geo-strategic position of the island and the free port are, since then, crucial assets in the economy of Charlotte Amalie. The location was the central argument when in 1917, during WW I, the USA bought the islands from neutral Denmark to prevent the possible danger of German submarines being stationed in the Caribbean, threatening the US. The Islands became the American Virgin Islands and since then are an unincorporated and organized territory of the United States, remaining until today in a state of not fully defined autonomy.

By that time, another stakeholder had already entered the stage, the Danish West Indian Company (WICO), a company founded in 1905 owning and running the majority of the port facilities.<sup>14</sup> The original field of action of the company was to search for benefits from the transatlantic trade by supplying coal and water to the steamships, used commercially on the Atlantic trade since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with big expectations after the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914. The company additionally adopted the connection of the island's harbor with the Danish ports, using the political network for a continuation of the economic relations. This shift, turning the political dependences into a business, leaves the extraterritorial ownership and profit transfer of the harbor from the Caribbean back to Europe even after the shift of national affiliation unchanged. The power structure of the colony, as well as in parallel the material and personnel infrastructure of the harbor, were reused. The former governor of the island was a leading founding member and the representative governor's residence in Charlotte Amalie became home to the president of WICO who used to put out the Danish flag every day until 1993.<sup>15</sup> A perfect maintenance of relations and symbols.

In 1936 WICO started operating in a new business area as a tourist company was opened within the enterprise reacting to the change of image of the Caribbean from savage to "health and freedom".<sup>16</sup> Tourism quickly became the most important economic sector of the US Virgin Islands and

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12 Nathalia Brichet, "A Postcolonial Dilemma Tale," *Itinerario* 2 (2019), 351

13 Christian Williamson and Douglas Armstrong. "A 19th Century Urban Port Town Merchant's Residence in Charlotte Amalie, St Thomas, Danish West Indies" in *Proceedings of the XXIII Congress of the International Association for Caribbean Archaeology*, ed. Samantha A. Rebovich (Antigua: Dockyard Museum, English Harbour, 2011), 278

14 Brichet, "A Postcolonial Dilemma Tale," 354

15 *ibid.*, 353

16 *ibid.*, 358.





FIG. 3 Charlotte Amalie and its historic urban structure. Graphic by Jes Hansen for Master Studio "Cosmopolitan Habitats" 2020

today, 80% of the economy is related to it.<sup>17</sup> While in the beginning tourists were intended to stay on the islands and Denmark and its past were sold as a nostalgic brand, in the 1960s, the WICO expanded the port facilities to attract more and bigger cruise ships, through which tourists would only stay a few hours in Charlotte Amalie. These decisions were mostly taken without the local population, which only selectively had economic benefit from its harbor but was affected strongly by these decisions. Being an unincorporated and organized territory of the United States until 1968, the population was not even allowed to elect their own governor, and the treaties of 1917 granting WICO extensive powers were valid until the 1990s. Since 1993, after the divestiture of WICO, ongoing lawsuits strive to redistribute the company. However, the big share of profits of cruise ship tourism still seems to flow off the island, while the destiny of the local economy depends on the decisions taken abroad [Fig. 3].

## Cosmopolitan peripheries

By focusing on Charlotte Amalie and Flensburg, we examine a global yet fameless postcolonial constellation of two rather small cities, which have not been in the spotlight yet. They have never become big "nodes of a globalization"<sup>18</sup> or hubs of economic power, which has rendered them less significant for the generation of urban theory.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, they are an interesting case study to reveal overlooked relations and dynamics of cities formed by globalization for more than five centuries. The

17 *ibid.*, 349

18 Ananya Roy, "The 21st-Century Metropolis," *Regional Studies*, 43, no. 6 (2009), 821

19 Jennifer Robinson, "Global and World Cities," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, no. 3 (2002)

“rediscovery of places beyond the metropolis”<sup>20</sup> is necessary to diversify the field of urban studies, particularly as “there is still considerable work to be done to produce a cosmopolitan, postcolonial urban studies”.<sup>21</sup> With the comparative work about Flensburg and Charlotte Amalie, one can trace back colonial agency and some “discrepant cosmopolitanism”<sup>22</sup> outside the metropolitan hubs of the former empires and megacities in the previous colonies. At first sight, the two minor cities do not seem to have much in common, however, without each other they would not be what they are today. They owe their cityscape, their historic urban structures and, to a considerable extent, their contemporary image to the relationship that had connected them politically for two centuries and on an economic level even beyond. In “the local [...] the adaptive persistence of imperial structures of power, the always present postcolonial counterflows and the unanticipated trajectories of identity and power”<sup>23</sup> can be grasped in their spatialities until today. Both cities have remained small, Flensburg (56 km<sup>2</sup>) counts 86.000 inhabitants and Charlotte Amalie 10.000 (the entire island of St. Thomas (83 km<sup>2</sup>) 52.000 inhabitants), so there has been little spatial-architectural transformation of the city cores and the material traces are still present. Different to big cargo ports like Hamburg or Rotterdam, which have continued their expansion and the historic structures have been largely reshaped, Flensburg’s historic trading house structure has remained largely untouched, as is the urban fabric of the historic area of Charlotte Amalie. This makes it possible to study particular small-scale spatial structures that were shaped during the heydays of colonial exchange and their effects on the cityscapes on both sides of the ocean. This study focuses on the relation of the two port cities, that is of postcolonial character, especially highlighting spatial-material assets, particularly the harbor area, and their shifting symbolic meaning, appropriation and commodification.

## Postcolonial linkages

Postcolonialism is understood not simply as the period after the official ending of the colonial period, which in the case of Flensburg would be 1864, becoming a Prussian city, and for Charlotte Amalie 1917, being sold to the USA, but also regarding its aftereffects and continuing agencies. This affects both cities, particularly as the colonial era has strongly influenced what they are today and needs to be analyzed comprehensively.<sup>24</sup> <sup>25</sup> This has not yet been done sufficiently. To analyze these continuing

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20 Schröder, “Open Habitat,” 13

21 Robinson, “Global and World Cities,” 533

22 *ibid.*, 532

23 Jacobs, *Edge of Empire*, 9

24 Jacobs, *Edge of Empire*

25 Anthony King, “Postcolonial Cities, Postcolonial Critiques,” in *Negotiating Urban Conflicts. Interaction, Space and Control* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2006).

systems of postcolonialism, King proposes “an essentially comparative, cross-cultural, and cross-temporal perspective”<sup>26</sup>, focusing on questions of culture, heritage and representation in a comprehensive analysis, comprising a global view. Yeoh formulates clearly: “Not only are the ‘colonial city’ and the ‘imperial city’ umbilically connected in terms of economic linkages as well as cultural hybridization, but their ‘post-equivalents’ cannot be disentangled one from the other and need to be analysed within a single ‘postcolonial’ framework of intertwining histories and relations”.<sup>27</sup> The often subconscious presence of the “other” in both cities, the agency of past times and the shifting interpretations of both create third spaces which, according to Bhabha, are not of one culture or the other but an entirely new concept:<sup>28</sup> “cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation”<sup>29</sup> which also include spaces and spatial attributions as well as the rehistoricization, appropriation and translation of their signs.

In the context of the postcolonial city, a particular focus should be put on architecture and spatial environments, their shifts in meaning and appropriation, both in the colonies and the corresponding cities in Europe.<sup>30</sup> In the still rare field of postcolonialism being applied to the built environment—not only in the former colonies but also in the “heart of the empire”—Jacobs provides a body of theory throughout her work “Edge of Empire”. She does not try to construct a “a strict model of cause and effect” though, but “rather, the basis of a loosely comparative project”.<sup>31</sup> Applying this comparative view on the postcolonial spaces, both in the heart and at the edge of the empire, Jacobs shows “how the imperial project is both global in scale but also messy in its local effects”.<sup>32</sup>

Given that ports are the key sites for joining and connecting the multi-scalar linkages of goods, people, places and cultures, they are per se cosmopolitan places and provide even small cities with a gate to global dynamics. They are platforms of exchange where new situations and constellations constantly emerge, which coins them as significant and stimulating parts of their cities’ culture. This holds true for both analyzed ports, as they play a decisive role as global connectors for the two cities, even though in uneven ways. The cities were strongly shaped by their harbors, the resulting global linkages and the flow of goods, people and ideas throughout several centuries. Today the resulting historic material assets of these periods are important resources for generating heritage that is also commodified for touristic purposes. This local heritage is based on

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26 Anthony King, *Postcolonial Cities* (Elsevier Inc, 2009), 5

27 Brenda S.A. Yeoh, “Postcolonial Cities,” *Progress in Human Geography* 25, no 3 (2001), 457

28 Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, New York: Routledge, 1994).

29 *ibid.*

30 King, “Postcolonial Cities, Postcolonial Critiques,” 21

31 Jacobs, *Edge of Empire*, 5.

32 *ibid.*, 5.

global exchange in both cases and one can consider these conjunctions as spatio-temporal relations between the two cities, a worldwide network and a dialog of different places and periods.

## Ports and the cities

The harbors of Flensburg and Charlotte Amalie were erected or expanded due to their direct connection through the transatlantic trade from the 17<sup>th</sup> century on and have since then marked the cityscape and self-understanding of the cities. Both have the same cultural and intellectual origin and a shared background of design ideas, and both are central today for contemporary tourism, however, in different ways. For Flensburg, the colonial conquest of the Danish crown in the Caribbean and the following trade monopoly with the Danish West Indies meant an acceleration of the city's prosperity based on multi-scalar trade. The harbor, trading and processing facilities expanded and broadened the number and profit of the trading houses with benefits for the entire city. The harbor of Charlotte Amalie ever since, has been the *raison d'être* of the city and reflects the changing needs of the time, which have always been mostly of long-distance global connections. It has served as a free port, as a transatlantic stopover to recharge resources, as a reception point for slaves from Africa, as a strategic outpost in the North Atlantic for European or US American nations and companies, and as a gateway for international tourists, but it has never achieved to diversify the economy of its hinterland. This is typical for the region, as today, most of the ports in the Caribbean are globally leading in the cruise ship business while being almost irrelevant for container shipping.

Flensburg's harbors are assigned for either current trading or historic-touristic purposes. They are accordingly organized and administered by the city council and the merchants and their respective guilds. The "Flensburger Hafen GmbH" administers the commercially used East Harbor, while the "Historische Hafen Flensburg eGmbH" operates the historic West Harbor. Particular architectural structures, like the trading houses with productive courtyards, appeared and marked the urban space substantially up to the current day. However, Flensburg has never been depending entirely on the intercontinental exchange and had quickly adopted a more diversified economy, too, by further processing the raw material of sugar cane and molasse. The rhizomes of trading on several scales and diverse productions helped Flensburg to develop a sustainable base to cope with the end of the sugar trade and the loss of the linkages to Charlotte Amalie and the Danish West Indies. Today the handling of cargo is not essential anymore for the harbor. It has become a central attraction for the city's tourism though and in that way proves to be still vital today.

The promising constellation of being a European outpost as a trading port and the sugar cane business had attracted several Europeans to settle in

Charlotte Amalie during colonial time. Although being a minority of the population, this community has decisively formed the cityscape of the town and the social contrasts of masters and servants can be retraced in the spatial-architectural segregation of the classes. Existing housing blocks, as well as archaeological studies showcase an upper-class lifestyle during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century with several servants and differentiated spatial transition and accessibility according to gender, race and social position, still resembling colonial configurations.<sup>33</sup> Armstrong, Williamson, Armstrong emphasize the many gates of the analyzed residential complex<sup>34</sup> that manifest the exclusion, segregation, and privileges of the colonial system<sup>35</sup> but also point to the nowadays popular gated communities in many postcolonial cities.

## Interpretation and appropriation

The uncritical prerogative of interpretation and usage of the historic architecture, including the history of the slave and sugar cane trading harbor, to touristic infrastructure, was likewise realized from abroad. This has been hindering a discussion about interpretation and appropriation of these sites and places by the local community who likely represent polyvalent relations and interpretations towards the port as their place of work and identity, and as many of them have their backgrounds based on voluntary and forced migration from several continents throughout the centuries. The simplified historicization as a Danish oversee nostalgia or a disneyfication of its pirate past as a background to sell souvenirs to one-day cruise ship tourists has been an obstacle to enter a public discourse about the island's cosmopolitan self-understanding. After the shift from being a Danish colony to becoming a slightly more self-governed appendix of the US, a major part of the population had not been given the opportunity to challenge the colonial power relations. The appropriation of the architectural symbols representing the hierarchy of the colonial past, like the governor's residence, the harbor and further representative buildings were directly turned private to be kept under the same control. So "the persistent social and spatial maldistributions of resources [...] among the population in some postcolonial cities"<sup>36</sup> is not only ensuring the economic continuity of the colonial system, but it also implies the prerogative of interpretation from the same external view of the former colonizer.

The profit that is generated by owning and administrating important parts of the harbor in Charlotte Amalie until almost 80 years after the end of the colonial period by a Danish company represents another postcolonial

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33 Douglas V. Armstrong, Christian Williamson and Alan D. Armstrong, "Networked Interaction," in *Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity*, ed. Magdalena Naum and Jonas M. Nordin. (New York: Springer, 2013)

34 *ibid.*

35 King, "Postcolonial Cities, Postcolonial Critiques," 21

36 *ibid.* 18

construction of “inherent structures of power, inherited from the colonial regime and institutionalized in the [...] practices of city and state bureaucracies”.<sup>37</sup> Ethical, social, and spatial segregation in a native and a European part are essential characteristics of a colonial city, as is its unidirectional, exploitive economic system run by oversea profiteers that withdraw whenever the business goes down.<sup>38 39</sup> Even after political independence, an important share of the island’s economic activity had remained spatially and functionally separated from the city of Charlotte Amalie in the oversea hands of a Danish company. The colonial, exploitive attitude can be seen by the ruthless expansion and privatization of former public land in the 1960s, the decades of judicial trials that followed after officially handing over the harbor in 1993 and in the lacking interest in developing a more diversified and sustainable economic system on the island.<sup>40</sup>

On the one hand, this proves the continuing agency of the colonial system and, on the other hand, illustrates the different academic views and reputations that exist on the two cities. While Flensburg as a German city is analyzed in many ways under different angles, the bibliography of Charlotte Amalie is mostly narrowed down to its past as a Danish colony or its current situation as a tourist destination.

Charlotte Amalie and Flensburg make use of their individual colonial history in a process of reframing the past for the tourism industry, which both cities’ economies rely on today. Flensburg branded itself as a Rum-City and tells, as part of this marketing scheme, its colonial history as a triumphant and adventurous story of seaman’s, riches and the tropical. This reveals the city’s self-perception of its postcolonial understanding. The tourist relives the glorious historical chapter of Flensburg’s economic rise based on the colonial land seizure and colonial exploitation in the West Indies. The inhuman logic of the colonial reality is talked down in an anecdotal narrative while employing “silences” to frame the past. The Haitian anthropologist Trouillot states: “any historical narrative is a particular bundle of silences, the result of a unique process, and the operation required to deconstruct silences will vary accordingly”<sup>41</sup>. These “silences” and the act of “silencing the past” are also present in the telling and reproduction of Flensburg’s and Charlotte Amalie’s postcolonial past and present. In a direct sense, we find the tendencies in the reframing of the past where “history is a story of power, a story about who won”<sup>42</sup>. More indirectly, we find it in the spaces and spatial configurations of the cities acting as agents and actors of their own in the production of history and the historical narrative. Charlotte Amalie—in the more difficult position of being

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37 King, *Postcolonial Cities*, 4

38 *ibid.*, 1

39 Brichet, “A Postcolonial Dilemma Tale,” 351-52

40 *ibid.*, 356

41 Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 27

42 *ibid.*, 5



FIG. 4 Rote Straße Flensburg. Image by Sönke Rahn, licensed under CC 3.0

the formerly colonized city—cleanses its history from the horrors and suffering of the slave labor and reinterprets itself as a place of the exotic for the cruise ship tourists flooding the island on their shore excursions, where the historic city becomes a superficial backdrop to the short-lived visits. The visitors are implicitly invited to identify themselves with the position of the European colonizer, enjoying the pleasures of a fully serviced “colonial lifestyle” of the superior class. Both phenomena, which are based on the stereotyping of the past, can be adequately decrypted and understood through Said’s theory of Orientalism which is concerned with the homogenization and stereotypical depiction of the Orient by the colonizers.<sup>43</sup> While Orientalism, according to Said, is foremost intended for the analysis of Middle Eastern and North African lands and societies ruled

43 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London, New York: Routledge, 1978), 2 ff



FIG. 5 Riise Mall Charlotte Amalie. Image by Martin Lie, licensed under CC 3.0

and represented by Britain and France, scholars have since proven that the theory is applicable to the representation of the Caribbean, where a similar unequal dichotomy to Orientalism is better described as tropicalisation.<sup>44</sup> [Figs. 4-5]

In both given examples, a form of tropicalisation is employed to create an historic narrative for tourists to consume the colonial past in a simplified and cleansed nostalgic reproduction. If we break down these narratives, we expose a binary division of the occident and the tropical, where the occident stands for superiority and strength and the tropical for exotic “otherness”. Flensburg focuses on its representation as the Rum-City, identifying itself over the main product of its colonial trade and a nostalgic recollection of the heyday of transatlantic trade with the Caribbean. In the present reality of the city, we do not find correlations to this self-depiction, as rum has become a souvenir, with only two rum producers left in the city and the relations with the tropic having ceased over 150 years ago. In that way, the multi-layered reality of postcolonial Flensburg has been reduced to a self-inflicted stereotypical and romanticized representation of its history of seafaring and its relationship with the Danish West Indies. This also extends into the built environment of the city, which in its scenic quality represents the nostalgic recollection of the 18th century and provides a backdrop to the narrative of the Rum-City. A spatial example in the city today are the Kaufmannshöfe, which are a characteristic urban typology of the harbor front in Flensburg. These elongated courtyards, surrounded by former warehouses and with a merchant’s residency towards the main street and a gatehouse towards the harbor front, are still present in the city of today. While they have long lost their original use

44 Krista A. Thomson, *An Eye for the Tropics*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).



and have been forgotten for many decades after the end of the colonial trade, since the 1980s, some of them have been restored and repurposed for the city's tourism. Through this, these former working yards are now flanked with restaurants, bars and small shops, transformed into leisure infrastructure for tourism, and represent a very different reality. In Said's tradition of the contrapuntal reading, it is becoming evident that these very characteristic and atmospheric spaces in the city can be seen as interlinked with the colonial exploitation of the West Indies.<sup>45</sup> Even though there is no mention of the history of these spaces found in them today, their existence is dependent on the colonial experience. Charlotte-Amalie, on the other hand, has a very different position in reproducing its history. At first, Charlotte Amalie has been the colonized city and through that, it is not able to separate itself from the past or be as selective in its retelling as Flensburg, the colonizer's city was. By the definition of colonialization, that people from the outside decide what the colony's resource is, one can assume that tourism in the way it is executed in Charlotte Amalie is a prolongation of the colonial logic, a legacy and still valid agency of being a colony.<sup>46</sup> The exclusion of an important share of the population in commemorating their experience as "heritage" and reducing the legacy to the story of a few that have been and are still the most powerful the prevalent interpretation of the past is reproducing colonial hegemonies.<sup>47</sup> This happens in the field of significance but also by selling the heritage as tourism, again, in the island's most important economic sector. In its competitive role as an American cruise ship destination, the city employs its past and its spatial postcolonial reality to appeal to the city's audience through the agents of tropicalisation. The repurposed colonial architecture in the city center is now the attractor for tourists in the city and much like Flensburg's rum and other signifiers of the past are symbolizing the tropicalisation of the place in the present. The city, which was founded for the sole purpose of colonial trade by the Danish crown, is spatially characterized by its warehouses and courtyard houses directly adjacent to the harbor front. Cleansed from the slave labor and the former uses, many of the warehouses have become souvenir shops for cruise ship tourists over the last decades. In that way, the architecture becomes a tropicalized backdrop for the western-touristic gaze, by eliminating the complexity of the multi-scalar and multi temporal postcolonial reality.<sup>48</sup> Through their reproduction of the tropical in their own way, both cities show that the imaginative machinery of colonialism does not disappear at the point of economic and physical separation. The stereotypical assumptions of the tropical are still renewed in the way the societies understand their postcolonial reality as a material for the present [Fig. 6].

45 Brichet, "A Postcolonial Dilemma Tale," 351-52

46 *ibid.*, 351-52

47 Denis Byrne, "Heritage as Social Action," in *Heritage Reader*, ed. Graham Fairclough et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008)

48 Larsen, Jonas and Urry, John, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* (New York: Sage Publications, 2011).



FIG. 6 Blended Ports: Flensburg and Charlotte Amalie related. Graphic by Jes Hansen for Master Studio "Cosmopolitan Habitats" 2020

## Outlook

The multifaceted relations and influences between the cities described, only reflect fragments of a dense network of globalization. Many encounters and continuously emerging cultures have influenced the sites. Understanding the "reach and power of networked analysis using the example of port cities, aiming to showcase a new approach [...] for an interconnected analysis of built and urban form"<sup>49</sup> prepares the ground for including the long-distance flow of ideas and global connections in urban research. Martiniquan philosopher Glissant describes the unpredictable nature of "creolisation" in the Caribbean that is based on the intertwining of cultures, places and people with all its inadvertent and unforeseen constellations as the opposite to a planned mixing and the alleged intended

49 Carola Hein, *Port Cities: Dynamic Landscapes and Global Networks* (London, New York: Routledge, 2011), 244

colonialization projects of segregation and exploitation.<sup>50</sup> Creolisation is built on “mutual respect of heterogeneous elements, that are set in relation, which means that in exchange and mixing the being [...] is not lowered or despised”<sup>51</sup>. By referring to chaos theory, Glissant proposes an archipelagic thinking, an inductive way of relational reasoning based on poetry and the imaginary, to analyze the world and its relationships. However, the unbalanced power relations in these linkages need to be considered and postcolonial theories help to integrate these interactions. This understanding formed in the Caribbean opens up a new view on how to create non-hierarchical relations based on cultural interactions and is a promising framework for pursuing and complementing Flensburg’s and Charlotte Amalie’s relations as well as understanding port cities in general.

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50 Édouard Glissant, *Kultur und Identität*, (Heidelberg: Das Wunderhorn, 2005).

51 *ibid.*, 14. (Translation by author)

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## MAIN SECTION

# (Re-)generating Symbolic Port-City Links: Urban Regeneration and the Cultural Demaritimisation and Remaritimisation of European Port Cities

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## ABSTRACT

Urban policies in many European port cities have displayed attempts to diversify the local economy and rebrand the city within interurban competition. Whilst these processes have been commented upon in relation to their socio-economic and spatial outcomes, little research has engaged with their connection with the maritime nature and exceptionalism of port cities. With examples from urban development and regeneration strategies in two European port cities, Rotterdam (The Netherlands) and Valencia (Spain), this paper elaborates on the concepts of demaritimisation and remaritimisation of port cities from a cultural perspective, to support the argument that, in some cases, these strategies have been underpinned by attempts to overlook, restore or depart from the city's maritime identity, history and heritage. These efforts by policy makers aim to overcome the perceived 'disadvantage' of the port city image or to create and promote different, not necessarily authentic, relationships with the port and the sea to brand the city.

## KEYWORDS

*Demaritimisation; European Port Cities; Port-City Relationships; Remaritimisation; Urban Regeneration*

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## Introduction

For centuries, the ‘myth’ of the port city has been fuelled by the open yet rebellious attitude and cosmopolitan character associated with these cities, by their alleged exceptionalism<sup>1</sup> and extraterritoriality. Late industrialisation and the development of modern ports, deindustrialisation, technological advancements and changing patterns of maritime trade worldwide led to the restructuring of most European ports and, in particular, to the migration of ports outside their traditional central city locations.<sup>2</sup> Since the 1980s, in many port cities, alternative local development policies (such as culture-led urban regeneration) have attempted to compensate for the loss of traditional maritime economic activities and jobs and to alleviate the negative socio-economic impacts of port restructuring through waterfront redevelopment.<sup>3</sup>

This paper explores urban development and regeneration strategies in European port cities and their connection—or lack thereof—with the maritime specificity of these cities and their elusive exceptionalism. It builds on the concepts of demaritimisation and remaritimisation to develop a theoretical tool for the critical analysis of urban regeneration within the socio-spatial and symbolic relationships between ports and cities. Cultural demaritimisation and remaritimisation are defined and tested in relation to the experience of two European port cities, Rotterdam (The Netherlands) and Valencia (Spain). The key argument of the paper is that processes that could be described as cultural demaritimisation and remaritimisation have been visible in regeneration policies in many European port cities since the 1980s. These processes may be either the—sometimes unintended—outcome of urban development and branding strategies or a political choice aimed at ‘getting rid’ of, transforming or constructing, the city’s maritime image.

The analysis<sup>4</sup> provides a comparative perspective on the two case-study cities. Fieldwork was undertaken in 2018 through a mixed-method approach encompassing the review of relevant policy documents (e.g. urban regeneration projects, spatial visions and strategic plans), approximately 10 interviews in each city involving local policy makers, port officials, city planners and experts, approximately 10 street surveys in

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1 John Belchem, *Merseypride: Essays in Liverpool Exceptionalism* (Liverpool: Liverpool Univ Pr, 2000); Eric Van Hooydonk, *Soft Values of Seaports: A Strategy for the Restoration of Public Support for Seaports* (Antwerp: Garant, 2007); Alice Mah, *Port Cities and Global Legacies* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137283146>.

2 Brian Hoyle, ‘Global and Local Change on the Port-City Waterfront,’ *Geographical Review* 90, no. 3 (July 2000): 395, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3250860>.

3 See for example Richard Marshall, *Waterfronts in Post-Industrial Cities* (London: Spon Press, 2001).

4 This research is part of a broader project on event-led regeneration and the socio-spatial, political and symbolic ties between ports and cities, undertaken by the author in 2016-2020 and funded by the University of Hull.



each locality with residents and visitors,<sup>5</sup> non-participant observations in redeveloped public spaces.

In the following sections, firstly, the literature on the exceptionalism of port cities and urban regeneration is briefly explored. Secondly, the concepts of cultural demaritimisation and remaritimisation are defined. Thirdly, the relevant aspects of the experiences of Rotterdam and Valencia are presented. Fourthly, cultural demaritimisation is explored more in detail in the case of Rotterdam. Finally, the case of Valencia is discussed more in depth in relation to cultural remaritimisation.

## Maritime exceptionalism and urban regeneration

European port cities are distinctive and fascinating for both positive and negative reasons.<sup>6</sup> On the one hand, they have traditionally been objects of “worship, myth and legend”.<sup>7</sup> They have been associated with freedom<sup>8</sup> and portrayed as “cities on the edge,”<sup>9</sup> radical, independent, rebellious and anti-authoritarian.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, port cities have been perceived as “havens of sin, poverty, crime, disease,”<sup>11</sup> where the lifestyle of their dwellers deserved moral condemnation.<sup>12</sup>

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, negative narratives of port cities were fuelled by accounts of urban decay, deindustrialisation and unemployment, at a time in which scholars heralded the increasing separation between ports and cities.<sup>13</sup> The presence of vast abandoned port areas in central city locations, together with the structural challenges associated with port restructuring, became the rationale for urban regeneration and waterfront redevelopment,<sup>14</sup> where policy makers in declining European port cities have tried to diversify local economies and to re-launch their

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5 Street surveys involved residents and visitors in redeveloped urban spaces on the waterfront. In relation to this paper, respondents were asked if they felt that regenerated waterfront environments in the city had retained their maritime distinctiveness and if their experience of these spaces had impacted on their interest in maritime history and modern ports.

6 Mah, *Port Cities and Global Legacies*, 29.

7 Van Hooydonk, *Soft Values of Seaports*, 57.

8 Waltraud Kokot, “Port Cities as Areas of Transition – Comparative Ethnographic Research,” in *Port Cities as Areas of Transition: Ethnographic Perspectives*, ed. Waltraud Kokot, Kathrin Wildner, Mijal Gandelsman-Trier and Astrid Wonneberger (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2008), 10.

9 As in the “Cities on the Edge” (COTE) project, see John Davies, *Cities on the Edge: Istanbul, Marseilles, Gdańsk, Bremen, Naples, Liverpool* (Liverpool: Liverpool Univ Pr, 2008).

10 Mah, *Port Cities and Global Legacies*, 177.

11 Van Hooydonk, *Soft Values of Seaports*, 23.

12 Han Meyer, *City and Port: Urban Planning as a Cultural Venture in London, Barcelona, New York, and Rotterdam: Changing Relations between Public Urban Space and Large-Scale Infrastructure* (Rotterdam: International Books, 1999), 32.

13 See for example Hoyle, “Change on the Port–City Waterfront,” 396–397; Glen Norcliffe, Keith Bassett, and Tony Hoare, “The Emergence of Postmodernism on the Urban Waterfront,” *Journal of Transport Geography* 4, no. 2 (June 1996): 123–34, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0966-6923\(96\)00005-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/0966-6923(96)00005-1).

14 Meyer, *City and Port*, 48.

cities “through the redevelopment of an area”.<sup>15</sup> In some cases, cultural policies and events have been the catalyst for the regeneration of urban waterfronts, with the redevelopment of Barcelona’s Port Vell as a primary example.<sup>16</sup>

A few studies have engaged with the symbolic aspects of waterfront redevelopment and the regeneration of former port areas, in particular in relation to the maritime character of port cities. Scholars agree that elements of the port city’s maritime past are being commodified to create an artificial and saleable image of the port.<sup>17</sup> In the 1990s, Norcliffe et al.<sup>18</sup> interpreted this process as part of the reshaping of urban waterfronts in relation to the emerging postmodern consumerist culture, aimed at offering new “place experiences”. Many redeveloped waterfronts now tend to display a certain “sameness,”<sup>19</sup> generating a “sense of déjà vu”.<sup>20</sup> Whether or not intentionally, city planners tend to be influenced by maritime-related stereotypes and myths.<sup>21</sup> Atkinson<sup>22</sup> discusses how the development of Victoria Dock Village in Hull made use of street furniture to provide the new residential neighbourhood with a maritime feeling, creating a “maritime-kitsch’ aesthetic” that was nonetheless appreciated by some of its residents. Yarker<sup>23</sup> develops the concept of tangential attachments to show how, taking NewcastleGateshead Quayside as an example, pre-regeneration memories of waterfronts may survive their transformation.

## Defining cultural demaritimisation and remaritimisation

In the field of transport economics, the term demaritimisation is sometimes deployed to describe the loss of established maritime practices in port cities or a reduced relative economic importance of maritime

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15 Rinio Bruttomesso, “Complexity on the Urban Waterfront,” in *Waterfronts in Post-Industrial Cities*, by Richard Marshall (London: Spon Press, 2001), 47.

16 For example, Franco Bianchini and Michael Parkinson, eds., *Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration: The West European Experience* (Manchester: Manchester Univ Pr, 1993); Jussi S. Jauhiainen, “Waterfront Redevelopment and Urban Policy: The Case of Barcelona, Cardiff and Genoa,” *European Planning Studies* 3, no. 1 (March 1995): 3–23, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654319508720287>; Beatriz García, “Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration in Western European Cities: Lessons from Experience, Prospects for the Future,” *Local Economy* 19, no. 4 (2004).

17 As mentioned by Maciej Kowalewski, “Images and Spaces of Port Cities in Transition,” *Space and Culture* 24, no. 1 (2018): 53–65, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1206331218783940>.

18 Norcliffe et al., “Postmodernism on Urban Waterfronts”, 132.

19 *ibid.*, 130.

20 Eric Van Hooydonk, “Port City Identity and Urban Planning,” *Portus* 18 (2009): 19.

21 Kokot, “Port Cities as Areas of Transition,” 10.

22 David Atkinson, “Kitsch Geographies and the Everyday Spaces of Social Memory,” *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 39, no. 3 (March 2007): 521–40, <https://doi.org/10.1068/a3866>.

23 Sophie Yarker, “Tangential Attachments: Towards a More Nuanced Understanding of the Impacts of Cultural Urban Regeneration on Local Identities,” *Urban Studies* 55, no. 15 (2018).

functions in favour of other economic activities.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, the term remaritimisation is sometimes used to describe the opposite process, where established maritime functions regain a greater relative importance within the local economy or new maritime practices are introduced. As suggested by Musso and Ghiara,<sup>25</sup> these concepts are not unambiguous and may also be interpreted from a cultural perspective.

Therefore, it is possible to elaborate on these concepts and apply them to the study of urban regeneration and the symbolic aspects of port-city relationships. 'Cultural demaritimisation' may be defined as the loss of aspects of local maritime cultures or heritage in favour of other narratives or elements of local identities. Local policy makers may, not necessarily intentionally, overlook aspects of local maritime culture, history and heritage (e.g. fishing or maritime trade) or may prioritise and value other aspects of the city's identity and local economy (e.g. manufacturing, cultural consumption) to the detriment of the city's maritime identity. Similarly, the term 'cultural remaritimisation' can be deployed to describe processes of urban transformation, cultural policy making or city branding aimed at creating or recreating socio-spatial and symbolic relationships with the port and the sea. In this case, urban policy may either try to reconnect with local maritime history, heritage and culture or override local values and meanings to create a new, possibly artificial connection with the sea.

Although the concepts of demaritimisation and remaritimisation are not widely used to analyse the cultural and symbolic aspects of port-city relationships or waterfront redevelopment, existing studies do propose similar ideas. Van Hooydonk argues that port migration contributed to weakening psychological port-city ties and transforming port cities into "dehumanising islands".<sup>26</sup> Andrade Marqués observes that waterfront redevelopment risks transforming many port cities into coastal cities, by eroding their maritime distinctiveness.<sup>27</sup> Dovey suggests that urban regeneration on the waterfront has pursued "a wholesale reconstruction of the urban image with spectacles of artistic, social and economic dynamism".<sup>28</sup>

Cultural demaritimisation or remaritimisation are visible in a range of urban, economic and social regeneration projects and policies in

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24 See for example Enrico Musso and Marco Bennacchio, "Demaritimisation o remaritimisation? L'evoluzione dello scenario economico delle città portuali," in *Porti, città e territorio costiero. Le dinamiche della sostenibilità*, ed. Stefano Soriani (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002); Enrico Musso, "Port Added Value at the Heart of the City Port Negotiations". *European Transports/Trasporti Europei* 23 (2003): 33; Claudio Ferrari et al., "Ports and Local Development: Evidence from Italy". *International Journal of Transport Economics/Rivista internazionale di economia dei trasporti* 37, no. 1 (2010): 10.

25 Enrico Musso and Hilda Ghiara, "The Economic Port Landscape. From Traffic to Remaritimisation". *Portus* 18 (2009): 63.

26 Van Hooydonk, *Soft Values of Seaports*, 42.

27 María José Andrade Marqués, "Puertos: Paisajes de memoria, lugares de oportunidad," *EDaP* 7 (2014): 33.

28 Kim Dovey, *Fluid City: Transforming Melbourne's Urban Waterfront*. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 13.

European port cities, including local development plans, cultural policy or mega-event programming. These processes may also occur where maritime heritage is contested or is perceived as dissonant heritage.<sup>29</sup> In port cities where local maritime history and heritage are associated with negative collective memories (e.g. war, disasters, poverty) or with present structural socio-economic challenges (e.g. unemployment, deprivation, pollution), the port city image may contribute to fuelling territorial stigmatisation.<sup>30</sup> As a result, policy makers, planners and developers may attempt to overlook aspects of local maritime history and heritage that are deemed as problematic, contested or potentially detrimental within interurban competition, or may stress these aspects to legitimate urban transformation.

### **Urban regeneration at the (symbolic) port-city interface: the case of Rotterdam and Valencia**

In Rotterdam and Valencia, policy makers have implemented urban regeneration and city branding policies, in particular in the 1990s and 2000s, to put their city on the global map of cultural tourism [TAB. 1].

In the 1990s, many would agree that Rotterdam displayed some of the typical challenges commonly associated with port migration and restructuring, such as a relatively young and low-skilled population, unemployment and the presence of derelict former port areas in proximity to the city centre. As part of the city's long-term policy to attract middle-income households, urban regeneration taking place since the 1980s has been redesigning the riverfront and promoting a stronger relationship between the city and the river. For example, the redevelopment of Kop van Zuid, which was initially envisioned in the 1980s with the aim of prioritising social housing, made use of high-rise modern architecture to shape the new image of Rotterdam as a port metropolis. Cultural and sporting events, such as UEFA EURO 2000 and the European Capital of Culture 2001, contributed to celebrating these redevelopments.<sup>31</sup> The city's cultural event policy undertaken from the 1990s to the mid-2010s has

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29 John E Tunbridge and Gregory John Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict* (Chichester: J. Wiley, 1997).

30 Enrico Tommarchi and Franco Bianchini, "A Heritage-Inspired Cultural Mega Event in a Stigmatised City: Hull UK City of Culture 2017," *European Planning Studies* (forthcoming).

31 Greg Richards and Julie Wilson, "The Impact of Cultural Events on City Image: Rotterdam, Cultural Capital of Europe 2001," *Urban Studies* 41, no. 10 (September 2004): 1931–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0042098042000256323>. Yawei Chen, "Urban Regeneration through Mega Event: The Case of Rotterdam," *Proceedings of 2012 Shanghai International Conference of Social Science*, 2012, 29–36.

	Rotterdam	Valencia
<b>Population</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 650,597</li> <li>• 2.3 million (metropolitan region)</li> </ul> (source: BRP – OBI, 2020; OECD, 2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 801,545</li> <li>• 1.5 million (metropolitan region)</li> </ul> (source: Ajuntament de València, 2020; 2017)
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7.3% (national average: 3.6%)</li> </ul> (source: Gemeente Rotterdam/CBS, 2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12.5% (national average: 14.5%)</li> </ul> (source: Ajuntament de València/INE, 2017)
<b>Value added of the port</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18bn Euros (direct)</li> <li>• 27.2bn Euros (total)</li> </ul> (source: Erasmus Centre for Urban, Port and Transport Economics, 2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0.9bn Euros (direct)</li> <li>• 2.5bn Euros (total)</li> </ul> (source: APV, 2016/2019)
<b>No. of jobs in the maritime cluster</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 121,800 (direct)</li> <li>• 225,100 (overall)</li> </ul> (source: Erasmus Centre for Urban, Port and Transport Economics, 2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16,400 (direct)</li> <li>• 38,800 (overall)</li> </ul> (source: APV, 2016/2019)
<b>Overnight stays</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.73 million</li> <li>• +63% in 2012-2018</li> </ul> (Gemeente Rotterdam/CBS, 2012-2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.06 million</li> <li>• +24% in 2012-2018</li> </ul> (Turismo Valencia, 2012-2018)

**TAB. 1** Key facts and figures about the case-study cities. Table elaborated by the author on the basis of the following sources (as indicated in the table): BRP – OBI, 2020; OECD, 2017; Gemeente Rotterdam/CBS, 2018; Erasmus Centre for Urban, Port and Transport Economics, 2018; Gemeente Rotterdam/CBS, 2012-2018; Ajuntament de València, 2020; 2017; Ajuntament de València/INE, 2017; APV, 2016/2019; Turismo Valencia, 2012-2018.

further contributed to increasing Rotterdam’s attractiveness and to fuelling its touristification.<sup>32</sup>

Due to its geographical settings, Valencia has long been considered as “giving its back to the sea”.<sup>33</sup> The city was established on the River Túria, about five kilometres inland. A few maritime villages developed on the coast around the port and gradually became part of the city.<sup>34</sup> However, local policy makers have sought to establish a stronger relationship with the sea and to strengthen the city’s maritime feeling. The Balcón al Mar

32 In the period 2012-2018, overnight stays in Rotterdam increased from 1.06 million to 1.73 million. Source: Gemeente Rotterdam, Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. For a discussion of the touristification of port cities see María J. Andrade and João Pedro Costa, “Touristification of European Port-Cities: Impacts on Local Populations and Cultural Heritage,” in *European Port Cities in Transition. Moving Towards More Sustainable Sea Transport Hubs*, eds. Angela Carpenter and Rodrigo Lozano (Cham: Springer, 2020).

33 Interview, expert3, 2018; interview, policy maker1, 2018.

34 David L. Prytherch and Josep Vicent Boira Maiques, “City Profile: Valencia,” *Cities* 26, no. 2 (April 2009): 105, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2008.11.004>.

project, agreed with the Port Authority in 1997, consisted in the reconversion of the historic harbour into a mixed-use retail and leisure area. This was coupled with a seafront promenade in the Cabanyal and Malvarrosa districts. The project was revised in the early 2000s, when the America's Cup 2007 provided the opportunity to transform the harbour and to project Valencia as a global visitor destination. The local government in office since 1991 also pursued a controversial urban regeneration scheme focused on extending Avenida de Blasco Ibañez to the seafront, which would have implied the destruction of many heritage buildings in Cabanyal, one of the city's maritime districts, had it been fully implemented.<sup>35</sup>

### **Port cities vs. ordinary cities: cultural demaritimisation as a policy mindset**

In a context of interurban competition, the challenges associated with many port cities may be perceived as a sort of 'port city stigma' hindering urban attractiveness. As a result of this, policy makers may be inclined to overlook local maritime history and heritage with the aim of 'getting rid' of the port image.

Rotterdam is Europe's largest and busiest port.<sup>36</sup> However, the way in which the relationship among the city, the river and the port has been framed in urban regeneration and urban cultural policies since the 1990s should be problematised. Arguably, the redevelopment of Kop van Zuid focused more on exploiting the symbolic power of water as an asset for urban design and branding than on retaining aspects of the area's maritime identity. Proximity to water was spectacularised with the use of modern architecture and high-rise developments, evoking waterfront redevelopment in North American cities, to affirm Rotterdam's image as a modern global city.<sup>37</sup> The relationship between the city and water, rather than its port, was also a key component of cultural event programming, such as in the case of the *Stromende Stad* (Flowing City) subtheme of the European Capital of Culture 2001 programme or the 2003 Year of Water.

Despite the fact that this strategy did produce effects in terms of increased attractiveness in the medium term,<sup>38</sup> its broader impacts on

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35 Luis del Romero Renau and Catherine Trudelle, "Mega Events and Urban Conflicts in Valencia, Spain: Contesting the New Urban Modernity," *Urban Studies Research* 2011 (July 14, 2011): 4, <https://doi.org/10.1155/2011/587523>.

36 In 2018, the Port of Rotterdam ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the world (1<sup>st</sup> in Europe) in terms of freight throughput (469.0 million tons) and 11<sup>th</sup> in the world (again 1<sup>st</sup> in Europe) for container throughput (14.513 million TEUs), source: Port of Rotterdam (2019) <https://www.portofrotterdam.com/en/news-and-press-releases/port-of-rotterdam-throughput-amounted-to-4694-million-tonnes-in-2019>. Covering a surface of 12,600 hectares, the Port of Rotterdam is also the largest port infrastructure in Europe (source: Port of Rotterdam, n.d., <https://www.portofrotterdam.com/en/doing-business/why-rotterdam/the-port-that-will-take-you-ahead>).

37 Richards and Wilson, "The Impact of Cultural Events on City Image," 1938.

38 *ibid.*; Arie Romein, "Leisure in Waterfront Redevelopment: An Issue of Urban Planning in Rotterdam?" *2005 AESOP Conference*, Vienna, 13-17 July, 2005. Available at: <http://aesop2005.scix.net/data/papers/att/606.fullTextPrint.pdf>.

symbolic port-city links in the long term appear to be more nuanced. For example, one surveyed long-time resident defined the skyline of Kop van Zuid as something unpleasant in the eyes of “true Rotterdammers” and not respectful of the city’s identity. When asked whether they felt they were in a port city, two young American tourists observed that the city’s skyline (the reason why they visited Rotterdam) hardly made them think of the port (which they were by no means interested in). Some interviewees stressed how many policy makers, especially in the 1990s and 2000s, perceived the city’s port image as an issue: “I was always very surprised [by] how negatively they see [the] port, how negatively they want to get rid of the port feeling from their city;”<sup>39</sup> “most cultural policy makers always have this mantra of ‘we’ve got to get rid of this [...] port city image. We’ve got to get culture in [until] it becomes a cultural city, instead of a port city.”<sup>40</sup> A city policy maker also underlined how urban regeneration and cultural policies in the last couple of decades had transformed Rotterdam into an attractive European metropolis and added: “more people live here, more people are proud of it [...] like [in] a normal city”.<sup>41</sup> This tendency to prioritise cultural consumption and the city’s attractiveness over Rotterdam’s maritime identity shows how port city policy makers may have perceived or are perceiving their city’s maritime exceptionalism as a sort of competitive disadvantage.

Nevertheless, the last decade has heralded signs of a shift towards a different attitude that embraces Rotterdam’s maritime character. The impacts of the 2008 crisis made the economic relevance of the port very clear and led local policy makers to abandon the idea that a port city that is attractive to cultural producers and consumers, tourists, businesses and professionals can be considered as independent from its port.<sup>42</sup> The nexus between the city’s maritime identity and its cultural attractiveness is celebrated in some of the city’s branding campaigns, such as Rotterdam Maritime Capital of Europe.<sup>43</sup> In addition, the *Wereldhavendagen* (World Port Days), the event held every year in September to celebrate Rotterdam’s relationship with its port, has gradually grown into a large-scale maritime festival<sup>44</sup> and a flagship event in the city’s cultural calendar.

Rotterdam is therefore an example of a port city where, in the last decades, policy makers have perceived maritime exceptionalism as ‘problematic’ and have prioritised generalist consumption over the city’s maritime identity. As a result, cultural demaritimisation is visible for

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39 Interview, expert1, 2018.

40 Interview, expert2, 2018.

41 Interview, city planner1, 2018.

42 Martin Aarts et al., “How to Develop an Unprecedented Port-City Synergie,” *Urban Design* 138 (2016): 27.

43 City of Rotterdam, *Rotterdam Maritime Capital of Europe*, 2020, available at: <https://www.rotterdammaritimecapital.com/>.

44 Erwin Van Tuijl and Leo Van den Berg, “Annual City Festivals as Tools for Sustainable Competitiveness: The World Port Days Rotterdam,” *Economies* 4, no. 11 (2016): 5–6.

example in redeveloped waterfronts celebrating the relationship between contemporary architecture and water, rather than connecting with their maritime past.

## The 'waterfront city': maritime branding and cultural remaritimisation

Many urban regeneration and waterfront development schemes in European port cities have attempted to promote the imaginary of the 21<sup>st</sup> century 'waterfront city.' The resemblance among many waterfronts across the world can be seen as the result of the willingness of policy makers to both follow the path of allegedly successful experiences of waterfront redevelopment and to meet visitors' expectations about contemporary urban waterfronts. From this perspective, the exploitation of the—not necessarily authentic—maritime feeling of an area is a key selling point and contributes to the standardisation of redeveloped port cityscapes.<sup>45</sup>

The case of Valencia illustrates how forms of cultural remaritimisation that override local meanings attributed to the port and the sea may be pursued as a political goal. The 1990s Balcón al Mar vision was intended as a retail- and leisure-oriented redevelopment of the inner harbour, inspired by the redevelopment of Barcelona's Port Vell. If it had been implemented, the project would have transformed the area into a public space, targeting primarily the local middle class. On the basis of Barcelona's experience, it appears possible to argue that this transformation might have encouraged a closer bond between Valencians and the historic harbour. Conversely, in the mid-2000s, Port America's Cup was designed as a lavish urban environment, targeting the upper class and foreign tourists. As in other redeveloped historic harbours, a superyacht marina was built. Despite the fact that the America's Cup 2007 had an immediate positive impact on the economy<sup>46</sup> and on civic pride<sup>47</sup> and was commented as an enjoyable event by some of the surveyed residents, it was not sufficient in itself to 'humanise' the redeveloped port.<sup>48</sup> After the event, this area was not immediately used by the local community, who gradually took hold of

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45 For a definition of port cityscapes, see: Carola Hein, "Port Cityscapes. A Networked Analysis of the Built Environment," in *Port Cities. Dynamic Landscapes and Global Networks*, ed. Carola Hein (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 5.

46 The economic impact of the America's Cup 2007 was estimated in a 2.67% increase in the region's GDP and a 3.29% increase in employment in the region, see IVIE, *Impacto Económico de la 32a America's Cup Valencia 2007. Informe final, diciembre 2007* (Valencia: IVIE, 2007).

47 According to a study by the University of Valencia, 74% of residents felt proud about the fact that the event took place in their city, see UVEG, *Informe sociológico sobre la Gestión Deportiva Municipal en Valencia* (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2009).

48 Cultural events and spectacles may be used to 'humanise' (i.e. to help people assimilate) real estate developments. Sharon Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995), 22.



	Rotterdam	Valencia
Cultural demaritimisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>port city image perceived as a 'policy issue' in past decades</li> <li>focus on cultural consumption and attractiveness, to the detriment of maritime identity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>maritime heritage assets not mobilised or concealed by redevelopments</li> <li>focus on cultural consumption and attractiveness, to the detriment of maritime identity</li> </ul>
Cultural remaritimisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>key role of contemporary architecture and water to brand the city (e.g. through cultural programming)</li> <li>recent awareness of the role of maritime identity in port competitiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>new, artificial maritime feeling sought to target upper classes and visitors</li> <li>recent attempts to mobilise/restore maritime heritage assets</li> </ul>

TAB. 1 Aspects of cultural demaritimisation and remaritimisation in the case-study cities. Author's work.

it in the following years.<sup>49</sup> Surveyed residents and visitors show little interest in, and in some cases awareness of, Valencia's character as a port city.

It appears possible to argue that cultural demaritimisation and, in particular, remaritimisation played a role in this process. The redevelopment of the historic harbour failed to mobilise existing maritime heritage assets, such as the historic shipyards known as Les Drassanes. Rather, the America's Cup team bases built on the harbourside profoundly transformed the port cityscape and concealed some heritage assets in the area.<sup>50</sup> Existing symbolic port-city links and meanings attributed to the ports were overridden by creating a new waterfront environment displaying some of the post-modern features highlighted by Norcliffe et al.<sup>51</sup> and targeting middle and upper classes. As mentioned by a senior officer of a local institution, this approach to the transformation of the harbour—and the seafront more in general, as in the case of Avenida de Blasco Ibañez—"was a will [...] to impose to [...] Valencia [...] a certain manner to be by the sea [...]".<sup>52</sup>

Since the mid-2010s however, a combination of factors including the impacts of the 2008 crisis,<sup>53</sup> a local fiscal crisis generated by mega events and large-scale projects<sup>54</sup> and the demise of the local government in office since 1991, changed the picture. In the last years, urban and cultural policies have displayed attempts to reconnect Valencia with its maritime history and heritage, suggesting that a different process of remaritimisation,

49 Interview, policy maker1, 2018.

50 Interview, policy maker2, 2018.

51 Norcliffe et al., "Postmodernism on Urban Waterfronts", 132.

52 Interview, event team member1, 2018.

53 Josep Sorribes, *Valencia 1940-2014: Construcción y destrucción de la ciudad*. Valencia: Universitat de València, 2015.

54 Amparo Tarazona Vento, "Mega-Project Meltdown: Post-Politics, Neoliberal Urban Regeneration and Valencia's Fiscal Crisis," *Urban Studies* 54, no. 1 (January 2017): 68–84, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098015625025>.

one closer to local meanings, might be at play. An example is the renewed interest in a multi-venue maritime museum,<sup>55</sup> which would mobilise a number of maritime heritage assets that were overlooked in past policies.

Valencia is an example of how cultural remaritimisation may be implemented as a political goal. Policy makers first sought to establish a new connection between the city and the sea by redeveloping the historic harbour into an environment targeting upper classes and foreign tourists, to the detriment of maritime history and heritage. More recently, the approach shifted towards the restoration of maritime heritage for example through heritage-led regeneration.

## **Conclusions: towards a holistic view of cultural de/re-maritimisation**

This paper has explored the cultural dimension of the concepts of demaritimisation and remaritimisation that is hinted at by many port-city specialists. It has proposed the terminology 'cultural demaritimisation' and 'cultural remaritimisation' of port cities to describe respectively the erosion of local maritime distinctiveness, culture and heritage and the restoration or introduction of new meanings associated with the city's maritime identity. It has shown how culture-led urban regeneration schemes in European port cities play a role in these processes, as a consequence of cultural urban policy or as a result of political choices, providing examples from the experience of Rotterdam and Valencia.

Aspects of cultural demaritimisation and remaritimisation are visible in the experience of both cities, where policy makers have prioritised cultural consumption to the detriment of maritime heritage and identity. In Rotterdam, cultural demaritimisation was visible in past decades in the tendency among policy makers to perceive the port city image as problematic. Valencia is an example of how cultural remaritimisation was actively pursued to create a new, saleable image building on the city's proximity to the sea, rather than on its maritime history and heritage. More recently, changing attitudes among policy makers towards the port city image are visible. In Rotterdam, policy makers are increasingly framing the cultural attractiveness of the city as an aspect contributing to port competitiveness. In Valencia, cultural remaritimisation is now being pursued through attempts to restore and mobilise the city's maritime heritage.

Recent studies do explore the erosion or transformation of local maritime cultures. Nonetheless, the use of the terms demaritimisation and remaritimisation to analyse these processes could help frame them and connect with other disciplines such as transport economics and port

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55 Enrico Tommarchi, "Port Cities, Heritage Cities. A Comparative Perspective on Maritime Cultural Quarters," *PortusPlus* 9 (2020): 11–12. Interview, policy maker3, 2018.

governance, encouraging more holistic accounts of the negotiation of symbolic port-city links.

At the time of writing, it is not clear to what extent local policy makers will be able to rely on culture, leisure and tourism as catalysts for urban development and regeneration in a post-pandemic world. Further research could explore whether a renewed awareness of the economic role of the port and of the significance of local maritime identity—observed in Rotterdam after the 2008 crisis and in Valencia after 2015—is set to emerge more broadly across European port cities as a consequence of the economic downturn related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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## MAIN SECTION

# Rotterdam's New Waterway: The Iconification of an Infrastructure (1860-1947)

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## ABSTRACT

The New Waterway (dug between 1863-1872) brought the port city region of Rotterdam unprecedented growth. Whereas it is a national engineering feat, the Waterway and its creator, Pieter Caland, were appropriated as icons of the progress of the city of Rotterdam by the start of the 20th century. In this paper, we analyze four examples of this iconification: the monument for Caland (1906), the Diorama of the Waterway for the World Expo in Antwerp (1930), and two theatrical plays (1941 and 1947) expressing the Waterway's meaning during and after the Second World War. We argue that these esthetic and public expressions are crucial elements in Rotterdam's narrative of progress, modernism, and resilience. The symbolic meaning of the New Waterway transcended even the technological significance of port-related infrastructure. In that sense, the Waterway became a convincing metaphor of hope and economic development for a port-city region.

## KEYWORDS

*Infrastructure; Culture; Port Cities; Urban Iconography; Port Culture*

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## Introduction

In 1872, the first ship passed the newly dug New Waterway near the Hook of Holland in the west of the Netherlands. Whereas this Waterway was planned in 1863 by the Dutch government as a new mouth of the transnational flow of the Rhine, by the turn of the century, the city of Rotterdam had appropriated it as an urban feat. For Rotterdam, the New Waterway not only precluded a new stage in the port city's development but also symbolized unprecedented economic growth. Reaching its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2022, this symbolic value is still strong: not only is the Waterway an economic artery with an ever-deeper draft to accommodate the newest container ships, it is also an icon of the city's success as the busiest port in Europe and of resilience in times of hardship.

We argue that these economic and cultural aspects of the Waterway are interconnected. This relationship between global trade and local urban culture is not unique for Rotterdam, and has gained attention from scholars in both the fields of history and social studies. Port cities in particular are what global historians Middell and Naumann call "portals of globalization:" «...places that have been centers of world trade or global communication [and] have served as entrance points for cultural transfer.»<sup>1</sup> The idea that this global connectedness has been affecting urban values and culture, is among others developed by sociologist Jerome Hodos. In his book on second-tier global cities, he attributes a stronger identification with global culture to these second cities than to their nation's capital counterparts: expressing their global connectedness is a way to compete with cities that are economically more diverse and politically more powerful.<sup>2</sup> Expressions of this global connectedness can be, according to social-historian Robert Lee, a "merchant ideology" in which independence, hard work, and an entrepreneurial spirit are highly valued, and artifacts, such as architecture, literature and (applied) works of art.<sup>3</sup>

This reciprocal process of shaping a culture can be captured by the concept of a 'social imaginary', in the words of philosopher Charles Taylor: «...the ways people imagine their social existence (...) the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations (...) it is what enables, through making sense of, the practices of a society».<sup>4</sup> In other words: the social imagination of

1 Matthias Middell and Katja Naumann, "Global History and the Spatial Turn: From the Impact of Area Studies to the Study of Critical Junctures of Globalization," *Journal of Global History* 5, no. 1 (March 2010): 149–70, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740022809990362>.

2 Jerome I. Hodos, *Second Cities: Globalization and Local Politics in Manchester and Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011).

3 Robert Lee, "The Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics of Port Cities: A Typology for Comparative Analysis?," *Urban History* 25, no. 2 (August 1998): 147–72, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S09639268000078X>.

4 The social imaginary had its roots in French mid-century philosophy, but was theorized for social sciences by among others C. Castoriadis (1975) and C. Taylor (2002). Quote from Charles Taylor, "Modern Social Imaginaries," *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (January 2002): 91–124, <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-14-1-91>.

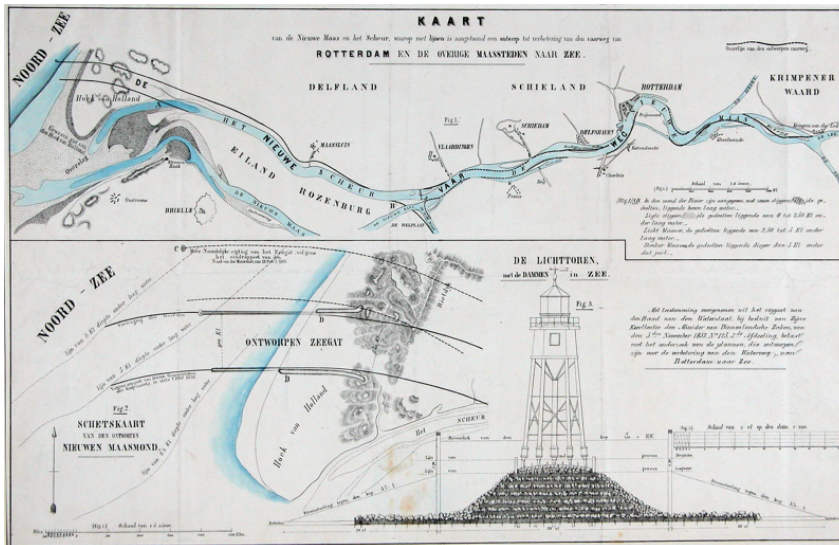


FIG. 1 Map from a report of the Department of the Interior, 5 November 1857, of the plans for the waterway from Rotterdam to the sea. City Archives Rotterdam, VI-26.

a certain group or era often takes shape in practices, policies, and the processes of sensemaking that accompany them. These practices can be as tangible as works of art of architecture, argues Maria Kaika: they are “icons” of the imaginary.<sup>5</sup> Icons, in this case, possess certain symbolic or aesthetic features recognizable to the general public and mediate the values underlying social narratives or the social imaginary. Sociologist Maciej Kowalewski underlines this idea in connection to port cities, in a paper in which he specifies the importance of iconographic representations of port cities and their often-mythical nature, expressing the man-made power over nature.<sup>6</sup>

## Context: reframing the history of the New Waterway

It is generally agreed upon that the construction of the New Waterway has been the most important condition for the development of the transit port city of Rotterdam. However, the primary goal of the national initiative of the New Waterway, decided upon by national law in 1863 and engineered by engineer and national civil servant Pieter Caland (1826-1902), was not to offer shipping traffic better access to the port city of Rotterdam. Initially, it was proposed to improve Rhine navigation and water flow towards the North Sea [Fig. 1]. This example of transnational water management, endorsed by the Central Rhine Commission, coincided with an upcoming shipping regime, dominated by new steam shipping technologies, new transatlantic crossings, and imperial competition between the

5 Maria Kaika, “Autistic Architecture: The Fall of the Icon and the Rise of the Serial Object of Architecture,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 29, no. 6 (December 2011): 968–92, <https://doi.org/10.1068/d161110>.

6 Maciej Kowalewski, “Images and Spaces of Port Cities in Transition,” *Space and Culture* 24, no. 1 (2018): 53–65, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1206331218783940>.

major European powers. The industrialization of maritime activities, which accelerated after the construction started on the Suez Canal in 1859 (and opened in 1869), introduced a new stage in port development as well.<sup>7</sup>

Rotterdam was the second merchant city of the Netherlands and governed by a network of transnationally oriented entrepreneurs. It was not, however, to be expected that the city would benefit from these developments around 1850. Shipowner J. Hudig described the governance network of Rotterdam merchants as quite conservative: «One worked hard but in one direction, and, because this direction had been successful, one did not care about novelties.»<sup>8</sup> With these novelties, he meant steam over sail shipping and the possibility of a breakthrough at Hoek van Holland which had been discussed ever since engineer Pieter Caland presented his plans in 1858.<sup>9</sup> While a part of the merchant elite was afraid that new developments would jeopardize their positions, some of them were quick to embrace the opportunities a new waterway would offer. This was not, however, necessarily due to their innovative mindset, but because they realized that their traditional maritime trade methods would benefit from this new seaway as well.

The potential for the port city of Rotterdam could only be met if its port infrastructure would be modernized. New harbor facilities such as wharves, docks, and advanced cargo handling installations were needed to accommodate new transit functions. Much as other ports worldwide, Rotterdam had to adapt its maritime infrastructures to integrate them into a new global network. The national discourse on the New Waterway, therefore, introduced a new perspective for local stakeholders to push for Rotterdam's future. A new generation of port entrepreneurs came to the forefront and used their national and transnational networks to push Rotterdam's new infrastructure agenda.

On the national level, however, Rotterdam still faced competition with the nation's capital and foremost merchant city, Amsterdam, and the city of Vlissingen in the southern province of Zeeland. Amsterdam had a historic head start, using the Golden Age of the seventeenth century as the main narrative for ensuring its dominant status in a new shipping era. Around 1860, moreover, it was less evident that Rotterdam and not Vlissingen would be the ideal center of transit, as long as rail transport was preferred

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7 For references on port development and the spatial consequences of these developments, see for instance Carola Hein, "The Port Cityscape: Spatial and Institutional Approaches to Port City Relationships," *PORTUSplus* 8 (2019), <https://portusplus.org/index.php/pp/article/view/190>; Josef Konvitz, "Contemporary Urban History: What the Study of Port Cities Implies for Evidence, Methodology, and Conceptualization," *Journal of Urban History* 39, no. 4 (2013): 801–6, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144212470248>; Dirk Schubert, "Ports and Urban Waterfronts," in *The Routledge Handbook of Planning History*, ed. Carola Hein (New York: Routledge, 2018), 338–49.

8 Jan Hudig, "In memoriam L. Pincoffs," in *Rotterdamsch Jaarboekje*, vol. 10, 1 (Rotterdam: P.M. Bazendijk, 1912), 175–85.

9 Johan Ringers, *Caland en de betekenis van zijn werk voor Rotterdam* (Rotterdam: Ad. Donker, 1953), <https://repository.tudelft.nl/islandora/object/uuid%3A5afd7e94-73eb-4046-8e94-41f0e2ce3e67>.

above Rhine shipping. Only after 1890, when Rhine navigation had finally replaced rail as the main transport unit for bulk goods, the New Waterway became a reliable seaway.<sup>10</sup>

The ambitious Rotterdam elite wanted to dethrone Amsterdam as the commercial center of the Netherlands, an ambition that was rooted in the eighteenth-century rivalry between both cities. Eighteenth-century Rotterdam had never been a serious threat to Amsterdam's domination. However, with the industrial development of the Ruhr area in the nineteenth century changing the hinterland, tables had turned. For the first time in its history, the Amsterdam commercial elite feared the ambitions of a Rotterdam merchant elite, as documented by travelers who visited both cities.<sup>11</sup> The New Waterway became the test case for new Dutch urban rivalries under new global conditions, shaped by new maritime industrial networks and major European powers. The rhetoric that was used in the discussions in both chambers of the national House of Representatives enlarged the differences, especially between Amsterdam and Rotterdam: according to representatives from the Rotterdam region, Amsterdam was illegitimately favored as the first city and Rotterdam, being the city of 'independent merchants' and 'hard workers', was left to its own devices. This context, in which both the New Waterway and Rotterdam's subsequent success were not self-evident, was even more reason for the Rotterdam merchant elite to glean a sense of pride from the New Waterway.

## Four iconic representations of the New Waterway

Despite the hesitancy of the Rotterdam elites, the New Waterway became an important object of visual representation of Rotterdam's successes as a modern world port, in particular at the turn of the twentieth century. To make sense of this new era of success and progress, the city sought new representations: icons of a new imaginary taking shape. We analyze four iconic examples of this representation. The monument for Pieter Caland (1906) exemplified the successful transition of the old merchant town into the modern working city of the Netherlands. It was a monument for the people of Rotterdam, and its location in the city center connected the wealth of the port conclusively to the city. The Diorama of the New Waterway by Jaap Gidding (1930) accentuated Rotterdam's future in a European context, in which port cities like Antwerp and Hamburg were caught in fierce competition to determine which of them would be the first on the European continent. Lastly, two theatrical expressions (1941 and 1947) symbolize Rotterdam's narrative of resilience after the atrocities of

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10 Paul van de Laar and Kim Zweerink, "De randstad: een vreemde metropool," *Holland: historisch tijdschrift*, no. 3 (2009): 187–206.

11 Paul van de Laar, *Stad van formaat: geschiedenis van Rotterdam in de negentiende en twintigste eeuw* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2000).

World War II, in the context of a social-democratic emancipatory movement led by a progressive elite of business leaders.<sup>12</sup>

## The Caland Monument (1907)

Although the New Waterway did not get the desired draft until 1909, shipping and trade grew at an unprecedented speed. The time of transport between the port of Rotterdam and the Ruhr area decreased from several months pre-steam, to 48 hours with a steam vessel through the New Waterway.<sup>13</sup> It catalyzed the potential that the city already had. Whereas Rotterdam's governance elite first was hesitant, in the first decades of the twentieth century, the elite embraced the Waterway unequivocally as part of the city's identity.

One of the main steps towards this appropriation of the New Waterway as an icon for the city was the revaluation of Pieter Caland. In 1874, the Dutch Steam Company NASM had already named one of its first ships the P. Caland.<sup>14</sup> Caland's death in 1902 was reported modestly in the national newspapers, but planted a seed in the mind of mayor s'Jacob. At his farewell from his post, a newspaper article noted that s'Jacob attributed the «the efflorescence of Rotterdam to the outstanding Waterway» and proposed to honor the designer of that Waterway with a memorial.<sup>15</sup> To this end, he wanted to use the money that was granted to him by the bourgeoisie, celebrating the end of his term as mayor. Indeed, Rotterdam owed a lot to Caland and the large transit ports would never have been developed without the quick dispatches the New Waterway had made possible. The New Waterway, however, remained a national project. Between 1863 and 1912 Rotterdam had only paid 5 percent of the total investments of around 40 million guilders.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, the local business community claimed Caland as a local hero, one of the key players of the successful port narrative.

Initially, the statue was planned to stand «amidst busy shipping movements» on the Prinsenhoofd, part of an island in the Nieuwe Maas.<sup>17</sup> In 1907, the monument for Caland was unveiled, albeit in a different location: on the new Coolsingel boulevard right in the center of Rotterdam. The Coolsingel was the new representative center of the city of Rotterdam and

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12 See, for example, Hilde Sennema, "Voor stad en haven: Jan Backx en de wederopbouw van Rotterdam," in *Rotterdams Jaarboekje* (Rotterdam: Historische Publicaties Roterodamum, 2016), 248–71.

13 Auke van der Woud, *Een nieuwe wereld: het ontstaan van het moderne Nederland* (Amsterdam: B. Bakker, 2006), 236.

14 Len de Klerk, *Frédéric en Antoine Plate 1802-1927: Rotterdamse kooplieden, reders en bestuurders* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren BV, 2019), 144–45.

15 "Installatie van Mr. A.R. Zimmerman als burgemeester van Rotterdam," *Algemeen Handelsblad*, May 2, 1906.

16 "Overzicht van de ontwikkeling van de nieuwe waterweg 1858-1958," *Stadsarchief Rotterdam*, No. XVIIIIE65 1958.

17 "Installatie"



FIG. 2 Porcelain plate showing two monuments: Caland's and Flour Mill The Hope, on the Coolsingel. Collection: Museum Rotterdam, 7130.



FIG. 3 Glass slide, ca 1920, showing the obelisk with the statue on top of it. City Archives Rotterdam, Collection BKOR.

fitted in the new mayor Zimmerman's large-scale ambitions for Rotterdam as a world port with a modern urban image. By the time the monument was placed, however, it was still a relatively modest street, and together with *Molen de Hoop*, a large flour mill, the monument was the eyecatcher on the new boulevard [Figs. 2-3].

The monument was designed by architect H.J. Evers and applied artist A. Odé, and appears rather eclectic: it consists of an architectural fountain

base and an obelisk, which is adorned with both classical and stylized decorations. The four sides of the obelisk contain texts and images, evoking the sea and the heraldry of the city of Rotterdam, the province of Zuid-Holland, and the Netherlands. When viewing the whole, it immediately strikes that the monument is only partly about Caland: at the base of the obelisk is a copper plaque with an *en profil* relief of Caland's face, surrounded by a laurel in stone. Above this profile is Caland's family weapon with its motto *stella duce*, a Christian maritime reference to the guiding star of Bethlehem.

A winged female figure on top of the obelisk catches the eye. In her right hand, she holds a *caduceus*, the attribute of the Greek god Hermes and the Roman god Mercury, consisting of two snakes intertwined around a staff, with wings on top, symbolizing trade and commerce. Despite the prominent placing of Caland's profile, it is rather small in the context of the whole statue. The texts on the sides, moreover, emphasize the national law and the urban importance of the New Waterway, suggesting that the monument is as much a tribute to the man as to his work, and to the meaning the Waterway had as a catalyst for Rotterdam's wealth.

The statue did not conjure much awe within the local population. A song from 1911 suggested that, despite the monument, Caland was not much revered. In the song, when a police officer is asked who Caland was, he answers: «One doesn't care about Caland, it's none of my business. Caland is a monument, on the Caland Square, in a stone bowl of water on top of a fountain.»<sup>18</sup> At the end of the 1930s, Caland's monument was displaced for a major infrastructural transformation. The replacement of the monument kickstarted a discussion in the press on the meaning of this monument. A hero like Caland – was the general opinion – deserved a better location, preferable at the entrance of the Waalhaven, then the biggest traffic bulk dock of the world. The local Catholic newspaper disregarded this idea: the monument was too urban, not even capable for shipping crews to “attach a cable to it».<sup>19</sup>

## 1930: The Gidding Diorama at the World Expo in Antwerp

Whereas the Caland monument was still a traditional edifice, the 1920s saw a new appreciation of the New Waterway as the catalyst of the new social imaginary. Modernist artists created new imaginaries of the city from the 1920s onwards: in avant-garde film and photography, atonal music of the modern city symphony and experimental literature. Ben

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18 “...Als je vraagt wie Caland was, Zegt de goede man: “Caland regardeert men niet, Dat gaat mij niet an. Caland is een monument, Op het Calandplein, In een waterkom van steen, Boven een fontein!” J.H. Speenhof, *De Diender van Het Calandmonument*, 1911. Accessed June 9, 2021, <https://seniorplaza.nl/liedjes/de-diender-van-het-calandmonument/>.

19 “Over Monumenten En Standbeelden,” *De Maasbode*, December 4, 1938.

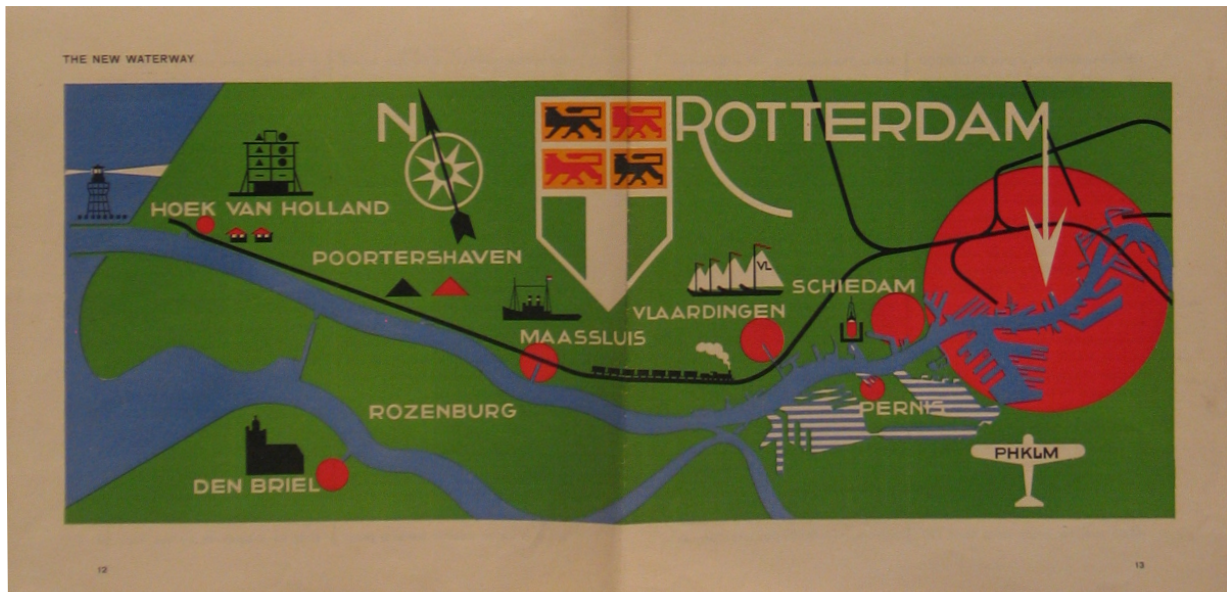


FIG. 4 N.P. de Koo, «The New Waterway», collection Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1929. TYP 10124 (1).

Stroman's novel *Stad (City)*, for example, explored a new modernist prose. These expressions framed Rotterdam as the city of modern large-scale port activities, where grain elevators and loading bridges for coal and ore transshipment symbolized an era of new port technologies and innovations. These modern imaginaries not only became apparent in artistic expressions, but in applied art as well: increasingly brochures of firms, the municipality, the Chamber of Commerce, and the new port city institutions that were established in the early 1930s all carried the distinct visual language of the new era. Alongside new imagery inspired by the industriousness and modernity of the port, writers and architects were explicitly experimenting with design concepts from the United States, such as skyscrapers.

Besides these futurist images, the economic success of the Waterway emphasized the historic connection of the city to the water. That this new imaginary was already rooted in society, is illustrated by the children's history book *Van Visschersdorp tot Wereldstad* (from fisherman's town to global city), by the historian J.M. Droogendijk. He frames the New Waterway as an object that helped Rotterdam regain its wealth after the French domination in the nineteenth century and honors the plans by Caland. He states that without the Waterway, the «thousands and thousands, who made a living in or near the port, would have had to look out for different employment.»<sup>20</sup>

An example of how the historic connection to the water was visualized in the modernist port city promotional materials was the work of artist J. Thorn Prikker. His contribution to a contest for murals in the newly built City Hall in 1917 depicted the strong connection between port and city

20 Jan Marie Droogendijk, *Van visschersdorp tot wereldstad: het 600-jarig bestaan der stad Rotterdam herdacht* (Rotterdam: J.M. Bredée's U.M, 1928).



through the water. Thorn Prikker described these works himself, lending a mythical connotation: «Rotterdam has grown out of light and water.»<sup>21</sup> A more practical representation of this link is a brochure designed by graphic designer N.P. de Koo in 1929, in which he depicts the growth of the New Waterway since its inception in 1872 [Fig. 4]. While a map shows the whole surrounding area of the Waterway, including Vlaardingen and Maassluis, the imagery is explicitly linked to the city of Rotterdam, even depicting the city's coat of arms.

It was the time that the world, specifically the world of global trade, was shaken by the Wall Street crash of 1929 and the subsequent financial and economic crisis. Rotterdam suffered heavily, which came as no surprise to some: already in the 1920s, several economists addressed the vulnerable position of the port city of Rotterdam that almost entirely relied on its vast hinterland, and much less on the industry. What was necessary, they argued, was to modernize general cargo handling and industrial development, but they also pleaded for modernization of government, a stronger urban industry, and the marketing of Rotterdam as an important global seaport.<sup>22</sup>

This marketing argument was central to the decision of the Rotterdam authorities to take part in the World Exhibition in Antwerp in April 1930. The decision came rather late, on November 24th, 1929, when Amsterdam and Vlissingen had already agreed to take part. The argument was that the city council deemed it «...necessary to draw attention to Rotterdam, as one of the pre-eminent port cities on the continent», and was willing to spend 69.000 guilders on the decoration of a pavilion.<sup>23</sup>

The Waterway was the centerpiece of the pavilion of Rotterdam, which was the effort of a committee that consisted of representatives from both local authorities and businesses.<sup>24</sup> The pavilion became the business card of Rotterdam, outperforming its closest competitors Amsterdam and Antwerp. The Rotterdam part showcased 3.000 ship models, and a decorative frieze, *Achterland*, an elegant transnational figuration of Rotterdam's connected cities on the Rhine, in combination with a silver diorama of the New Waterway, both made by decorative painter Jaap Gidding (1887-1955). It was probably laid down in a basement-like structure, 22 meters long, so the visitors had to look at the diorama from a height of about 3,5

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21 Paul van de Laar, *Coolsingel: 700 jaar Rotterdammers en hun stad* (Amsterdam: Bas Lubberhuizen, 2017), 109.

22 Johannes Philippus Backx, *De haven van Rotterdam: onderzoek naar de oorzaken van haar economische betekenis in vergelijking met Hamburg en Antwerpen* (Rotterdam: Nijgh & Van Ditmar, 1929); Johannes Philippus Backx, "Commercieel havenbeheer," in *Beschouwingen over de haven van Rotterdam: zes lezingen gehouden voor het Departement Rotterdam van de Nederlandsche Maatschappij voor Nijverheid en Handel in den winter 1931-1932* (Rotterdam: Nijgh & Van Ditmar, 1932), 23–50.

23 "De Wereldtentoonstelling Te Antwerpen. De Deelneming van Rotterdam," *Tilburgsche Courant*, November 25, 1929.

24 Stadsarchief Rotterdam, 271-01: Archieven van de firma Hudig en Blokhuyzen, vanaf 1903 Hudig & Veder N.V. te Rotterdam en van dochtermaatschappijen.



FIG. 5 Diorama Nieuwe Waterweg: mural with overview of the Waterway area with the port of Rotterdam. Bird's eye view from the South. Collection: Museum Rotterdam, 78609, CC BY-SA 3.0 NL.

meters. Because aerial photography was already invented, his bird's eye view perspective is quite common in the imagery of port cities, for example in postcards. It showcases the New Waterway in silver tones, emphasizing the vast area that the port of Rotterdam contains [Fig. 5].

This growing interest in the Waterway as a symbol of Rotterdam's ambitions led to new links between the history of the city of Rotterdam and the history of the Waterway. A key figure was entrepreneur and president of the Chamber of Commerce W.A. Engelbrecht, who was a mapping enthusiast in his spare time. For the city yearbook of 1934, he wrote a history of the mouth at Hoek van Holland, in which he states that for at least 'two hundred centuries' there had been a flow of sweet into the saltwater marshes to the west of Rotterdam.<sup>25</sup> A year later, Engelbrecht used the narrative of the supposed millennial river mouth in his effort to ask for national help during the Great Depression. Here, the independence of Rotterdam as a port city clashed with the realization that Rotterdam would not be able to face the crisis alone. Engelbrecht emphasized this point in a speech for the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the first spadework for the New Waterway.<sup>26</sup> The anniversary represented the heroic story of the Waterway to historically mirror a resilient port city, while also insisting on national investments in the port to counter the effects of the Great Depression.

According to Engelbrecht, the meaning of the New Waterway for the city was in the first place a «...strengthening of civic power and confidence in times of adversity, moreover, an ever more deeply rooted awareness of the tight bond of our port city with our country in its global relations.»<sup>27</sup> Explicitly, Engelbrecht turned the narrative towards local actors and their agency. He even connected Caland's insightfulness to Rotterdam's trade mentality: «...especially this instinctive conviction of how to think of a good solution to a difficult problem, is so well developed in a trade city, in which

25 Willem Anton Engelbrecht, "Het ontstaan van den Hoek van Holland," in *Rotterdams Jaarboekje*, vol. 2, 4 (Rotterdam: W.L. & J. Brusse, 1934), 55–64.

26 Willem Anton Engelbrecht, *Rede ter gelegenheid van den aanvang van het werk* (Rotterdam: Kamer van Koophandel en Fabrieken, 1936), 9.

27 *Ibid.*, 3.

the whole bourgeoisie has a deep awareness of the foundations on which its existence and development rest.»<sup>28</sup>

This rationale, along with the rapid development of modern port infrastructures, paved the way for the modernization of the city and had a major effect on urban planning during the interwar period. This did not stop at the borders of the port city of Rotterdam. Underlining the narrative that Rotterdam was the 'working horse' of the Dutch economy, local elites pushed the national government to support regional developments. The diorama of Gidding, therefore, was the iconic representation of Rotterdam's ambitions on the global stage.

### **The New Waterway as a symbol of wartime and post-war resilience (1941, 1947)**

During and after the Second World War, the iconification and appropriation of the New Waterway went even further. While port entrepreneurs and prominent businessmen put their imprint on the reconstruction of the port city during and after the war, they were also involved in the cultural reconstruction of the port city. Books, artworks in the public space, and various theatre plays were made to commemorate the bombings and to boost the morale of citizens in the arduous (post-)war era.

By this time, the Waterway had become a self-evident part of the narrative of the city. Building on the discourse of resilience that was used in the 1930s, the Waterway was considered to be both the icon of resilience and the agent to recover from attacks, suppression, and the consequent economic downturn. Whereas most books on the war and the liberation have the city itself as the main topic, two plays that were produced during and right after the war are specifically about the New Waterway and mention it, implicitly or explicitly, in their title: *De Weg naar Zee* (the way to sea) in 1941, and 'De Waterweg Heroverd (the Waterway reconquered) in 1947.

*De Weg naar Zee* was written by journalist and novelist Herman Besselaar, a contemporary and friend of the aforementioned avant-garde writer Ben Stroman.<sup>29</sup> The play starts on the beach of Hoek van Holland in 1866, with a prophecy by Neptune who tells a beach scavenger (*strandjutter*) that grand things are about to happen. The scavenger is sceptical: «Concoctions from the city, a new waterway.» Neptune answers that this plan «...by Rotterdam is not so bad. I have to say: I love Rotterdam... it is a feisty city.»<sup>30</sup>

In a later dialogue, scavenger Storm and a helmsman named Stoer (literally: sturdy, stalwart), discuss the plans for a Waterway:

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28 Ibid., 8.

29 "Censuur," in *Rotterdamsch Jaarboekje*, vol. 3, 5 (Rotterdam: W.L. & J. Brusse, 1945), 219–21.

30 Herman Besselaar, "De weg naar zee," *Stadsarchief Rotterdam*, 1941.

Stoer: «...Rotterdam has to live, my dear man. A new waterway is necessary. (...) The sluices are too narrow, it's all too slow.»  
 Storm: «Why so fast, why so impatient? Is eighteen hours of travel so excessive?»  
 Stoer: «It is. It could be a fifth. What Caland, the great engineer, wants, is a short, free waterway, that connects Rotterdam to the open sea. One straight line. The Maas mouth is clogged, the spade has to go in the sand, for the benefit of Rotterdam and our Fatherland (...).»

A group of students of the nautical school agrees and chants: «Hip hip hurray for Caland!»<sup>31</sup>

A young lady, Amalia Maas, from the city, personifies the city, as a cast description indicates: «resolute, open-minded and practical.» She is consequently referred to as «juffer Maas», young lady Maas. Up until the third act, however, Storm is unconvinced about the urban “conceitedness” of digging a new waterway. Even at a festive event, celebrating the first spade, he urges his son (who has come to love the city and its inhabitants) to stay away. The son, however, answers: «Without shipping no trade, and without trade no Holland, father! Not only Rotterdam, but the whole nation awaits the new waterway. Once it has been dug, a heyday will come like never before!»

The play is concluded by yet another contemplation by Neptune: «The way to sea... no, no, it is no vain illusion of Rotterdam; it is its future, its mere existence. (...) She will yet again become a city on the sea, and see to all horizons, to the farthest places on earth.» This hopeful note explicitly drew a paralleled resilience between the start of the New Waterway in 1868 and war-torn Rotterdam in 1941.

This parallel was also evident in the 1947 play *De Waterweg Heroverd*, [Fig. 6] although it took an entirely different approach. It was staged in the football stadium of Feyenoord, on the south bank of the Maas, and emphasized events during the war: the battle to capture the bridges, the capitulation of the city to the Nazis, razzias (for which, eerily, the same stadium was used) and the eventual liberation. Instead of a small-scale historical play that was heavy on parallels, this play was a very literal depiction of what had happened, including planes flying over the stadium to depict the bombing. Here, the Waterway serves as a metaphor that transcends Rotterdam during wartime, and comes to stand for freedom and free trade.

Compared to traditional parades that were held during this era, for instance in Britain where the tradition of historical pageantry was used as part of a local remembrance culture with a strong sense of nostalgia,

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31 Ibid., 5.



FIG. 6 Cover of the programme booklet of *The Waterway Reconquered*. Scan by Albert Koevoet, CC BY-NC 2.0, <https://flic.kr/p/5zSDrm>.

the stage setting in Rotterdam was different.<sup>32</sup> Rotterdam post-war celebrations were part of a narrative of progress rather than of remembrance of old glories: they were cultural productions in service of the new welfare city, expressing a local vibrancy for a new future. Historical developments were used to showcase the resilience of the working classes.

## Conclusion

The New Waterway was not only a national plan that pushed Rotterdam into a new era of technological progress and economic efflorescence, it also gave the city a new identity. It illustrates one of the key values of

32 See for instance Tom Hulme, "A Nation of Town Criers': Civic Publicity and Historical Pageantry in Inter-War Britain," *Urban History* 44, no. 2 (2017): 270–92, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0963926816000262>.

port cities according to Kowalewski: their man-made power over nature. The New Waterway illustrates this, and furthermore shows that culture in port cities often involves infrastructures and work-related objects being reappropriated into cultural icons, thus creating a distinct sort of port city culture.

The cultural meaning of an infrastructure such as the New Waterway was especially linked to the development of the port city as a hybrid, that was connected to the global market and yet of vital importance to the national economy. It spurred local actors to urge the national government to invest in the port. Its role as a sense-making vehicle in the case of contingencies and external events sometimes even took on mythical proportions: all four cases showed aspects of the New Waterway acting as a founding myth of the modern port city of Rotterdam.

Different levels of governance were actively involved with these narratives and subsequent policies, using it both as a vehicle of sense-making of external events and as the catalyst for wealth. We can therefore consider the Waterway as an important aspect in initiating and instituting a new social imaginary for Rotterdam, but also to maintain it. The story of the Waterway underlined the importance of investing in modern infrastructure in times of crisis, to boost morale, to justify growth-oriented policies, and to convince policymakers to invest in infrastructure, and does so up until this day.

Further research can explicate the values that were needed to maintain this imaginary, and to see to which extent they were exclusive for the elites in power or collectively shared. This rings especially true in the subsequent period, in which the narrative of progress was questioned, and the New Waterway became a symbol of polluting industries. A cultural example is the children's book *Kinderen van de Waterweg* from 1971, in which children growing up near the Waterway get sick and protest the increasing pollution near their houses.

This counter-narrative, however, never gained the status of a full-fledged counterpart to the mythical narrative of progress which is still going strong. In October 2016, 150 years after prince Willem of Orange dug the first, mayor of Rotterdam Ahmed Aboutaleb opened an exhibition about the «artery of the Netherlands.» Whether it is the first plan of engineer Caland in 1858, the anniversary of the signing of the law for the New Waterway in 1863, the first spade in 1866, or the first ship that entered in 1872: the port city keeps celebrating its founding infrastructure. Yet again in 2022, we may expect that the Port Authority of Rotterdam and other local stakeholders will use anniversary celebrations to strengthen the social imaginary of a port city region being able to maintain its position as the busiest port of Europe.

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## MAIN SECTION

# Marking a New Chapter in the History of our City. Newspaper Narratives of Proposed Waterfront Star Architecture

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## ABSTRACT

A recurrent claim associated with the development of star architecture buildings along new urban waterfronts in port cities is that star architecture's capacity to garner media exposure for a port city can support its efforts to communicate narratives of urban transformation. Even during the inception phase, a constellation of actors legitimizes these projects by capitalizing on their power to attract media attention. The media play a role in the communication and construction of narratives. This paper shows how newspaper narratives about a proposed star architecture project along the waterfront of a port city communicate transformation proposals. The case study presented is the inception phase of the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, Germany. The findings are based on content analysis of 420 newspaper articles, published before the formal endorsement of the project. The findings indicate that newspapers communicated the sense-making value of the Elbphilharmonie based on the visual and emotional power of star architecture. Newspapers introduced notions of identity, citizen identification and Hanseatic particularity into the discourse and played an important role in explaining the promise of the Elbphilharmonie to become a symbol of the city's commitment to the port, the maritime context and the Elbe river.

## KEYWORDS

*Port City; Star Architecture; Narratives; Media; Identity*

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## Port cities, new waterfronts and star architecture: introducing a textual research method

The transformation of port zones and historic former-port areas in post-industrial port cities of the Western World forms one of the main chapters of urban regeneration since the late 1970s.<sup>1</sup> The dynamics of globalization and containerization have spurred governments to adapt their ports by constructing new deep harbors and developing open storage sites for containers.<sup>2</sup> In the course of such advancements, the warehouses that had earlier provided storage became obsolete and the old port sites became abandoned. It would be a mistake to consider waterfront redevelopment projects efforts to introduce any new urban functions in a void that could be filled. Hein<sup>3</sup> argues that “since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century waterfronts of port cities had served as the site of exchange and the most important image of a port city, both a maritime business card and a welcome sign for travelers coming over the sea. They showcased a city’s international character and the presence of global trade and established or reinforced their character and function as gateways of the world”.

According to Marshall,<sup>4</sup> the phenomenon of ‘new urban waterfront’ has played a key role in the economic development and image-making of post-industrial cities worldwide and in Europe especially; the waterfront has become a testbed for ‘new city-making paradigms’, as well as an expression of ‘culture’. As such, while waterfront development focuses on local urban transformation processes, these are intricately linked to transitions in a city’s relationship to its port economically, socially, culturally and spatially; the term port city transformation refers to the process of change in these relationships. Although the ‘model’ of waterfront development was first consolidated and became popular in North America, the US in particular, in Europe many examples of this strategy in which waterfront becomes a driver for the future urban development can be identified: in the United Kingdom (Liverpool, Glasgow, Cardiff), in France (Le Havre, Dunkerque, St Nazaire), in Germany (Hamburg, Bremen, Kiel), in Spain (Valencia, Malaga, Cadiz), in Italy (Genoa, Venice, Naples, Trieste) –as well as the well-known cases of the London Docklands or Port Vell in Barcelona.<sup>5</sup> As part of a broader redevelopment plan, some port cities constructed cultural facilities as star architecture projects along their transforming waterfronts. By ‘star architecture’, we are referring to

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1 Brian Stewart Hoyle, “The Port-City Interface: Trends, Problems and Examples,” *Geoforum* 20, no. 4 (1989): 429–35, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0016-7185\(89\)90026-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/0016-7185(89)90026-2).

2 Carola Hein, “Port Cities,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Cities in World History*, ed. Peter Clark (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199589531.013.0043>.

3 Ibid., 5.

4 Richard Marshall, ed., *Waterfronts in Post-Industrial Cities*. (New York: Routledge, 2001), 4.

5 Rinio Bruttomesso, “Complexity on the Urban Waterfront,” in *Waterfronts in Post-Industrial Cities*, ed. Richard Marshall (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2004).

architecture that is developed, perceived or promoted as a transformative agent of change owing to the exceptional recognition status of particular architects and their architecture.<sup>6</sup> Examples of such projects are Porto Antico in Genoa (1992), designed by Renzo Piano, the Norwegian National Opera and Ballet in Oslo (2008), designed by Snøhetta, and the Musée des Confluences in Lyon (2014), designed by Coop HIMME(l)blau.

Although the topics of new urban waterfronts and port city relationships have been well-studied by scholars since the 1980s, the interplay between star architecture, culture and the port city relationship remains relatively unexplored. A recent systematic study on culture-led waterfront redevelopments in Europe has been conducted by Ponzini and Akhavan.<sup>7</sup> Based on their analysis of 340 projects in the period 1990-2015, they underline the “contribution of cultural facilities designed by a star architect as part of a long-term program for the regeneration of waterfronts, of broader planning visions for economic restructuring, of a set of heavy infrastructural investments, of the transformation of public space and surrounding areas through master plans”.<sup>8</sup> Development of star architecture projects as part of waterfront redevelopment plans in port cities must be understood as a kind of identity work, in which a constellation of actors pushes for the development of these projects with the aim of contributing to the communication of an imagined collective identity. Such a project of collective identity work allows collective identities to be *recognized* by the collectivity and by others. Fukuyama<sup>9</sup> links contemporary collective identity work to demands for recognition, visibility and dignity. We argue that star architecture projects contribute to such collective identity work by amplifying visibility and facilitating the recognition of collective identities. As such, star architecture projects generate and support narratives linked to collective identity. During this process, language is mobilized to generate a discourse that constructs narratives. In this paper, we investigate how a proposed star architecture project and narratives are linked. We define narratives as sense-making depictions that influence the way in which an audience perceives a reality presented by a narrator.<sup>10</sup> A narrative transports emotions and value. The development of a narrative precedes the decision to hire a certain architect or to commission a certain design. In that sense, the narrative makes the case for a certain architecture. Although a narrative is constructed discursively, mostly by politicians and

6 Nadia Alaily-Mattar, Joelean Hall, and Alain Thierstein, “The Problematization of ‘Star Architecture’ in Architecture Research,” *European Planning Studies*, March 4, 2021, 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2021.1889476>.

7 Davide Ponzini and Mina Akhavan, “Star Architecture Spreads in Europe: Culture-Led Waterfront Projects Between 1990 and 2015,” in *About Star Architecture: Reflecting on Cities in Europe*, ed. Nadia Alaily-Mattar, Davide Ponzini, and Alain Thierstein (Basel: Springer International Publishing, 2020), 69–94, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-23925-1\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-23925-1_6).

8 Ibid., 88.

9 Francis Fukuyama, *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018).

10 Roland Barthes and Lionel Dussit, “An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative,” *New Literary History* 6, no. 2 (1975): 237–72, <https://doi.org/10.2307/468419>.

journalists, a narrative influences the choice for a certain architecture, which then goes on to develop or even transform the narrative.

A recurrent claim associated with the development of star architecture on waterfronts is that star architecture's capacity to garner media exposure can support a port city's identity work and its efforts to communicate narratives that explain the value of urban transformation. However, despite of the centrality of the role of the media, little evidence exists of the input of the media particularly in the inception phases of proposed projects, which is where much of the legitimization by a constellation of actors takes place. Newspapers are an important medium for the communication of narratives, and therefore their articles become a suitable site for the observation of linguistic aspects of how narratives are developed.

In this paper, we have adopted a qualitative single case-study approach and used the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, Germany, as our case study. We conducted qualitative content analysis of newspaper articles, a research method which is common in media studies. Findings are based on a close reading and analysis of limited amount of text pertaining to newspaper articles. Garcia<sup>11</sup> notes "Back in the 1990s, Parisi and Holcomb (1994) warned against the existing tension in news narrative, which 'typically mediate between the newspaper's economic self-interest in regional development and the journalistic ideal of public service'". Newspaper reporting can reflect, support or repudiate public perceptions. Journalists and editors are opinion formers. Their reporting can contribute to fostering the reception of narratives by the readers. However, in this paper we do not isolate the voices of individual journalists, nor do we consider the political inclination of the newspapers. Rather, we consider the aggregated voice of the corpus of articles as the newspaper narratives. The focus of our interest is how newspaper narratives about an emerging star architecture project proposed on the waterfront of a port city communicate a port city's commitment to transformation and the recreation of a new maritime culture. It is beyond the scope of the paper to investigate the political motivations or the make-up of actor constellations that initiate or communicate such narratives. It is also important to note that we did not intend to look for evidence that would support a claim that a change took place in perceptions by local communities owing to such newspaper narratives. Nor did we investigate how these narratives of a proposed project changed once it was approved and its construction started. Rather our analysis focuses on how discourse evolved before the existence of a concrete architecture proposal and we critically examine how this discourse revealed the expectations and objectives of the role that star architecture was expected to play for the city. Hence, we restricted the articles to those that were published during the time period from the inception of a project

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11 Beatriz Garcia, "If Everyone Says so ...' Press Narratives and Image Change in Major Event Host Cities," *Urban Studies* 54, no. 14 (November 2017): 3178–98, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098016674890>.

on that specific site to the formal approval of *the* Elbphilharmonie project by the Hamburg State parliament. We have identified and extracted the newspaper articles from the on-line news source LexisNexis Database. Using the keywords listed in Table 1, we identified 420 articles, covering 15 different newspapers and newsmagazines, which reported on the project. Of these articles, 63% were published by the publishing house Axel Springer in the newspaper *Die Welt* and its Sunday edition *Welt am Sonntag*. Although this high percentage might seem to limit our analysis and lead to questions about its representativeness, this in itself is a significant finding. It means that during the inception period one publishing house had a significant effect on shaping the discourse. It is important to note that only text can be retrieved through *LexisNexis*. Although it would have been useful to analyze the images that were circulated in these articles, this was not possible using the corpus that was analyzed. The articles cited in this paper were all originally published in German. All translations into English are our own.

Time Frame	Language	Type	Total #articles (collected via keywords before reviewing)	Total #relevant articles (that were analyzed)
Before Nov., 3, 2005	German	Reports & newswires	548	420
Search keywords: Elbphilharmonie OR Kaispeicher OR Elb-philharmonie OR Philharmonie AND Hamburg				

TAB. 1 Search results of LexisNexis Database

## Brief background of Hamburg and the Elbphilharmonie

The Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg is a city state in Germany, located south east of the Elbe River's estuary mouth on the North Sea at the junction of the Elbe River with the Alster and Bille Rivers. Hamburg's ancient river harbor enabled the city to become an important trading center on a regional and continental scale. Over time, the harbor of Hamburg became the largest port in Germany and the fate of the city has been linked to the economic significance of its port. Even in the 1920s, the catchphrase "Tor zur Welt" (Gateway to the World) was Hamburg's slogan,<sup>12</sup> which captures the city's involvement with maritime trade and the connectivity that was made possible through its port.

Hamburg's harbor was originally located on the northern bank of the river Elbe. Since medieval times, harbor activity has been physically integrated with the city: ships and barges would transport goods by canal to

12 Lars Amenda, "Welthafenstadt' und 'Tor zur Welt': Selbstdarstellung und Wahrnehmung der Hafensstadt Hamburg 1900-1970," *Deutsches Schifffahrtsarchiv* 29 (2006): 137–58.

warehouses connected to the offices and houses of traders.<sup>13</sup> A warehouse district, the Speicherstadt, was developed in the late 19th century, which encompasses the site that would later house the Elbphilharmonie; it was home to a former prominent landmark of the city, namely, the Kaiserpeicher, an imposing building with a special tower and a time ball clock that can be seen from afar and used by ships to set their clocks. Damaged during WW2, the old Kaiserpeicher, along with the clock tower, was demolished. A new building called Kaispeicher was built in the early 1960s as a modern storage facility, notably lacking a special tower or any symbolic ambition. However, during the 1960s, the port of Hamburg was losing its importance: first the iron curtain cut it off from its hinterland and then the advent of containerization decreased the demand for storage facilities. Due to these trends, the waterfront in the port area around the Speicherstadt and buildings such as the Kaispeicher lost their functions and historic importance.

As the City of Hamburg owns most of this land through the harbor company, in the 1990s Hamburg Senate decided to repurpose the warehouse district and transform a 157-hectare former harbor land area next to it into a mixed-use urban district through a city-owned subsidiary. This urban transformation project is called HafenCity, and the district itself would later be called HafenCity. With this project the city intended to re-establish the connection between the River Elbe and the city centre, giving Hamburg a new direction for growth, down to and along the river".<sup>14</sup> The 1999 winning international competition entry to the masterplan of HafenCity by KCAP Architects & Planners, ASTOC Architects and Planners, and Hamburgplan AG envisages the development of an architectural landmark on the strategic site of the Kaispeicher, which is located in HafenCity.<sup>15</sup> In 2001, the city launched an international architecture competition for a project called MediaCityPort, an office building, on that site. The competition was won by the Dutch firm Benthem Crowel.<sup>16</sup> In 2001, art-historian Jana Marco and Hamburg architect and real estate developer Alexander Gérard asked the office of Gérard's former classmates Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron to produce a counterproposal in the form of a draft for an alternative architecture project. Herzog and De Meuron won the Pritzker Prize in that same year. Coincidentally in 2001, the Hamburg municipality leadership had changed after four decades of Social Democratic leadership to Christian Democratic. A wind of change was blowing in Hamburg. Marco and Gerard claim that their involvement came as a reaction against the

13 Carola Hein, "Port Cities and Urban Wealth: Between Global Networks and Local Transformations," *International Journal of Global Environmental Issues* 13, no. 2/3/4 (2014): 350, <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJGENVI.2014.064510>.

14 Dirk Schubert, "Waterfront Transformations and City/Port Interface Areas in Hamburg," *Dimensión Empresarial* 13, no. 1 (2014): 15, <https://doi.org/10.15665/rde.v13i1.335>.

15 ASTOC's firm webpage shows the masterplan <https://astoc.de/en/projects/urban-planning/masterplan-hafencity-hamburg>, accessed April 14, 2021.

16 The project is featured on Benthem Crowel's webpage <https://www.benthencrowel.com/projects/mediacityport>, accessed April 14, 2021.



FIG. 1 The Elbphilharmonie (Image by Carola Hein)

architectural mundanity of MediaCityPort. From 2002 to 2003, they lobbied for the idea of an iconic concert hall placed on top of the Kaispeicher and designed by the two newly crowned star architects. In 2003, they introduced Herzog & de Meuron's visualization to the media, launching what later would be called the Elbphilharmonie to the public. This proposal, henceforth, garnered media and civic support. The German weekly news magazine *Stern*<sup>17</sup> reported favorably on the proposal in June 2003. The first big article appeared locally in the *Hamburger Morgenpost* in August 2003. A few months later, the Hamburg Senate abandoned the MediaCityPort project and eventually in October 2005, the Hamburg State Parliament consensually approved building the Elbphilharmonie on the basis of a feasibility study and authorized the Hamburg Senate to award the project.

It is quite remarkable that the building was awarded to Herzog & de Meuron without an open call for bids or architectural competition. Balke et al.<sup>18</sup> argue that an overarching euphoria and enthusiasm made political party barriers virtually meaningless and was sufficiently powerful to marginalize any critical comments and questions regarding unclear financial, contractual or constructional issues. This collectively shared euphoria in the initial planning phase was followed by scandals related to setbacks, conflicts and delays of the construction phase, which commenced in 2007. Most notable were the exuberant increase in costs from a projected cost of 186.7 million Euros in the first feasibility study in 2005 to €241

17 "Ufo an der Elbe; Die Hamburger Hafencity wird Europas größtes Bauprojekt. Mit einer PHILHARMONIE wollen zwei Architekten dem Ganzen eine Krone aufsetzen," *Stern*, June 26, 2003.

18 Jan Balke, Paul Reuber, and Gerald Wood, "Iconic Architecture and Place-Specific Neoliberal Governmentality: Insights from Hamburg's Elbe Philharmonic Hall," *Urban Studies* 55, no. 5 (April 2018): 997–1012, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098017694132>.



million in 2007, to 789 million Euros in 2013. Juridical struggles resulted in a temporary construction standstill but were resolved eventually in 2013. The Elbphilharmonie project was completed and hosted its first concert in January 2017 [Fig. 1]. The final price tag was €866 million! (See a report in *Zeit Online*<sup>19</sup> on the evolution of the costs.)

## Analyzing the inception narratives in relation to port city transformation

As indicated by the newspaper coverage, before the idea was proposed for a concert hall on top of the Kaispeicher the city communicated its intent to build on this site an exceptional landmark that would support port-city transformation. Even before the inception of a star architecture project, the narrative of an architecture project on this particular site was framed around expectations that it would contribute to port city transformation. In 1999, *Die Welt* reported that city planners envisaged on this strategic site “a landmark modeled on the Sydney Opera House”.<sup>20</sup> Newspapers reminded their readers that the Kaiserspeicher of 1875, with the tower and the time ball, had been a landmark of the city.<sup>21</sup> The MediaCityPort was portrayed as becoming a flagship. Indeed, the concept of the initial project MediaCityPort was framed in the competition brief around “increasing Hamburg’s importance as Germany’s digital capital... representing an initial spark for an urban and economic development in the new HafenCity”.<sup>22</sup> This was picked up in several newspaper reports which indicated that MediaCityPort had the potential to position Hamburg as “Silicon Valley an der Elbe”<sup>23</sup> and that the building could become a “Medien-Mekka”.<sup>24</sup> From 1999 till June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2003, MediaCityPort was described as an exceptional project in the newspapers. However, exceptionality was related in the newspaper articles to the exceptionality of the location, the previous building and the particular moment in the evolution of the city. MediaCityPort was linked to the exceptionality of the efforts to build the HafenCity as a “Milliardenprojekt” of a new city on the port.<sup>25</sup>

19 Florian Zinnecker, “Lohnt sich das Spektakel?,” *ZEIT-online*, January 10, 2019, [https://www.zeit.de/hamburg/2019-01/elbphilharmonie-hamburg-bau-kosten-besucher-konzerte-bilanz?utm\\_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F](https://www.zeit.de/hamburg/2019-01/elbphilharmonie-hamburg-bau-kosten-besucher-konzerte-bilanz?utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F).

20 Gisela Schütte, “Die Hamburger Hafencity wächst Block für Block; Das Hanseatic Trade Center wird zum Eingangstor des neuen Stadtteils - Höchste Mieten der Stadt,” *Die Welt*, April 9, 1999.

21 Gisela Schütte, “Der Kaispeicher A wird zum Medien-Mekka; Konsortium plant Zentrum für 300 Millionen Mark -Rund 1000 neue Arbeitsplätze - Fertigstellung 2004,” *Die Welt*, January 27, 2001.

22 “Wettbewerbe Entscheidungen: MediaCityPort,” *BauNetz*, accessed May 31, 2021, [https://www.baunetz.de/wettbewerbe/MediaCityPort\\_99358.html?infopage=81495](https://www.baunetz.de/wettbewerbe/MediaCityPort_99358.html?infopage=81495).

23 Ralf Wegner, “Silicon Valley an der Elbe,” *HORIZONT*, January 24, 1999.

24 Schütte, “Der Kaispeicher A wird zum Medien-Mekka; Konsortium plant Zentrum für 300 Millionen Mark -Rund 1000 neue Arbeitsplätze - Fertigstellung 2004.”

25 “HAFENCITY; Milliardenprojekt: Die neue Stadt am Hafen,” *Immobilien Zeitung*, September 27, 2001.

The article "HafenCity Hamburg; Neue Gründerzeit am Wasser"<sup>26</sup> explicitly links structural transformation, containerization and the transformation of the waterfront, speculating that MediaCityPort will be a flagship of the future HafenCity. "Kaispeicher A, which will mutate into the MediaCityPort with a glass tower, will stand in the middle of the water, with the city center within reach when you look out the window".<sup>27</sup> Although first doubts about the MediaCityPort project emerged in early 2002, with reports of "rumors of [the project's] end... [and]... political scramble for this prestigious project"<sup>28</sup> these concerns revolved around the economic viability of an office building. The newspaper coverage did not dispute the necessity of building a landmark. The MediaCityPort continued to be described as an ambitious project with implications for all other projects of HafenCity,<sup>29</sup> and as "courage for a big pitch".<sup>30</sup> Hence, even before the inception of a star architecture project, the narrative of an architecture project on this particular site was framed in the newspapers around expectations of it contributing to port city transformation.

In June 2003, Marco and Gerard first launched to the public the idea of a concert hall on top of the Kaispeicher, designed by two star architects. Beginning in June 2003 the longitudinal development of the number of articles reporting on an architecture project for that strategic site of the Kaispeicher shows a sharp increase [Fig. 2]. In addition, there was a change in content, garnering considerable qualifiers for the proposed building [Fig. 3], which made the case for an exceptional star architecture. Calls for a landmark accelerated, with journalists repeating the rhetorical ploys used by proponents of the project. Indeed, after that date, the exceptionality of the architecture took center stage in the newspaper coverage; the vocabulary used to describe such exceptionality revolved around sensationalism, spectacularity and otherworldliness. The Elbphilharmonie was a "Musentempel",<sup>31</sup> "UFO on the Elbe",<sup>32</sup> *Die Welt*<sup>33</sup> described MediaPortCity as a "glass tower" in June 2002, and one year later *Die Welt* describes the Elbphilharmonie as a "glass palace".<sup>34</sup> The Elbphilharmonie project was legitimized by references to the status of its architects as

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26 "HAFENCITY HAMBURG; Neue Gründerzeit am WasserHafencity-Fest bringt Leben in den Stadtteil der Zukunft," *Immobilien Zeitung*, March 15, 2001.

27 Gisela Schütte, "Hafencity-Fest bringt Leben in den Stadtteil der Zukunft," *Die Welt*, June 25, 2002.

28 Gisela Schütte, "Hamburgs Hafencity vor ungewisser Zukunft; Planer verärgert über politisches Gerangel um Renommier-Projekt - Kaispeicher-Abriss wieder in der Kritik," *Die Welt*, October 30, 2002.

29 Martin Kopp, "Mut zum großen Wurf," *Die Welt*, October 30, 2002.

30 Ibid.

31 Gisela Schütte, "Gutachten prüft Chancen der gläsernen Philharmonie auf dem Kaispeicher; Musentempel auf dem Dach?," *Welt am Sonntag*, October 5, 2003.

32 "Ufo an der Elbe; Die Hamburger Hafencity wird Europas größtes Bauprojekt. Mit einer PHILHARMONIE wollen zwei Architekten dem Ganzen eine Krone aufsetzen."

33 Schütte, "Hafencity-Fest bringt Leben in den Stadtteil der Zukunft."

34 Gisela Schütte, "Ein Glaspalast für Hamburgs Musik; Spektakulärer Plan für neues Gebäude über Speicher in der Hafencity - Konzertsäle für 3000 Besucher," *Die Welt*, June 26, 2003.

being star architects<sup>35</sup> from the world league<sup>36</sup> and even by the fact that foreign newspapers were reporting on the project.<sup>37</sup> Hence, the necessity for an exceptional star architecture project was amplified almost uncritically by the newspapers that adopted and circulated the rhetoric of the project's proponents. The narrative changed from one in which architecture supports port city transformation to one in which star architecture is the spearhead of transformation.

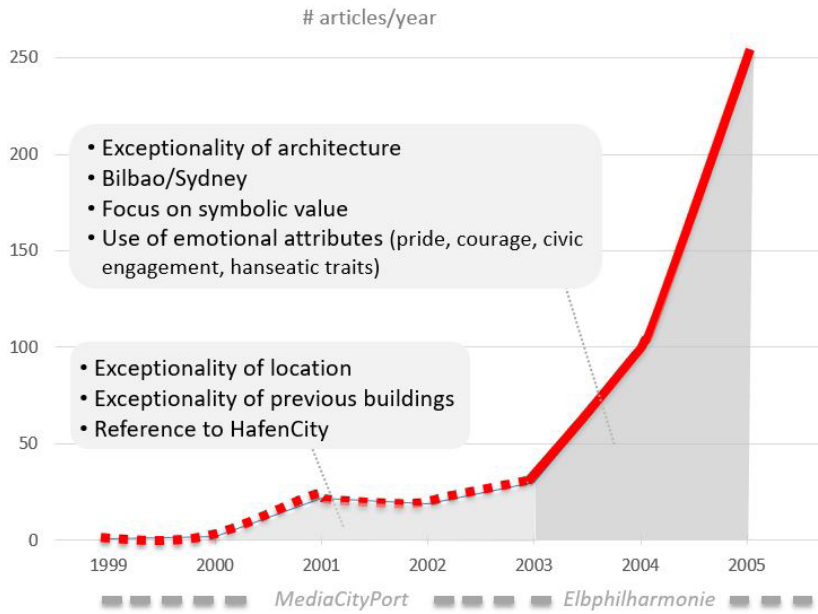


FIG. 2 Development of articles accessed in LexisNexis

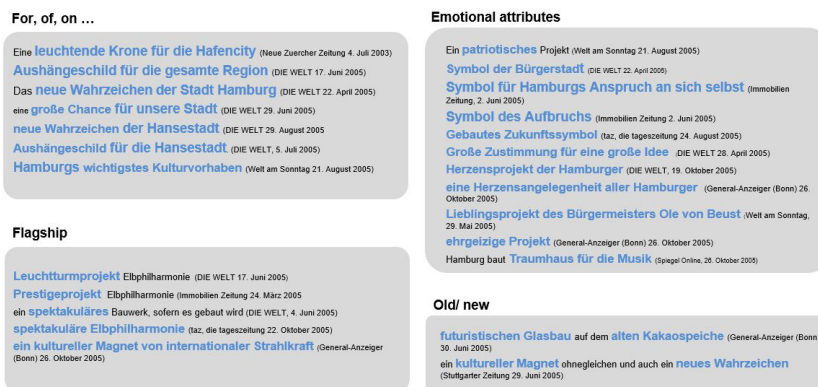


FIG. 3 Qualifiers of the Elbphilharmonie in articles during the inception period

35 Hajo Schiff, "Zwei Gesichter ; Er schuf IBM-Hochhaus und filigrane Villen: Dem Architekten Werner Kallmorgen widmet das Ernst Barlach Haus erstmals eine große Schau," taz, die tageszeitung, July 7, 2003.

36 Berthold Seewald, "Elbphilharmonie nimmt sich Berlin zum Vorbild," Die Welt, April 28, 2005.

37 Gisela Schütte, "Das Ausland lobt das neue Hamburg; Zahlreiche wohlwollende Stadtplanungs-Kritiken - 'Die Stadt verschreibt sich einen gewaltigen Wachstumsschub,'" Die Welt, September 13, 2004.

After the introduction of Marco and Gerard's proposal of a star architecture project, the visuality of the project's architecture and the power of its image to accentuate the city's visibility became fodder for the media. Newspapers reported on how the image was being used to advertise the city: "Now the image of the new 'Elbphilharmonie' is already being used in city advertising - under the slogan 'growing city', with the help of which Hamburg wants to stay out of the depressing discussion about shrinking cities... A slogan can also be good politics. The image of a piece of bold architecture as a philharmonic hall over the Elbe ... has actually made city history".<sup>38</sup> "A built symbol with a visual power like the Sydney Opera House would advertise HafenCity and reinforce the goal of making Hamburg a leading metropolis culturally as well";<sup>39</sup> "an architectural spectacle that offers all the prerequisites to finally bring Hamburg a long-awaited world reputation in architecture".<sup>40</sup> Continual reports on the visuality of the building aimed to sensitize the readership to the recognition value of the building and the power of its image to support the city's quests for recognition and visibility, which supposedly have been "long-awaited".<sup>41</sup> There were even reports on the receptiveness of this visuality by the citizens. "Somebody said that the citizens were not interested in architecture: A single picture was able to turn the entire political and planning opinion of the city by 180 degrees".<sup>42</sup> During the period 2003-2005, the Elbphilharmonie project was described as a landmark that could aid the positioning of HafenCity, Hamburg and its region at scales ranging from that of northern Europe to Europe and worldwide. References were made to the city of Bilbao, urging Hamburg to be not only as exciting as Bilbao but also as daring.<sup>43</sup> More allegories were made to the Sydney Opera House. The Elbphilharmonie was "a building like the Sydney Opera House ... [it] advertises Hamburg in illustrated books around the world",<sup>44</sup> "a promotional building (ein werbewirksames Bauwerk)".<sup>45</sup> Hamburg was depicted as seeking to replicate a "Sydney-Effekt"<sup>46</sup> not long after the city of Hamburg had failed a national bid to host the Olympic games of 2012, which incidentally Sydney had hosted in 2000. One newspaper article explains this as follows: "A James Bond film was shot in Hamburg a few years ago. The first question the director asked was where in the city is the building by

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38 "Von Sydney lernen heißt bauen lernen; Die von Herzog & de Meuron geplante neue Philharmonie soll Hamburgs Hafencity aus der Lethargie reißen," *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, August 27, 2004.

39 "Sydney-Effekt," *taz, die tageszeitung*, January 13, 2005.

40 "Von Sydney lernen heißt bauen lernen; Die von Herzog & de Meuron geplante neue Philharmonie soll Hamburgs Hafencity aus der Lethargie reißen."

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.

43 Katja Engler and Gisela Schütte, "Wahrzeichen von europaweiter Strahlkraft; Hinter verschlossenen Türen beraten die Leiter der führenden Konzerthallen der Welt Fragen zur künftigen Elbphilharmonie," *Die Welt*, August 25, 2004.

44 Gisela Schütte, "Geister-Debatte um neue Philharmonie," *Die Welt*, August 28, 2003.

45 Ibid.

46 "Sydney-Effekt."

which the world can tell that we are in Hamburg. No answer was given to the director and so he chose the Atlantic Hotel. We now know how important the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao or the Opera in Sydney are for a metropolis. The Philharmonie could play this role in Hamburg".<sup>47</sup> Hence, the potential positive economic and cultural effects of the project were discussed in reference to the project's supposed recognition value and its capacity to increase the city's exposure, thus leading to a competitive advantage. Newspapers propagated the notion of the visual power of star architecture and its capacity to generate recognition. With the introduction of the idea of a star architecture project visuality became a central element of the narrative.

Significant emphasis was placed on communicating the idea that the symbolic value of the Elbphilharmonie manifests itself not only in its landmark value but also in terms of its sense-making value. Especially in the period preceding the formal endorsement of the project by the Hamburg Senate, the project was increasingly presented in the media using emotional attributes. The project was described as possessing power to counter the negative condition of the city. It could "pull Hamburg away from lethargy"<sup>48</sup> because "the magic of architecture will work".<sup>49</sup> The emerging project was also associated with an optimistic mood in the city.<sup>50</sup> "The Elbphilharmonie could be a symbol for breakthrough/awakening (Aufbruch)",<sup>51</sup> a symbol for Hamburg's claim to itself.<sup>52</sup> When the question of funding became a concern, the project was presented as symbol for a "Bürgerstadt",<sup>53</sup> "a patriotic project",<sup>54</sup> an "affair of the heart (Herzensangelegenheit) for all Hamburgers"<sup>55</sup> with calls for a campaign similar to that of the Dresden Frauenkirche to make the Elbphilharmonie a "heart project (Herzensprojekt) for Hamburgers".<sup>56</sup> In this period, star architecture was legitimized by notions of identity and citizen identification. It was a project for all Hamburgers. To strengthen this argument,

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47 Oliver Schirg and Matthias Iken, "Wir müssen mehr tun; Wo muß Hamburg besser werden? Finanzsenator Wolfgang Peiner (CDU) hat konkrete Vorstellungen," *Die Welt*, April 2, 2005.

48 "Von Sydney lernen heißt bauen lernen; Die von Herzog & de Meuron geplante neue Philharmonie soll Hamburgs Hafencity aus der Lethargie reißen."

49 Katja Engler, "Die Magie der Architektur wird wirken; Unterstützung und Beifall für geplante Elbphilharmonie - Leiter der führenden deutschen Konzerthäuser diskutieren in Hamburg," *Die Welt*, November 5, 2004.

50 Ludwig Görtz and Oliver Schirg, "Hamburg muß sich von den engen Fesseln der Stadtgrenzen befreien; Der Unternehmer Ludwig Görtz schreibt über seine Vision Hamburg 2015," *Die Welt*, May 19, 2005.

51 Klaus Göppert, "Hamburg, die wachsende Stadt," *Immobilien Zeitung*, June 2, 2005.

52 Ibid.

53 Matthias Iken, "Symbol Der Bürgerstadt," *Die Welt*, April 22, 2005.

54 Katja Engler, "Ein patriotisches Projekt," *Welt am Sonntag*, August 20, 2005, <https://www.welt.de/print-wams/article131221/Ein-patriotisches-Projekt.html>.

55 Carola Grosse-Wilde, "Die Hansestadt will Weltniveau: KONZERTHAUS: Die Elbphilharmonie soll ein neues Wahrzeichen der Stadt Hamburg werden. Heute faellt die Entscheidung ueber den Bau des futuristischen, 186 Millionen Euro teuren Glasbaus auf dem alten Kakaospeicher," *General-Anzeiger (Bonn)*, October 26, 2005.

56 Nicole Paganini and Stefan Flohr, "CDU und Grüne stimmen für Bau der Elbphilharmonie," *Die Welt*, October 19, 2005.

newspapers tapped onto the Hanseatic particularity of the city with the notion of the Hanseatic being implicitly understood by the readers and not necessitating much explanation or elaboration. The project was linked to “what it means to be Hanseatic”,<sup>57</sup> the financing builds on its Hanseatic tradition.<sup>58</sup> “According to the Senate, “an incomparable Hanseatic landmark is being created here”.<sup>59</sup> The notion of citizen identification and the vocabulary of optimism, patriotism, citizenship and identity were raised by politicians and public officials and then went on to be reported on in the news. *Spiegel Online* cites three prominent local politicians in one article.<sup>60</sup> “The Elbphilharmonie is a landmark with which the people of Hamburg can identify, of which they can be proud and a landmark that will be freely accessible to all Hamburg residents ... Like the Eiffel Tower is connected with Paris, Big Ben with London and the Brandenburg Gate with Berlin - this is how the Elbphilharmonie will be identified with Hamburg all over the world in the future ... The planned building [is] a ‘new city symbol’”. By linking the Elbphilharmonie with emotional attributes, media reports produced a sense-making depiction that transported emotions and values to the Hamburger readership and explained to citizens the direction the city was headed, while taking them along. It is worth noting that this effort to use the Elbphilharmonie for sense making was quite explicit. It was reported on quite elaborately in the media: “The development of HafenCity is already attracting international attention. But that is especially true for the professional world. You cannot imagine much by that. With the Elbphilharmonie, the HafenCity would get a symbol of the aspiration with which Hamburg pursues urban development, and also of the aspiration that the city of Hamburg itself places on its future”.<sup>61</sup> Newspapers integrated the emotional appeal of star architecture into the narratives which they circulated. These explained the necessity for the emerging project to address supposed deficits in recognition and visibility.

## Visual and emotional power of star architecture

Our findings indicate that the narrative of port city transformation prepared the ground and made the case for the development of star architecture along new urban waterfronts. However, the introduction of the initial ideas regarding star architecture accentuated the narrative of port city transformation. After the first introduction of the idea of a star architecture project, the exceptionality of architecture took center stage in the

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57 Peter Krause, “Ein wenig hanseatischer Aufbruch mit Gidon Kremer,” *Die Welt*, January 14, 2005.

58 Seewald, “Elbphilharmonie nimmt sich Berlin zum Vorbild.”

59 “Geld für Glas,” *taz, die tageszeitung*, September 27, 2005.

60 “Hamburg baut Traumhaus fuer die Musik,” *Spiegel Online*, October 26, 2005, <https://www.spiegel.de/kultur/musik/elbphilharmonie-hamburg-baut-traumhaus-fuer-die-musik-a-381851.html>.

61 Göppert, “Hamburg, die wachsende Stadt.”

newspapers, with repeated mentions of sensationalism, spectacularity and otherworldliness. The repeated reports on the promise of engaging two architects, whose skill was legitimized by the authority of a prize and the power of visuality of architecture, not only set the stage for a spectacular star architecture but also supported the recourse to emotional attributes which linked the project to the identity of the city in which the port was an essential element. Newspapers introduced notions of identity, citizen identification and Hanseatic particularity into the discourse and played an important role in explaining the promise of the Elbphilharmonie to become a symbol of the city's commitment to the port, the maritime context and the Elbe River. They connected the emerging waterfront star architecture to emotional attributes such as pride and courage. By doing so, newspapers played a role in developing and communicating a narrative of the Elbphilharmonie, one which explained the Elbphilharmonie as a symbol of the city's commitment to turn its attention to the port and to the river. This narrative sought to influence the way in which readers made sense of the emerging waterfront star architecture and by extension the reality of port city transformation in Hamburg.

These findings show how a proposed star architecture on the waterfront was first discursively constructed and how this process of discursive construction used the visual and emotional power of star architecture. These efforts were directed by a constellation of actors to whom fostering a role of the port in the imagined identity of the citizens of Hamburg mattered. While it was beyond the objective and scope of this paper to investigate the motivations of these actors and their identities, our findings raise important questions about how the process of star architecture production can be a medium for negotiating and constructing power relationships in the city rather than just reflecting existing ones. One must keep in mind that the decision for port city transformation is foremost a political one. Such projects are developed in a particular phase in the history of the evolution of these cities, one in which the symbolic power of strategic sites was disrupted and a search for carriers of identity was ongoing. In this process, even before an architecture is built, its visual and emotional power is used discursively to serve political interests.

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## MAIN SECTION

# Globalization, Nautical Nostalgia and Maritime Identity Politics. A Case Study on Boundary Objects in the Future German Port Museum.

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## ABSTRACT

The future *German Port Museum* is scheduled to open in Hamburg in the late 2020s as one of Germany's currently largest and best-funded museum projects. It is pursuing an ambitious programmatic agenda that aims not only to narrate the historic dimensions of ports and seafaring, but to assess ports as hubs of globalization and thus help the understanding of a globalized world. This paper approaches the Port Museum's first and central artefact, the historic four-masted barque *Peking*, as a crucial organizational and epistemic entity in the museum's development process. The *Peking* is of significant interest to actors from diverging social worlds, who approach the ship either as a starting point for critical debates on globalization and colonial heritage, as a symbol of nautical nostalgia, or as a vehicle for Hamburg's maritime identity politics. Relying on the theoretical concept of boundary objects by Star and Griesemer, it is argued that the *Peking's* interpretive flexibility enables it to mediate between these potentially conflicting individual agendas and facilitate a cooperative process between different communities of practice. Thus, the Port Museum is brought into being as a suspenseful, yet stable entity, that is situated in a field of tension between decolonial critique and revisionist maritime heritage politics.

## KEYWORDS

*Museum Studies; Material Semiotics; Globalization; Maritime Heritage; Colonial Heritage*

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## Introduction

Port city cultures are often discussed in terms of their urban maritime identity, of a self-conception relying on the city's claim for a cosmopolitan and mercantilist tradition of resilience.<sup>1</sup> These identity constructions, simultaneously working as an internal means of community building and as an asset in global intercity competition, evolve from a complex network of diverse actors and processes, involving economic players, governance structures, local communities, cultural institutions and many others. Historically, museums play an outstanding role in this as bearers and producers of identity, while bringing together within themselves a large number of different actors and contradicting views. "The mix of co-creators in identity construction and the resulting potent soup of identity negotiation are symptomatic of the very nature of the museum," as Fiona McLean writes.<sup>2</sup>

The future German Port Museum that is scheduled to open in Hamburg in the late 2020s, is no exception. The Museum is currently being developed by the "Stiftung Historische Museen Hamburg" (Historic Museums Hamburg Foundation) and is funded with a €185m budget from the federal household. What distinguishes the museum from other comparable institutions is that the developers aim not only at narrating the historic dimensions of ports and seafaring, but at assessing ports as hubs of globalization and thus help the understanding of a globalized world. Globalization is therefore addressed as an inherently contemporary matter, involving complex economic, social and cultural interrelations, and is made accessible to the museum public by turning towards ports and global maritime trade.

Spatially, the Port Museum will consist of three locations: first, the historic warehouse 50A, that has already been home to an outpost of the Labor Museum since 2005, will offer a mainly local and historical perspective on the port of Hamburg. Besides the display of the Labor Museum's collection of historic vessels and handling equipment, it will provide a space for performative demonstrations of traditional work techniques and participatory workshop formats. Second, a new museum building is planned in the future neighborhood of Kleiner Grasbrook, which will be committed to the discussion and display of contemporary global connections through maritime trade. The architectural competition for the new building will not take place until 2023, hence spatial as well as conceptual considerations are rather rudimentary at this point. Finally, the historic four-masted

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1 Alice Mah, *Port Cities and Global Legacies: Urban Identity, Waterfront Work, and Radicalism* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Carola Hein and Dirk Schubert, "Resilience, Disaster, and Rebuilding in Modern Port Cities," *Journal of Urban History*, 2020, 009614422092509, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144220925097>.

2 Fiona McLean, "Museums and the Representation of Identity," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, ed. B. J. Graham and Peter Howard, Ashgate Research Companions (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub. Co, 2008), 283.

barque *Peking*, will eventually be docked next to the new building at Kleiner Grasbrook as the museum's leading object and as a floating third location.<sup>3</sup> Although the Grasbrook-location and the warehouse 50A are both located in the north-eastern part of the port area, they are separated from each other by two port basins and a 3 km drive. Concepts to connect the two locations and make them perceivable as a unit are still in the works.

Not least due to this ambitious programmatic and spatial framework, the museum's development is a highly contested process, requiring numerous actors inside and outside the museum world to cooperate, to balance divergent agendas and to facilitate the exchange of knowledge between their different communities of practice. I will therefore discuss in this article how the historic vessel *Peking* as the museum's central object allows different stakeholder groups to cooperate in the Port Museum's planning process. In drawing upon Star and Griesemer,<sup>4</sup> I discuss the *Peking* as a boundary object that facilitates cooperation and knowledge transfer between different stakeholder groups. I therefore follow an approach that moves between museum studies, organizational studies and material semiotics, as I understand the museum as an actor-network dedicated to the production and distribution of knowledge, and its formation as an inherently epistemic process that is carried out by a complex web of diverse agents.<sup>5</sup> In applying this approach to the future German Port Museum through an ethnographic description of different stakeholder's accounts, this article contributes from a humanities-oriented perspective to the ongoing discussion on port cities and maritime heritage.<sup>6</sup>

In the next section, I give a brief overview on the *Peking's* history to provide the basic backdrop for the following arguments. In section 3, I discuss the main perspectives, stakeholders and interpretations that can be identified around the *Peking* in the Port Museum's development process, in order to illustrate the complexity of the ship as an epistemic and organizational object. I therefore refer to my own ethnographic material and to public discourses on the *Peking*, mainly represented by articles from the local newspaper *Hamburger Abendblatt* and non-academic publications by journalists and amateur historians. In section 4, I introduce the concept of boundary object and adapt it for a discussion of the *Peking's* positioning

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3 SHMH, "German Port Museum," accessed November 27, 2020, <https://shmh.de/en/german-port-museum>.

4 Susan Leigh Star and James R. Griesemer, "Institutional Ecology, 'Translations' and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-39," *Social Studies of Science* 19, no. 3 (August 1989): 387–420.

5 Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1992), <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10060851>; Kevin Hetherington, "Museum Topology and the Will To Connect," *Journal of Material Culture* 2, no. 2 (1997): 199–218, <https://doi.org/10.1177/135918359700200203>.

6 i.a. César Ducruet, "The Port City in Multidisciplinary Analysis," in *The Port City of the XXIst Century. New Challenges in the Relationship between Port and City*, ed. RETE (Venecia: RETE, 2011), 32–48; Alice Mah, *Port Cities and Global Legacies: Urban Identity, Waterfront Work, and Radicalism* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Carola Hein, ed., *Port Cities: Dynamic Landscapes and Global Networks* (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge, 2011).

in its wider discursive context.

## 2. Background: the historic vessel *Peking*

The four-masted barque *Peking* was built in Hamburg on behalf of the shipping company F. Laeisz to join its fleet of so-called “Flying P-Liners”. After its launch in 1911, it sailed on the so-called “saltpeter route” between Hamburg and Chile for more than 20 years.<sup>7</sup>

Saltpeter, or sodium nitrate, was one of the most sought-after resources in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, since it was at the same time essential to industrial-agricultural production as a fertilizer and of particular military relevance as a main component in the production of explosives. The saltpeter trade therefore generated enormous profits, predominantly for those actors involved in the business on the European side.<sup>8</sup> Sodium nitrate was systematically extracted from the Chilean Atacama desert, one of the driest regions of the world, by a booming mining industry since the 1850s. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Chile was producing about two thirds of all commercially used saltpeter worldwide, with Germany being one of the main purchasers.<sup>9</sup> The *Peking* sailed the saltpeter route, interrupted by its internment in Valparaíso at the outbreak of WW1 in 1914 and its confiscation after the war,<sup>10</sup> until transcontinental saltpeter trade came to its end in the early 1930s due to the increasingly efficient synthetic production of sodium nitrate and a sharp decline in international markets after the Great Depression.<sup>11</sup>

In 1932, the *Peking* was sold to a British company that turned it into a floating boarding school until it was put up for sale again in 1974.<sup>12</sup> Influential voices in Hamburg at that time discussed the acquisition of the *Peking* as a museum ship, but failed with their suggestion due to financial concerns in the local political landscape.<sup>13</sup>

Instead, the ship was sold to an American foundation and was transferred to the South Street Seaport Museum in New York City, where it remained until the German parliament decided to acquire it as the future German

7 Andreas Gondesens, *Die letzten Flying P-Liner: PAMIR, PASSAT, ihre Schwestern und Halbschwwestern der Baujahre 1902 - 1926*, 2. durchgesehene Auflage, Schriften des Deutschen Schiffahrtsmuseums, Band 69 (Bremerhaven: Deutsches Schiffahrtsmuseum, 2014), 63f.

8 Brett Clark and John Bellamy Foster, “Ecological Imperialism and the Global Metabolic Rift: Unequal Exchange and the Guano/Nitrates Trade,” *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 50, no. 3–4 (June 2009): 311–34.

9 Jaime Wisniak and Ingrid Garcés, “The Rise and Fall of the Salitre (Sodium Nitrate) Industry,” *Indian Journal for Chemical Technology* 8 (2001): 428.

10 Heinz Burmester, “Die Deutsche Seglerflotte in Und Nach Dem Krieg 1914-1918,” *Deutsches Schiffahrtsarchiv* 15 (1992): 105–22.

11 Michael Monteón, *Chile in the Nitrate Era: The Evolution of Economic Dependence, 1880-1930* (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982).

12 Burmester, “Die Deutsche Seglerflotte in Und Nach Dem Krieg 1914-1918,” 117.

13 Christoph Strupp, “Im Bann Des Authentischen? Historische Schiffe Und Maritime Museen in Hamburg,” ed. Forschungsstelle für Zeitgeschichte in Hamburg, *Zeitgeschichte in Hamburg* [Nachrichten Aus Der Forschungsstelle Für Zeitgeschichte in Hamburg (FZH) 2019 (2020): 24.

Port Museum's leading object in 2015.<sup>14</sup> In 2017, the *Peking* once more crossed the Atlantic Ocean to be restored in a shipyard near Hamburg. After the substantial restoration was completed, it was towed to its temporary berth next to the Warehouse 50A in September 2020 and has since then been on display—although not yet accessible—to the public, while being equipped for its future use as a museum ship.

### 3. Perspectives, stakeholders and interpretations

#### 3.1 Museum professionals and contemporary discussions on globalization

The museum professionals engaged in the Port Museum's development emphasize that the ship will not be treated as an end in itself or as an artifact that provides a solely aesthetic experience of history. They explicitly reject the notion that the *Peking* will be staged as a conventional museum ship, which predominantly mediates a nostalgic image of a past era of seafaring. Instead, they express the aim of addressing the ship in the wider context of historic saltpeter trade. Hans-Jörg Czech, chair of the Historic Museums Foundation Hamburg, points out:

Of course, we could tell a lot about seafaring in those times [with the *Peking*]. [...] But the German Port Museum's task [...] is to move from the object to the next layer of questions. [...] We don't want to establish another shipping museum [...], we really want to make the port and the *Peking's* connection with the port the subject.<sup>15</sup>

Thomas Overdick, who is responsible for the Port Museum as a secretary at the Hamburg Ministry of Culture and Media, explicates what this next layer of questions could possibly be:

I think we should [look at] the networks in which the ship was involved. The ship does not live a life on its own, but is an object of utility which is related to many, many other objects. I find it quite interesting as a symbolic object, which connected Europe and South America on its numerous trips.<sup>16</sup>

Project head Ursula Richenberger explains the complexity of this enterprise. She reflects, how historic saltpeter shipping is suitable as a model for modern globalization:

In the saltpeter trade, we have a specific phase of globalization on the basis of a certain product, of a specific commodity

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<sup>14</sup> Matthias Gretschel, "Für 120 Millionen Euro: Hamburg Bekommt Neues Hafenumuseum," *Hamburger Abendblatt*, November 13, 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Hans-Jörg Czech, interview and translation by author, Hamburg, Oct. 15, 2020

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Overdick, interview and translation by author, Hamburg, Feb. 13, 2020



chain. It is a closed chapter and therefore is already very well researched through various research projects. This is why we can make very clear: what does globalization mean? Not only economic exchange, but also social history, cultural history, urban history... these manifold perspectives can be illustrated in the example of the *Peking* and the saltpeter trade.<sup>17</sup>

This explicitly includes a critical view on economic interdependencies related to international division of labor and on (neo-)colonial power relations. Richenberger points out that the museum's understanding of colonialism is not temporarily limited to the era of formalized colonial rule, nor is it geographically restricted to the so-called former European overseas territories. Rather, it refers to a much broader understanding of "global asymmetries of power" that are historically rooted in the imperial expansion of European colonial powers.<sup>18</sup> Jasmin Alley, member of the Port Museum's curatorial team, further elaborates:

Today's globalization still functions under the aegis of colonialism. As far as customs restrictions are concerned, as far as visas are concerned, as far as flows of goods are concerned. [...] Raw materials are [extracted in the South and] sent to the global North, but the value chain always starts in the global North, not in the global South.<sup>19</sup>

Geopolitical patterns of economic imbalance are hence identified as a focal point of the museum, and are supposed to be elaborated starting from the *Peking* and the global interconnections of saltpeter trade. Therefor, Alley further emphasizes the importance of including Chilean points of view in this discussion and to establish a mode of exchange between the museum staff and Chilean academic and non-academic actors, considering the *Peking* as a mediator in a multivocal process:

The Chilean side of the story has to be told. Especially that of the *Officinas*, the saltpeter plants, that were mainly run by German and British companies, and of the working conditions in these *Officinas*. [...] Those are the narratives that are relevant for the *Peking* and that we want to make visible.<sup>20</sup>

All the museum professionals interviewed emphasize the importance of embedding the *Peking* into a broader discursive context. In looking at the ship as part of the social-material network of globalization, the economic, political and cultural interconnections related to this matter are approached, while making the *Peking* a didactic access point for a multi-perspective discussion. They aim to overcome a solely historic gaze

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17 Ursula Richenberger, interview and translation by author, Hamburg, Jan. 15, 2020

18 Field note Apr. 14 2021, informal conversation with Ursula Richenberger

19 Jasmin Alley, interview and translation by author, Jun. 5 2020

20 Jasmin Alley, interview and translation by author, Jun. 5 2020

and to establish a link between the historical subject of saltpeter trade and contemporary phenomena of globalization, paying attention to neo-colonial continuities in today's global economic links. Conceptual considerations on how to implement these complex and abstract matters in the overall museum concept and in a didactic approach to the *Peking* exist only in broad outlines so far and can therefore not be further elaborated at this point.

### 3.2. Sailing enthusiasts, amateur historians and nautical nostalgia

While this approach dominates conceptual papers and museological discussions in the Port Museum's professional core team, it is by far not the only perspective on the *Peking*. There are numerous other actors involved, for instance the "Stiftung Hamburg Maritim", a foundation dedicated to the preservation of Hamburg's material maritime heritage. Hamburg Maritim is one of the *Peking's* most important stakeholders, since they were in charge of its transfer from New York to Hamburg and its restoration, and were legally responsible for the ship until it was formally handed over to the Stiftung Historische Museen Hamburg in 2020. In contrast to the museum professionals, Hamburg Maritim is first and foremost concerned with the ship's preservation and presentation as a singular material artefact of nautical history.<sup>21</sup>

A similar agenda is pursued by the booster club "Freunde der Viermastbark *Peking* e.V." (Friends of the Four-Masted Barque *Peking*), which was founded in 2013 in order to lobby for the ship's preservation and its acquisition by the city of Hamburg. To this stakeholder group, as curator Jasmin Alley puts it, "the *Peking* is first and foremost a *ship*".<sup>22</sup> The "Freunde der *Peking*" aims to turn the *Peking* into a "vivid museum ship that displays life and working on ship as authentically as possible".<sup>23</sup>

Most of the publicly visible members of the "Freunde" are no trained historians, while many of them have an affiliation with sailing, e.g. as hobbyists, former professional seamen and marines, or lawyers, managers and other white collar-professionals in maritime businesses. Accordingly, the most detailed publications on the *Peking* and its sister ships have not been written by academic scholars, but by non-academic enthusiasts that engage as amateur historians. In their books, they gather meticulous records of the ships' journeys,<sup>24</sup> historical photographs, technical drawings and

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21 Stiftung Hamburg Maritim, "Ziele," accessed December 1, 2020, <https://stiftung-hamburg-maritim.de/ueber-uns/ziele.html>.

22 Jasmin Alley, interview and translation by author, Jun. 5 2020.

23 Freunde der Viermastbark *Peking* e.V., "Zukünftige Nutzung & Hafenumuseum," accessed November 30, 2020, <https://peking-freunde.de/index.php/die-peking/zukunft>, translation by author.

24 Gondesen, *Die letzten Flying P-Liner*.

photographic documentation of the *Peking's* restoration<sup>25</sup> or travel reports by former Flying P-Liner-captains that are framed as first-hand insights into a rugged, yet heroic past in seafaring.<sup>26</sup>

The book "*Peking – Fate and Rebirth of a Legendary Hamburg ship*"<sup>27</sup>, written in 2020 by the journalist Matthias Gretzschel on the occasion of the *Peking's* transfer to Hamburg, can be read as a journalistic condensate of the popular discourses around the *Peking*. In the final chapter "People aboard", numerous actors who took part in the *Peking's* preservation and its transfer to Hamburg explain what the ship means to them and how they got involved in the project.<sup>28</sup> A striking number of them refer to the documentary film "Around Cape Horn"<sup>29</sup> that was shot in 1929 by the American seafarer and filmmaker Irving Johnson, showing the *Peking* on a trip from Europe to Chile. Johnson's film seems to be an initial trigger for many stakeholder's dedication, prompting their imagination and admiration of heroic seafaring, as for instance Laura Lühenschloss, deputy head of the *Peking's* technical staff, is quoted:

To me, the seamanship performed by the boys in the film is absolutely magnificent and unparalleled. They were laughing together, as much as they had to overcome great hardships. And more than anything, they were proud of their ship.<sup>30</sup>

These examples illustrate in a cursory way, how a captivating image of the *Peking* as a superior technical object is created and connected to an adventurous imagination of historic seafaring, acknowledging the seamen's nautical mastery and their toughness and bravery. Unlike the didactic approach presented in the previous section, these discourses mainly focus on the ship itself as a product of engineering and on its immediate nautical context. This discursivization of the *Peking* as a symbol for nautical nostalgia and technological excellence hence mobilizes multiple actors as diverse as committed amateur historians, shipbuilding enthusiasts or well-connected and solvent sponsors.

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25 Peter Behr and Jörn Lütjens, *Viermastbark PEKING. Historische Konstruktionszeichnungen, Belegt Und Ergänzt Mit Aktuellen Fotografien Vor & Während Der Restaurationsphase 2019/2020*, 2020.

26 Peter Klingbeil and Hermann Piening, *Die Flying P-Liner: die Segelschiffe der Reederei F. Laeisz* (Bremerhaven: Deutsches Schifffahrtsmuseum, 1998).

27 Matthias Gretzschel, *PEKING – Schicksal und Wiedergeburt eines legendären Hamburger Segelschiffes*, 2020, translation by author.

28 Ibid., 127, translation by author.

29 Irving Johnson, *Around Cape Horn*, 1929.

30 Gretzschel, *PEKING – Schicksal und Wiedergeburt eines legendären Hamburger Segelschiffes*, 138.

### 3.3. Political decision-makers and maritime identity politics

Closely related to, yet analytically distinct from this perspective is the emphasis on the *Peking's* connection to Hamburg. The motif of “returning home” is strikingly dominant in media coverage, mainly promoted by the local newspaper *Hamburger Abendblatt* and the public broadcasting station NDR. This was already apparent when Hamburgian elites first discussed buying the ship from its British owner in the 1970s. At that time, the *Abendblatt* fueled the discussion for several weeks, always pointing out the *Peking's* importance for Hamburg's maritime history. “The *Peking* belongs at the Elbe”<sup>31</sup> wrote the *Abendblatt* in September 1974, and: “The city finally has the great opportunity [...] to return a piece of Hanseatic sailing tradition back to the port of Hamburg”.<sup>32</sup> This kind of folksy campaign journalism was taken up in 2012, when another attempt was made to transfer the *Peking* to Hamburg (“*Peking* close to coming home”<sup>33</sup>), in 2015, when the *Bundestag* granted the funding for the German Port Museum and the *Peking's* acquisition (“Hamburg Windjammer *Peking* comes home”<sup>34</sup>), and in 2020, when the ship reached its temporary berth in Hamburg (“Welcome Home!”<sup>35</sup>)

This specific expression of local patriotism, considering the *Peking's* location anywhere else but in Hamburg a mistake that has to be corrected, is crucial for the Port Museum as a whole since it persuaded key actors to initially push the project forward. Johannes Kahrs, often publicly portrayed as being responsible for the museum's funding as a member of the federal budget committee, states that his original concern was not to initiate a new museum, but to raise money for the *Peking's* transfer to Hamburg:

It was urgent, since the *Peking* was about to be scrapped. [...] But I knew, I wouldn't get 27 million for a scrap ship that is lying in New York. But I've financed plenty museums all over the country [...]. So I said: OK, let's do this. We'll build a [...] German port

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31 Peter Krukow, “Die ‘Peking’ Gehört an Die Elbe,” *Hamburger Abendblatt*, September 10, 1974, translation by author.

32 Angelika Kirchhecker, “Viele Hamburger Wollen Die ‘Peking’ Retten,” *Hamburger Abendblatt*, September 11, 1974, <https://www.abendblatt.de/archiv/1974/article205134969/Viele-Hamburger-wollen-die-Peking-retten.html>, translation by author.

33 Alex Tiedemann, “Viermastbark ‘Peking’ Vor Der Heimkehr Nach Hamburg,” December 20, 2012, <https://www.abendblatt.de/hamburg/article112138645/Viermaster-Peking-vor-der-Heimkehr-nach-Hamburg.html>, translation by author.

34 Bettina Mittelacher, “Hamburger Windjammer ‘Peking’ Kommt Nach Hause,” December 27, 2015, <https://www.abendblatt.de/hamburg/article206863305/Hamburger-Windjammer-Peking-kommt-nach-Hause.html>, translation by author.

35 Friederik Ulrich, Julian Schmelmer, and Lukas Homrich, “Willkommen Zu Hause! Die ‘Peking’ Hat in Hamburg Festgemacht,” *Hamburger Abendblatt* (blog), September 7, 2020, <https://www.abendblatt.de/hamburg/article230347454/Die-Peking-kehrt-heim-die-Ueberfahrt-im-Livestream.html>, translation by author.

museum with the *Peking* as its first exhibit, and I'll sell that as a package.<sup>36</sup>

To him, the *Peking*, as a ship that was built in a Hamburg shipyard and sailed for a Hamburg shipping company, in the context of the Port Museum is capable of strengthening the city's ties to its maritime past and to "raise the question of Hanseatic identity".<sup>37</sup> Although he acknowledges the contemporary demands for critical perspectives, he makes clear that he prefers them to play a marginal role and proposes a selective view on the ship and its history:

You will certainly also have to talk about all these other stories on the sidelines, about slavery and... I don't know. [...] But the basic idea was always: the port influences world trade, and world trade influences the port.<sup>38</sup>

This discursive connection between history, identity and materiality can be discussed in terms of heritage politics, meaning "the ways in which very selective material artefacts, mythologies, memories and traditions become resources for the present".<sup>39</sup> This does not necessarily go along with a centralized strategy, but can be understood as a tacit discursive praxis, unfolding on many interdependent layers like everyday speech, media discourse and official governance strategies.<sup>40</sup> It fosters a certain sense of belonging, a consciousness for an alleged local tradition, from which a collective identity is constructed.<sup>41</sup>

Over the past few decades, most western port cities have put increasing effort into the maintenance of their maritime heritage "not just in physical objects but also in the collective memory of citizens through maritime traditions and ceremonies of nautical culture".<sup>42</sup> Hamburg, in this regard, is no exception. Since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the city kept strategically stressing its maritime character and cosmopolitanism, dubbing itself "the gateway to the world", regardless of the racist and classist power structures that are deeply intertwined with its economic strength as a port city.<sup>43</sup>

36 Johannes Kahrs, interview and translation by author, Hamburg, Aug. 5th 2020

37 Johannes Kahrs, "Bitte Kurs Halten! Warum Das Deutsche Hafensemuseum Eine Gewaltige Chance Ist. Eine Erwiderung," *Die Zeit* 8/2017 (2017), translation by author.

38 Johannes Kahrs, interview and translation by author, Hamburg, Aug. 5th 2020

39 G. J. Ashworth and B. J. Graham, *Senses of Place, Senses of Time and Heritage*, ed. G. J. Ashworth and B. J. Graham, Heritage, Culture, and Identity (Aldershot, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 4.

40 Zongjie Wu and Song Hou, "Heritage and Discourse," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Heritage Research*, ed. Emma Waterton and Steve Watson, 2015.

41 Laurajane Smith, "Uses of Heritage" (Abington/New York: Routledge, 2006), 29 ff.; McLean, "Museums and the Representation of Identity".

42 Azadeh Arjomand Kermani, Wout van der Toorn Vrijthoff, and Arash Salek, "The Impact of Planning Reform on Water-Related Heritage Values and on Recalling Collective Maritime Identity of Port Cities: The Case of Rotterdam," in *Adaptive Strategies for Water Heritage*, ed. Carola Hein (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020), 347, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-00268-8\\_18](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-00268-8_18).

43 Lars Amenda, "'Welthafenstadt' Und 'Tor Zur Welt': Selbstdarstellung Und Wahrnehmung Der Hafenstadt Hamburg 1900-1970," *Deutsches Schifffahrtsarchiv*, 29 (2006): 148

Numerous museum ships and other maritime memorial sites, alongside touristic spectacles like the annual “Port Anniversary”, constantly “perpetuate the equation of port and city”.<sup>44</sup>

In this light, the *Peking*, as the (literal) flagship of one of Hamburg’s biggest cultural enterprises and as a maritime artefact that is bound to the city through its biography, appears not only as an object of local patriotism and of (selective) pride in the city’s maritime tradition, but also as an important asset for Hamburg’s city marketing that strongly relies on “[celebrating] the city’s maritime past with nostalgic undertones and [producing] specific images and moods”.<sup>45</sup> The *Peking*’s potential as a destination for heritage tourism<sup>46</sup> thus represents another argument for its acquisition, as Monika Grütters, the Federal Commissioner for Culture and Media, is quoted in a press release: “With the *Peking* as its showpiece, the port museum will provide comprehensive and vivid information about Germany’s maritime history and attract people from all over the world”.<sup>47</sup>

Hence, the ship appears to be of particular interest for political decision-makers who aim to strengthen Hamburg’s identity as a port city either in terms of maritime local patriotism or following a more entrepreneurial, tourism-led agenda that focuses on commodification and city marketing and makes use of maritime images for this purpose. These two sides, however, must not be seen as distinct from each other, but as deeply interdependent facets of an overarching discourse of maritime identity- and heritage politics that leans on material artefacts like the *Peking*.<sup>48</sup>

#### 4. Conflicting port-related narratives and the *Peking* as a boundary object

This schematic overview neither claims to be analytically exhaustive nor categorically precise, since there are indisputable overlaps between and inconsistencies within the portrayed positions. Rather than providing a comprehensive analysis, the previous discussion of the three broad stakeholder groups and their perspectives aims to illustrate how multiple actors ascribe differing and sometimes contradictory symbolic meanings to the *Peking* and thus cluster around the ship as an epistemological and organizational object.

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44 Strupp, “Im Bann Des Authentischen? Historische Schiffe Und Maritime Museen in Hamburg,” 39, translation by author.

45 Ibid., translation by author.

46 Yaniv Poria, Richard Butler, and David Airey, “The Core of Heritage Tourism,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 30, no. 1 (January 2003): 238–54, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383\(02\)00064-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(02)00064-6).

47 Behörde für Kultur und Medien, “Die PEKING Kehrt Zurück Nach Hamburg!,” September 7, 2020, <https://www.hamburg.de/pressearchiv-fhh/14286622/historische-viermastbark-pekings-kehrt-nach-hamburg-zurueck/>, translation by author.

48 Mah, *Port Cities and Global Legacies*, 88 ff.

This situation thus resembles the concept of “boundary objects”<sup>49</sup> that has been widely adopted in numerous contexts since its introduction in 1989.<sup>50</sup> The original article by Star and Griesemer takes up the notion of translation—a core concept of Actor-Network-Theory—and combines it with approaches from symbolic interactionism. It is argued that, in order to produce and circulate new knowledge, scientific actors need to mobilize allies from different social worlds to participate in their cause. To reconcile these allies’ different perspectives and goals, certain objects are required—be they material, theoretical, methodological etc.—that are considered relevant by all actors involved in a scientific enterprise and thus allow them to interact and to exchange information through and on these objects. Pointing out that epistemic objects<sup>51</sup> inevitably inhabit different social worlds, and are ascribed different meanings in each world, Star and Griesemer pose their central question: “how can findings which incorporate radically different meanings become coherent?”<sup>52</sup> Therefore, they introduce the concept of boundary objects:

Boundary objects are objects which are both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites. [...] They have different meanings in different social worlds but their structure is common enough to more than one world to make them recognizable, a means of translation.<sup>53</sup>

The concept hence refers to objects that are located in the “shared space” between social worlds and thus allow these worlds to interact.<sup>54</sup> Crucial to this is the idea to “not presuppose an epistemological primacy for one viewpoint,” but to follow the “flow of objects and concepts through the network of participating allies and social worlds”.<sup>55</sup>

Returning to the German Port Museum, it is the *Peking’s* “interpretive flexibility”<sup>56</sup> that allows different communities of practice to approach it from different points of view without substantial conflicts jeopardizing the project’s overall success. They can “abstract or simplify the object

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49 Star and Griesemer, “Institutional Ecology”.

50 Pascale Trompette and Dominique Vinck, “Revisiting the notion of Boundary Object,” *Revue d’anthropologie des connaissances* 3, 1, no. 1 (2009): 3, <https://doi.org/10.3917/rac.006.0003>.

51 I prefer “epistemic objects” to the term “scientific objects” used by Star/Griesemer, since I want to include non-scientific forms of knowledge production as equally relevant. See David Turnbull, “Reframing Science and Other Local Knowledge Traditions,” *Futures* 29, no. 6 (August 1997): 551–62, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0016-3287\(97\)00030-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0016-3287(97)00030-X).

52 Star and Griesemer, “Institutional Ecology,” 392.

53 Ibid., 393.

54 Susan Leigh Star, “This Is Not a Boundary Object: Reflections on the Origin of a Concept,” *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 35, no. 5 (September 2010): 602, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0162243910377624>.

55 Star and Griesemer, “Institutional Ecology,” 389.

56 Star, “This Is Not a Boundary Object,” 602.

to suit [their] demands”, so that “extraneous’ properties can be deleted or ignored,” while others are moved into the foreground.<sup>57</sup> This makes it possible for different actors to treat the *Peking* as a starting point for a critical discussion of globalization, as a representation of a long-gone era of nautical mastery and as a symbol for maritime identity at the same time. Hence, allies from different worlds are mobilized to contribute their resources to the project, either knowledge on technical or historical details, political influence or financial means. Although they do not have a shared vision for the ship, they are able to reconcile their differing points of view through the joint effort that leads to the *Peking’s* display as the Port Museum’s central object.

The existence of a mutual outcome, however, does not necessarily imply consensus between the cooperating allies. Rather, it is likely to “contain at every stage the traces of multiple viewpoints, translations and incomplete battles”.<sup>58</sup> For example, the subject of constructive alterations in the restoration process has already given rise to conflict: which degree of historic authenticity should be recreated to restore the *Peking* as a historic artefact, and which compromises are made to make it spatially and didactically accessible to a broad public? Another potential site of conflict is the prioritization of conflicting narratives. Will (neo-)colonial power relations be put at the center of the discussion, as the Port Museum’s core team would like? Or will they be treated as a marginal aspect of the master narrative of maritime trade, as other actors imply?

Of course, these fundamental narrative decisions are not carried out solely by a discrete museum object and its immediate stakeholders, but must be regarded in their broader context. The field of tension between critical and affirmative views on maritime heritage is in fact structured by manifold path dependencies that have been set by Hamburg’s political and cultural landscape over years. After decades of demands and interventions by activists, artists, and academics, the reappraisal of the city’s colonial past has finally been acknowledged as part of Hamburg’s official heritage policy in 2014.<sup>59</sup> This has led to recognizable effects such as the establishment of an interdisciplinary “Advisory Board for the Reappraisal of Hamburg’s Colonial History” in 2019 and the recent publication of a framework paper for a city-wide decolonial remembrance concept.<sup>60</sup> The paper points to the tight entanglement of Hamburg’s maritime history with colonial exploitation, and demands for the city’s museums and other cultural institutions to take an active part in the process of decolonization.<sup>61</sup> However, these

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57 Star and Griesemer, “Institutional Ecology,” 404.

58 Ibid., 413.

59 Melanie Boieck, “‘Heia Safari’ in Der Hafen-City - (Post-) Koloniales Erinnerungsbewusstsein in Hamburg” (Hamburg, Universität Hamburg, 2018).

60 Beirat zur Dekolonisierung Hamburgs, “Eckpunktepapier Für Ein Gesamtstädtisches Dekolonisierendes Erinnerungskonzept,” 2021.

61 Ibid., 4.



propositions that pick up on contemporary decolonial debates are rarely echoed in the discourse on and praxis of Hamburg's maritime heritage so far. With regard to the port and its history, revisionist narratives remain dominant through the primarily nostalgic staging of historic artefacts, leading to an aesthetic experience of a pre- or early industrial era that is almost entirely stripped of its colonial dimension.<sup>62</sup>

Accordingly, the future Port Museum has to situate itself between a critical, mostly academic discourse on decolonial reappraisal on the one side, and affirmative practices of material maritime heritage on the other. Through its narrative complexity and its relevance for multiple actors leaning towards either side of this divide, the *Peking* carries the potential to mediate between these hitherto separated trajectories. This must by no means be misunderstood as a process of seamless integration, leading to a homogenous and harmonic whole. Rather, conflicts and disputes are going to shape the museum that is about to emerge around the *Peking*, and it is far from clear how the contesting narratives will eventually relate to each other.

The suspense between decolonial critique and euphemistic port-related narratives is, however, not unique to the case of Hamburg and the German Port Museum. Phyllis Leffler states that "maritime museums on both sides of the Atlantic have been slow to embrace controversial topics of social and cultural history," since they have been "founded for the specific purposes of positive promotion of the sea" and to "relate histories of courage, power, conquest, and progress".<sup>63</sup> In the city of Liverpool for example, it is mainly for the ongoing demands by local black communities, that critical reflections on the city's role in transatlantic slave trade and colonialism have been given room in the museum landscape, and that the International Slavery Museum has been established as a permanent extension of the Merseyside Maritime Museum in 2007.<sup>64</sup> Alice Mah further reflects on the complex "spatial and narrative relationships"<sup>65</sup> between these two: Although the International Slavery Museum is located in the top floor above the Maritime Museum, Mah notes that critical positions are still "cut-off in terms of representation and narrative, but also spatially".<sup>66</sup> These observations illustrate that the mere existence of decolonial approaches in a museum project is not sufficient to alter the overall

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62 Strupp, "Im Bann Des Authentischen? Historische Schiffe Und Maritime Museen in Hamburg"; Amenda, "Welthafenstadt' Und 'Tor Zur Welt': Selbstdarstellung Und Wahrnehmung Der Hafencity Hamburg 1900-1970".

63 Phyllis K. Leffler, "Maritime Museums and Transatlantic Slavery: A Study in British and American Identity," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 4, no. 1 (March 2006): 57f, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14794010608656840>.

64 Robin Ostow, "The Museum as a Model for a Human Rights-Based Future: The International Slavery Museum, Liverpool, UK," *Journal of Human Rights Practice* 12, no. 3 (February 25, 2021): 620-41, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jhuman/huaa051>.

65 Mah, *Port Cities and Global Legacies*, 97.

66 Ibid.

narrative. Rather, they have to be looked upon in the light of their spatial, organizational and discursive ecology.

The *Peking's* prospect mooring in close proximity to the newly built Grasbrook-location, that is supposed to host multi-perspective views on globalization, raises hope that critical and present-oriented narratives might also be foregrounded in the *Peking's* presentation. The public noticeability of critical discourse in the future Port Museum as a whole, as well as its wider impact on Hamburg's heritage policy, will, however, not be determined by the *Peking* alone. The ship is in fact entangled in a much larger assemblage, containing not only the above-mentioned actors and communities that are immediately connected to the *Peking*, but also the city-wide museum landscape, the Port Museum's spatial contexts, long-term political trajectories and many more.

## 5. Conclusion

It has been shown that the *Peking* is of significant importance for a wide range of stakeholders for various reasons. Serving as a boundary object at the intersection of museum professionals, amateur ship enthusiasts, and political decision-makers, it allows different social worlds with different and partly contradictory agendas to interact and to cooperate. As Bruno Latour points out, an organizational entity is resilient, as long as its agents keep "performing it".<sup>67</sup> The *Peking* as a boundary object correspondingly mobilizes its stakeholders to bundle their resources, in order to preserve the ship and to transfer it to Hamburg as the German Port Museum's central object. Hence, the *Peking* can be regarded as the Port Museum's ontological, material, and organizational focal point in a sense that Latour calls "organizing as a mode of existence."<sup>68</sup> not only is it the museum's first tangible representation, but also the center around which crucial driving forces of the project group, and thus bring the Port Museum into being as a suspenseful, yet stable entity. It is for the ship's strength as a symbolic object and its interpretative flexibility, that the stakeholders are able to focus their efforts despite their conflicting individual interests.

However, the negotiations between these diverging standpoints outreach the question of how to harmonize different stakeholder's plans for a prominent museum object. At stake are, in fact, fundamentally different conceptions of how the maritime is intertwined with histories of violence

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67 Bruno Latour, "What's the Story? Organizing as a Mode of Existence," in *Agency without Actors? New Approaches to Collective Action*, ed. Jan-Hendrik Passoth, Birgit Maria Peuker, and Michael W. J. Schillmeier, Routledge Advances in Sociology 58 (London ; New York: Routledge, 2012), 167.

68 Ibid., 168.

and exploitation.<sup>69</sup> It remains to be seen, to what degrees the presented perspectives leave room for each other and if the museum's final conception will transcend what Stephen Small calls "token gestures to critical approaches".<sup>70</sup> Compared to other port cities, Hamburg is late in coming to terms with its colonial and imperial past. It might be instructive for further reflections to contextualize the Port Museum and its leading object within other museum projects that are based on a longer and denser history of dealing with port cities' past and present position within global power relations. The city of Liverpool, for example, is currently redesigning its dock area, giving the International Slavery Museum a more prominent spatial and programmatic position within the maritime museum ensemble and hence meeting some of the criticism referred to above.<sup>71</sup> Discussions on the intertwining of maritime heritage with colonialism and imperialism keep gaining momentum in the museum landscape, and it will be seen how the Port Museum as a newly founded institution lives up to this. At best, the *Peking* could serve as a vehicle to implement decolonial critique and multivocal reflections of global power relations in the midst of an exceptionally well financed museum project. At worst, critical disruptions will be smoothed out by the overwhelmingly present narratives of technological excellence, nautical adventures, and maritime pride.

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69 Philip E. Steinberg, *The Social Construction of the Ocean*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations 78 (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Liam Campling and Alejandro Colás, "Capitalism and the Sea: Sovereignty, Territory and Appropriation in the Global Ocean," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 36, no. 4 (August 2018): 776–94, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775817737319>.

70 Stephen Small, "Slavery, Colonialism and Museums Representations in Great Britain: Old and New Circuits of Migration.," *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 4, no. IX (2011): 123.

71 Maya Wolfe-Robinson, "Slavery Museum to Be Expanded in 10-Year Liverpool Waterfront Project," *The Guardian*, January 28, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/28/slavery-museum-to-be-expanded-in-10-year-liverpool-waterfront-project>.

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MAIN SECTION

# Cultural Heritage of the Old Port of Quebec Sacrificed on the Altar of a *Market Polity*

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ABSTRACT

Far from relying solely on scientific expertise, the construction of cultural heritage mobilizes elected officials, citizens, representatives of associations who have divergent points of view and interests. Connecting the main features of the participatory and deliberative paradigm with theories of cultural heritage this study aims to demonstrate with a pragmatic approach that the river and port front of Quebec City is given modest importance in cultural heritage characterization studies and conservation plans of the Commission des biens culturels du Québec and this penalizes its preservation.

KEYWORDS

*Deliberative; Cultural; Heritage; Port; Quebec*

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## Introduction

The old city of Quebec has been a meeting point for several millennia and has been permanently inhabited for more than four centuries. It plays a prominent role in collective memory and identity in Quebec. Among several archaeological sites, the fortifications, the citadel, the New Barracks and other defensive works prove of the military importance of the city since its origins and the Château Saint-Louis and the Intendant's Palace bear witness of the importance of the civil administration of the colony. Numerous other buildings serve as examples of the architectural richness of the site, such as Place Royale, the Citadel, the Basilica of Notre-Dame-de-Quebec, the Holy Trinity Cathedral, the Ramparts, the Dufferin Terrace, etc.; the Château Frontenac which sits atop Cap Diamant is the very emblem of the city. The old city of Quebec counts with some of the oldest and most prestigious health care institutions in the country too; some of them were founded by the Augustines de la Miséricorde de Jésus and the Ursulines, as an example the Hôtel-Dieu. As one among the oldest preserved fortified colonial citadel in North America, the site is officially declared a historic district of national importance in 1963. It receives international recognition in 1985 for its archaeological, parceling, architectural and landscape characteristics and is included on the list of the World Heritage Sites of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Surrounded by the Saint-Charles River and the St. Lawrence River, the old city of Quebec is also a port and maritime space that, from a military vocation under the French regime, experiences a more commercial turn in the 19th century. Thanks to its facilities it becomes one among the most important ports in the country and in North America besides New York and New Orleans. Contrasting with its contribution to the development of the Quebec agglomeration, the maritime and port infrastructure of Quebec is given modest importance in the cultural heritage characterization studies of the Commission des biens culturels du Québec; furthermore most of the old port space is excluded from the perimeter of the heritage district of the old city of Quebec which was delimited by the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications upon the advice of the Conseil du Patrimoine Culturel and this prevents it from any adequate protective measures as deplored by several associative organizations, representatives of international organizations but also by actors from civil society.

### **Theoretical framework: the cultural heritage construction**

The notion of cultural heritage questions a certain relation to history, to memory, to identities, etc. At the turn of the 1970s and 1980s it underwent a definitional inflation in the West that was perfectly described by Pierre Nora: "Suddenly, whole sections of obsolete categories of objects,

aesthetic or cultural fields that the industrial transformation and the development of space threatened to disappear, entered the cultural heritage domain”.<sup>1</sup> Cultural heritage thus gathers tangible elements whose typologies embrace more and more elastic criteria. Religious edifices and roadside crosses, commercial buildings and store decorations, industrial buildings, military and harbour works, peasant houses and washhouses, road networks and railway installations, bridges and canals, etc., stand among the list of immovable goods. Movable property includes pieces of furniture, relics, paintings, archives, etc. Collections, archaeological sites or working-class neighbourhoods rank also among cultural heritage which furthermore includes intangible elements such as tales and legends, skills and abilities, customs, etc. If its apprehension is likely to “potentially embrace any human production, material as well as symbolic”,<sup>2</sup> it also considers ecological and biological processes, habitats and ecosystems, etc.

To summarize, the notion of cultural heritage does not refer to a substantially existing object, fact or place; it results from a process at the end of which elements acquire a certain status, usually with the aim to be preserved, possibly restored, rehabilitated, or even exhibited and valorized. Associated with the idea of “common good”, of “doing things together”, “to make something collective”,<sup>3</sup> this process is however rarely consensual. From an institutional point of view, it generally follows a centralized technocratic-administrative procedure regulated by principles, rules and laws. Experts and specialists contribute at different levels, updating what is seen and known at the end of a process of desemantization and resemantization.<sup>4</sup> From this point of view, patrimonialization emerges as a performative act by which certain actors in a position of authority manage to make choices, to establish priorities, to make certain elements more visible than others, and thus orient in a certain way the question of the past and its interpretations. In contrast to a qualification procedure that prioritizes the tasks of identification and nomination to experts and specialized institutions that consecrate “institutional heritages”<sup>5</sup> based on predetermined taxonomic classes, the construction of cultural heritage can also be considered from a social experience perspective by which plural actors intend through their actions and commitments to confer on certain objects, spaces (architectural, urban or landscape), social practices

1 Pierre Nora, ed., *De l'archive à l'emblèmes*, vol. Les Lieux de mémoire, Bibliothèque des Histoires 3 (Paris: Gallimard, 1993), 4708.

2 Jean-Louis Jeannelle, “Le Kamtchatka patrimonial,” *Critique* 805–806, no. 6 (2014): 499, <https://doi.org/10.3917/criti.805.0494>.

3 Vincent Veschambre, “Patrimoine : un objet révélateur des évolutions de la géographie et de sa place dans les sciences sociales,” *Annales de géographie* 656, no. 4 (2007): 3, <https://doi.org/10.3917/ag.656.0361>.

4 Nathalie Heinich, “La construction d'un regard collectif : le cas de l'inventaire du patrimoine\*,” *Gradhiva*, no. 11 (2010): 162–80, <https://doi.org/10.4000/gradhiva.1707>.

5 Jean-Louis Tornatore, ed., *Le patrimoine comme expérience: Implications anthropologiques* (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2019), 17, <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.editionsmsmh.19033>.

(languages, rites, myths, etc.), as well as the relations (or lack of them) between them and the relations (or transactions) that they signify and organize, a set of properties or “values” that are recognized and shared (a form of cultural heritage), because they have appropriated them, recognize themselves in them, care about them and proclaim their existence. This form of appropriation can be objectified by territorial delimitation, through restoration and protection measures, through legal control and economic valuation, etc. It can also result from a symbolic transfer of value from cultural heritage to individuals or groups of individuals who recognize it and claim it as their own.

Not necessarily converging, institutional designation and collective appropriation go through phases of tension that reveal at least of the heterogeneity of scientific traditions or the absence of scientific-methodical consensus on the modalities or effects of cultural heritage, reveal of a plurality of perceptions and interests in qualifying cultural heritage. The hierarchy and the complementarity of the rationalities underlying these processes often remain unresolved and, in the end, it is often a form of collective validation backed by institutional mechanisms whose implementation and development are generally ensured by state authorities that determines what constitutes cultural heritage. Allowing to account for the panopticon of visions and divisions which serve to support criticism or common understanding, this qualifying process presents affinity with the participative and deliberative paradigm in that it engages within hybrid arenas or forums elected officials who deliberate, experts who confronts their operational competences and technical knowledge, scientists who expose fundamental knowledge, representatives of associative bodies, activists or non-expert citizens who resort to other cognitive or expressive resources in order to characterize what cultural heritage is.

Thus, this study postulates that the construction of cultural heritage far from relying on the sole scientific and institutionalized expertise mobilizes numerous elected officials, committed citizens, representatives of associative bodies who confront divergent points of view and interests in defining what cultural heritage is. It also postulates that the river and port front which is inseparable from the origin and development of the agglomeration of Quebec City is given a modest importance in the cultural heritage characterization studies of the Commission des biens culturels du Québec and this penalizes its preservation.

## **Epistemological positioning and methodology**

### **a. Epistemological positioning**

From a relativist and constructivist hypothesis according to which reality proceeds from the meanings, the representations that the actors construct from their own experience of reality; “knowledge cannot be conceived as predetermined, either in the internal structures of the subject, since they

result from an effective and continuous construction, or in the pre-existing characteristics of the object, since they are known only thanks to the necessary mediation of these structures”;<sup>6</sup> the epistemological posture is close to the interpretivist paradigm which also recognize interdependence between reality and subjectivity but distances itself from empathetic and psychologizing understanding in elucidating representations, mental constructions, motivations and reasons for acting in order to favor a production of theoretical-empirical diagnoses of the situations which are dissociated from the phenomenological experience (individual and collective). The epistemological posture also refutes this form of social constructivism according to which everything would be under construction, in the process of being done, but recognizes certain reality stability that is always likely to be challenged and this generally takes the form of criticism, a denunciation and possibly a trial. It is then a question of paying particular attention to the conditions of realization or non-realization of these regularities. This epistemological positioning seems consistent with the chosen theoretical framework which is characterized by a form of empiricism, non-essentialism, continuism (continuity between knowledge and action) and pragmatism (knowledge proceeds from the analysis of practical effects). The epistemological position seeks to objectify and categorize the nature of various practices and to conceptualize their relations with institutions and the environment; the truth emerges in a context, a situation, at a given moment in response to concrete problems.

## b. Methodology

The investigation follows several steps. At the beginning the collection of data tends to gather clues that make it possible to grasp what makes the situation ambiguous, indeterminate in its attributes. It then aims at gathering further materials, elements, data, significant facts to define more precisely the nature of the problem at the origin of the disorder and to facilitate, as the situation is reorganized, a better understanding of the purposes of the conversion of the problem into a satisfactory experience. The collection embraces multiple sources, policy documents, framework documents, data related to the cultural heritage process, etc. Whether in geography, architecture, archaeology, sociology or economics, the Historic District of Old Québec has been a topic for countless studies, research, inventories and publications; it would be tedious to draw up an exhaustive list of the sources used, so it is more appropriate to indicate that only recent writings directly related to the cultural heritage issue in Quebec have been short-listed. Furthermore, discourses of actors were only considered if they were sufficiently publicized: “a thing is only fully known when it is published, shared and socially accessible (...) knowledge

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6 Jean Piaget, *L'épistémologie génétique* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2011), 5.

of social phenomena depends especially on its dissemination, for it is only by being distributed that such knowledge can be obtained or tested".<sup>7</sup>

The analysis of the speeches is organized around three chronological phases: the pre-analysis, the exploitation of the material as well as the processing of the results, the inference and the interpretation. A first reading of the materials allows to further delimit the object of the research. It is then a matter of reading and reading again the documents and the discourses in order to organize and systematize the ideas and themes, to specify the analysis plan and possibly to reformulate the hypotheses and the objectives. Without attempting to hierarchize the tripartition of semiotics into semantics, syntax and pragmatics, the analysis progressively organizes a second axial coding that consists of grouping, ordering and arranging the data, highlighting more precisely the themes of representations, beliefs and ideological references conveyed by the speeches that guide the construction of reality and on which the justifications for action are based and renewed over time. This classification of elements by differentiation and then grouping (analogy) makes it possible, by condensation, to arrive at a representation of the raw data; this remains, however, too simplified. The coding must be assessed not only in terms of the relative and absolute positioning of the syntagms in the corpus, but also with regard to the entities in context to which they refer; this makes it possible not to isolate the semantic-thematic markers from their corresponding universe of production, enunciation and reception, and to preserve the coherence of the sequences, the trace of the thematic and semantic connections operated between the units of the analysis. Following a principle of inference and generalization, techniques of induction, interpretation and abstraction (from empirical studies to the generation of theories), the lexical worlds, the discursive formations and concepts identified are then refined (description and contextualization of the situation, exploration and statement of possibilities, revelation of certain mechanisms, certain regularities, presentation of ideal types, etc.), sometimes by taking "interpretative risks" as Bernard Lahire<sup>8</sup> acknowledges, grouped and linked to the theoretical dimensions of the sociology of justification<sup>9</sup> to which this study resorts. Developed in France in the 1980s under the impetus of Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot, this pragmatic approach is envisioned as a project of grammatical investigation of forms of denunciation, vindication, and justification during disputes or conflicts in evaluating problematic situations. Proposing tools for describing and interpreting operations of appreciation and judgment, this approach tends to objectify and categorize the moto of action according to an analytical grid, a typology of

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7 John Dewey, *Le public et ses problèmes*, trans. Joëlle Zask (Paris: Gallimard, 2010), 275.

8 Bernard Lahire, "Risquer l'interprétation: pertinences interprétatives et surinterprétations en sciences" *Enquête*, no. 3 (1996): 61–87, <https://doi.org/10.4000/enquete.373>.

9 Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot, *De la justification : les économies de la grandeur* (Paris: Gallimard, 1991).

polities; first the *domestic, civic, fame, market, industrial, inspired polities*,<sup>10</sup> then the *projects polity*<sup>11</sup> and finally the *eco polity*,<sup>12</sup> each finding their roots in a moral and political philosophical theory. Following a gradual succession of verifications, the analysis ceases when the object is sufficiently corroborated not only to satisfactorily inform the situation with regard to the experience of the respondents (who have themselves conducted their experience of the problematic situation) and of the investigator (with regard to the investigation of the respondents), but also to test the stated hypotheses with interpretative consistency.

### **Context of the research: the old city of Quebec**

From Cap Diamant to the St. Lawrence River, the historic heart of Quebec City became a privileged place for trade; the native tribes living upstream and downstream have met there for thousands of years as evidenced by nearly 480 archaeological sites. Around 1535, the navigator Jacques Cartier took possession of this small village; in Algonquin “Kébec” means “where the river narrows”; in the name François I, King of France, who mandated him to establish a permanent colony at the mouth of the Cap Rouge River, a few kilometers west of the present cultural heritage site. Although this first colonial project was definitively abandoned in 1543 when the Franco-Spanish war broke out, the idea of establishing a permanent colony was revived at the beginning of the 17th century under the impetus of Henri IV, King of France, who wished to set up there a trading post. Samuel de Champlain built there a trading post in 1608, Quebec City was founded as the first permanent French settlement in America. It became the capital of New France in 1663. The lower town sector was developed, defensive works were erected, the Saint-Louis fort was built in 1620 on the heights of the escarpment, the city was equipped with a fortified enclosure in 1690, two cannon platforms were placed in 1660 and 1690 on the Pointe aux Roches, the Royal batteries (1691), Dauphine (1709) and Pointe-à-Carcy batteries were built, and trading posts and garrisons were established along the St. Lawrence Valley, also to benefit from the fishing activity of the coastal fishery (lobster, salmon, for example), the deep-sea fishery and the forestry and mining activities inland. Constituting a key link between the New World and the Old World, the port was developed, initially in wood, gradually consolidated, taking on a rectilinear appearance with a small cove to the west, that of the Cul-de-Sac, where the first shipyard was developed between 1746 and 1748. The arrival and installation of the first religious communities was not only part of an

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10 Ibid.

11 Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello, *Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1999).

12 Claudette Lafaye and Laurent Thévenot, “Une justification écologique? Conflits dans l’aménagement de la Nature,” *Revue Française de Sociologie* 34, no. 4 (1993): 495–524, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3321928>.

intense evangelization activity but also lead to the erection of numerous religious buildings. The Jesuits established themselves in the upper town in 1633 and built a college (1725), the Ursulines began constructing their monastery west of the Jesuit property in 1639 and built a chapel there in 1711. The Augustinian nuns established themselves on a vast plot of land away from Fort Saint-Louis and founded the Hôtel-Dieu, the first hospital in America built north of Mexico. After the assault of Quebec in 1759 and the English occupation, the Seven Years' War, a brief American siege that lasted until the spring of 1776, the city of Quebec rebuilt itself and began an important period of prosperity thanks to the continental blockade that Napoleon exercised on the British Isles as from 1806, which allowed the port of Quebec to serve not only as a base for exporting forest resources to England but also as a center for transit and redistribution of English products to the British colonies. From Anse-au-Foulon in the west to the Burnett and Olivier piers in the north, the port system formed a huge floating warehouse for wood drifting from the Ottawa River. The development of the St-Roch district until the 1840s launched the construction of new piers at the mouth of the St-Charles River under the impetus of importers and exporters who had their own wharves built. In a hurry to benefit from this boom, 30,000 British and Irish people disembarked each year at the immigration shed. Shipyards also proliferated; from 1760 to 1825 38% of the ships built in Lower Canada came from the twenty Quebec shipyards that employed up to 5,000 people. At the turn of the 19th century, the port of Québec became one of the most important ports in North America, hosting coastal vessels that travelled to and from the Great Lakes and ocean-going ships. Just instituted, the Maison de la Trinité de Québec (renamed since then Commission du Havre de Québec) took charge of guaranteeing the security of the port installations, the installation and removal of buoys and beacons, the anchoring and mooring of ships, the erection of lighthouses and wharves, the clearing of sands, rocks or other obstructions to navigation, while ensuring the regulation and the emission of pilots' licenses and sitting as an independent court in these matters. The lower and upper town of Quebec City also developed considerably ; some of the most significant pieces of architecture were then built up : the Hôtel-Dieu Chapel (1800), St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (1809-1810), the Parlors and Seminary Congregation wings (1822-1823), St. Patrick's Irish Catholic Church (1831-1833), the former Wesleyan Church (1848), the Free Church of Scotland (1851-1853), the former Baptist Church building (1853) and the institutional complex of the Sisters of Charity of Quebec. Several fires, epidemics of cholera and typhus. which is called "ship's fever", as well as the fall of preferential tariffs for wood caused however a clear slowdown in economic activities. The construction of the pier and the Louise Basin, followed by the construction of deep-water wharves at Anse au Foulon, made it possible to accommodate larger ships and to transship merchandise more easily ; this boosted the export of mining, grain and forestry products and the import of iron, steel and

textile products, etc. This new dynamism was accompanied by a certain enthusiasm for commemoration; many monuments were erected and public squares were built, including Place D'Youville, the Quebec Young Men's Christian Association building (1878-1879) and the Capitol Theatre (1902-1903). Other buildings popped up such as the Grand Séminaire (1879), the Aiguillon Pavilion of the Hôtel Dieu (1892), the new chapel of the Ursuline monastery (1901-1902) and the new chapel of the Sisters of Charity of Quebec (1914).

## Historic district of Old Québec

The process of protecting the old city of Quebec began in the second half of the 19th century and continued in the following century through a series of actions taken by municipal, provincial and federal authorities. The increase in population, the modernization of transportation and industrialization impacted on the old city of Quebec; in order to preserve its unique character, the Quebec government ratified in 1922 the *Loi relative à la conservation des monuments et des objets d'art historique ou artistique d'intérêt national* which established the Commission des monuments historiques, the forerunner of the Conseil du patrimoine culturel du Québec, which carried out the first inventories of Quebec's cultural heritage; these included "Les monuments commémoratifs de la province de Québec" (1923), "Les vieilles églises de la province de Québec" (1925) and "Les vieux manoirs, vieilles maisons" (1927) ; and the first classifications of historic monuments, notably the Maison des Jésuites de Sillery and the Church of Notre-Dame-des-Victoires in Quebec City (1929). Amended in 1952, the law empowered the Commission des monuments historiques to acquire buildings of cultural heritage interest that were often subsequently restored to their original style. With the coming into force in 1963 of the *Loi sur les monuments historiques*, the old city of Quebec was officially declared a historic district of national importance. Comprising an urban area of approximately 135 hectares, numerous archaeological sites and close to 1400 buildings constructed as from the 17th century onwards, the Historic District of Old Québec is the first territory to benefit from this protection in Quebec. Beyond its archaeological value, the Historic District of Old Québec presents a strong architectural interest; many edifices in Palladian style are characterized by the symmetry of the facades, masonries bearing cut stone, elevations of three or four floors, roofs of average slope with straight slopes or hips pierced by dormers, regularly ordered windows with casements or sashes. The Historic District of Old Québec counts although with colonial residences, some monumental buildings, commemorative monuments, numerous religious edifices; the Ursulines-de-Québec monastery, the Augustines de-l'Hôtel-Dieu-de-Québec monastery, the Notre-Dame-de-Québec basilica-cathedral, Holy Trinity Cathedral, the exterior chapel of the Séminaire de Québec, the chapel of the Sœurs de la Charité de Québec, etc.; fortifications and port constructions. The



site is characterized by a contrasting rhythm and physiognomy parcelling, with square or rectangular small or medium-sized units of residential houses, medium- and large-sized parcels of variable shapes on which institutional, religious, military, public and commercial buildings are erected. The circulation network is composed of stairways built between the 19th and 20th centuries, notably the Lépine and Charles-Baillairgé stairways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, roads, streets, avenues, boulevards and old squares, including Place d'Armes, Place de Paris, Place de l'Hôtel-de-Ville and Place d'Youville, organized according to an initial radio-concentric plan in the upper town and an orthogonal plan in the lower part of the city. Connecting public places, including Place d'Armes, church squares, religious properties with the initial nuclei of the colony built in Lower Town, the master plan of the Historic District of Old Québec leads to the shores of the St. Charles and St. Lawrence rivers. From the promontory of the upper town, structured by its fortifications erected on the highest point of Cap Diamant, to the residential, commercial and harbour lower town enclosed between a pronounced escarpment, the river terrace (or riparian strip) and the plain formed by the old banks, the Historic District of Old Québec is also a landscape of interest. The fortifications, the Dufferin Terrace, Place Royale, Place d'Armes, Place de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, Montmorency Park, Cavalier-du-Moulin Park, La Cetière Park and Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde Park all offer beautiful vantage points; the road network, the hills and the stairs of the old city of Quebec offer a multitude of visual perspectives and the côte de la Montagne offers unique views of the old city of Quebec, both from the upper and lower town. The visual qualities of the Historic District of Old Québec also interact with natural elements that undoubtedly contribute to the cultural heritage value of the whole. The geological elements of the site appear in the very structure of the buildings; the limestone extracted from the Quebec promontory as early as the 17th century is widely used, notably for the construction of the Saint-Louis fort, the Hôtel-Dieu, the Ursuline convent and the Notre-Dame-de-Quebec Cathedral Basilica, while the sandstone is found as early as the 19th century mainly in the construction of prestigious residences, institutional buildings and fortification walls. The vegetation cover is made up of a few conifers, including pines and cedars, but is mainly composed of deciduous trees, beech, maple, birch, oak, poplar, ash and a few specimens of American elm of great value. Further preservation, rehabilitation and enhancement measures entered into force, including a plan for redeveloping the old city of Quebec (1970), which is similar to the first development plan with a cultural heritage connotation. With the coming into force of the *Loi sur les biens culturels* in 1972, it became impossible without authorization to divide a lot, to modify the layout or appearance of a building, to excavate the ground even inside a building, to replace or demolish a sign or a panel, etc. Some buildings located in the historic district were also classified by the Minister whose heritage department published several guides: "Guide pour la conservation et la mise en valeur

de l'architecture du Vieux-Québec" (1982), "Regards sur l'architecture du Vieux-Québec" (1986), "Conserver et mettre en valeur le Vieux-Québec : guide d'intervention" (1998); and commissioned various studies aiming at better understanding, inventorying and protecting the characteristics of the Historic District of Old Québec; "Québec de roc et de pierres: la capitale en architecture" by Luc Noppen and Lucie K. Morisset,<sup>13</sup> "Québec, World Heritage City: Forgotten Images of Daily Life, 1858-1914" by Michel Lessard or "Old Québec: Its Interior Architecture" by Christina Cameron and Monique Trépanier.<sup>14</sup>

## Patrimonialization of the old port?

By adopting la *Loi sur le patrimoine culturel* in 2012, the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications intends to curb further the transformation of the Historic District of Old Québec; according to this law conservation plans have to drawn up to (re)evaluate the features of interest of the site, to identify issues (both positive and negative) that might influence the site, to set clear objectives for the conservation, to set out appropriate strategies/management actions to achieve its preservation and rehabilitation. In order to legitimize the measures to be taken, the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications undertakes various operations to publicize its intentions and those emphasized the role of the media (circulation of press releases, press conferences, etc.) in producing a space for discussion and debate. Relying on new information and communication technologies to stimulate the political engagement of citizens (several briefs denounce in this regard a placing under tutelage of citizens: "ensure an effective sharing of decision-making powers";<sup>15</sup> "Place the citizen in the center of collective cultural heritage concerns. He must be a partner", "include a major absentee: the citizen/civil society for whom this cultural heritage is preserved and enhanced", "no citizen involvement"<sup>16</sup>). As *civic greatness* requires access to information, sharing and acknowledging the opinion of each and everyone, a public hearing is also set for 17 April 2019. Taking the materiality of these arenas into account helps analyzing the logics of problematization of public issues and the involvement stakes which derive from them; "this debating process is seen as necessary for

13 Luc Noppen and Lucie K. Morisset, *Québec de roc et de pierres: la capitale en architecture* (Montréal: Editions MultiMondes, 1998).

14 Christina Cameron and Monique Trépanier, *Vieux Québec: son architecture intérieure* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1986), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt22zmcc1>.

15 Dominique Albernhe, "Le passé conditionne le présent, et le présent contient l'avenir," Consultation publique du CPCQ pour le Vieux-Québec Commentaires écrits, 2019, <https://cpcq.gouv.qc.ca/app/uploads/2020/06/DominiqueAlbernhe-memoire.pdf>.

16 Coalition pour l'arrondissement historique de Sillery, a Web-based Surveys gets circulated online from 21 March to 22 April 2019. Opening up to different audiences and social groups, a public information session is set for 21 March 2019 to enrich public debate. "Contribution à la préparation du Plan de conservation du site patrimonial du Vieux-Québec" (Coalition pour l'arrondissement historique de Sillery, 2019), <https://cpcq.gouv.qc.ca/app/uploads/2020/06/CoalitionpourlarrondissementhistoriquedeSillery-PierreVagneuxmemoire.pdf>.

citizens to be able to make choices upon which public policies can be developed which will influence collective destinies".<sup>17</sup> Beforehand, actors are given the opportunity to send the Conseil du patrimoine culturel du Québec their comments in a written form. Ranging from a few lines to several pages, fourteen papers are then submitted (8 individual papers, 9 collective papers) in accordance with the form and content requirements as set by the law. Paginated and dated, they have to clearly identify their author (no anonymity), aim to satisfy collective (not private) interests, detail the very concerns raised by the conservation plan and conclude with concrete suggestions or proposals for improvement. Unless the author expressly states otherwise, the written submissions are made public and posted on the Conseil du patrimoine culturel du Québec's Web site. During the public hearing, citizens have five minutes to introduce their communication to the audience and the hearing committee composed by a historian, an ethnologist, an associate professor of architecture and an expert in public affairs management. In its stage-like dimension, public debate complies with ceremonial rules which are "neither recorded, nor quoted, nor available to informants"<sup>18</sup> but nonetheless made manifest every time there is a breach of the standard of "good conduct" (avoidance, distancing, etc.).<sup>19</sup> These communicational constraints certainly influence the dynamic of debates even though it is not easy to quantify it.<sup>20</sup> Through shared attentional demands, intersubjective mechanisms of co-presence, empathic inter-comprehension<sup>21</sup> and acts of communication, some speakers prove in that respect to master the required behavioral and cognitive skills<sup>22</sup>. Playing to an audience of spectators whose collective judgement about the relevance and authority of the arguments exchanged produces public opinion<sup>23</sup> also require overcoming further constraints related to public justification.<sup>24</sup> Questioning their skills in making clear and solid arguments alongside experts, several citizens tend to opt between

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17 Romain Badouard, Clément Mabi, and Laurence Monnoyer-Smith, "Arenas of Public Debate. On the Materiality of Discussion Spaces," *Questions de Communication*, no. 30 (December 31, 2016): 1, <http://journals.openedition.org/questionsdecommunication/11000>.

18 Erving Goffman, *Façons de parler, Les sens communs* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1987), 96.

19 Erving Goffman, *Les moments et leurs hommes* (Paris: Editions Seuil - Minuit, 1988).

20 Iris Marion Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, Oxford Political Theory (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

21 Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).

22 Daniel Gaxie, "Appréhensions du politique et mobilisations des expériences sociales," *Revue française de science politique* 52, no. 2-3 (2002): 145-78, <https://doi.org/10.3406/rfsp.2002.403705>.

23 Louis Quéré, "Perception du sens et action située," in *La logique des situations*, ed. Michel De Fornel and Louis Quéré (Paris: Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2000), 301-38, <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.editionsehess.10705>.

24 Yves Sintomer, "Délibération et participation : affinité élective ou concepts en tension ?," *Participations* 1, no. 1 (2011): 239-76, <https://doi.org/10.3917/parti.001.0239>.

logos, ethos and pathos<sup>25</sup> for ordinary rationality, rhetoric,<sup>26</sup> negotiation<sup>27</sup> and transactions tactics<sup>28</sup> or even less structured forms of enunciation such as invective and display of affects.<sup>29</sup> Far from illustrating the virtues of a “boundless hospitable democracy”<sup>30</sup> this open gathering of officials and citizens ideally aiming to enhance public debate<sup>31</sup> could oppose in that respect a theoretical voice in the chapter and the effective capacity to have an impact on deliberations and their outcome. Nevertheless, forming a specific narrative, rhetorical and dramatic configuration<sup>32</sup> the next stage of the process confronted in the debate individuals or a group with diverging representations, rationalities, points of view (e.g. aesthetic, scientific, environmental, architectural, urbanistic, economic, etc.), values (individual or collective) and stakes (way of considering cultural heritage, mass tourism, etc.). These discussions are not abstract exchanges but concrete social activities showing people either modifying or conversely supporting their initial positions, forging enlightened opinions on questions of general interest. Some arguments denounce political arrangements whose greatness do not comply with *civic greatness*. Under the *Loi sur le patrimoine culturel*, the City of Quebec, subrogating to the powers of the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications, is responsible for determining what work (construction, modification of a building, excavation, etc.) may be carried out within the perimeter of the Historic District of Old Québec. However, the City of Québec has delegated its powers to the Commission d’urbanisme et de conservation de Québec whose 10 members, three elected officials and members appointed by the municipal council, are not identified as a cultural heritage specialist. This transfer of responsibility is considered detrimental to cultural heritage protection (“base their decision on political rather than cultural heritage considerations”, “This shift of the authorization process from administrative to political spheres could lead to situations that are not optimal for cultural

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25 Marc Breviglieri and Danny Trom, “Troubles et tensions en milieu urbain. Les épreuves citadines et habitantes de la ville,” in *Les sens du public : publics politiques, publics médiatiques*, ed. Daniel Cefaï and Dominique Pasquier (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2003), 399–416.

26 Simone Chambers, “Rhétorique et espace public : La démocratie délibérative a-t-elle abandonné la démocratie de masse à son sort ?,” *Raisons politiques* 42, no. 2 (2011): 15–45, <https://doi.org/10.3917/rai.042.0015>.

27 Frans H. van Eemeren and Houtlosser Peter, “Dialectic and Rhetoric: The Warp and Woof of Argumentation Analysis,” *Argumentation* 18, no. 4 (2002): 483–88, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10503-004-1076-0>.

28 Maurice Blanc, ed., *Pour une sociologie de la transaction sociale*, Logiques sociales (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1992).

29 Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*.

30 Stavo-Debaugé, 2012, cited by Mathieu Berger and Julien Charles, “Persona non grata. Au seuil de la participation,” *Participations* 9, no. 2 (2014): 18, <https://doi.org/10.3917/parti.009.0005>.

31 Michael X. Delli Carpini, Fay Lomax Cook, and Lawrence R. Jacobs, “Public Deliberation, Discursive Participation, and Citizen Engagement: A Review of the Empirical Literature,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 7, no. 1 (2004): 315–44, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.7.121003.091630>.

32 Daniel Cefaï, “La construction des problèmes publics. Définitions de situations dans des arènes publiques,” *Réseaux* 14, no. 75 (1996): 43–66, <https://doi.org/10.3406/reso.1996.3684>.

heritage protection”, “Just think of the citizen and political pressures related to the conservation plan implemented for the Historic District of Île d’Orléans”, “The lack of supervision of this political body whose primary mission is not, unlike the Direction générale du patrimoine, to protect cultural heritage is disturbing”;<sup>33</sup> “these mechanisms seem designed to facilitate abuses of discretionary power”, “It can be said that the facilitation of these abuses is not only intended, it is planned and set up as a system by the government bodies responsible for preserving cultural heritage”<sup>34</sup>). As a consequence, numerous comments refer to the authorization given to punctual modifications that cumulated altered the overall harmony of the district and the visual qualities or the historical character of the buildings. Several comments focused on the materials used for the renovation that do not reflect the period of construction of the building (“The use of materials that correspond to those of the environment of Historic District of Old Québec must be considered as an imperative”<sup>35</sup>), while other criticisms relate to the insertion of contemporary elements or to poorly executed interventions carried out on architectural components such as doors and windows, roofs and their components (“The integrity of materials, structures and heights often seems to vary at the whim of real estate promoters”, “The architectural integrity, often left to the care of owners and promoters, seem insufficient”<sup>36</sup>). Several comments criticized façadism, a common practice that consists of preserving the façade while authorizing an interior restructuring of the building (“It seems to me that in all cases, the Plan will have to take a position on façadism, which seems to be the imposed norm in Old city of Quebec”<sup>37</sup>). Several actors were willing to protect not only the built environmental characteristics but also the landscape and elements of nature by maintaining a sufficient vegetation cover, whether it is on the facade of the buildings, along the streets or in the squares. Another problem addressed concerns the museification of historic sites for the main benefit of tourist industry (“Transforming the area into a museum where everything remains static is an aberration”, “risk of transforming it into a museum district where everything is driven by tourism”<sup>38</sup>; “In its least glowing version, mass tourism, is defined by critics as a form of insensitive, indifferent and unconscious appropriation of a community’s local assets by transient visitors”, “Increasingly unlivable is the

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33 “Mémoire concernant le Plan de conservation du site patrimonial du Vieux-Québec présenté au Conseil du patrimoine culturel du Québec” (Fédération Histoire Québec, April 2019), [http://www.histoirequebec.qc.ca/uploads/Memoire\\_Vieux-Quebec-FHQ.pdf](http://www.histoirequebec.qc.ca/uploads/Memoire_Vieux-Quebec-FHQ.pdf),

34 Pierre Larochelle, “L’abus de pouvoir discrétionnaire systématisé. Le patrimoine bâti au Québec : quand l’ignorance fait loi,” Mémoire sur le Projet de plan de conservation du site patrimonial Vieux-Québec, 2019, <https://cpcq.gouv.qc.ca/app/uploads/2020/06/PierreLarochelle-memoire.pdf>.

35 “Mémoire concernant le Plan de conservation du site patrimonial du Vieux-Québec présenté au Conseil du patrimoine culturel du Québec.”

36 Ibid.

37 Alberne, “Le passé conditionne le présent, et le présent contient l’avenir.”

38 “Mémoire concernant le Plan de conservation du site patrimonial du Vieux-Québec présenté au Conseil du patrimoine culturel du Québec.”

best word that describes our situation as permanent residents in recent years”<sup>39</sup>). As a matter of facts, six cruise ships carrying no less than 5,000 people dock each week at the Port of Quebec, not to mention the 400 daily 50-passenger buses, visitors and other conventioners arriving by car, train, or plane that affect so badly the quality of life of many residents that they prefer to go into exile; between 2006 and 2011, the cultural heritage site lost more than 9% of its permanent residents. Several citizens stressed that preserving the cultural heritage character of the site should also involve the development of infrastructures that allow for the stabilization of permanent population (“We don’t create a setting, we perpetuate a living environment”, “Permanent housing is an essential condition for the vitality, conviviality and security of these neighborhoods. The resident must be at the heart of the action”;<sup>40</sup> “Several pages on the history of the district and the state of architecture and topography. Not a word about the residents”;<sup>41</sup> “Should we remind you that one among the others reasons for the classification of the Historic District of Old Québec as a UNESCO World Heritage Site was the presence of a permanent population that gives life to the district? “If tourism is a manna for the merchants of the sector and for the hoteliers, it is otherwise for the residents of the sector”, “The old city of Quebec is a living environment, and a living environment includes people who live there”;<sup>42</sup> “let us remind you that the first beneficiaries and guardians of our cultural heritage are the inhabitants of the old city of Quebec, the permanent residents”<sup>43</sup>). Emphasizing the relationship between inhabitants who, knowing each other for a long time, claim a community of destiny, many *domestic* discourses stress the importance of patrimonializing without dispossessing the inhabitants of their living space, without corrupting their sense of belonging. Insisting on preserving centuries-old forms of sharing that cement community relationships, many citizens are furthermore willing to protect not only isolated units but naturel and build ensembles and their intangible characteristics that help their understanding, developing and transmitting to future generations (“Cultural heritage is more than the built environment, there is notably the intangible and the landscape”;<sup>44</sup> “The inability to have a global vision of the site, accepted by all stakeholders, puts the whole at risk”<sup>45</sup>). In this regard,

39 “Mémoire au Conseil du patrimoine culturel du Québec sur le « Projet de plan de conservation du site patrimonial du Vieux-Québec »” (Le conseil d’administration des Maisons de Beaujours, 2019), <https://cpcq.gouv.qc.ca/app/uploads/2020/06/LeconseildadministrationdesMaisonsdeBeaujours-LucienMorin-memoire.pdf>.

40 “Mémoire soumis au conseil du patrimoine culturel du Québec concernant le Plan de conservation du site patrimonial du Vieux-Québec” (Coopérative La GrandVoile de Québec, April 8, 2019), <https://cpcq.gouv.qc.ca/app/uploads/2020/04/Cooperative-la-GrandVoile-de-Quebec.pdf>.

41 Albernhe, “Le passé conditionne le présent, et le présent contient l’avenir.”

42 “Mémoire concernant le Plan de conservation du site patrimonial du Vieux-Québec présenté au Conseil du patrimoine culturel du Québec.”

43 “Mémoire au Conseil du patrimoine culturel du Québec sur le « Projet de plan de conservation du site patrimonial du Vieux-Québec ».”

44 “Contribution à la préparation du Plan de conservation du site patrimonial du Vieux-Québec.”

45 “Mémoire concernant le Plan de conservation du site patrimonial du Vieux-Québec présenté au Conseil du patrimoine culturel du Québec.”

they questioned the strict boundaries of the historic district of Quebec as delineated by the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications. They point out that the three facades of the promontory of Quebec are from a hydrographic point of view surrounded by the St. Charles River and the St. Lawrence River. However, the importance of this port and maritime space, which is intrinsically connected with the origin and development of the city of Québec, contrasts with the modest place it is given in the cultural heritage characterization studies of the Commission des biens culturels du Québec. Nonetheless, the diverse expressions of this cultural heritage deserve the most sustained attention. The historic cradle of the city, the old port of the 17th century built in the lower part of the city between the Royal Battery and Saint-Paul Street counts for example with the Royal Battery, the Finlay Market, the Hunt Islet, the Museum of Civilization, the Bell Islet and the Dalhousie Square (Place des Canotiers). At the Saint-Nicolas harbour, located near the Islet of the Palaces at the mouth of the Saint-Charles River, archaeologists have unearthed the remains of the Roy's shipyard (1739-1747): wharves, ship launching ramp, etc. Until the middle of the 18th century, the Cul-de-Sac harbour was used for repairing and wintering ships; it has not yet been excavated but could reveal next some interesting treasures. Notwithstanding a multiplication of associative and citizen initiatives aiming at protecting these sites since the 1960's, several observers deplore that in less than half a century the old port of Quebec City has been emptied of most of its historic elements and transformed into a meaningless front of recent "international style" buildings ("historic riverfront had been transformed over the past half century into a meaningless pastiche of typical U.S. East Coast waterfronts", "our history is left without evidence of its past existence",<sup>46</sup> "Similar behavior in Dubrovnik would not have elicited bold warnings from those who are responsible for the preservation of World Heritage sites"<sup>47</sup>). Excluded from the perimeter of the Historic District of Old Québec which was delimited by the Ministère ministre de la Culture et des Communications on the advice of the Conseil du patrimoine culturel, it has indeed been exempted from the application of adequate measures of preservation ("you make one of the most controversial decisions in judiciously authorizing the demolition of a building because of obsolescence",<sup>48</sup> "should prohibit in the future any cruise ship to enter the Old Port in winter", "cancel the project of a second terminal for cruise ships in the Old Port",<sup>49</sup> "Let's hope that one day the historic riverfront of Quebec City will regain some of its "old Europe" character"<sup>50</sup>). Despite intense lobbying from the Coalition pour la

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46 Alberne, "Le passé conditionne le présent, et le présent contient l'avenir."

47 Léonce Naud, "Détérioration du front fluvial historique de Québec," 2018, <https://cpcq.gouv.qc.ca/app/uploads/2020/06/LeonceNaud-memoire.pdf>.

48 Alberne, "Le passé conditionne le présent, et le présent contient l'avenir."

49 "Mémoire au Conseil du patrimoine culturel du Québec sur le « Projet de plan de conservation du site patrimonial du Vieux-Québec »."

50 Naud, "Détérioration du front fluvial historique de Québec."

sauvegarde du Vieux-Port de Québec (1988-1994) to defeat private real estate projects that threaten Quebec City's riverfront ("It is up to the citizens to watch out or collective cultural heritage will quickly become private and lost forever"<sup>51</sup>), notwithstanding the efforts of the Coalition pour l'aménagement du front fluvial du Québec founded in 2000 to preserve the old port from the effects of a large and very expensive rehabilitation, the City of Quebec and the Canadian government provide the Société immobilière du Canada–Vieux-Port de Québec with a \$100 million envelope which is immediately invested in regenerating the infrastructure of the Old Port of Quebec into a land-water and river-sea platform and recreational marina. Welcoming coastal vessels that shuttle to the Great Lakes as well as ocean-going vessels that connect Quebec to the rest of the world, Quebec City's port infrastructures now play an even more significant role in terms of tonnage handled (ranked third in Canada with 26.8 million tons) and passenger traffic (238,000 cruise passengers in 2018). Driven by these imperatives of productivity and profitability, the rehabilitation of the old port seems to be detrimental to *the greatness of a domestic polity* to prioritize the extension of the *industrial and market worlds* ("one of the main challenges in preserving historic districts remains the creation of a cultural heritage policy capable of reaching a consensus on what cultural heritage is about and, and above all, on the purpose of its preservation";<sup>52</sup> "mass tourism or trade disguised as cultural heritage"<sup>53</sup>) as deplored among others by ICOMOS in its evaluation report addressed to the World Heritage Centre (the Historic District of Old Québec is on the World Heritage List).

## Conclusion

Paying attention to history, attachment to the territory, respect for places of memory as well as to the secular channels that irrigate relationships of proximity, dependence and protection between beings, patrimonialization is elaborated from a *domestic* perspective to preserve, possibly to rehabilitate or even to valorize cultural heritage for the sake of the past, present and future generations. As a socio-cultural and political process by which tangible and intangible goods acquire a certain status, a certain recognition, patrimonialization proceeds from a *civic* co-construction that mobilizes citizens, a community of affected people, experts, scientists who confront representations, memories, values in defining cultural heritage while elaborating and implementing modes of access, use and management of these cultural elements that are considered essential because they are common to a given community. The validation of a compromise

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51 "Contribution à la préparation du Plan de conservation du site patrimonial du Vieux-Québec."

52 Alberne, "Le passé conditionne le présent, et le présent contient l'avenir."

53 "Mémoire au Conseil du patrimoine culturel du Québec sur le « Projet de plan de conservation du site patrimonial du Vieux-Québec »."



between the *civic* and *domestic polities* is however by no means consensual; *engagement in justification* reveals indeed divergent points of view and interests. The too modest importance given to the old port in the cultural heritage characterization studies and the conservation plans of the Commission des biens culturels du Québec needs for *reality checks* as it penalizes its preservation. It has cut the historical characteristics out of the old port which has been transformed into a front of international style buildings. Rehabilitation operations that further extend the *industrial* and *market world* need *reality checks* too; dissociated from the *greatness of a domestic polity*, the valorization of the old port meets almost all expectations in terms of productivity and profitability (increase in the price of land, development of commercial exchanges, increase in tourist inflows, etc.). In this respect, the maritime and port activities in the Quebec City region represent nowadays an added value of 489.8 million dollars (2007 figures) and this seems to legitimize the choices made by the government.

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#### MAIN SECTION

# Hull's Maritime Industrial Heritage: Sites of Debated Value and Conflicting 21st- Century Port-City Mindsets. Case Analysis and Suggested Learnings.

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#### ABSTRACT

The study of Hull's curation of industrial maritime heritage in its redundant docklands depicts how values, mindsets, and visions concerning the 21st-century port city differ significantly between urban actors. Typically, non-economic stakeholders seek dock preservation as evidence of their contribution to Hull's growth, while investors favor a simplified and romanticized maritime narrative. Research on the redevelopment of three docks and Hull's Yorkshire Maritime City masterplan demonstrates the lack of consensus on the dockland's role in shaping Hull's contemporary maritime identity. These diverging mindsets are impeding future-making, as the priceless heritage which bore witness to Hull's maritime-industrial boom and testifies to working-class' contribution is rapidly degrading. There is therefore a need to develop a new consultation practice seeking a broader stakeholder consensus to preserve Hull's unique historical identity and acknowledge discordant readings of the past. This will enable urban interventions in sites presently gridlocked in conflicts of interest and will nurture a new mindset for 21st-century Hull shared by various stakeholder groups.

#### KEYWORDS

*Kingston-Upon-Hull; Maritime Mindsets; Maritime Industrial Heritage; Cultural Regeneration; Heritage Value*

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## Introduction

At its peak in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Hull was the third-largest British port, active in commercial shipping, deep-sea fishing, and passenger transport. <sup>1</sup> Today it is a shadow of its former self. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, a perfect storm dealt a blow that proved particularly hard to recover from; like the rest of the world, automation and roll-on/roll-off (“Ro-Ro”) facilities challenged existing shipping infrastructure, on top of which a reduction of fishing rights spelled the doom of Hull’s fishing industry. Consequently, half of Hull’s docks became redundant [Fig. 1]. Hull urgently needed to cultivate a new purpose and identity, and to do so, reassess the relevance of its vacant docks whose significant surface area, water bodies, and riverside visibility was both a blessing and a curse. Various forms of redevelopment, funded by the council and private investors, led the docklands to house residential, commercial, and leisure uses. Hull was shaping up as an increasingly diverse port city. However, to this day, the city still ranks lowly in socio-economic indicators, constituting one of the five most deprived local authorities in England, a statistic that says a lot about Hull’s difficulties in finding its footing as a 21<sup>st</sup> century port city. <sup>2</sup>

Hull, officially Kingston-Upon-Hull, is a medium-sized port city in East Riding Yorkshire, England with 259 000 inhabitants.<sup>3</sup> It lies at the confluence of the River Hull and the Humber Estuary. The study of Hull’s docklands provides insight into the values and mindsets of the actors reshaping the built environment, namely investors, council leadership, and other stakeholders. Indeed, the built environment signposts the societal values of its time, and heritage illustrates the evolving values of built environment actors, as each stage of a building’s lifespan –namely construction, use, heritage designation and potential reconversion– illustrates how the past is instrumentalized in the creation of a revised urban identity. <sup>4</sup> As such, heritage is “a subjective political negotiation of identity, place and memory.” <sup>5</sup> The economical shift made by 20<sup>th</sup> century port cities led to urban redundancies which provide fertile grounds for analyzing changing urban identities and diverging actor values and mindsets. Given that *heritagization* – meaning the institutionalized process whereby a building or place is designated as heritage and subsequently protected, funded, mediatized, etc. – tends to favor buildings conforming with the desired image of the past and, often, the ruling class, docklands are particularly

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1 A. Bax and S. Fairfield, *The Macmillan Guide to the United Kingdom 1978–79* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 314–29, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-81511-1>.

2 “The English Indices of Deprivation 2019” (Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, 2019), 1.

3 “Mid-Year Population Estimates” (Kingston Upon Hull Data Observatory, 2019).

4 Sanjoy Mazumdar and Shampa Mazumdar, “Societal Values and Architecture: A Socio-Physical Model of the Interrelationships,” *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 11, no. 1 (1994): 66–90.

5 Laurajane Smith, *All Heritage Is Intangible: Critical Heritage Studies and Museums* (Amsterdam: Reinwardt Academie, 2011).





FIG. 1 Diagrammatic representation of the evolution of Hull's Waterfront from the Middle Ages to future plans, reproduction drawing by author, 2020. [reproduced with GIS Data provided by OS Meridian 2, n.d.]

interesting cases to study as their claim to heritage value is contested.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, they capture the zeitgeist of maritime power from the point of view of laborers, entailing that they are often understood as working-class heritage. This ambivalence is evidenced by a Historic England public survey carried out in Humberside that identifies the high regard in which industrial heritage is held, as well as its negative connotation of decline.<sup>7</sup> Given the ambivalence felt toward dockland heritage value, one wonders whether the unique cultural capital they represent risks dereliction

6 Yaniv Poria and Gregory Ashworth, "Heritage Tourism—Current Resource for Conflict," *Annals of Tourism Research* 36, no. 3 (2009): 522–25, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2009.03.003>.

7 "Industrial Heritage at Risk Public Attitudes Survey" (BDRG Continental, 2011), <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/har/nat-results-public-attitudes-industrial-heritage-pdf/>.

or misuse if redeveloped following tourism-related ambitions which may compromise truthful, inclusive, and diverse historical representation.

This research, therefore, seeks to uncover the values and mindsets influencing the curation of maritime heritage to understand Hull's desired port city identity, as this is key to safekeeping maritime industrial heritage as Hull transforms into a 21<sup>st</sup> century port city. *Value*, when used to refer to stakeholder or societal values, refers to the overarching societal principles that guide behavior. Examples of values consist of economic growth, social wellbeing, environmental sustainability, and many more. Societal values guide heritagization processes. Indeed, on the one hand, stakeholders that value economic growth may designate mostly heritage of high *destination branding value* – meaning a building that has a high potential to attract visitors and be financially profitable. On the other hand, a community which prizes their legacy and conviviality may relate heritage's importance to its *evidential value*, referring to the "potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity," or *communal value* entailing "the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory" according to Historic England.<sup>8</sup> *Mindsets* determine how values are interpreted in a specific situation, thus having a direct impact on both individual and communal ambitions in future-making. A mindset's ability to determine a compromise between competing values and frame the past makes it instrumental in dealing with heritage issues as it sheds light on conflicts between stakeholder groups who may share the same values, yet different mindsets. In Hull's case, understanding which values and mindsets drove the evolution of Hull's built fabric provides insight into how this evolution may continue. This research's premise is that the retention of facets of the maritime past, including contested ones, is key to port cities preserving their unique identity, culture, and social fabric. The stakes are high, as Hull's policy declares "the historic environment is a fragile and finite resource, once an element is lost, it is gone forever."<sup>9</sup>

This paper's research draws from a wide range of authors and media forms. Historical literature, policy readings, and archival sources have informed research on the evolution of Hull's docklands, while press clippings provide insight into their public perception and redevelopment. A 2020 photographic survey highlights the current condition of the docks and analytical infographics provide visual syntheses. Only one scholar, Atkinson, has published critical research on Hull's Victoria Dock and St Andrew's Dock. His last relevant publication dates to 2008. Since, many redevelopment initiatives have broken ground, entailing the need to re-appraise the values and mindsets influencing the curation of Hull's maritime

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8 "Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance" (Historic England, 2008), 20, <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-principles-sustainable-management-historic-environment/conservationprinciplespoliciesandguidanceapril08web/>.

9 "Supplementary Planning Document 2: Heritage & Archaeology" (Hull City Council, 2017).

industrial heritage. Indeed, Hull is in the process of carrying out the Yorkshire Maritime City masterplan, thanks to which four historic maritime sites and two historic ships will be refurbished, and the port city hopes to present itself in a new light. Other key scholars consist of Crinson, Hewison, Tunbridge, Smith, and Ashworth. Their extensive research on urban memory and critical reflection on the concept of heritage through the lens of class struggle, social dominance, and historical representation have provided the basis for a critical review of Hull's heritagization process anchored in the wider discourse.<sup>10</sup>

Firstly, this paper carries out a historical review of the docklands. Secondly, a comparison is carried out between the regeneration of three Hull docks, namely Victoria Dock, Alexandra Dock, and St Andrew's Dock. Thirdly, a reflection is made on Hull's culture-led Yorkshire Maritime City regeneration masterplan and similarities are observed between Hull's approach to heritagization and other British Capitals of Culture. Finally, the paper suggests a heritage redevelopment practice that strikes a compromise between stakeholder aspirations, unlocks the potential of contested heritage sites, and paves the way for an inclusive 21<sup>st</sup> century port city mindset.

## Dockland evolution and the industrial mindset

Founded in the 12<sup>th</sup> century for exporting wool, Hull rose to fame quickly, becoming second only to London as a raw material importer by 1700.<sup>11</sup> The Hull Dock Company was founded in 1773 and five years later, Hull's first dock opened. In the following 150 years, another nine docks were built to keep up with growing traffic, following the mindset of industrial ambition at almost any cost [Fig. 2]. The urban evolution was driven by values of growth, trade, and prosperity with pragmatism trumping conservation.<sup>12</sup> The edge between city and water was then Hull's most active urban zone. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, seven miles of docks and warehouses fronted the Humber and the River Hull. Hull's last dock was built in 1914, and, in the following decade, all of Hull's 10 docks were active, with Hull ranking as the "third port in the Kingdom" after London and Liverpool.<sup>13</sup> The 1930s closure, infilling, and reuse of Queen's Dock marked the first permanent closure of a Hull Dock. The second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

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10 Mark Crinson, ed., *Urban Memory: History and Amnesia in the Modern City* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203414613>; Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London: Methuen Publishing, 1987); John Tunbridge, "Whose Heritage to Conserve? Cross-Cultural Reflections on Political Dominance and Urban Heritage Conservation," *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe Canadien* 28, no. 2 (1984): 171–80, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0064.1984.tb00783.x>; Smith, *All Heritage Is Intangible*; Poria and Ashworth, "Heritage Tourism—Current Resource for Conflict."

11 Keith John Allison and Graham Kent, eds., *The Victoria History of The Counties of England* (London: Victoria County History, 1969).

12 *The Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal, Scientific and Railway Gazette* (London: William Laxton, 1839), 357, <https://archive.org/details/civilengineerarc02lond/>.

13 "Kingston-upon-Hull: A Wool Port," *Journal of the Textile Institute Proceedings* 15, no. 7 (1924): 284–284, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19447012408660966>.

spelled the doom of the docklands, with the perfect storm of containerization, dock automation, and the loss of access to fishing waters making half of Hull's docks redundant by 1975. While most port cities' shipping was challenged, Hull's fishing industry which was specialized in deep-sea trawling was decimated by the loss of fishing rights for the Atlantic near Iceland. This was less of a blow to Grimsby, a town also located on the Humber estuary, as it carried out coastal fishing and was, therefore, less affected by the new agreement. These circumstances set the stage for Hull's exceptionally steep economic decline which is still felt today, making it a pertinent case study of values and mindsets informing the reshaping of a port city's identity following industrial collapse. The fishing industry which involved one-fifth of Hull's population in 1954, has proven particularly divisive.<sup>14</sup> One only needs to look at the importance of the fishing agenda in the Brexit talks to grasp the weight of these issues.

Following the 1980s British port city trend, Hull's local council regenerated its de-industrialized waterfront.<sup>15</sup> While all redundant docks laid idle for a period, four out of five were re-purposed for leisure and cultural uses [Fig. 2]. Junction and Railway docks were converted to a Marina, Prince's dock was built over with Prince's Quay shopping center and Victoria dock was infilled and turned into a residential neighborhood completed in 1988, constituting the only instance that a Hull dock was redeveloped through private funding. All other docks were re-used following the council's purchase of sites. St Andrew's Dock is the outlier as it is stuck in a redundancy phase, never having found a new use since its closure. The following three case studies, in bold in Figure 2, identify how the maritime past was curated according to diverging 21<sup>st</sup> century Hull mindsets.

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14 Chris Gooding, "Heritage Dock," accessed June 6, 2021, <http://www.hullnow.co.uk/concepts/heritage-dock>; David Atkinson, "The Heritage of Mundane Places," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, ed. Brian Graham and Peter Howard (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 381–97, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315613031.ch21>.

15 Rodwell Jones, "Kingston-upon-Hull: A Study in Port Development," *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 35, no. 5 (1919): 161–74, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14702541908541610>; "Kingston upon Hull. Heritage Evidence Base" (Hull City Council, 2014), <http://hullcc-consult.objective.co.uk/file/3598012>.

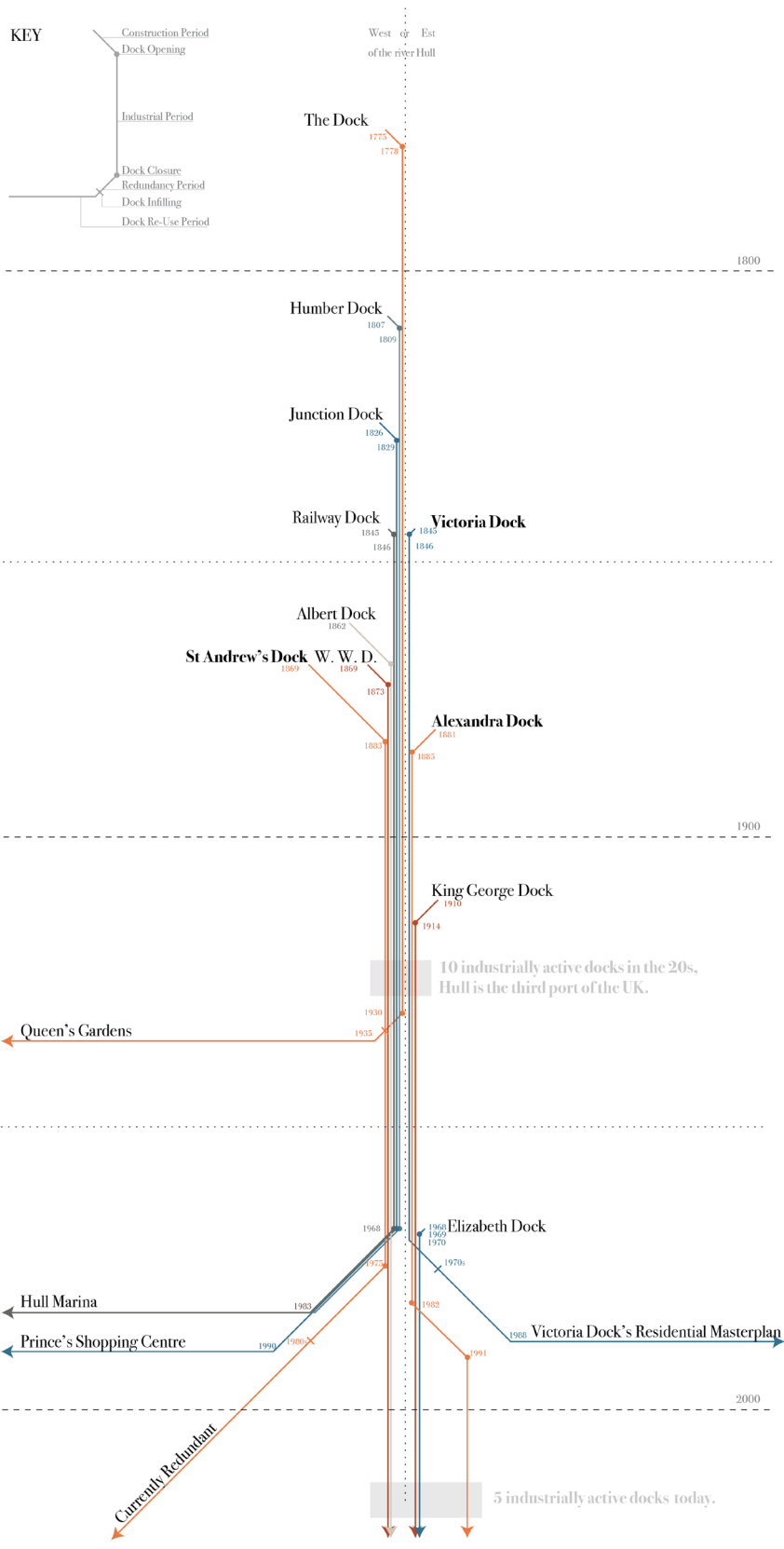


FIG. 2 Spatio-temporal diagram of the evolution of Hull's docklands, original drawing by author, 2020.

## Victoria Dock: the maritime romanticization of post-industrial Hull



FIG. 3 Victoria Dock with timber yard in Kingston upon Hull, England, 1942. Adapted from Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, David Rumsey Map Collection, David Rumsey Map Center, Stanford Libraries.

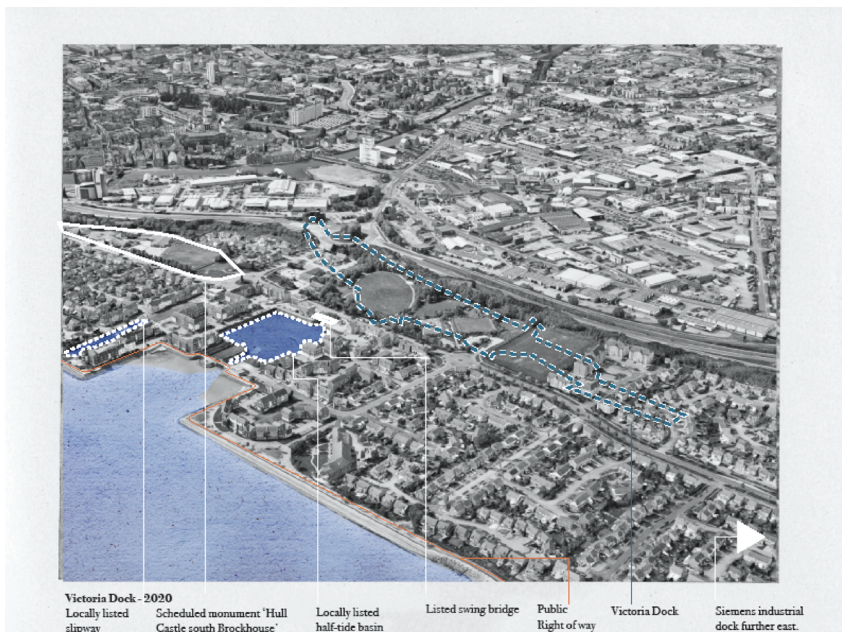


FIG. 4 Google Maps satellite photo of Victoria Park. Adapted from ©2020 Google.

Victoria Dock was the first mercantile dock outside the historic town and shipped cattle, coal, and timber. [Fig. 3]. Made redundant in 1968, the 150-acre site was vacant for more than a decade until it was bought by Bellway Homes. The private development company aspired to create a “riverside community, self-contained, yet essentially part of Hull, designed to link

with the port's past yet incorporating every amenity for today's lifestyle." <sup>16</sup> Planning permission was granted in 1986 for Victoria Dock Village's 1500 homes, soon followed by a school, village hall, waterfront promenade, and leisure amenities [Fig. 4]. Bellway Homes used maritime heritage as a place-marketing strategy, referring to the sea through archetypical street names and ornamental anchors. Atkinson called this maritime-themed aesthetics "maritime kitsch" referring to its mass production and high degree of legibility, and points out the evident commercial agenda behind such an approach, writing that the masterplan features "sufficient 'historic' maritime kitsch motifs to make it saleable to its middle-class residents." <sup>17</sup>

While the project won the title of "Best Urban Development of 1993", Victoria Dock Village did not receive unanimous support, described by some as a "rather crass development that has spoilt docks." <sup>18</sup> Avni and Teschner observe that the development lacks "substantial forms of recognition" of the local past, none withstanding the Heritage Trail which provides information boards about the dock's history. <sup>19,20</sup> Similarly, Atkinson remarks that while inhabitants appreciate the plainly fabricated décor, they feel detached from the area's history possibly due to the lack of heritage able to communicate the past. <sup>21</sup> Indeed, all that remains of the site's industrial history is infrastructural, namely a swing bridge, slipway and half-tide basin that convey mostly technological progress [Fig. 5], rather than the curation of buildings that would better communicate an understanding of working life at the dockside.

This approach to working-class heritage echoes Smith's observation that sites of labor are often curated with a bias favoring "physical fabric and technology over the social relations of production, labor process and class conflict." <sup>22</sup>

This approach depicts a nostalgic vision of the maritime past while leaving out specific aspects of local history to reduce potential controversy, a process sometimes referred to as "heritage sanitization", whereby narratives

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16 "The New Riverside Village in the Heart of Hull, Bellway Homes: Looking to The Future, Linking with the Past" (Bellway Homes, n.d.).

17 David Atkinson, "Kitsch Geographies and the Everyday Spaces of Social Memory," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 39, no. 3 (March 2007): 521–40, <https://doi.org/10.1068/a3866>.

18 Atkinson, "The Heritage of Mundane Places"; Fitzgerald as quoted in *ibid.*

19 Nufar Avni and Na'ama Teschner, "Urban Waterfronts: Contemporary Streams of Planning Conflicts," *Journal of Planning Literature* 34, no. 4 (2019): 408–20, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0885412219850891>.

20 Colin McNicol, *A Walk through Time: Victoria Dock Heritage Trail / as Described by Colin McNicol*, 2006.

21 Atkinson, "Kitsch Geographies and the Everyday Spaces of Social Memory."

22 Laurajane Smith, Paul Shackel, and Gary Campbell, eds., *Heritage, Labour and the Working Classes* (London: Routledge, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203813232>.



FIG. 5 Silted locally listed slipway, original photo by author, 2020.

are simplified to appeal to broad audiences.<sup>23</sup> This approach negates the *evidential* and *communal* values of built heritage, merely framing them as assets for destination branding whereby Hull's maritime history is air-brushed into a romanticized and nostalgic brand straying significantly from truthful, inclusive, and diverse historical representation.<sup>24</sup> The use of such a model says a lot about the maritime mindsets shared by Bellway Homes as well as from the council which approved the project, and the contemporary school of thought regarding dock redevelopment which awarded Victoria Dock Village. What occurred in Victoria dock aligns with Tunbridge's analysis that

"Whichever social group is ascendant at the time shapes the city in its own image by deliberate or unconscious bias in its approach to conservation and alternative redevelopment."<sup>25</sup>

This model is troublesome as the erasure of the social context and

23 David Atkinson, Steven Cooke, and Derek Spooner, "Tales from the Riverbank: Place-Marketing and Maritime Heritages," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 8, no. 1 (2002): 25–40, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527250220119910>; Peter Howard and Brian Graham, eds., *The Routledge Research Companion to Heritage and Identity* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2008), 388–93.

24 "Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance," 20.

25 Tunbridge, "Whose Heritage to Conserve? Cross-Cultural Reflections on Political Dominance and Urban Heritage Conservation."



working conditions negates the contribution made by local communities who worked at the docks. Furthermore, while planned, affordable housing was never built, and rents were soon among the highest in the city.<sup>26</sup> Through this redevelopment, a former site of blue-collar labor had become a middle-class neighborhood and initiated one of the first occurrences of post-industrial gentrification in Hull. The uniformity and increasing ubiquity of such waterfront redevelopments risk devaluing post-industrial docklands heritage, as all remaining maritime industrial heritage is stripped of meaning due to the erasure of its (in)tangible context. Hull, as seen in Victoria Dock Village today, is not a port city but rather a suburban city overlooking an estuary.

### **Alexandra Dock: the sustainable values for Hull's industrial renewal**

Located East of Victoria Dock, Alexandra Dock was built in 1881 to export coal.<sup>27</sup> Made redundant in 1982, the dock found a new purpose as a riverside container terminal, *Quay 2005*, which fueled tensions with the newly residential Victoria Dock Village. The dock handled bulk cargo and obtained a Ro-Ro terminal, demonstrating Hull's interest in remaining technologically relevant. In 2010, Associated British Ports' new project *Green Port Hull* enabled Hull to assert itself as an industrially active, sustainable, and innovative port city. This won Alexandra Dock the bid to host Siemens's new wind blade manufacturing site for the North Sea wind farms, whose transition from coal to wind was emblematic of changing port values. The blade factory, inaugurated in 2016, created hundreds of jobs and training opportunities.<sup>28</sup>

Therefore, Alexandra dock exemplifies a different type of dock transformation than Victoria Dock: one that materialized Hull's sustainable values and industrial ambitions. Extensive information on Hull's green agenda is provided on information boards lining the footpath that skirts around the no-longer accessible high-security dockland [Fig. 6-7]. The cordoning-off of the dockland and waterfront has led to the loss of access to the listed heritage buildings located in Alexandra dock, only one of which can be seen through the site's fences [Fig. 8]. However, efforts have been made to retain a sense of history, namely with the maintenance of listed buildings by Associated British Ports and the commissioning of artwork for the sites' surroundings, inviting proposals relating to local heritage.<sup>29</sup> The

26 Atkinson, "The Heritage of Mundane Places."

27 Allison and Kent, *The Victoria History of The Counties of England*.

28 Steve Barnard et al., "Green Port Impact Assessment: Summary Report" (Hull: University of Hull, 2018), 8, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331234057\\_Green\\_Port\\_Impact\\_Assessment\\_Summary\\_Report](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331234057_Green_Port_Impact_Assessment_Summary_Report).

29 "Green Port Hull Sculptures Along the Public Right of Way at Alexandra Dock" (Associated British Ports, 2016), 7, [https://greenporthull.co.uk/uploads/files/Latest\\_A4\\_Greenport\\_artist\\_doc.pdf](https://greenporthull.co.uk/uploads/files/Latest_A4_Greenport_artist_doc.pdf).



FIG. 6 Information board on renewable energy, original photo by author, 2020.



FIG. 7 Siemens fenced-off industrial grounds, original photo by author, 2020.



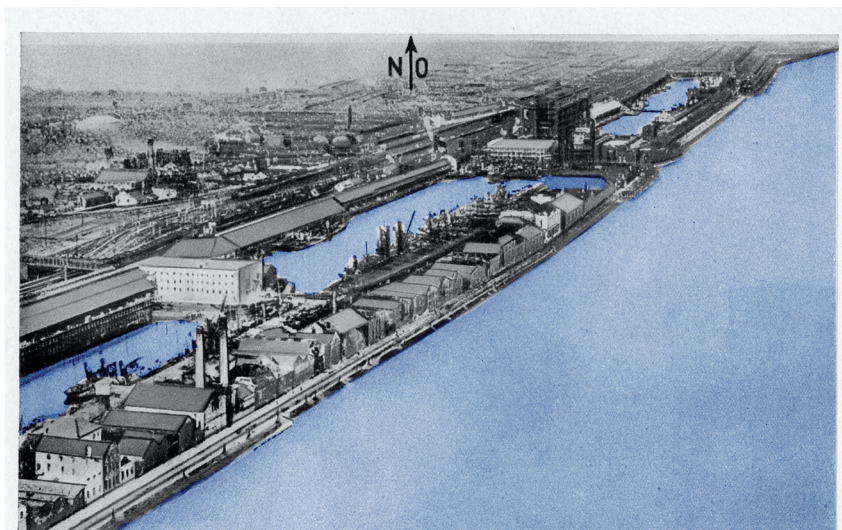
FIG. 8 Grade II Listed Hydraulic Tower and Pump House, original photo by author, 2020.

iconic 1960s Dead Bod graffiti was removed from a West Wharf building, saved for posterity, and exhibited during the City of Culture 2017 celebrations. However, once again, the selection of heritage is heavily biased towards technological buildings rather than those referencing the working life of the site.

Alexandra Dock's reuse reflects the interest of local leadership in continued industrial activity by making use of existing infrastructure and creating social value through jobs and training opportunities while ensuring the perpetuity of heritage for Alexandra Dock's post-Siemens future. However, the continuation of industrial harbor activity is leading to social unrest as the spatial buffer between Alexandra dock and Victoria Village may shrink.<sup>30</sup> This case study highlights diverging visions for 21<sup>st</sup> century Hull, envisioned on the one hand as an active, industrial harbor, and on the other peaceful residential suburbia, both of which compete for the waterfront.

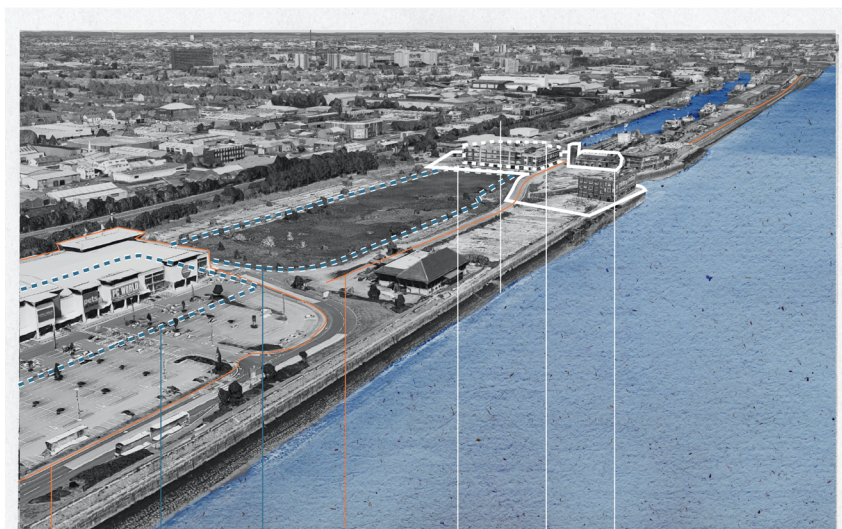
30 "Site 3 Keystore Site Earle's Road Hendon Road" (Hull City Council, 2012), <http://www.hull.gov.uk/sites/hull/files/media/Editor%20-%20Planning/Keystore%20Site%2C%20Earle%27s%20Road%2C%20Hendon%20Road.pdf>.

## St Andrew's Dock: clashing mindsets and development deadlock



GB 3, BB 10, Nr. 42: St. Andrews Dock in Kingston upon Hull.  
 Flußkai des River Humber, dahinter von links nach rechts St. Andrews Dock Extension und St. Andrews Dock mit großen Fischhallen auf dem Nordufer, William Wright Dock und Albert Dock.

FIG. 9 St. Andrew's Dock in Kingston upon Hull, England, 1942. Adapted from Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, David Rumsey Map Collection, David Rumsey Map Center, Stanford Libraries.



St Andrew's Dock - 2020  
 St Andrew's Retail Park    Infilled Extension of St Andrew's Dock    Infilled St Andrew's Dock    Public Right of Way    St Andrew's Conservation Area (excludes the dock)    Locally Listed Lord Line Building    Grade II listed hydraulic tower and pump house

FIG. 10 Annotated aerial view of St Andrew's Dock. Adapted from ©2020 Google.



FIG. 11 St Andrew's Shopping Park, original photo by author, 2020.



FIG. 12 Mural in St Andrew's Retail Park referencing the site's past, original photo by author, 2020.

St Andrew's dock was built in 1883 and is rumored to have harbored the UK's biggest trawler fleet<sup>31</sup> [Fig. 9]. St Andrew's was home to a thriving community: "for every fisherman working at sea there were up to three people working ashore in associated jobs. This totaled almost 50,000 workers in 1954."<sup>32</sup> St Andrew's dock nurtured a unique mindset: while the women processed the fish in factories near the docks, the men lived on precarious trawlers for weeks at a time. St Andrew's was also a location of collective memory and mourning, as an estimated 6,000 Hullensian fishermen died at sea, leaving grieving communities onshore.<sup>33</sup> The high number of orphans and widows led women such as Lillian Bilocca to campaign for safer working conditions on trawlers. [Fig. 14] The strenuous lifestyle engendered by the fishing industry shaped generations of Hullensian who lived on Hessle Road.

The advent of freezer trawlers and the loss of access to Iceland's Cod-rich waters rendered St Andrew's redundant in 1975, leading to its infilling. Part of the site became an "anyplace" retail park with a mural as the only reference to the site's past [Fig. 10-12]. The remaining part of the site is a metaphorical graveyard for the fishing industry, subjected to trespassing, vandalism, and arson.<sup>34</sup> Today, St Andrew's has spent 40% of its life deteriorating and is in "very bad condition" according to the 2020 Heritage at Risk Register.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, the past's lingering presence can still be felt in dilapidated St Andrew's thanks to the open horizon over the estuary and the Memorial to Lost Trawlers which, to this day, hosts regular memorial services [Fig. 13].

31 "The Birth of STAND," St. Andrew's Dock Heritage Park Action Group, accessed June 10, 2021, <https://www.hullfishingheritage.org.uk/about-us/>.

32 Gooding, "Heritage Dock."

33 Sophie Kitching, "The Moving Moment Hull Remembers 6,000 Trawlermen Lost at Sea," *Hull Daily Mail*, January 20, 2019, <https://www.hulldailymail.co.uk/news/hull-east-yorkshire-news/moving-moment-hull-remembers-6000-2448450>.

34 Grace Newton, "Hull's Landmark Lord Line Trawler Offices Saved from Demolition," *Yorkshire Post*, November 8, 2019, <https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/heritage-and-retro/heritage/hulls-landmark-lord-line-trawler-offices-saved-demolition-1747784>.

35 "Heritage at Risk Register 2020: North East & Yorkshire" (Historic England, 2020), <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/har-2020-registers/ne-yo-har-register2020/>



FIG. 13 Vandalized condition of St Andrew's remaining Lord Line building (left) and Grade II Listed Pump House (right) and lock gate (front), original photo by author, 2020.

There have been attempts at re-using the dock, with its riverside location and character presenting great potential for redevelopment. Multiple planning applications have been submitted by the successive owners, some of which were approved but never actioned, others which were rejected as a local group pressured the council to oppose due to perceived historical insensitivity, despite the inclusion of memorial artwork and landscaping. Indeed, the families who were involved with St Andrew's fishing industry wish to be acknowledged for their contribution to Hull's past prosperity, the poverty they suffered from lost livelihoods, and their grief for those who perished at sea and were last seen alive departing from the dock. Most recently, Manor Properties applied for permission to demolish St Andrew's Lord Line building on the grounds of safety, which was unanimously refused by the council.<sup>36</sup>

Complicating things further, Atkinson's observed that the Lord Line Building, which has recently been center stage in redevelopment debates, is a problematic symbol as it represents trawler management rather than the fishing community.<sup>37</sup> Indeed,

"The vast majority of fishermen, past and present, that pass-through memory lane do not wish to see the Lord Line Building preserved to the trawlers' owners, who they are in dispute with over their claim for compensation."<sup>38</sup>

36 Angus Young, "Lord Line Building Saved from Demolition by Councillors," *Hull Daily Mail*, December 6, 2017, <https://www.hulldailymail.co.uk/news/hull-east-yorkshire-news/lord-line-building-saved-demolition-886365>.

37 Hull Daily Mail as quoted in Atkinson, Cooke, and Spooner, "Tales from the Riverbank," 38.

38 Atkinson, Cooke, and Spooner, "Tales from the Riverbank."



FIG. 14 Fishing themed graffiti in Hessle road, home to the ex-fishing community and the Hull Fishing Heritage Center. The lower section depicts the 'Headscarf wives' who fought for safer working conditions on trawlers. Original photo by author, 2020.



FIG. 15 Sculpture part of Hull's historic center fish trail, original photo by author, 2020.

In the case of St Andrew's Dock, the meaning given to heritage is shifting as the original buildings are now tagged with very different emotional associations.

Studying the mindsets surrounding debates of St Andrew's redevelopment reveals the social class conflicts intrinsic to port cities. The value clash between entrenched local stakeholders and investors about the site's future has left St Andrew's Dock in developmental limbo. While the current owner attempts to prescribe change, the only power local stakeholders yield consists of rebutting planning proposals and demolition requests, as they can neither sway the balance in their favor nor purchase the site and take the matter into their own hands.

Some may blame St Andrew's Dock's prolonged redundancy on its remoteness or its private –rather than council– ownership. However, Victoria dock was redeveloped privately and, if private ownership were to impede redevelopment, ownership could change as there is a precedent of compulsory purchase in Hull.<sup>39</sup> Rather, the root cause of St Andrew's lack of activity resides in the contrasting views on St Andrew's value, compounded by the deep-seated disagreement on Hull's fishing industry's claim to heritage. Indeed, 60 years ago, the Times wrote that Hull is

39 "The New Riverside Village in the Heart of Hull, Bellway Homes: Looking to The Future, Linking with the Past."

"systematically removing its 'fish only' label" and Atkinson's observed the port city's attempt at "excising" less marketable images from the city's branding, such as the "dirty and smelly fishing industry."<sup>40, 41</sup> Figures 14 and 15 highlight the different mindsets affecting the portrayal of fishing, with the former representing the grueling trawler lifestyle and the latter referencing the fishing industry as wildlife pavement decoration. Given these deep-seated incompatible mindsets, it is no surprise that, until now, no proposal has satisfied both social and commercial interests at St Andrew's.

The study of these three docks not only highlights how trade-offs are made between heritage preservation and economic interests but confirms that, as Crinson observed, heritage is a "resource for conflict" which sows division and polarization as heritagization seeks to uniformize memory and conceal existing social heterogeneity.<sup>42</sup> Victoria dock's regeneration demonstrates the post-industrial mindset favoring the romanticization of docklands converted to residential and leisure uses, thus trading off the important commemorative value of the site to the working-class. Alexandra Dock's Green Port Hull testifies to industrial rebirth and environmental values, simultaneously safeguarding heritage while rendering it inaccessible. The conflict between both mindsets can be felt at the interface between Alexandra Dock and Victoria Dock, where the industrial activity impinges upon the suburban lifestyle. In contrast, St Andrew's Dock is torn between a mindset like the one which prevailed in Victoria dock which threatens to erase local history, and the ex-fisherman community that wishes to see the site's evidential and communal value acknowledged. This inability to act has led to the decay of the dock's sparse remains, much to the despair of Hessle Road's community. Indeed, left unchecked, this causes urban amnesia and challenges the perpetuation of living memory, leading non-hegemonic historic narratives to disappear, and negating the contribution of the fishing community.<sup>43</sup>

Based on these case studies, two preliminary conclusions can be drawn. On the one hand, Hull's top-down redevelopment model has proved incapable of translating complex, emotionally loaded histories into successful win-win redevelopment agendas. On the other hand, these case studies tell the tale of different aspirational port city identities, namely a suburban residential city, and an industrious, innovative port, both of which selectively curate the past, and finally a repressed need for historical representation.

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40 "Changing Face of Britain's Third Port" (The Times Hull Development Committee, n.d.).

41 Atkinson, "The Heritage of Mundane Places."

42 Crinson, *Urban Memory: History and Amnesia in the Modern City*.

43 Avni and Teschner, "Urban Waterfronts."



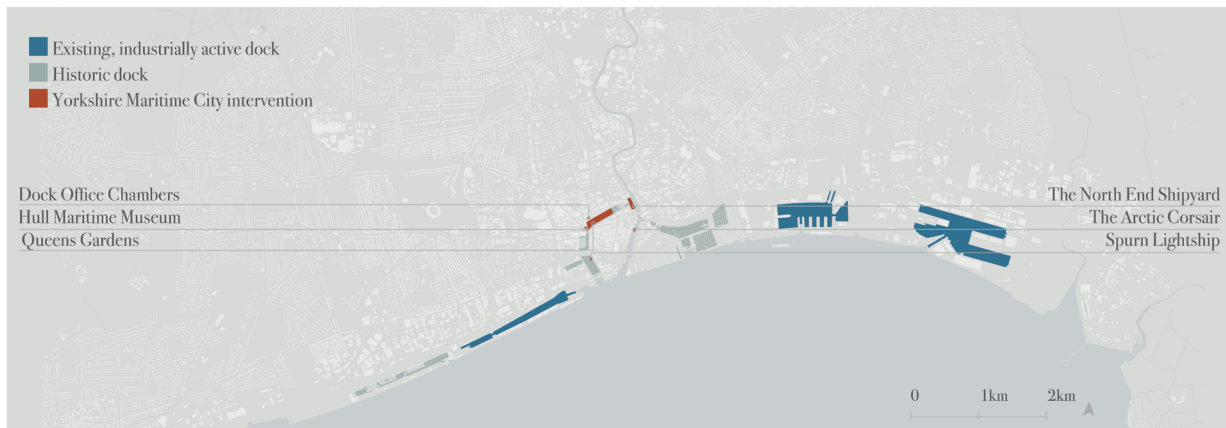


FIG. 16 Location of the Yorkshire Maritime City masterplan sites, reproduction drawing by author, 2020. [reproduced with GIS Data provided by OS Meridian 2, n.d.]

## Troublesome biases of cultural renewal

At the turn of the century, Hull's soul-searching continued as the city still ranked lowly both in quality of life and popular opinion. It comes therefore as no surprise that the 2017 UK City of Culture nomination was used to improve perceptions of the city, as it provided an unprecedented opportunity for Hull to re-present itself in a new light, with certain stakeholders hopeful of Hull shedding its fishy overalls for an alluring cultural program.<sup>44</sup> This funneled billion-pound investment toward regeneration initiatives, which included renovations of heritage buildings and improvements of the public realm and yielded £300m in tourism revenue for the year.<sup>45</sup> Hopes were high that cultural renewal may break the vicious cycles of low aspirations and achievement. As a result, culture was consequently framed as the chief aim, paving the road for the Yorkshire Maritime City masterplan. Due for completion in 2024, the multi-million-pound heritage regeneration project involves the refurbishment and preservation of four historic maritime sites and two historic ships [Fig. 16]. The culture-driven masterplan is part-funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Hull City Council, and its brief recognizes the need to preserve and promote maritime history, and acknowledge how Hull became the city it is today by drawing on the port city's "unique spirit and sense of place."<sup>46</sup>

However, the masterplan presents a similar bias toward old heritage dissociated from most people's lives, with only one intervention made on 20<sup>th</sup> century heritage, namely the restoration of the Scotch Derrick Crane –once again an object whose value has more to do with technological

44 "Cultural Transformations: The Impacts of Hull UK City of Culture 2017" (University of Hull, 2018), 9, <https://static.a-n.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Cultural-Transformations-The-Impacts-of-Hull-City-of-Culture-2017.pdf>.

45 Nicholas Serota, "Why the Arts Can Lead the Revival of Britain's Towns," *The Guardian*, June 16, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/aug/26/art-revive-britain-towns-hull-margate-creative-high-streets-nicholas-serota>.

46 "6 Unique Heritage Sites, 1 Great City" (Yorkshire Maritime City, 2020), <https://maritimehull.co.uk/>.



FIG. 17 Yorkshire Maritime City masterplan breaks ground along the Hull riverbank to host the Arctic Corsair, a deep-sea trawler which was turned into a museum, original photo by author, 2020.

proWess than lived experience.<sup>47</sup> All other intervention sites for the masterplan have lost their industrial function for a long time already, having since become recreation spaces: Queen's Dock has been a park since the 1930s and the Old Dock Offices, which present the maritime industries from the point of view of administration and not labor, has been Maritime Museum since the 1970s. The masterplan merely adds a layer of re-use on something that had already had a curatorial purpose, rather than using the opportunity to share lesser-known stories in dire need of unearthing. Furthermore, its geographically limited scope favors the old center, importantly leaving out St Andrew's dock, with the only link being made to fishing through the Arctic Corsair trawler's exhibition [Fig. 17]. Given the limited scope of the sites curated in the masterplan, the maritime narrative depicted by Yorkshire Maritime City cannot be representative of Hull's diverse maritime history as it fails to acknowledge the contribution made by working-class communities. The narrative presented by Yorkshire Maritime City is that of a removed maritime-industrial past that has since been overcome. Kisiel writes that this approach to industrial pasts is prevalent in post-industrial cities that won the title of Capital of Culture such as Liverpool and Glasgow:

"In the European Capital of Culture framework, the industrial past is not so much silenced, but rather is packed as part of the narrative of [the] rise and fall of the industry, which is replaced by the service economy, part of which is the culture. [...]"

47 Ann Day and Ken Lunn, "British Maritime Heritage: Carried along by the Currents?," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 9, no. 4 (2003): 5, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1352725022000155045>.

It was not the old shipyards and former factories that stood in focus, but rather the creative industries that replaced them.”<sup>48</sup>

The continued bias in curating a romanticized vision of Hull’s maritime history, rather than specific histories, has led to the discrimination of the industries around which Hull’s working-class’ lives revolved and whose urban traces now lie in ruin. However, the lack of attention given to 20<sup>th</sup> century fishing heritage is neither due to a lack of stakeholder interest nor of lack of awareness regarding the value of recent heritage, as evidenced by local policy. Indeed, already 50 years ago, it had been acknowledged that “the historic character of the city, including the fishing activities, is clearly important to the indigenous population.”<sup>49</sup> Thirty years later, the St. Andrew’s Dock Conservation Area Character Statement observed that this held true and that as the dock degraded “many Hull people felt that a part of their history was also disappearing, a history with which many of them had close family ties.”<sup>50</sup> Beyond policy writing, Hull must acknowledge in urban terms the evidential and communal values of heritage.

Remarkably, the Yorkshire Maritime City masterplan highlights that tourism-based cultural regeneration cannot unlock sites whose heritage value is contested, given that appealing to a broad audience requires heritage sanitization that prevents an inclusive, if not faithful, testimonial of the past.<sup>51</sup> However, in nature as in architecture, what fails to evolve is destined to extinction. There is therefore a need for a new approach, able to give a post-industrial future to redundant docklands. As Hardy pleaded in parliament, “let us act now to save this piece of Hull’s history. The people of Hull will not forget or forgive us if we do not.”<sup>52</sup>

## **A new redevelopment model based on stakeholder consensus.**

The key question for Hull’s maritime industrial heritage is not whether Hull’s promotion of a maritime heritage is biased, as conservation is inherently biased. Rather, it is whether heritage processes can become more inclusive of discordant past experiences. Heritagization is not clear-cut and gives rise to many conflicting interests. However, the decision-making process leading to the choice of sites and the form of re-use must be transparent, informed, empathetic and should not allow key histories to

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48 Piotr Kisiel, “Unwanted Inheritance? Industrial Past as the EU Heritage,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 26, no. 7 (2019): 9, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2019.1678053>.

49 Jacquelin A. Burgess, *Image and Identity: A Study of Urban and Regional Perception with Particular Reference to Kingston upon Hull* (Hull: University of Hull, 1978).

50 “Urban Conservation and Design St. Andrew’s Dock Conservation Area Character Statement” (Hull City Council Planning & Design Committee, 1996).

51 Avni and Teschner, “Urban Waterfronts”; Atkinson, “The Heritage of Mundane Places.”

52 Emma Hardy, *Compulsory Purchase and Planning*, 2019, <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2019-09-04/debates/B1964971-1317-48D3-BD1C-0ADB694921D3/CompulsoryPurchaseAndPlanning>.

disappear. The factors influencing the condition of the docks today are still at work in future development and, given its earlier outcomes, this relationship needs urgent reconsideration. Indeed, Crinson writes that "if development sweeps buildings away, then memory loss and identity crisis follow."<sup>53</sup> The prize of consensus is on the one hand the retention of a priceless heritage, and on the other, a sustainable social rebirth anchored in Hull's maritime identity.

Kisiel writes that "overcoming this rather simplistic view of the industrial past would require much deeper engagement with the past, beyond mere scenography."<sup>54</sup> Indeed, the safekeeping of Hull's heritage requires a reconciliation with painful pasts and the plurality of histories that these spaces materialize. The mindset would then shift to viewing contested heritage sites as assets rather than hindrances, following Tunbridge and Ashworth's "inclusivist" approach for the resolution of heritage conflicts which seeks to incorporate all perspectives into a "patchwork quilt" of heritage.<sup>55</sup> In this aim, public consultations and archival exploration may aid in identifying why, what, and how various stakeholders wish to preserve or (re)develop.

The sensitive redevelopment of contentious heritage sites relies on bottom-up processes, an observation that aligns with Historic England's high-level principle that "everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment."<sup>56</sup> The council's ability to approve, refuse, coordinate and fund urban projects would be supplanted by its role as a third-party conversation facilitator, nurturing constructive debate between actors. Indeed, a consensus among local stakeholders, investors, council leadership, and policy actors is a prerequisite to successful change in sites such as St Andrew's. New, diverse uses should attract footfall and re-integrate the currently isolated site to the urban fabric, thus ensuring its memorial role is sanctified. Similarly, the relocation of the Hull Fishing Heritage Centre, currently managed by ex-fisherman and dockworkers, may enable the transition of lived memory across generations and social classes. To reduce gentrification threats as experienced in Victoria dock, the focus should lie in job creation and training opportunities suited to the local level of qualification. The site may also seek to foster new forms of maritime interactions. Such non-residential uses may also reduce potential tensions with the neighboring, industrially active William Wright Dock. Sites of heritage thus provide opportunities for social, economic, and perhaps even environmental sustainability.

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53 Crinson, *Urban Memory: History and Amnesia in the Modern City*.

54 Kisiel, "Unwanted Inheritance?," 7.

55 John Tunbridge and Gregory Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past As a Resource in Conflict* (Chichester ; New York: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 1996).

56 Historic England, "Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance," 20.

Policy such as the *Statement of Community Involvement* does enshrine the role of local participation in redevelopment, however, Hull lacks precedent where this is viewed as a design driver, rather than as a necessary formality.<sup>57</sup> Lessons can be learned from examples such as Granby Four Streets, whereby the practice Assemble supported and coordinated a community-led project to rebuild a Liverpool neighborhood. Over the course of two decades, the derelict urban fabric was salvaged and turned into a locally valued area.

“The approach was characterised by celebrating the value of the area’s architectural and cultural heritage, supporting public involvement and partnership working, offering local training and employment opportunities, and nurturing the resourcefulness and DIY spirit.”<sup>58</sup>

Such community involvement is vital when dealing with heritage whose value is significant locally, yet not recognized at a national or regional level as observed by Hodges and Watson.<sup>59</sup> However, support should be provided by the council, whose incentivization may break down the reticence of private actors, thus unlocking funding. An interesting approach has been pioneered with success by “Yorkshire Forward”. This approach acknowledges that typically the heritage which attracts investors differs from the heritage revered by local communities and the challenge lies in combining interests toward a common development goal. Yorkshire Forward made (compulsory) land purchases in Hull and gathered public-sector agencies and private-sector investors towards a common development goal. Though not active in the docklands, Yorkshire Forward proved effective in re-using derelict heritage sites, as it “avoided the discontinuities that political cycles and events can entail.”<sup>60</sup> From a process point of view, such a model may follow growing guidance on empathetic development such as the Royal Institute of British Architects’ Social Value Toolkit for Architecture that advocates for the creation and monetization of social value to ensure the communication of the worth of such new models.<sup>61</sup>

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57 “Statement of Community Involvement” (Hull City Council, 2014), <http://www.hull.gov.uk/sites/hull/files/media/Editor%20-%20Planning/Statement%20of%20community%20involvement.pdf>.

58 “Granby Four Streets,” Assemble Studio, accessed June 6, 2021, <https://assemblestudio.co.uk>.

59 Andrew Hodges and Steve Watson, “Community-Based Heritage Management: A Case Study and Agenda for Research,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 6, no. 3 (January 2000): 231–43, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527250050148214>.

60 Harry Smith and Maria Soledad Garcia Ferrari, eds., *Waterfront Regeneration*, 0 ed. (Routledge, 2012), 63, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203133378>.

61 “Social Value Toolkit for Architecture” (Royal Institute of British Architect and University of Reading, 2020), 9, <https://www.architecture.com/-/media/GatherContent/Social-Value-Toolkit-for-Architecture/Additional-Documents/RIBA-UoR-Social-Value-Toolkit-2020pdf.pdf>.

## Conclusions

Studying the mindsets of private investors and Hull's council revealed that following industrial collapse, the evolution of Hull's port cityscape was guided by the belief that past hardship could be overcome by erasing it. This resulted in a romanticized maritime-themed urban landscapes such as Victoria Dock and modern facilities seeking to reinvent the port, as found in Alexandra Dock. In both scenarios, maritime heritage related to this collapse was not prized for its present-day communal value. If such redevelopment dynamics continue, they will cause the continued loss of built heritage, accelerating the loss of unrecorded memories. This in turn causes an absence of acknowledgment and empathy towards social groups who are disappearing from the urban fabric, yet who will continue to suffer for multiple generations from post-industrial collapse.

While approaches seeking to balance heritage imperatives and redevelopment were attempted in St Andrew's dock, the systematic push-back of local stakeholders who find heritage sensitivity insufficient has led to development deadlock. There is therefore a need to find ways of aligning various stakeholder interests to secure the funding to satisfy the local community's entitlement to its heritage. Understanding the existing, conflicting mindsets –particularly those of disenfranchised stakeholders– provided a way of understanding stakeholder interests, and the entrenched opinions that aid and/or constrain future-making. However, so long as this understanding remains in the sphere of academia, these findings alone cannot break undesirable path-dependencies and behavioral trends. Indeed, only site-specific stakeholder engagement can yield a satisfactory compromise and enable urban intervention on divisive heritage. Over time, one could foresee that the engagement process and new spaces created by the latter will enable the crafting of a new vision of 21<sup>st</sup> century Hull. With it, a new maritime mindset that values a multiplicity of pasts in future-making, acknowledges heritage's value separately from its destination branding value, and esteems cross-stakeholder collaboration may surface.

Port cities have an abundance of contested heritage that relates to environmental and social injustices by today's standards. As such, it is fair to assume that most port cities harbor a "St Andrew's" of their own –a site whose heritage value is debated to such an extent that conventional, top-down redevelopment models cannot unlock redevelopment. So long as port cities do not engage with the historic complexities of their unique heritage and continue to curate an image that leaves out undesirable pasts, such sites are fated to crumble, leaving little for intangible stories to cling onto. This entails a loss of unique cultural capital which one could foresee might, in time, provide unique tourism assets as heritage "offers a 'hereness' that reproduces stable, historic identities" for cities

and communities in a globalizing environment.<sup>62</sup> Reassessing and redesigning heritage redevelopment processes is therefore of utmost social *and* economic value.

The waterfront is a palimpsest at the interface between the city center and estuary that has constantly evolved and will continue to do so. The question is not whether the waterfront will change but rather how to guide its evolution. Hull urgently needs a new developmental paradigm, enabling it to approach the entirety of the docklands not as a past to be overcome but rather as a social and economic resource, to visitors as well as local communities. Such a mindset will be instrumental to Hull claiming an identity of its own among a maritime landscape populated by port cities looking and feeling increasingly similar. One can hope that a new model of community-based redevelopment may enable the retention and protection of Hull's contentious maritime industrial heritage. Hull has always made a living from the sea and the loss of its legacy activities must not be the reason for this 800-year-old traditional to wane.

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62 Atkinson, Cooke, and Spooner, "Tales from the Riverbank," 29.

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## PRACTICES

# From Open Port to North Tyrrhenian Port Center Network. A Synopsis of 15 Years Port-City Integration Strategy

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## ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic confirmed ports' role in the global economy but it highlighted that there is still a lot of work to be done to let it be recognized and preserved by the general public. The changes ports went through in the last century generated a physical distance between ports and the general public which had psychological consequences in ordinary citizen mindset and did not help to make the port attractive for future generations' employees. To achieve the community outreach and the license to operate social, public bodies – most of all port authorities – must engage themselves in restoring the contact with local communities, by showing them how ports work, to what extent their assets contribute to the city/region development, which are the added values and the cultural connotations of living in a port-city. After a brief recall of Italian new ports organization and a short overview regarding North Tyrrhenian ports-cities distance, this article aims to present some steps made by North Tyrrhenian Port Network Authority to make the ports closer to their cities through a long-term project: the "Open Port" Project (since 2007), including the Livorno Port Center (since 2015) and the Port Centers' Network of the North Tyrrhenian (end of 2021/ beginning of 2022).

## KEYWORDS

*Port-Cities Culture; Soft Values; Community Outreach; "Open Port"; Licence to Operate*

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## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the essential functional role that ports, and related supply chains, play in the global circular economy. Like after other economic shocks, the disruption caused by the challenging pandemic period has tested the adaptability of ports and put pressure on the integrity and efficiency of the global supply chain. It has also highlighted the need to ensure traffic continuity and improve the resilience of maritime gateways, keeping supply chains moving, economies functioning, and people employed, contributing therefore to sustain cities and surrounding areas.

Although scholars agree that as crucial nodes of the economy, ports play an important critical role—both on material and on immaterial aspects of cities, landscapes and regions—they are still arguing on *how* ports bring a particular culture and in which way it contributes to port-city resilience. If the continuity of port operations has been assured also in challenging periods like during the pandemic, the multiple conditions composing the particular port-cities *status*, rather than being seen from a societal and cultural perspective, are most of all approached through the lens of economy and transport. In fact, not only is it difficult to define the particular port-city culture but also culture, and in general, immaterial issues, are often overlooked in contemporary maritime and port discussions and in practice. This is particularly true in the case of port players, but it also extends to port authorities and sometimes port-city/regional governments, interested exclusively in measuring the economic impact.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes the infrastructural impact drives the attention more than the economic one, but port-city integration in the general mindset is almost always a matter of local and regional material development and rarely of societal and cultural one.

Moreover, the changes ports went through in the last century (due to port expansion projects, mechanization, automation, economic transition, reduced workforce, connectivity with the hinterland, etc.) generated a physical distance, a barrier between them and the general public which had psychological consequences on the latter's mindset. Local port-city inhabitants misunderstood the *other side of the barrier*, failing to fully comprehend the positive—or negative—impact of living in a port-city context. This distance often triggers a number of conflicts that has gradually conditioned the port-city citizen's identity.

Nowadays, many politicians and practitioners agree on the fact that public communication has become indispensable for ensuring constant productive relations between the public administration and local communities and, like marketing and information strategies, it is part of the port

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1 Francesca Morucci, "Le principe d'intégration sociale du port de Livourne," in *Gouverner les ports de commerce à l'heure libérale*, ed. Éric Foulquier and Christine Lamberts (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2014), 211–26, <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.editions-cnrs.45082>.

authorities' sphere of activities. Nevertheless, in these first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the need for the port to come back to the city, much more mentally than physically, is still evident.

To achieve the community outreach and social acceptability, public bodies—most of all port authorities—must engage in restoring their contact with local communities, by showing them how ports work, to what extent their assets contribute to the development of the city/region, and the added values and the cultural connotations of living in a port-city. In other words: by communicating with them. As reaching local communities' "license to operate" is nowadays as important as having the city/regional government's approval, a communication strategy is as necessary as a development one.

The North Tyrrhenian Port Network Authority's port planning strategy includes several projects supporting the port-city relationships and the long-term engagement with the local community. The "Open Port" Project (since 2007), the Livorno Port Center (since 2015) and the North Tyrrhenian Port Center Network—which will be officially put on the map with the inauguration of the Piombino Port Center set for the end of 2021/beginning of 2022—are developing an "involvement" philosophy to remove borders by creating socio-cultural flows in the Network's main port cities. The waterfront, increasingly conceived as a point of contact rather than a barrier, can contribute to "reinstalling" the port in the city; the interaction with the general public, at different levels, can facilitate port knowledge.

Which issues does the "Open Port" Project address and where did they take root? How does the interaction with the local community through long-term activities affect the renaissance of the port-city network? What solutions have been devised to give a new meaning to the port context and contribute to redesigning contemporary port-cities, especially after the Covid pandemic which has changed the conception of tourism but also of maritime traffic?

After a brief review of the new organization of Italian ports and a short overview regarding the distance between the North Tyrrhenian ports and their urban contexts, this article aims to present some steps made initially by Livorno Port Authority, and more recently by the North Tyrrhenian Port Network Authority, to bring the ports closer to their cities.

Among disagreements, continuities and flexibilities, a double action—enhancing the port-city relationship and general public outreach—is very important as development policies by ports, port authorities, public bodies involved in port areas, maritime and port stakeholders, cities and communities have to be sustainable. Above all today, being in the middle of a paradigm shift, which has disrupted most aspects of our social lives and demonstrated that people need to adapt to following new rules in terms of working, travelling, consuming, going out, exercising, meeting friends, etc.

## **The Northern Tyrrhenian Port Network Authority: a never-ending relationship between ports and cities, a new network model at the service of a renewed port image**

In 2016 the Ports Decree n. 169 reviewed the Italian port system, re-launching ports and logistics in Italy. Port Authorities have been re-organized into strategic decision centres managed by Port Network Authorities (PNA), based on the Italian “core” ports, as set out by the EU TEN-T Network (n. 1315/2013).<sup>2</sup> The new Port Authorities are in charge of 57 national ports and have a strategic role in policy, programming and coordinating the ports in their own area.

Following the Italian new ports’ law, since 2016 Livorno and Piombino port authorities have merged into a new network, the Port Network Authority comprising also Portoferraio, Rio Marina, Cavo on Elba Island and Capraia Island.<sup>3</sup> Like the other PNAs, the Northern Tyrrhenian Port Network Authority is under the Ministry of Transport, with its own legal capacity in matters of public law and with administrative autonomy. It has financial, budgetary and administrative duties, and is in charge of planning, coordinating, promoting, controlling and providing guidelines on port operations and other commercial and industrial activities in ports. It can issue regulations and ordinances on port matters, including safety, accident-prevention and hygiene. The port reform law has led to a new emphasis on integration both for the ports belonging to the North Tyrrhenian Network and their cities/regional context.

Like in other cities, port-city interaction was more perceived in the past. In the last two decades of the 20th century, it started to be less visible not only for the two biggest network ports, Livorno and Piombino, which have become increasingly physically and mentally separated from their nearby cities, but also for the other ports belonging to the network, specializing in passenger traffic. Although passenger traffic is the last remaining type of traffic to directly involve the city centre, port cities have become places of transit, characterized by rapidity and volatility. Often passenger traffic, most of all cruise passenger traffic, does not stop in the port city but it is directed to other touristic areas in the region. Combined with other major changes port cities experienced in the last century, this material/physical and immaterial/psychological distance has led to an erosion of the public image of ports and an identity crisis which has necessitated placing increasing emphasis on disseminating an understanding of the port

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2 The Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) concerning a Europe-wide network of railway lines, roads, inland waterways, maritime shipping routes, ports, airports and railroad terminals. Cfr. Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013. [https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/infrastructure/ten-t\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/infrastructure/ten-t_en)

3 The ports of the Network Authority of the North Tyrrhenian Sea constitute one of the largest systems of Italian ports, accounting for over 14% of Italian Port traffic (over 42 million tonnes of goods and 9 million passengers every year).

among the local community of what the port sector has to offer (The North Tyrrhenian Port Network Authority “Open Port” project, 2009). Moreover, the new administrative model of the last few years has made port public bodies realize that new solutions have to be found in order to facilitate a new relationship between the port and the city and to bring port into the daily active life. With this new approach, Port Network Authorities intend to broaden their philosophy and to attract more societal stakeholders to their ports.

In fact, the new Italian Port Networks are the result of a value chain that manifests itself in the port, in the surrounding area, on a national scale, in relations with Italy and the Mediterranean, and in Italy’s relations with the rest of the world.<sup>4</sup> Their growth therefore depends significantly on the quality of the rapport that (port) governance manages to set up, including the indispensable relations with the various institutional levels, the port community and the local community. Pursuing the network logic, seeking the development of the local in the global, means developing programmes not only with the logistics and production system but with a network of local relationships that can trigger a collaborative, common strategy i.e. a sense of belonging to a “collective project”.<sup>5</sup>

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the relationship between the port and the city is still a challenge- sometimes a potential conflict- for the governance of both ports and cities. That is the reason why, on the one hand, port authorities and city governments need to continue enhancing their relationship and, on the other, they have to enable local inhabitants and the general public to develop a general awareness of all the aspects regulating their symbiosis. The *sustainability* and *social legitimacy or social license to operate (SLTO)* of a port can be at stake if the social dimension of port activities is neglected.<sup>6</sup> To achieve community outreach and social acceptability, public bodies—most of all port authorities—must engage in restoring contact with local communities, by showing them how ports work, and what it means to live in a city with a port, which are its assets. In other words: by communicating with them.

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4 “Piano Portualità e Logistica | Mit,” accessed June 17, 2021, <https://www.mit.gov.it/node/5278>.

5 Luciano Guerrieri, *Strategie Di Sistema e Gestione Snella Nelle Autorità Di Sistema Portuale* (Piombino: La Bancarella Editrice, 2020).

6 Michaël Dooms and Alain Verbeke, *Crafting the Integrative Value Proposition for Large Scale Transport Infrastructure Hubs: A Stakeholder Management Approach*, 2010, <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10781887>.



## **Opening up the port to the local community: the Open Port project, a communication container' to remove the erosion of its public image**

Nowadays public communication has become indispensable for ensuring constant, productive relations between public administrations and local citizens. Like marketing and information strategies, it is also part of the port authorities' sphere of activities. Ports must respect the same legislative guidelines that have reformed the public administration sector: transparency, dialogue, access to acts and procedures, understanding rights and opportunities, relations with the local community and surrounding area (city/province/region), affinity with the mass media and Internet. Besides, not only relations between ports and local citizens, but also between public bodies themselves involved in port activities have become indispensable for ensuring constant productive results. In line with this, since 2007, the Port Authority has been devising a series of initiatives designed to "communicate the port" to a non-professional audience known as the "Open Port" project. It celebrates its fourteenth edition in 2021 and has succeeded in increasing its public from 500 people a year to 4000. Moreover, the project has been devised with the contribution of the entire port community i.e. civil and military authorities operating in the port and port operators.<sup>7</sup> Although each edition has represented a step forward, building tangible, strong ties between the Port Authority and stakeholders, collaboration with local and regional public bodies, in particular Tuscany's Regional Administration and Local Councils, as well as with local and national media, has been—and is still—fundamental for developing the project. Right from the first editions, the Port Authority realized that no single stakeholder can describe the port effectively. Contributions from all key players are essential as each one can offer his/her own personal professional experience. Hence the Port Authority is the driver of the communication policy, but the participation of all port stakeholders is indispensable. Without this synergy it would have been impossible to attain the results that have been achieved so far.

The "Open Port" project is based on various actions designed to communicate the port to the general public, focusing in particular on youngsters, in order to illustrate the complexity of the port system. Through actively involving the local community, it aims to facilitate people's awareness and to foster the port-city relationship. After Livorno and Piombino Port Authority merged in 2016, the project has been extended to the other ports

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<sup>7</sup> Livorno, Piombino and Portoferraio City Councils, Livorno City Council's Educational & Teaching Resources Centre, Municipality of Capraia Island and of Rio, Collesalveti town Council, the Harbour Authority, Livorno Customs Agency, Livorno District Council, *Porto di Livorno 2000* (the company managing the Port's Cruise & Passenger Terminal), Livorno port terminals A. *Vespucci* Logistic Platform. All these public bodies and private ports and intermodal operators have taken part since the project devising phase.

Autorità di Sistema Portuale del  
 Mar Tirreno Settentrionale

LIVORNO  
 PORT  
 CENTER

Presentazione del libro  
**Storia illustrata  
 di Piombino**  
 MARCO PAPERINI

Videopresentazione  
**15 aprile 2021**  
**ore 17.00-18.00**  
 Nell'ambito dei  
 Giovedì del Port Center

Introduce:  
 Luciano Guemieri, Presidente AdSP Mar Tirreno Settentrionale

Partecipano:  
 Giuliano Parodi, Assessore alla cultura e turismo Comune di Piombino  
 Fabrizio Mannari, Direttore Generale e Banca di Credito Cooperativo di Castagneto Carducci  
 Olimpia Vaccari, Presidente Fondazione Livorno Arte e Cultura

Interviene:  
 Marco Paperini, Autore del libro

Modera:  
 Claudio Capuano, AdSP MTS Dirigente Preposto Ufficio Territoriale di Piombino  
 Sarà presente l'Editore

Pacini Editore  
 Storie illustrate  
 BANCA DI CREDITO COOPERATIVO DI CASTAGNETO CARDUCCI  
 CREDITO COOPERATIVO ITALIANO

[www.portaittirreno.it](http://www.portaittirreno.it)  
[www.livornoportcenter.it](http://www.livornoportcenter.it)

FIG. 1 Presentation of the book *Storia illustrata di Piombino* by M. Paperini (An illustrated history of Piombino), 15 April 2021- (Graphic material produced by the North Tyrrhenian Port Network Authority).

in the North Tyrrhenian Network and it has become a *communication container* of events dedicated to opening up ports to local communities [Fig. 1].

The main aim of the “Open Port” project is in fact to promote the image of ports by opening not only their gates but also offering local citizens new sector dissemination tools:

- the *Livorno Port Centre*, inaugurated in 2015 and located in Livorno’s Old Fortress, with its website [www.livornoportcenter.it](http://www.livornoportcenter.it), its Facebook page and the Old Fortress Facebook page;
- the *North Tyrrhenian Port Centre Network* project, which will be developed at the end of 2021/ beginning of 2022 with the inauguration of Piombino Port Center;

- the series on the local TV network discussing all the various aspects of port work and life;
- the *Port News* web TV video clips on the Port Network website;
- the Twitter account @AdspAltoTirreno.

“Open Port” is therefore an integrated project, a sort of umbrella that brings together different projects interacting with each other in view of promoting long-term involvement with the local population. The main program runs every year for a period of 8 months, from October to May. It consists of a series of events (port centre and port visits for all kinds of public, meetings at school to create a specific program for each type of school, preparatory meetings tailor-made to fit specific requests from teachers, TV programs, exhibitions, performances and concerts during the European Maritime day on 20<sup>th</sup> May, etc.). In each edition, citizens, above all youngsters and the school sector, are invited to take part in a program designed to allow them to become familiar with the port and to participate in the activities of their city’s most important economic reality. Through a series of completely free events, they can come inside the ports, beyond their customs gates, to get to know the world that represents their city’s main economic driving-force. Ports are ready to reveal their secrets: not only their inaccessible areas, their protagonists, the mechanisms that regulate them, but also their particular language and lifestyles that, over time, have permeated the entire cities [Fig. 2].

Accepting the challenge of disseminating port knowledge—experiences, aims and culture—and of reducing the gap between young people and the job market linked to the logistic chain and port operations, the Port Authority plays an important educational role, attracting students and teachers from different types of regional secondary and technical schools,<sup>8</sup> but also investing in the field of University-Research and Development. In 2009, the Port joined an alliance among public authorities, namely the Municipality, the District Council and the local Chamber of Commerce, to support, both financially and operationally, Pisa University’s new logistics faculty in Livorno. It offers a degree in Logistics Economics designed as an interdisciplinary course (Engineering, Law, Business Economics, Information Technologies). Likewise, aware of the importance of reducing the gap not only with young people but also between research and its application on the work cycle, the Port Authority has also set up strong ties with the TeCIP laboratory (Institute for Communication, Information and

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8 In two editions (2015 and 2016) a new part of the “Open Port” focused on the education theme to encourage youngsters from the local Nautical Institute to explore maritime professions and understand the wide range of employment opportunities. This part took the name of “Shipping and maritime jobs project,” a job-orientation program with courses related to technical nautical maritime professions structured to get a wide experience on the everyday working life in ports. This initiative has been recognized by the University of Pisa, offering students specific credits (from 5 to 10 points) to access the Logistics Advanced research faculty of the University. After two years of testing, the course is now run by the Port Authority’s Training Department. At European level, the Port Network vocational training center works with STC Group of Rotterdam, Valencia Port Foundation and Antwerp APEC Institute.






**Domenica 17 Giugno 2018**

*In occasione del **Port Day** promosso  
dall'Associazione dei Porti Italiani*

# Porto Aperto



*Portoferraio*

**Ore 8:30, Molo Alto Fondale**  
Saluto in musica per i passeggeri delle navi da crociera *Seabourne* e *Seadream* e dei traghetti provenienti da Piombino da parte del gruppo di rievocazione storica *Petite Armée* e della *Fanfara Militare Napoleonica* (a cura della Filarmonica Elbana "Giuseppe Pietri")

**Ore 12:00, Piazza Cavour**  
Concerto aperitivo a cura della Filarmonica Elbana "Giuseppe Pietri" in collaborazione con i *The Horn Project* e con il *Quintetto di Ottoni Gabrieli*

**Ore 18:00, Piazza Cavour**  
Concerto della Filarmonica Elbana "Giuseppe Pietri"

FIG. 2 *Italian Port Days* in Portoferraio- (Graphic material produced by the North Tyrrhenian Port Network Authority)

Perception Technologies) of Pisa's *Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna*, specialized in the design and implementation of training simulators for specific port equipment, and the CNIT (National Consortium for Telecommunications).

After 14 editions, the Port Network Authority has succeeded in rekindling a fascination and interest for the port world that had hitherto lost its appeal for the general public. At the same time, it has now become very clear that the port needs to constantly stimulate the interest of the general public.

To give just an example: if the revitalization of waterfront, in the case of Livorno, has consented an urban re-integration of part of the port area that had lost its appeal to the general public—the so called "Sea Gate"





## PORTO APERTO

In occasione del 30° Trofeo Accademia Navale e Città di Livorno, il Porto di Livorno vi apre le porte: venite a scoprire l'anima della città e il fascino dei Cantieri Benetti e Lusben.

<p><b>VISITE GUIDATE AI CANTIERI</b></p> <p><b>20 Aprile 2013</b></p> <p>Dalle ore 10:00 alle 18:00</p> <p>Ingresso libero per tutta la durata dell'evento.</p> <p><a href="http://www.benettiyachts.it">www.benettiyachts.it</a></p>	<p><b>VISITE GUIDATE IN PORTO</b></p> <p><b>21 Aprile - 1 Maggio 2013</b></p> <p>Feriali: ore 17:00 Festivi: ore 10:30 e 16:00</p> <p>Per info e prenotazioni: Stand Autorità Portuale, Villaggio Tuttovela.</p> <p><a href="http://www.porto.livorno.it">www.porto.livorno.it</a></p>
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FIG. 3 The "Open Port" Programme at the "Sea Gate" - (Graphic material produced by the North Tyrrhenian Port Network Authority)

operation<sup>9</sup>—the creation of social and economic benefits, after over 20 years, is still not well perceived. It is, in fact, an area once linked to the port that local citizens are very familiar with, as a result of the large number of people working at the shipyard. Nowadays, however, the new activities based in this area are only partly known to the general public. The indisputable waterfront revitalization still needs to be constantly accompanied by a cultural discovery in order to gain a general understanding which is part of the general port awareness strategy the "Open Port" project is promoting.

This long-term policy—not only an event but a series of activities throughout the year in order to avoid an "event approach" and to establish a constant rapport with the local community—facilitates the port-city's renaissance and helps also to prevent a) the local community' detachment b) social conflicts c) the waterfront becoming a sort of folkloric setting [Fig. 3].

<sup>9</sup> It regards the areas where the old "F.lli Orlando" shipyard once ran its activities where, after the shipyard folded up in 1999, a new part of the city has been developing. The "Sea Gate" operation is an industrial reorganisation combining the manufacture of luxury yachts, marine services, facilities, berths, and residences for citizens and tourists. Nowadays this area is privatised and owned by the Azimut-Benetti shipyard, a world leader in the construction of yachts, and the "Medicean Gate" company, more involved in real estate development, but the quays and berths belong to the Port Authority which is totally involved in this part of the city's renovation.

## Some solutions devised to link the port to the city

In all “Open Port” activities, visitors are “virtually” accompanied along a path where Man is the protagonist: S/he who lives in the city, S/he who works in the port, and S/he who explores this reality. *Man* as the key player and his project ideas are therefore at the heart of the issues being discussed. These are divided into 5 main themes that are recurrent in every initiative:

- 1<sup>st</sup> theme: the port in history
- 2<sup>nd</sup> theme: the port at work and its professions
- 3<sup>rd</sup> theme: the port and the shipping goods’ routes
- 4<sup>th</sup> theme: the port of the future
- 5<sup>th</sup> theme: the city in the port

Apart from the main objective of encouraging local citizens to participate in the life of the port, the project is designed to disseminate the port culture at different levels, starting from an early age and involving port workers and port operators by making themselves guides to their professions and *ambassadors* of the project. An activity that creates a sense of belonging to the port community and promotes a safety and quality culture, providing local citizens and students with the opportunity to experience the multiple facets of the port ecosystem. An integrated communication program regarding the whole project has been devised since the beginning in 2007 with a coordinated package designed every year (posters, informative brochures, publicity in local newspapers and sector press). Likewise, dedicated web pages and e-mail addresses and campaigns on social tools have been created. These communication tools have always been supported by press conferences and numerous press reminders providing information on the project and related events [Fig. 4].

Besides these main activities, another big part of the “Open Port” creative communication strategy is related to the contemporary use and disclosure of the ports’ heritage. The Northern Tyrrhenian Ports belonging to the Network Authority share a special bond with their cities and, as we already mentioned, were commonly seen as an expression of the city’s urban expansion, at least until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Their cities can all be seen as a *Gateway to Tuscany*, a region that, thanks to its famous and extensive cultural heritage, monuments, historic towns and typical food and wine products, is one of the most important international tourist and cultural attractions. In this context, the North Tyrrhenian Port Network Authority, in unison with local institutions (City Councils, Local Chamber of Commerce and Region of Tuscany) has long been pursuing an objective that goes beyond the albeit important sphere of economic development: namely, to revive the relationship between the port and the surrounding area by



FIG. 4 Two "Open Port" Poster Programmes - (Graphic material produced by the North Tyrrhenian Port Network Authority)

accompanying citizens and tourists on a walk down memory lane, conserving the soul of the port and city. This strategy, in an attempt to contextualise the new and the old, aims to enhance the various historical landmarks through cultural and tourist activities. It is also designed to combine the virtual with the real and fathom what the city and its port may and will look like in the future. A journey from past to present to the ambitious plans for tomorrow. The solutions devised in the "Open Port" project to achieve port-city integration by promoting the ports' heritage are also to be seen in the iconic value and contemporary use of monuments inside and around the port area. In particular, the four monuments in Livorno: the *Fortezza Vecchia* (Old Fortress), the ideal interface between the city and port, next to the passenger terminal, which hosts also the Livorno Port Center, the *Forte della Bocca* (Bocca Fortress), the *Fortezza Nuova* (New Fortress), the *Torre del Marzocco* (Marzocco Tower).

The Old Fortress, located in an area under the Port Authority's jurisdiction, is the city's most representative monument, not only from a historical point of view. One of the most ancient ramparts designed to defend the port and city, it was used initially as its trade centre. It represents a *continuum* between land and sea, past and future. Thanks to a cooperation agreement between the State Property Dept., the Regional Directorate for Tuscany's Cultural Heritage, the City Council, the Local Chamber of Commerce and the Port Authority signed on April 2013, (the Port Authority manages the



FIG. 5 Livorno's Old Fortress- (Photographic material owned by the North Tyrrhenian Port Network Authority)

Fortress) all the public bodies mentioned above have committed themselves to putting together a program of cultural and tourist initiatives to let the fortress continue to be considered as a centre for a variety of organized events. They include business conferences, trade fairs, exhibitions, festivals, leisure and sports, open-air cinema and film festival dedicated to port and city.<sup>10</sup> It is located close to the docks, a short distance away from the city centre and the business district known as *Venezia*, the point of departure for the major public transportation services (15 mins from Livorno railway station, 30 mins from Pisa Airport). The Fortress—a transit point for tourists arriving by sea—is strategically positioned to serve as a key location from which tourists can embark on excursions or enjoy shopping sprees. In the light of the above and in terms of the port-city's tourist and cultural development, the location of the Fortress, logistically and strategically, serves as a “business card” to anyone arriving in Livorno by sea, a natural link between the port and the city and between Tuscany and the rest of the world [Fig. 5].

In addition, we should add the city leisure program related to the part of the city linked to the port i.e., the “Venezia” district. This area takes its name after its Venice-style canal network used in the past for maritime purposes and nowadays for local boating activities. Thanks to daily boat trips along the waterways and the canals running throughout the year, the local community, but also tourists, not only live the Livorno port heritage but also can better understand the city's history and urban planning.

<sup>10</sup> Livorno's film tradition is quite prestigious, with some of its directors and actors having won international acclaim, as well as being a source of inspiration and stage setting of many films, old and new, with its port and city.



The canals reveal the soul of the old merchant, maritime city and allow visitors to get a taste of what it is like to live here today.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, it is important to emphasize that, to improve its societal integration with its urban context and with the local communities, the North Tyrrhenian Port Network Authority takes part in a number of European projects focusing on the need to devise innovative ways of developing co-operative synergies with cities and devising a program of best practices relating to port workers based on two actions. First of all, the management of port professions through a database known as the “Observatory of Port Professions”, used to elaborate the data necessary for monitoring the training needs of authorized workers in Livorno Port. Secondly, basic training courses for new port workers, devised in agreement with port companies and trade unions, whose successful completion is required to be authorized to work in the network ports and validated by the Port Authority.

## Conclusion

Ports have always been in direct contact with port users and the port community mostly in terms of information on port operations, commercial and passenger traffic, military operations, rescuing boats in peril on the open sea. Nowadays, ties with the areas around the port are constantly strengthening also from a communication standpoint, to improve a process of development of the geographical area, respectful of the local population and their heritage. The COVID-19 pandemic has confirmed the role of ports in the global economy, but it has also highlighted that there is still a lot of work to be done in terms of getting ports recognized and defended by the general public. The location outside the citizens “sight of its main terminals, the loss of employment due to automation, the general lack of knowledge of ports” fundamental contribution to their local economy and society in general, still risk isolating the port from the city. Besides, not all these factors help attract newcomers to the sector in the future.

The North Tyrrhenian Port Network Authority has been organizing the “Open Port” initiative since 2007, bringing together different projects based on several actions, to: a) gain a better understanding of the port by its local community; b) keep people constantly aware of the ever-changing port dynamics c) disseminate a new image of the port as a place to experience with impressive infrastructures that are the results of a rich and multiple cultural heritage; d) let students and citizens understand that the city and port’s identity is a result of their cultural heritage and that living in a port-city offers an added value for their future; e) make youngsters aware that

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11 This part of the city is a sort of “zip” between port and city which, during the summer, is the backdrop for different initiatives (concerts, shows, exhibitions mostly during the *Effetto Venezia* summer event program) binding more people to port-city environment. This program is organized by the City Council, but the Port Authority works in strict contact with it, as the canals are under the Port Authority’s jurisdiction.

port offers employment opportunities not only in terms of its traditional professions but also new ones dictated by current port scenario requirements; f) allow public bodies to become proactive in land development strategies, starting from the port as a key component of the city's identity; g) strengthen the collaboration with institutions and with the ports main protagonists in order to better organise the new initiatives devised as part of the new phase of development the ports are going through; h) develop a specific recognition and a common strategy to preserve the forms and features of historical monuments located in or around the port area which are important for the local community; i) generate public support.

The level of interest shown from the beginning of the project has been far greater than expected:

- from a *cultural* point-of-view, participants discovered areas they had never had the opportunity of visiting prior to this initiative, due to security restrictions;
- from an *educational/vocational* point-of-view, participants have been introduced to the working reality of the port, discovering possible employment sectors;
- from an *institutional* point-of-view, the strategic collaboration among the most important public bodies related to the port and with port stakeholders has led to a common philosophy to develop the port and the city together, based on dialogue and co-habitation.

Following the idea that "we can better appreciate when we understand" ("Open Port" project 2009), the *North Tyrrhenian Port Center Network* will pursue the long-term creative mission of the "Open Port" project. It will be interesting to investigate to what extent it will offer stimulating frameworks to reflect on the future planning of the port-city network. Most of all, setting up the North Tyrrhenian Port Centre Network will demand an additional effort to prepare a solid basis for its development. The new project mission could be summarized with the following sentence: "no better way to live in a port-city than by understanding its benefits, no better way to discover them by visiting the port". The port as a place to experience, live and work and as an added value for the future.

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**Giles William Foster.** Communication & Promotion officer. Born and brought up in England, after graduating from Warwick University with a First Class Honours Degree in Italian & European Literature, he left for Italy in 1988. After working as a teacher in Brescia for 5 years, he moved to Livorno, to work at Livorno Naval Academy as a professor of Maritime English/English teaching program coordinator. He has been employed at the North Tyrrhenian Port Network Authority, formerly known as Livorno Port Authority since 2001, working initially a training officer, specializing in designing technical English training packages for the port and logistics sector, before joining the Communication & Promotion Office, where he is responsible for the English version of the Port Network Authority's sector webmagazine « Port News » , preparation and publication of contents on the Authority's website, plus collaborating in national and international promotion initiatives.

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PRACTICES

# The Importance of Autonomy in the Port City

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ABSTRACT

The port cities of Costa Rica face strong challenges on their path to be sustainable, in addition to those common to all port cities in the world such as: climate change, demands derived from globalization, access to technology and adjustments to innovation. This article addresses specific governance situations, specifically the issue of autonomy in fundamental institutions for the development and sustainability of port cities: local governments, port authorities and state universities. Costa Rica is taking a political turn away from a long democratic tradition and respect for what is established in the political constitution. At this juncture it is essential to alert to citizens, so that they can defend some nation basic principles and to promote inherit a better future for the next generations.

KEYWORDS

*Costa Rica; Port Cities; Autonomy; Governance; Democracy*

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FIG. 1 Young man in front of a cruise ship, ©Johnny Aguilar.

## The Importance of Autonomy in the Port City

A port city requires, for its development, institutions that meet the objectives for which they were created. Municipalities or local governments, port authorities and even universities are part of them.

Each of these institutions was conferred, from the Costa Rica Republic Political Constitution, the fulfillment of community obligations, each choosing the appropriate form and procedure, in accordance with the national legal system. However, today we find out in Costa Rica a strong threat to the autonomy exercise of these institutions, and at the same time, a tendency towards state authoritarianism that, ultimately, puts at risk the proper functioning and achievement of the objectives of these institutions, to the detriment of the services they provide to citizens.

The transformation in the exercise of political power that we see today in Costa Rica, precisely in the year of celebration of the Bicentennial of the Spain Independence, does not seem to be only a product of the decisions of the current president. Some theorists agree that this type of authoritarianism could have been enhanced by the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, Slavoj Žižek<sup>1</sup> argues that this state authoritarianism stems from the strong blow that COVID-19 has given to capitalism, meanwhile

1 Slavoj Žižek, *Pandemia: La covid-19 estremece al mundo*, trans. Damián Alou (Argentina: Editorial Anagrama, 2020).

Byung-Chul Han<sup>2</sup> supposes that, due to the pandemic, the Democrat states will mutate towards one digital authoritarianism.

It is likely that these authors are correct in some points of the problem, and I am not going to delve into that. But what happens here seems very particular.

In this short article, we will see three examples of a political nature that have affected, are affecting and will affect, the development of the port cities of Costa Rica, and the country in general.

## A port authority violated

We summarize what has happened in the last three years with JAPDEVA (Port Administration Board of the Atlantic Slope) as the port authority in Costa Rica Caribbean ports.

As a background, we can point out that the creation of JAPDEVA, in 1963, was made to decentralize functions of Transportation Ministry. Decentralization implies transfer of ownership and the exercise of specific and exclusive powers from the Greater Public Entity (State or Central Public Administration) to the Lesser Public Entity (Decentralized Public Administration).

Law JAPDEVA No. 3091 establishes in its first article, the following:

The Board of Port Administration and Economic Development of the Atlantic Slope, hereinafter called JAPDEVA, is created as *an autonomous entity of the State*, with the character of a public utility company, which will assume the prerogatives and functions of the Port Authority. It will be in charge of building, managing, conserving and operating the current port of Limón and its extension to Cieneguita, as well as other maritime and river ports of the Atlantic slope [...].<sup>3</sup> (italic is not from the original)

The Political Constitution of Costa Rica establishes in its Article 188 that, "The autonomous institutions of the State enjoy administrative independence and are subject to the Law in matters of government. Its directors are responsible for its management."

From the above, all the powers of the State, in more than fifty years, were clear of the competences that the law grants to JAPDEVA as Port Authority, and of its powers of empire. However, at the beginning of 2019, Transportation Minister on duty, was unaware of the Political Constitution and, with the backing of the executive branch, it was assumed as the

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<sup>2</sup> "Byung-Chul Han: Viviremos como en un estado de guerra permanente," *La Vanguardia*, May 12, 2020, sec. Cultura, <https://www.lavanguardia.com/cultura/20200512/481122883308/byung-chul-han-viviremos-como-en-un-estado-de-guerra-permanente.html>.

<sup>3</sup> "Ley Orgánica de la Junta de Administración Portuaria y de Desarrollo Económico de la Vertiente Atlántica," No. 3091, (1963).

National Port Authority.

This intervention caused the closure of JAPDEVA's port operations, the dismissal of more than 60% of the employees, the technical failure of the institution, and great damage to the socioeconomic stability of the port city of Limón.

"Limón is drowning in unemployment and insecurity" says the headline of one of the newspapers with the highest circulation in the country.<sup>4</sup> And it does not seem to be an exaggeration, because in addition to the aforementioned social situation, the problems related to drug trafficking, a shortage of basic services and the deterioration of infrastructure have worsened. In addition, with the arrival of COVID-19, a large number of companies of all kinds were closed: hotels, logistics services and more.

Unfortunately, the illegitimate action carried out by the MOPT damaged JAPDEVA's autonomy and caused it damages that could not be repaired. In addition, it also created damages to the port community. For example, the fact that companies such as Dole and Chiquita have stated that they have been forced by the Government to transfer their operations to a private terminal, whose services have higher costs. It seems that they do not measure the impact of such actions on international trade.

The socioeconomic situation in Puntarenas, on the Pacific coast, is similar in several respects. In both cases we find monopolies of private port operators, quite concentrated in the development of their business, but without high standards of service to foreign trade.

## **The struggle of local governments**

In the first days of this year, the Executive Power presented project No. 21336, of the Public Employment Framework Law, to the Legislative Assembly. Since then, there have been academic and political debates about the possible effects of its application. Legal experts consider that among the greatest evils it could bring is the elimination of democracy, as we have known it for more than 60 years. This project aims to eliminate the distribution of power given by the Political Constitution to autonomous institutions (local governments and universities, among others), and centralize it only in the Executive branch.

Municipal autonomy has its origin in the representative character of being a local government, in charge of managing local interests and, therefore, municipalities can define their development policies, plan and agree on action programs, independently and with the exclusion of any other State institution; power that also entails being able to dictate its own budget.

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4 Greivin Granados, "Limón se ahoga en desempleo e inseguridad," *Diario Extra*, August 31, 2020, <https://www.diarioextra.com/Noticia/detalle/427587/lim-n-se-ahoga-en-desempleo-e-inseguridad>.





FIG. 2 Municipal Building of Limón, ©Johnny Aguilar.

This municipal autonomy implies:

- Free choice of their own authorities.
- Free management in matters within its competence.
- The creation, collection and investment of their own income.

Port cities, both in Costa Rica and throughout the world, require freedom in their fundamental decisions; in investment policies, setting plans and programs, because in all of them, the will of the community is expressed, and this can diverge from that of the Government of the Republic and even contradict it.

In recent weeks, local government workers have held protests onto the streets and mayors have met with deputies, to prevent municipalities from being included in said bill. However, political pressure from the Executive branch seems to be giving less and less hope to local governments.

Limón, Puntarenas, Quepos and other port cities yearn to preserve their autonomy, and I have no doubt that they will fight to defend it.

## University struggle

Law Proposal No. 21336 Public Employment Framework threatens universities and their autonomy, because it conflicts with the democratizing conceptions of the public university. This project has a line of extreme capitalism that seeks to reduce the universities to the training of professionals useful to their objectives, considering the training of critical thinking and social mobility as something that exceeds its conception.

Today, a small group that holds economic power and directly administers the State has modified the notion of what is public, only representing the interests of this new oligarchy, and the interests of the vast majority have



FIG. 3 Hands with flags<sup>5</sup>

been expelled from the public sphere; among them, the conquests of labor and social rights.

Public universities, with a strong presence in the port cities and coastal areas of Costa Rica, express great concern for the future of their social outreach projects, researches and, even to be sustained, their academic offerings.

Universities in Latin America have known how to defend their autonomy. Countries like Uruguay, Chile and Argentina are good examples of how critical thinking does not generate crossed arms.

### Single actor governance?

When we speak of governance, we speak of a concept that refers to changes in socio-political systems; particularly to democratization and decentralization processes.

The authoritarianism of the State that is emerging in Costa Rica is completely contrary to the Sustainable Development Goals -ODS that, with very challenging goals, commits local and national governments to open a path of opportunities for port cities; expand their development models

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<sup>5</sup> Silhouettes of People Holding Flag of Costa Rica. Image digitally intervened by UNED from the work of Raw Pixels. Original extracted from <https://www.shutterstock.com/es/image-photo/silhouettes-people-holding-flag-costa-rica-250811686>

to achieve inclusion, sustainability, diversity; transform cultural enclaves and; achieve the economic well-being of their populations.

Port cities are at the forefront of many processes of global change: in trade, innovation, technologies and education; so they can become attractive investment centers and regional leadership.

Port authorities, local governments and universities are important actors in the governance processes of port cities, but if the public employment bill were to be approved, these actors would disappear from the scheme, and a two-actor governance model would probably emerge: The centralized state and transnational companies.

In the three years of the current government administration, we have seen Costa Rica's democracy fade, but in the last year that includes the COVID-19 pandemic, the acceleration of phenomena, which had already been occurring, has been remarkable: on the political level, shaping of a democratic dictatorship; in the economic plane, neoliberal authoritarianism and; on a social level, strong mobilizations and the formation of resistance groups.

The current scenario does not promote best practices for the sustainable development of port cities, but hope is not so easily lost. The project has not yet been approved and something could happen, through dialogue and protest, that enlightens and sensitizes the deputies of the Republic, to act for the good of the nation.

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## MISCELLANEA

# Democracy and Masks. Towards an Iconology of the Faceless Crowd

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## ABSTRACT

Since 2008 an object has become part of the repertoire of demonstrations, the mask. First in the Global North and then worldwide, a variety of masks – from that of the film *V for Vendetta* to that of *The Joker* and many more – have been donned by protesters. While individual masks have been investigated, the widespread use of masks as a meaningful political symbol still deserves analysis, all the more so that this artefact is absent from the political tradition of the Western World. The article formulates some hypotheses in order to understand the genealogy of the “political mask”. In particular, it locates its *longue durée* visual history within the iconography of the “faceless crowd”.

## KEYWORDS

*Political iconology; Mask; Face recognition; Multitude; Masses*

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“It is not given to every man to take a bath of multitude: enjoying a crowd is an art; and only he can relish a debauch of vitality at the expense of the human species, on whom, in his cradle, a fairy bestowed the love of masks and masquerading”.<sup>1</sup>

Baudelaire, “Crowds”

“But there was also a political dream of the plague [...] not the collective festival, but strict divisions [...]; not masks that were put on and taken off, but the assignment to each individual of his “true” name, his “true” place, his “true” body [...]. Behind the disciplinary mechanisms can be read the haunting memory of “contagions”, of the plague, of rebellions, crimes, vagabondage, desertions, people who appear and disappear, live and die in disorder”.<sup>2</sup>

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

“Not making ourselves visible, but instead turning the anonymity to which we’ve been relegated to our advantage, and through conspiracy, nocturnal or faceless actions, creating an invulnerable position of attack”<sup>3</sup>

The Invisible Committee, *The Coming Insurrection*.

We all saw him, the self-proclaimed “QAnon’s Shaman” bare-chested in the halls of the United States Capitol Building. With a horned headdress, white supremacist tattoos and the American flag hoisted on a spear, he was the most eccentric figure in the pro-Trump mob that rampaged the building on the 6th of January 2021. The multitude sported a variety of symbols, from Norse mythology to the fictional nation of Kekistan and flags that aimed to revive the American Revolutionary War: an altered version of the Betsy Ross flag, as well as the Gadsden flag (now associated with the Three Percenters militia). Originating as much from the halcyon days of American Independence as from 2010s internet subculture, these insignias illustrated the narratives and affective bonds that rioters understood as being immanent to their actions. Most journalists have paid little attention to this plethora of signs, and have instead proposed different

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1 Charles Baudelaire, “Crowds”, in *Paris Spleen* (New York, New Directions, 1974), 20.

2 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977).

3 The Invisible Committee, *The Coming Insurrection* (Cambridge (Mass); London: The MIT Press).

genealogies. They have assimilated the assault on the Capitol to, among other things, the storming of a medieval castle by angry plebs, or the Fascist March on Rome. These and similar historical analogies ultimately prove unsatisfactory if for no other reason than because what happened on 6 of January 2021 would have hardly made sense before the advent of social media platforms and their visual economy. The rioters choreographed a seizure of power. Neither a massive demonstration of force nor a rebellion in a context alien to representative democracy, what took place on 6 January 2021 might be better understood as a new praxis in the protest repertoire of the Global North: the symbolic (but not necessarily peaceful) intrusion of a group of people in a government building. This type of action reveals something of a contradiction: the forcible imposition of citizens' physical presence into places where citizens are not normally permitted but, by definition, are always present in the form of their delegates acting as proxies of the citizen body.

On a much smaller scale and with no casualties, at least two recent events echo the storming of the Capitol Building. On 5 January 2019, a group of yellow vests used a forklift as a battering ram to break open the gate of a Ministry in Paris. In Germany in 2020, marches against the government's policies over COVID-19 repeatedly tried to penetrate the Reichstag (the German parliament), and in November 2020 a handful of protesters gained entry. This parallel is not meant to minimise Trump's seditious incitements or the dissimilar political circumstances, but rather to highlight the shared reliance on a similar imaginary that might on the surface appear obsolete (the "storming of the castle"), but which in actual fact traverses the iconography of Western democracies. Despite the innovative role played by social media platforms, photographs of the assault on the Capitol tap into visual tropes that date back to the founding moments of popular sovereignty. A cursory look at the caricatures and etchings depicting Parisians storming the Tuileries in 1792 and 1848 reveals the *longue durée* history of this idiom. Two recurrent motifs illustrate this point: the presence of an imponent architectural barrier that has to be scaled or descended with bare hands (Figure 1, 2) <sup>3</sup>, and the "low" body parts (typically a bare foot or the buttocks, Figure 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) <sup>3 3 3 3 3 3</sup> ostentatiously placed upon the symbols of power. In Paris as much as Washington, in 1792 just like in 2021, the optical clash between humble body parts and authoritative symbols of the polity encodes an irreconcilable tension in the legal architecture of contemporary democracies. It suggests what remains the core ambiguity of the notion of "popular sovereignty:" the fact that the people have "two bodies." Indeed, the notion of "people" conflates the abstract *populus*, the juridical subject endowed with sovereignty, with the very concrete *plebs*, the lower classes.<sup>4</sup>

4 Pierre Rosanvallon, *La démocratie inachevée: histoire de la souveraineté du peuple en France* (Paris: Gallimard, 2003), 40. For the notion of the King's "two bodies", see Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton University Press, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400880782>.



## What is a Political Mask?

One of the least conspicuous aspects of the QAnon's Shaman's trappings is his mask. Indeed, the man painted his face with the colours of the American flag, thereby turning his facial features into a mask. This article focuses on masks such as this, and proposes an interpretation of the widespread practice of wearing masks at demonstrations. In particular, it concentrates on the genealogy of the collective image that is generated (or implicitly invoked) through this type of mask. The practice of protesters wearing masks has expanded exponentially over the past decade. An inventory of the masks that have been seen in the streets is long overdue, and should include political marches from Beirut to London, and from Hong Kong to Santiago and Cairo. This research would probably highlight surprising patterns, but also divergent registers and practices. Examples of this manifold language of self-fashioning include: 1) masks taken from graphic novels, Netflix series and films: for example, the mask worn by the protagonist in the film *V for Vendetta* (popularised by the hacker group Anonymous), that of Dali (taken from *Money Heist*) and the clown mask of *The Joker*; 2) masks depicting the colours of a flag (at times combining it with the mask of *The Joker*); 3) the ski-masks of the Zapatistas and the so-called "black bloc."

Given the protean variety of this global phenomenon, it is imperative to provide a working definition to guide the inquiry of this aspect of the protesters' visual culture. This article defines a "political mask" as an artefact that a large number of people active in the political arena use to replace their face with a shared symbol. This definition might seem odd, as a mask is generally considered to be an object that does not substitute for, but rather covers, a visage. However, as Françoise Frontisi-Ducroux has demonstrated, at least two paradigms inform the cultural connotations of masks in Western culture.<sup>5</sup> One tradition, which can be dubbed "Roman," associates masks with duplicity and fraud. In this context a mask is something that hides the true identity and emotions of an individual. Another paradigm, which prevailed in ancient Greek culture, understands the face as the body part that is "offered to the other person's gaze" (unlike the dressed parts). Within this cultural framework, the word signifying both mask and face, *prosopon*, does not carry ideas of dissimulation because where there is a mask, there is no longer a face (i.e., a visible body part). Thus, the mask was viewed as abolishing, or rather replacing, the face. The contemporary adoption of masks at demonstrations cannot be fully understood unless we navigate between these two paradigms, and explore the continuum between the artefact "mask" and the "idealised" body part called the "true face," to quote Hans Belting.<sup>6</sup> Whereas governments have

5 Françoise Frontisi-Ducroux, *Du masque au visage: aspects de l'identité en Grèce ancienne* (Paris: Flammarion, 2012). A similar point is made in Richard Weihe, *Die Paradoxie der Maske Geschichte einer Form* (Paderborn: Fink 2004), 35-36.

6 Hans Belting, *Face and Mask: a Double History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

passed legislation to ban objects that “hide” the protesters’ visage, the way many protesters deploy masks requires that we accept that a political mask performs a new identity, one that is provisional, but not *ipso facto* duplicitous, false or fictional.

Clarifying what a “political mask” is not can also help to circumscribe this concept. A political mask is neither a religious symbol nor a costume related to a festivity. A political mask is not an artefact invented for a specific march, because what is remarkable about political masks is their iterative appearance and transregional symbolic valence. A political mask is not a face protection worn for hygienic reasons, yet nothing prevents a surgical mask from acting as a political mask. A political mask is not an object designed to dissimulate an identity in view to committing illegal acts. This intent might be present in some activists adopting the “black bloc” tactic. Yet even for them the choice of donning a balaclava is in many cases a symbolic gesture, one that does not necessarily translate into the willingness to damage property.<sup>7</sup> Last but not least, a political mask is not a disguise. As an historian focusing on the prohibitions affecting the 1790 carnival has pointed out, masks hide an “identity in a visible way,” whereas a “disguise asserts [...] a false identity” and its “concealment is concealed.”<sup>8</sup>

Where do contemporary political masks come from? Political masks have few antecedents in the iconography of protest developed in the Global North. The Rebecca riots, a series of riots against taxation that took place in Wales between 1839 and 1843, are worth a mention. Some protesters wore masks and dressed like women, possibly referencing the biblical character Rebecca. The practice of cross-dressing during upheavals originates in seventeenth-century England, and stems from the folk tradition of “rough music” (also known as “charivari”) loud mock parades targeting local wrongdoers. Despite the carnivalesque tenure of several rallies since the 1970s, the rationale of the Rebecca riots’ masks share little with contemporary protests criticising forms of political representation. Another artefact could be considered to be a forerunner of contemporary political masks: this is the infamous costume of the Ku Klux Klan. Similar to some contemporary masks, the KKK’s white hoods emerged in response to “pop culture” visuals; indeed, their main source is found in the supremacist-minded depiction of the clansmen provided in the popular film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), which is loosely based on the book *The Clansman: A Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan* (1905). The clan’s choreographed public parades gained purchase in the 1920s, when, on occasion, marchers replaced their faces with a hood \* \* \*. There is a connection between contemporary political masks and the KKK’s public displays, as

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7 Francis Dupuis-Déri, *Who’s Afraid of the Black Blocs: Anarchy in Action around the World* (Oakland: PM Press, 2014).

8 James H. Johnson, “Versailles, Meet Les Halles: Masks, Carnival, and the French Revolution”, *Representations*, 73, 1 (Winter 2001): 89-116.

we shall see in due course. This article will articulate a tentative answer to the question concerning the genealogy of contemporary political masks. It understands them as part of a collective social practice characterised by the creation of an image and an imaginary. In order to engage with this emerging visual culture, the research relies on the tools of political iconology. In so doing, it aims to reveal visual taboos, conceptual shifts and unsuspected continuities, the interpretation of which complements textual analyses and their focus on high-profile thinkers, parliamentary deliberations and juridical texts. The answer regarding the genealogy of contemporary political masks is also “tentative” because further research is required to ascertain the hypotheses discussed here. This contribution is only the first outcome of an ongoing research project.

Over the past few years, several scholars have explored the “political mask”. They tend to agree that, by enacting a confrontational form of anonymity, the political mask symbolically counters the asymmetry of power within the visual economy of “surveillance society,” while at the same time materialising a collective, if paradoxical, identity. Echoing this argument, readings premised on the work of Foucault and Agamben have cast the act of wearing masks at political demonstrations as a social practice advocating “dis-identification.” In other words, the mask would be an artefact laying bare the coercive nature of the technologies of governance. Emerging out of a “struggle over visibility”, the mask would represent an indirect repost to the notion of “visibility” as expressed, for instance, in Axel Honneth’s theory of recognition. From this perspective, political masks would instantiate what Giorgio Agamben has defined as a “whatever singularity.”<sup>9</sup> A further theoretical dyad has been mobilised to understand political masks, that pertaining to the contrast between Emmanuel Lévinas’ “visage”—the locus of face-to-face encounter and, therefore, the origin of ethics—and Deleuze and Guattari’s “faciality”—which emphasises the ongoing production of faces via make-up, facial expressions and masks.<sup>10</sup> Less philosophical in spirit, some scholars have honed in on the white mask of *V for Vendetta* (the so-called “Guy Fawkes mask”) and investigated the practices associated with this artefact during the Occupy movement.<sup>11</sup> Others have examined this mask as a “cultural pastiche,” the popularity of which is indebted to the simplified Hollywood film version of the story, rather than the more politically nuanced graphic novel of the

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9 Maxime Boidy, “Visibilities in Words, Visibilities on Bodies: Academic Sociopolitical Theories of Visibility and Militant Teachings From the Genoa Summit of July 2001”, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 25, 4 (2019): 1-11; Érik Bordeleau, *Foucault anonymat: essai* (Montréal: Le Quartanier, 2015).

10 Anonymous, “Fous ta cagoule, Vers une étho-politique de l’anonymat”, *Lundimatin*, 9 February 2019 <https://lundi.am/fous-ta-cagoule>

11 Pete Lampard, “Understanding Culture in Social Movements: A Historical Materialist Approach to the Guy Fawkes Mask” (PhD dissertation, University of Manchester, 2018)

same name.<sup>12</sup> Another strand of scholarship has discussed ski-masks: the colours of the “black bloc,” the “visual activism” of Zapatistas and that of the Pussy riots, whose colourful ski-masks have been construed as an “affective generator.”<sup>13</sup> Stimulating interpretations have relied on the work of Dario Gamboni to read the “black bloc” as a “composite image,” whereas others have likened its black ski-masks to the Guy Fawkes mask and cast them as “blank images” that can assume all possible meanings and signal “the presence of an absence” in the political arena.<sup>14</sup> The visual inclusivity of these masks suggests an analogy between these “blank figures” and Ernst Laclau’s idea of “the people” as an “empty signifier” strategically invoked by “populists.” One could opine that, while the political mask materialises a “blank” signifier, the appeal to “the people” is anchored in the history of popular sovereignty, without which it would fall on deaf ears. Yet political masks, too, have an iconographic history that is far from “blank.”

While acknowledging the topicality of these analyses, this article offers a different perspective. Its core hypothesis is that the current proliferation of masks can be understood as the re-emergence and re-enactment of an iconographic motif that is immanent to popular sovereignty and universal suffrage, the “faceless crowd.” This is a history of archives, dreams and nightmares, of disciplinary visual mechanisms and attempts to deliver a collective subject from their disempowering frameworks.

## The Faceless Crowd

In this article, the term “faceless crowd” indicates a visual motif depicting a crowd formed by individuals whose “natural” facial traits are deliberately made unrecognisable. On occasion, it is not entirely clear whether a crowd is deliberately faceless or simply too far in the background for their facial traits to appear. Yet, in most cases, the presence of this motif is unambiguous. A work by Félix Vallotton offers a paradigmatic example. Although the artist repeatedly depicted riots and demonstrations, only one of his crowds is purposefully faceless, that painted in *The Crowd*  $\pm$  (1894). The person located in the foreground has no facial features (apart from

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12 Andreas Beer, “Just(ice) Smiling? Masks and Masking in the Occupy-Wall Street Protests”, *European journal of American studies*, 13, 4 (2018): 1-14; “Ein neues Gesicht für den Dissens? Die Ästhetik der V-Maske zwischen Comic, Film und Occupy-Protesten.” *kritische berichte*, 1 (2016): 96-107; Oliver Kohns, “Guy Fawkes in the 21st Century : A Contribution to the Political Iconography of Revolt”, *Image [&] Narrative*, 14, 1 (2013): 89-103.

13 Carolin Behrmann, “‘Indignati, guerriglia black bloc’. Zur Farbenlehre des Versammlungsrechts”, *Bildwelten des Wissens*, 10, 1 (2014): 19-27; T.J. Demos, “Between Rebel Creativity and Reification: For and Against Visual Activism”, *Journal of Visual Culture*, 15, 1 (2016): 1-18; Caitlin Bruce, “The Balaclava as Affect Generator: Free Pussy Riot Protests and Transnational Iconicity”, *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 12, 1 (2014): 42-62.

14 Maxime Boydy, “Une iconologie politique du voilement. Sociologie et culture visuelles du black bloc” (PhD dissertation, Université de Strasbourg, 2014); P. Ruiz, “Revealing Power: Masked Protest and the Blank Figure,” *Cultural Politics an International Journal* 9, no. 3 (January 1, 2013): 263–79, <https://doi.org/10.1215/17432197-2346973>.

a beard), suggesting that it is not distance that has erased the people's visage.

Several studies have explored the iconography of the crowd in Impressionism, Futurism and Fascism. Yet the *longue durée* history of how and why the crowd is depicted as faceless in still images has received little attention. In what follows, this motif will not be understood as the mere illustration of a concept, but rather as a political subject, the history of which can be sourced in literature, laws and police archives, just as in still images. Pierre Rosanvallon has argued that "the people" does not pre-exist the fact that it is invoked [...]; it has to be constructed."<sup>15</sup> Judith Butler has indirectly echoed this contention, maintaining that, in order to achieve a public existence, collective subjects must constantly be nominated and performed lest they become unthinkable. This performative approach has also been applied to the institutionalisation of social categories; in recent years, in particular, sociologists have conceded that the making of a social group is not only a matter of political rhetoric and administrative definitions, but also one of image.<sup>16</sup> The cultural history of contemporary democracy stands incomplete without this type of visual investigation, and the current worldwide use of political masks cannot be fully comprehended without exploring how the faceless crowd has been portrayed and staged since the end of the nineteenth century. While being inextricably linked to the history of contemporary democracy, this narrative reveals turning points that are not generally associated with popular sovereignty, such as 1848, 1945 and the historic dates when census suffrage was abolished or the franchise was extended to women. Before sketching the iconology of the faceless crowd, however, the origin of the phrase "faceless crowd" must be briefly outlined.

The term "faceless crowd," with some variation, exists in most European languages (*gesichtlose Masse*; *foule sans visage*, *безликая толпа*, *masa sin rostro*, *folla senza volto*, etc.). It is first attested in French and German-speaking regions at the beginning of the nineteenth century. By contrast, in Mandarin (匿名群众) and Arabic (آفة داعل ري هلمجل), for instance, this syntagm appears much later and often in translations from European languages.<sup>17</sup> This primacy is textual, but suggests that an iconology of the faceless crowd may have also begun in Europe. The first major instance of a phrase similar to it can be found in Hegel's *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (1820), where the philosopher talks in terms of *formlose Masse*.<sup>18</sup>

15 Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le peuple introuvable: histoire de la représentation démocratique en France* (Paris: Gallimard, 2010) 24; Judith Butler, *Notes toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015).

16 Imogen Tyler, *Revolt Subjects: Social Abjection and Resistance in Neoliberal Britain* (London, New York: Zed Books, 2013).

17 This research has been conducted mostly using Google Books.

18 For a detailed analysis of the notion of "the masses", Stephan Günzel, "Der Begriff der 'Masse' in Philosophie und Kulturtheorie", *Dialektik*, 2, 4 (2004): 117-135; *Dialektik*, 1, 5 (2005): 123-140, *Dialektik*, 2, 5 (2005) 113-130 and "Der Begriff der 'Masse' im ästhetisch-literarischen Kontext. Einige signifikante Positionen", *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte*, 45 (2003): 151-166.

The many as single individuals—and this is a favourite interpretation of [the term] “the people”—do indeed live together, but only as a crowd [*Menge*], i.e. a formless mass [*formlose Masse*] whose movement and activity can consequently only be elemental, irrational, barbarous, and terrifying. If we hear any further talk of “the people” as an unorganised [*unorganische*] whole, we know in advance that we can expect only generalities and one-sided declamations.<sup>19</sup>

The crowd as a pliant matter describes “the people” when this entity is nothing more than a mere summation of private citizens (and interests); that is, before the people are sublated by the state as the representative of the universal. In Hegel’s text the metaphor of the “body politic” is latent; indeed, by defining the crowd as an “inorganic” (*unorganische*) whole, Hegel grounds his state doctrine in a biological terrain, as confirmed by another passage of *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, “when it becomes part of the organism, the mass attains its interests in a legitimate and orderly manner. If, however, such means are not available, the masses will always express themselves in a barbarous manner.”<sup>20</sup>

Hegel’s “formless crowd” is reminiscent of Hobbes’ “multitude” insofar as it designates a political subject *ex negativo*, by means of what is *not*, or rather *not yet*—not yet “state” for Hegel, not yet “people” for Hobbes. For Hegel, the formless mass is depicted as a “barbarous” subject suitable for shallow meditations and demagoguery. It is a living being, to be sure, but something that is marked by an inharmonious, “terrifying” (and possibly monstrous) physiognomy until it is transubstantiated into the state. Hegel taps into a set of metaphors that were common already in Ancient Greece, where the *topos* of ochlocracy (mob rule) pervaded the harangues of those who opposed the idea that power should be exercised by all male citizens (the *demos*), rather than by the rich elite (the oligarchy) or the “best ones” (the aristocracy).<sup>21</sup> The New Testament took these condemnations even further by having Jesus virtually sentenced to death by the crowd, which preferred sparing the life of Barabbas, a bandit/rioter/revolutionary (the gospels diverge on this point). This metaphoric continuity should not obscure the fact that Hegel speaks from within the paradigm of popular sovereignty. His concept of the crowd is set against the tensions between a census male suffrage (excluding the vast majority of the population from the vote) and a universal male suffrage, as formulated in the French Constitution of 1793, which never came into effect.

A focus on the face was still absent from Hegel’s wording in 1820. This is similar to mainstream European languages; the first written instances

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19 Georg Wilhelm Fredrich Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 344.

20 *Ibid.* 343.

21 John S McClelland, *The Crowd and the Mob: from Plato to Canetti* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011).

of “faceless crowd” seem to have surfaced in France, where *foule sans visage* is attested in the early 1850s (and is absent, for instance, from Alexis de Toqueville’s *Democracy in America*, published in 1835 and 1840). Semantic research also shows that this phrase gradually gained purchase in Europe in the latter part of the nineteenth century. At this stage of the analysis, it is not far-fetched to surmise that the primacy given to the face reflected the emergence of photography as a medium, and the attendant hope to turn the visage into a repository of information—into an “operative portrait,”—that could be stored and processed by scientists, psychologists, and law-enforcement institutions.<sup>22</sup>

To be sure, the throngs of European and North American industrial cities slowly moved left the outskirts of philosophical theory and literature and arrived on the centre stage of the European political arena in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. As Michela Nacci has argued, the crowd was increasingly being constructed as a political subject in its own right, one that was defined by the same lack of rationality and conscience that Hegel had attributed to it some 60 years earlier.<sup>23</sup> Historians have explored the discursive emergence of the crowd in one of the most important academic disciplines of the time, crowd psychology.<sup>24</sup> Criminologists, sociologists, psychologists and intellectuals such as Le Bon, Sighele, Ferri, Lombroso and Tarde began describing the crowd as a ruthless, suggestible subject whose erratic behaviour could not be more different than that of a judicious, autonomous white bourgeois man. The crowd was akin to dreadful natural phenomena (storms, volcanos, tumultuous oceans, etc.), animals and their instincts, supposedly inferior populations (“primitive” people) and, not least, women, who were considered to be voluble, impulsive and “hysterical.”<sup>25</sup> Admittedly, crowds were also capable of heroism, as in the case of an army, but even this behaviour could be dismissed as a by-product of the crowd’s “herd mentality.” Within the discursive framework of crowd psychology, the bourgeois white man was deemed superior to the throng, yet scholars cast a dark shadow on him as well. Indeed, one of the discipline’s postulates was precisely that anyone could ravage and lynch under the “hypnotic” spell of the crowd and its ability to spread like a “contagion.”

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22 Roland Meyer, *Operative Porträts: eine Bildgeschichte der Identifizierbarkeit von Lavater bis Facebook* (Konstanz: Konstanz university press, 2017).

23 Nacci Michela, *Il volto della folla. Soggetti collettivi, democrazia, individuo* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2019).

24 The bibliography is vast and includes Michael Gamper, *Masse lesen, Masse schreiben: Eine Diskurs- und Imaginationsgeschichte der Menschenmenge 1765-1930*; Olivier Bosc, *La foule criminelle: politique et criminalité dans l'Europe du tournant du XIXe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2007); Susanna Barrows, *Distorting Mirrors: Visions of the Crowd in Late Nineteenth-Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); Robert A Nye, *The Origins of Crowd Psychology: Gustave Le Bon and the Crisis of Mass Democracy in the Third Republic* (London: Sage, 1975).

25 Annette Graczyk, “Die Masse als elementare Naturgewalt”, in *Das Volk: Abbild, Konstruktion, Phantasma*, ed. Annette Graczyk (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996), 19-30.

From the 1910s onwards, the determinism of crowd psychology—an admixture of evolutionism, misogyny, racism and climate theory—was increasingly discredited in academia. This disavowal notwithstanding, the work of Le Bon and his colleagues continued enjoying popularity and exerting influence upon intellectuals and politicians. In the 1920s, Le Bon was still quoted by Freud as a key reference, as well as by Mussolini, who claimed to have read his complete works.<sup>26</sup> Until the 1950s, debates on “mass society” were rarely free from the imprint of crowd psychology. Suffice it to mention José Ortega y Gasset’s *The Revolt of the Masses*, which was the best-selling philosophical essay in Germany between the 1930s and the 1950s.<sup>27</sup> As the title of Ortega y Gasset’s book suggests, the term “the masses” (and the coinage “anonymous masses”) was now catching on, and it was often contrasted with the terms “crowd,” “class” and “nation” by thinkers such as Kracauer, Benjamin and Canetti, as well as by sociologists including Theodor Geiger and Gerhard Colm. This shift was not merely terminological. As Jonsson’s study has shown, while Le Bon’s “crowd” embraced the upper classes, in the interwar years the term “the masses” was often a coded allusion to the working classes and the underclasses.<sup>28</sup> These verbal changes are useful hermeneutical tools for exploring the iconography of this subject. Nonetheless, the shifts that intellectuals aimed to capture were not directly reflected by the images, which tell a partly different story.

### From the faceless crowd to the political mask

The research that I have conducted thus far shows the existence of five loosely chronological conceptual shifts in the Global North. 1) From the 1890s onwards the faceless crowd, often one made of bourgeois individuals, appeared as an urban political subject eliciting apprehension. 2) In the interwar years, images of a faceless crowd grew in number and popularity. At the same time, a number of visual strategies were put in place to provide a reassuring depiction of this subject. Despite significant differences in their visual idioms, painters, photographers and caricaturists contributed to the emergence of what can be called a visual taboo, which spanned the period from the initial establishment of census male suffrage to its generalisation in the Global North. This taboo can be formulated as the *inability/unwillingness to represent the faceless crowd as being capable of autonomous and positive political action*. 3) The third conceptual shift began in the early 1960s. The motif of the faceless crowd was no longer a prerogative of industrialised countries, and it began to surface in

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26 Benito Mussolini, *Opera Omnia*, vol XXII, eds. Edoardo and Duilio Susmel, (Florence: La Fenice, 1954), 156. Mussolini’s claim dates from 1926.

27 Axel Schildt, *Moderne Zeiten: Freizeit, Massenmedien und “Zeitgeist” in der Bundesrepublik der 50er Jahre* (Hamburg: Hans Christians Verlag, 1995), 327-328.

28 Stefan Jonsson, *A Brief History of the Masses: Three Revolutions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).



different parts of the world as part of the leftist imagery. By the late 1960s, however, these visualisations increasingly conjured a political subject that was autonomous and invested with a constructive political agenda. 4) Starting in the late 1960s, some artists/activists began not only to portray the faceless crowd, but to perform it as well. In the 1980s, the use of the political mask gained momentum only to culminate with the iconic ski-masks of the Zapatistas. 5) The last shift took place around 2008 and it is inextricably linked to the digital images circulated on social media, which diversified the inventory of masks and enabled protesters in hundreds of cities around the world to coordinate demonstrations such as the Million Mask March.

The images examined here provide examples of this shifting iconography from the first to the fourth shifts as outlined above. Their treatment, and the theoretical meditations accompanying them, are admittedly cursory. My goal is not to offer conclusive evidence of my theses, but rather to outline the provisional founding of a research project that aims not only to describe the main tendencies inherent to this iconography, but also to articulate in-depth, innovative readings of some little-known artworks.

1) *The emergence of an icon and a collective subject*. Starting in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the faceless crowd begins to appear in paintings. The role of this medium is not accidental, and reflects the emergence of crowd psychology, which initially represented an elitist discourse in the sense that it foregrounded a warning by and for the conservative- and socialist-minded upper and middle classes. Despite the fact that the categories and metaphors of crowd psychology percolated to the intellectual and artistic life of European countries—and indeed some painters personally knew its theorists—it would be inaccurate to argue that the visual conventions surrounding the faceless crowd emerged in response to crowd psychology.<sup>29</sup> Rather, both artists and “psychologists” were part of the same cultural environment, and one does not need to posit a direct causal relationship. The reception of Monet’s *Le Boulevard des Capucines* ± (1873) exemplarily shows that, even before the emergence of the representational codes that came to define of the faceless crowd (Monet’s painting does not overtly suggest apprehension and his crowd cannot be considered deliberately “faceless”), the moral categories and anxieties of crowd psychology were already grafted onto his cityscape. At the first exhibition of the Impressionists, art critic Louis Leroy expressed his shock at the view of the indistinguishable people of Monet’s crowd. By relying on the metaphorical field of crowd psychology, which was then still in its gestation, Leroy compared the individuals in the painting to anonymous

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29 Christine Poggi, “Mass, Pack, and Mob. Art in the Age of the Crowd”, in *Crowds*, eds. Jeffrey Thompson Schnapp; Matthew Tiews (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2006), 159-202, see endnote 31, on page 404.

“specks in the marble” and feared that a prolonged exposure to such a dehumanising portrayal of human beings might cause an apoplexy.<sup>30</sup>

Two decades later, as seen in the case of Futurist artist Boccioni and expressionist painter Ensor, the motif of the faceless crowd emerged with a tangible power. Ensor painted several works that grant a masked crowd the role of protagonist.<sup>31</sup> In his *Self-Portrait with Masks* (1899) <sup>⊕</sup> the contrast between masked crowd and individual could not be more striking. The crowd is the locus of the false, the grotesque, the inauthentic. The individual arises from this faceless and bodiless mass to claim his right to beauty and autonomy. In *Christ's Entry Into Brussels* (1889) <sup>⊕</sup>, the socialist slogans are ridiculed, and the procession turns into a carnival masquerade. When Ensor makes a parody of the king, however, the crowd becomes a positive actor. This is the case with *Belgium in the Nineteenth Century* <sup>⊕</sup>, a painting that overturns the iconographic model proposed by Hobbes on the frontispiece of *Leviathan* <sup>⊕</sup>. This suggests that when Ensor postulated for the crowd the possibility of a positive political action—here the demand of universal suffrage—he intentionally avoided the depiction of a faceless crowd. The case of Boccioni mirrors a similar dynamic. As Christine Poggi has argued, two paintings Boccioni made between 1908 and 1911, *Crowd Surrounding High Equestrian Monument* <sup>⊕</sup> and *Riot* <sup>⊕</sup>, echoed the ideas of crowd psychology.<sup>32</sup> His faceless crowds are fanatical and violent subjects. Their features encapsulate an aspect often highlighted by Le Bon and other theorists: the madness of the crowd concerns all social classes. The crowd prostrated in front of the equestrian monument is a distinctively bourgeois crowd that acts much like what were “primitives,” thereby testifying to the regression of the “civilised man”'s mind to the primordial stages of humanity. (The same credulous faceless crowd was also depicted by Hans Windisch in *Das Idol* on a 1919 front cover of the anarchist publication *Der Einzige*.) In Boccioni's crowds, the closer one gets to the idol the less recognisable the visages become; the more instinctive the action in the fray, the more the faces blend into the mass of colours, or the paper is left blank. In so doing, Boccioni devised a fairly intuitive semantic strategy: if the facial traits acted as the identifying features of a person, and thereby the proof of its moral responsibility, their erasure could not but signal a form of debasement that prefigured promiscuity, chaos and unrest. In both Ensor and Boccioni, the symbolic prominence of the face in the crowd can be connected to the “scientific” work of figures such as Lombroso and Alphonse Bertillon (a police officer), who claimed that an informed biometric analysis would allow the authorities to predict whether a criminal would re-offend. Insofar

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30 Louis Leroy, “L'Exposition des impressionnistes”, *Le Charivari*, 25 avril 1874 [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Exhibition\\_of\\_the\\_Impressionists](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Exhibition_of_the_Impressionists).

31 Stefan Jonsson, *Crowds and Democracy: the Idea and Image of the Masses from Revolution to Fascism* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2013), 69-117.

32 Christine Poggi, *Inventing Futurism: the Art and Politics of Artificial Optimism* (Princeton Princeton University Press, 2009), Chapter 2.

as the propensity to delinquency was deemed to be innate, the correct interpretation of a nose, a mandible or even a tattoo would indicate whether an inmate was a “born criminal”. A faceless crowd, therefore, was a crowd in which anthropometry was unable to extract the information produced by “positive science.”

Several depictions of the working class by far-left artists such as Eugène Laermens <sup>2</sup>, Theophile-Alexandre Steinlein <sup>2</sup> and Jules Grandjouan <sup>2</sup>, and the jubilant crowd of Mitschke-Collande <sup>2</sup>, come close to depicting a faceless crowd. Yet artists routinely opened up a breach in the compact mass, usually in the foreground or through a “divine” ray of light. This semantic strategy enabled them to show some faces, and infuse the endless expanse of bodies with a touch of “humanity” that was coded by the epiphany of the visage and its ability to elicit empathy in the viewer. It is only in *Demonstration* (1905)<sup>2</sup> that Steinlein seems to blur deliberately the individual facial traits in order to let the faceless crowd of a demonstration invade the public space. This motif is reiterated by Hans Richter’s *Revolution* <sup>2</sup>(1918) (an allusion to the German revolution of 1918) where a faceless crowd, this time without flags, occupies the streets. Departing from Steinlein’s unambiguous visual statement, Richter lets the viewer decide whether this faceless collective subject will act as a spectator or merely as an actor in the ensuing events.

2) *The interwar years and the “capture” of a subject*. It has been widely noted that crowds, or rather “the masses”, constituted a leitmotif of the interwar years both in fascist-elitist discourses and those of the Left. It is generally agreed that it was no longer the medium of painting that best embodied the spirit of this new political subject, but rather photography and, most importantly, cinema. As Walter Benjamin famously argued in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, the new “techniques of reproduction” constituted a sort mirror for the crowds, and allowed for what can be described as their subjectivation. According to Benjamin, this process was mediated, paradoxical as it may seem, by the masses’ “faces.”

In big parades and monster rallies, in sports events, and in war, all of which nowadays are captured by camera and sound recording, the masses are brought face to face with themselves [*sieht die Masse sich selbst ins Gesicht*]. This process [...] is intimately connected with the development of the techniques of reproduction and photography. Mass movements are usually discerned more clearly by a camera than by the naked eye.<sup>33</sup>

At a time when the social structures of the Old Regime were collapsing and male suffrage was being established in the Global North, this

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<sup>33</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (Boston; New York: Mariner Books, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1935), 26

panoptic mechanical eye came to dominate the visualisation of what Jonsson has defined as “post-individual” masses.<sup>34</sup> Yet the visual taboo enunciated above was not countered. From the 1910s onwards, when the faceless crowd was not outright dismissed as a “bunch of zeros” (think of the equation of “faceless” with a total lack of intellection in Werner Heldt’s 1933-1935 *Rally (Parade of Zeros)*\*), this collective subject was depicted in such a way as to indicate its inability to express a concerted and autonomous political will. In Europe, there emerged four (at times overlapping) iconographic strategies, or rather visual dispositifs. Despite their heterogeneity, their instantiation shared a common goal. This was to provide reassuring, productive images of the crowd, turning its advent onto the stage of history into an unescapable necessity that did not *ipso facto* imply the “decline of the West.” The four visual dispositifs can be summarised as follows.

2.1) A faceless crowd active on the political scene could be represented in a positive light if it was the victim of repression. This motif obliquely appears in *The Funeral of the Anarchist Galli* (1910-1911)\* and it is discernible in the woodcut made by Richard Seewald for the anarchist magazine *Revolution*\*. The crowd is far from the viewer, but the faces of the protesters are deliberately replaced by identical squares. The motif of the faceless crowd as a symbol of suffering humanity dates back at least to two paintings and the plaster that Honoré Daumier devoted to the topic of “the fugitives” \*\*. As will be demonstrated, the motif of sorrow was to become extremely productive in the 1960s when the image of the faceless crowds would break the visual taboo that initially characterised its representation.

2.2) The faceless crowd could take the form of an army, which was typically depicted through the reiteration of the same figure or a silhouette \* \* \*. The army as a faceless group of people had already been used by Bonnard in *The Parade Ground* (1890)\*, but his antimilitarism was now turned on its head, as in this visual dispositif depersonalisation symbolised obedience. This iconography also corroborated one of crowd psychology’s core contentions, namely that the crowd had a “natural” propensity for imitation. Meanwhile, this visual language often “nationalised the masses”, bearing out the idea that crowds should never be left unguided; otherwise, they would loot, rape or kill indiscriminately.<sup>35</sup> It is within this framework that the hoods of the 1920’s Ku Klux Klan should be understood. For all their religious undertones, the clansmen’s political masks were derived from the cavalry of *The Birth of a Nation*, where the costume acted as a paramilitary uniform.

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34 Jonsson, *Crowds and Democracy*.

35 George L Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic wars through the Third Reich* (New York: H. Fertig, 2001).

2.3) The faceless crowd could be portrayed positively if it featured submissiveness and embodied productivism, notably by highlighting pleasant geometric shapes formed by the coordinated action of a large number of human bodies. Despite some rather schematic parallels, Kracauer's 1927 essay "The Ornament of the Masses" is, to date, the most cogent attempt to read this omnipresent motif and its both oppressive and emancipatory implications. While recalling Hegel's idea of the crowd as a pliant matter, the depiction of the "masses" in the guise of a human ornament (as in Pierre Ichac's photographs of Sokol gymnastics exercises<sup>36</sup>) rendered individual faces irrelevant and hence virtually invisible, despite the fact that this representation of the crowd relied on photography. The ornament of the masses boomed in the 1920s, when it mostly came to evoke the integration of individuals in a harmonic whole. In contrast to the crowd psychologists' descriptions, this characterised the faceless crowd as orderly and willing to accept the *diktats* of the state, industry or existing socialism. In Rodchenko's photographs<sup>37</sup> of athletic parades, the faceless crowd emerges even in the absence of masks, panoramic perspectives and blurred images, by the sheer similarity of the athletes' identically shaved faces.

2.4) In the interwar years the representation of the crowd also followed the iconography devised by Abraham Bosse and Hobbes for the frontispiece of *Leviathan* in 1651, the twentieth-century legacy of which has been outlined by Bredekamp <sup>\*</sup> <sup>\*</sup> <sup>\*</sup> <sup>\*</sup> <sup>\*</sup>.<sup>36</sup> This subject was made faceless by downsizing its members, and granting the surmounting body of the leader absolute primacy. For instance, an "oceanic" faceless crowd was a mainstay of Fascist image politics.<sup>37</sup> People could take shelter in the "body politics" of Mussolini <sup>\*</sup>, whose sovereign power was often depicted, unlike that of Hitler, as "the incorporation of a multiplicity".<sup>38</sup>

Deviations from these overarching dispositifs rarely occurred. However, incipient attempts to challenge them can be found in some linocuts produced by the artists gravitating around the Cologne Progressives, an informal grouping launched in the aftermath of World War I. Hans Schmitz's *Die Masse* (1923)<sup>\*</sup>, where the schematic and identical visages turn into masks, or Gerd Arntz's faceless and yet diverse crowds<sup>\*</sup> (as well as the crowds Arntz subsequently made for infographics) still await a sustained analysis exploring their original position within the *longue durée* history of this iconography. An only apparent departure from these four visual dispositifs is also seen in a poster<sup>\*</sup> crafted by the Bolshevik camp during the Russian Civil War. The poster depicts a group of robber barons, whose "masks" are in the clock, as it were. Listing them in order

36 Horst Bredekamp, *Thomas Hobbes - Der Leviathan: Das Urbild des modernen Staates und seine Gegenbilder. 1651-2001* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2001).

37 Jeffrey Schnapp, "The Mass Panorama", *Modernism/modernity*, 9, 2 (April 2002): 1-39.

38 Susanne von Falkenhausen, "Vom 'Ballhauschwur' zum 'Duce' Visuelle Repräsentation von Volkssouveränität zwischen Demokratie und Autokratie", in *Das Volk*, ed. Graczyk, 3-17.

of disappearance from the political scene, the object depicts Nicholas II, Kerensky, Kornilov, Kolchak, Yudenich, Denikin, Wrangel and “Pan” (the Polish army), announcing that the capitalists’ public personas had reached their “final hour.”

3) *The end of a visual taboo*. By the 1960s, suffrage was extended to women almost everywhere in the Global North, and most of the European Empires had disintegrated. At this stage of the research, it is still impossible to identify an unequivocal link between these novel political circumstances and the subsequent shifts in the iconography of the faceless crowd. Yet, it is hardly coincidental that the increasingly widespread acceptance (at least formally) of universal suffrage paralleled the creation of novel images of the faceless crowd. The rhetoric of the crowd as a potentially criminal subject persisted, and the recourse to a faceless or a grotesque heap of faces often coded such a damning verdict. In 1963, the hideous crowd of Argentinian artist Noé Luis Felipe voted for “blind force”<sup>2</sup>, recalling Ensor’s masks or the faceless crowd, driven by base instincts and misguided by agent provocateurs concealed in its ranks, that had been portrayed by Orozco in *The Masses* (1935)<sup>3</sup>. Visual strategies such as the “ornament of the masses” (e.g., in a poster of May-June 1968<sup>4</sup>) and the iconography of *Leviathan* persisted. In particular, Maoist China invited the deployment of this iconography in Europe, possibly suggesting the artists’ prejudice that individual personality was less pronounced in a largely agricultural society. One can think of Thomas Bayrle’s ingenious Mao<sup>5</sup> (1966) and Mario Ceroli’s *China*<sup>6</sup>.

However, new pictures of faceless crowds were coming to full fruition outside of the framework that had marked its appearance in the previous 70 years. Spain was one of the first countries where artists experimented with new codes. Painters such as Joan Antoni Toledo, Saura, Rafael Canogar, Juan Genovés and Equipo Crónica shaped a repertoire of faceless crowds that bestowed positive political agency upon them, relapsing neither into the “ornament of the masses” nor the visual semantic of *Leviathan*. In fact, the departure from this visual trope constitutes the main theme of Toledo’s lithograph *Caesar*<sup>7</sup> where the faceless crowd, conjured by the iteration of the same silhouette, is located above the sovereign and opposes his will. Nevertheless, one of the four visual dispositifs discussed above did act as a repository of ideas: the faceless crowd as a victim. From the political prisoners of Augustí Ibarrola<sup>8</sup> to Genovés (who would paint faceless crowds for most of his life<sup>9</sup>), several depictions of faceless crowds were initially premised on this model.

Yet, a confrontational faceless crowd slowly emerged in the late 1960s. An example of this is Genovés’s *The Wait*<sup>10</sup>. On the frontispiece of *Leviathan*, the crowd is fully incorporated into the body of the sovereign and stares at his towering face. On the contrary, the throng of *The Wait* is not subsumed by a superior entity, but rather looks out at the spectator. However,

the sovereign did not disappear, but is only concealed, because its power operates within regimes of visibility that are no longer Hobbes's. Here the people are observed through what can be construed as a telephoto lens, a device that alludes to the gaze of power in Genovés' late 1960's production. Another feature of his assembled people contradicts previous representation of faceless crowds. They do not overstep the white line, a concerted decision that proves its autonomy and self-control while facing its invisible opponent. Unlike most of Genovés' subsequent works, the throng of *The Wait* is virtually faceless, but not homogeneous, as every character has individual features. A productive tension is at play here, one that tries to amalgamate anonymity and social differences, and which tentatively challenges the iconology of the faceless crowd's victimhood. The motif of the faceless crowd as being capable of halting to form a line would surface again in one of the final scenes of the film *V for Vendetta*; this same action precedes the collective gesture of the crowd removing their white masks so as to unveil the numerous and diverse human faces behind them.

Examining Equipo Crónica's *Demonstration. Or Quantity becomes Quality* (1966) within the history of this iconography allows for a new understanding of this painting. Deliberately or not, the Spanish duo relied on a graphic conceit, the iteration of the grainy picture of a crowd, that had been pioneered by 1930's artists who translated Mussolini's state-centred vision of the individual and his despise of "the masses" into images.<sup>39</sup> In a graphic tour de force published by architectural partnership BBPR, the pictures of the masses provide a modernist version of the iconographic model invented by Hobbes (the final part of Mussolini's quote reads, "we consider individuals first and foremost from the perspective of their function within the state"). The extent to which this iconography of the crowd also informed the Francoist regime requires further research. What is certain is that Equipo Crónica had contact with Italy (namely with communist art critic Mario De Micheli); in fact, the group's first "post-colonial" faceless crowd—the repetition of the same picture of jubilant black men—was published on the front cover of the Italian art magazine, *D'Ars Agency*.

With regard to this iconography, the primacy of Spain can probably be explained. As I have argued in a previous publication, this manifold visual language testified to both the attempt of circumventing censorship (depicting crowds hosting red flags was inconceivable under Franco) and the need to broaden the anti-Franco camp, whose epicentre was moving from the exiles in France towards the Iberian Peninsula in the 1960s.<sup>40</sup> For all its diversity, in Spain the image of the faceless crowd generally repre

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39 Ishay Landa, *Fascism and the Masses: The Revolt Against the Last Humans, 1848–1945*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351179997>.

40 Jacopo Galimberti, *Individuals against Individualism. Western European Art Collectives (1956-1969)* (Liverpool University Press, 2017).

sented a cautious, if cunning, way to visualise an oppositional subjectivity that was making itself manifest in civil society, factories and mines.

In France, an artist who had been exposed to the work of Equipo Crónica, Gérard Fromanger, began to appropriate this motif and contributed to its popularisation. His first faceless crowds—found in the series *The Red*<sup>\*</sup>—emerged from the 1968 movement and updated the motif established by Steinlein's *Demonstration* in 1905. From 1971 onwards, particularly through the series *Boulevard des italiens*<sup>\*\*</sup>, Fromanger's faceless crowds became both more allusive and inclusive, but not less political in spirit, as they were embedded in the painter's intellectual acquaintances in the far-left Parisian milieu, from the Salon de la Jeune Peinture to Deleuze and Foucault. Partly via Paris, this imagery spread to the pages of *The Tricontinental*, a leftist magazine founded after the Tricontinental Conference in Havana (1966), and acting as the official outlet of the OSPAAAL, the anti-imperialist, socialist Organization of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America. In and around the OSPAAAL hundreds of militant posters were created. Designed by Cuban artist Alfredo G. Rostgaard, two of them participated in the attempt to reformulate the image of the faceless crowd. Both posters represent guerrillas and are indebted to the motif of the faceless crowd as an army. But while the 1971 poster<sup>\*</sup> relies on the arc of a rainbow to infuse this canonical icon with a pop nuance, the second<sup>\*</sup>, made in 1969, associates the faceless crowd with three masks. From the 1930s, the USSR's graphic artists had pioneered an "universalising" iconography of the masses that emphasised the ethnic heterogeneity of the proletariat under the guidance of a Leviathan-like Stalin<sup>\*\*</sup>. In line with the political agenda of the Tricontinental, Alfredo G. Rostgaard also aimed to materialise a multi-ethnic population, but his three figures are presented like masks offered to a guerrilla whose visage is a blank silhouette—one of the most common visual tropes for portraying a faceless crowd.

4) *Performing the faceless crowd*. At the end of the 1960s, the iconography of the faceless crowd witnessed a further shift. If, until this point, the subject was generally depicted from an exterior vantage point, in the 1970s and 1980s, a growing number of demonstrators began to embody the faceless crowd, and the most common way of "performing" this subject was by actually wearing a mask. The black bloc became a strategy of action in the 1980s. However, it was a group of artists who first organised a march that starkly resembled a "black bloc". This performance took place in Manhattan in 1967, and was the brainchild of the collective Black Mask. Founded by artists/activists influenced by Dadaism and the Situationist International, the group's "black mask" referenced popular depictions of petty thieves and "bandits." In so doing, the group infused the faceless crowd with a captivating criminal aura, and vice versa. The 25 men hoisted banners against Wall Street and enacted an incendiary imaginary that shared nothing with that of the Civil Rights and the workers' movements.



An issue of their magazine showed that their black ski-masks originated as much in Franz Fanon's 1952 book *Black Skin White Mask* as in the black hoods of Fantomâs. Created in the 1900s, this crime fiction criminal exercised a lasting fascination on avant-garde artists throughout his 50-year long saga. The character's masks and protean ability to change face were initially linked, as Dominique Kalifa has demonstrated, to the fears of the "dangerous classes" in turn-of-the-century Paris. However, if the masks of Fantomâs concealed a bourgeois sociopath (which echoed the scripts of crowd psychology), the march of Black Mask choreographed a politicised faceless crowd that was incommensurable with "the system," and defied its taboos surrounding the visual rhetoric of rallies and democratic representation.

A further example of protesters enacting a faceless crowd can be found in the 1977 movement in Italy. The "creative wing" of this movement, particularly the loose grouping of pranksters and performers that came to be called Metropolitan Indians, often adopted the white facial make-up of mime artists. During their first press conference, one of them donned a white mask and refused to show his face in front of the journalists. He identified himself as "Gandalf the Purple" and declared that he was speaking "in a personal capacity, and therefore" (he was quick to add) "in the name of", a list of farcical collectives ("the Red Laughter Cells," "the EAPM, the Elusive and Absent Political Movement", etc.) that existed but were often made of just one person.<sup>41</sup> This post-individualist political statement, which blurred the distinction between person and group, between representative and represented, relied on the mask to create a sort of visual synecdoche. The artefact allowed the "spokesperson" to operate a transition from the one to the many, who were absent but conceptually present via his blank face. This shift also characterised the iconic ski-masks of the Zapatistas in Chiapas, which are part of the imagery of radical democracy and post-individual leadership that emerged alongside the alterglobalist movement. As a propaganda video featuring Marcos clarifies, the Zapatista's ski-masks are constructed as a visual tool to strike a balance between inclusiveness, diversity and unity of intents. Possibly the first masked political leader, what Marcos describes as "his photograph" is actually a mirror directed towards the camera, and the ominous black political masks donned by the people are taken off in order to unveil a smiling humanity—Marcos' only "true" image.

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41 Author's interview with Olivier Turquet (Gandalf the Purple), 23 October 2020.

## Conclusion

Since 2008, the mask has become part of the repertoire of political demonstrations. This article, which is the provisional outcome of an ongoing research project, formulates some hypotheses in order to explore the genealogy of the current widespread utilisation of “political masks.” In particular, this examination has located this manifold symbol within the history of the “faceless crowd”, an image, a political subject and a catalysator of fears, the iconography of which still requires sustained analysis. A tentative attempt has been undertaken to develop a conceptual grid upon which to map the five shifts that this iconography has experienced. First, the faceless crowd emerged in the late nineteenth century in the same cultural context that shaped crowd psychology. Second, the faceless crowd was “captured” in a set of four visual dispositifs in the interwar years. Third, some artists broke the visual taboo that had characterised the iconography of the faceless crowd over the previous 70 years. In the 1960s, the faceless crowd began to be represented as an autonomous political subject. Fourth, the faceless crowd was not only depicted in a positive light but also performed, anticipating the fifth phase of this iconography, which was not examined in this article, and coincides with the re-enactment of the faceless crowd via the political mask, a phenomenon that has marked the past 12 years.

This genealogy suggests conceptual continuities that still need to be more fully developed. However, they are undoubtedly embedded in the history of popular sovereignty, as well as in that of an elitist rhetoric that no longer foregrounds the abashedly classist and racist arguments that typified it before World War II, but which is increasingly influential today when the economy is, to quote Quinn Slobodian, “encased” in a bid to protect it from the “encroachment” of democratic elections and decision making.<sup>42</sup> In a context where politics has become increasingly mediated by digital images, examining the iconography of the faceless crowd provides an innovative perspective on an elusive political subject that accompanies, almost like a moot point, the slow and conflictual emergence of universal suffrage. By concentrating on its current and past visual instantiations, this investigation aims to open new avenues for the understanding of the recent, or perhaps structural, crisis of representative democracy.

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42 Quinn Slobodian, *Globalists: the End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018).

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