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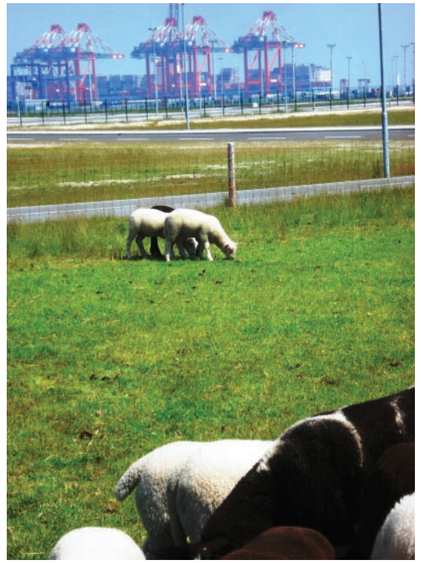
THE CULTURE OF THE PORT CITY

When talking or thinking about culture, and especially local culture, it is often about those obvious symbols, artefacts and behaviours we can perceive directly on the surface: Specialised architecture, regional dishes, traditional festivities, typical dialects etc. But, all this is nothing more than an expression of collectively shared meanings, expectations, norms and values characterising a certain locality or community. In this sense urban culture is much more than just the ensemble of symbols around us; it is an extremely important determinant of our thinking, understanding and decision making. In twofold respect this fact is of high relevance for urban planning: (1) Planning and a certain planning culture are without any doubt operating in the framework of a wider local culture and therefore they can transcend the cultural peculiarity of a given place only in a limited way; (2) planners as well as most of the other actors in urban development and local policy are not only specialised professionals but also residents of a certain place and as such they are affected by that framework and contribute to produce and reproduce local culture. Meaning and relevance of the local culture in this sense will be analysed in the case of European port cities in the following.

1. STRUCTURAL CHANGE AND THE ROLE OF LOCAL CULTURE

Since the 1970s port-cities were forced to reinvent themselves because the typical development path that had once guaranteed wealth and prestige appeared to be leading to a dead-end. In many cases port operations had ceased, the port itself had been relocated and traditional maritime industries had been lost or reduced to a mere shadow of their former self. Numerous other activities had lost their economic viability, job numbers and tax incomes had decreased dramatically and whole districts had fallen into decline. At the same time port-cities themselves had lost a part of their former significance to the country as a whole, no longer the sole major gateway between the national economy and international markets or the source of economic and marine military power.



1. Modern container ports need no city any longer: Jade-Weser-Port at Wilhelmshaven

Likewise traditional institutional arrangements (specific administrative structures and political powers, location for specialist institutions such as port authorities, harbour police, customs offices and their functions, facilities for developing skills and training in the marine industries), which had previously contributed to building and underpinning the port-cities' specialist niche, had been progressively eroded and made partially redundant; in any case their transformation and modernisation had become essential.

While undergoing these processes, port-cities were seized by a deep sense of uncertainty about their own identity and a loss of collective self-confidence, both of which had grown out of centuries of tradition and local culture. Since there was a lack of clear alternatives to the former specialist maritime industrial structure and the options for further development were extremely unclear, it was difficult to reach an understanding or make a decision as to which elements and areas of local culture and tradition could be relied upon to help build a new future and which would be obstructive to future development. However, the crisis of the 1980s and 1990s exposed a fundamental reality which had not previously been recognised: the close linkage existing between the various institutions, local economic and social structures and local cultures. These elements mutually support and reinforce one another in a way that leads to, not only the typical specialisation of the port-city, but they also produce a highly stable and durable development path. In this regard the characteristically stable development of most port-cities over the centuries is not simply a function of economic potential and appropriate institutional arrangements, but in historic reality the special character of the port-city is based on the coherence of its economic and institutional structures and the particular local ensemble of "culture, informal rules and history" (Hall/Soskice 2001:12/13).

"Local culture" in this sense represents the ensemble of common practices, attitudes, symbols and the use of language and meanings, which express and collectively reproduce shared expectations, norms and conventions. Hence local culture covers a wide range of material artefacts – such as, for instance, typical arts, objects, buildings or clothing – as well as collective values and shared basic assumptions, which are reflected in typical daily routines, particular customs or manners (Schein 1984, 1992:16ff; Kluckhohn/Strodtbeck 1961). In this way, local culture works as a steering and coordinating mechanism which forms a commonly accepted and locally defined framework for decision-making and shapes the actions of both individual and collective players. Being embedded in this framework means that

- a sense of affiliation is established and leads to reciprocal trust and reliability,
- cooperation can build on shared orientations and conventions, and
- individual decisions on economically or politically relevant alternatives are generally taken in a collectively accepted framework.

To be really effective, such a steering and co-ordinating mechanism must make a clear distinction between inclusion and exclusion. This explains why at the same time local culture is also a major distinction to anything "outside" or "non-affiliated". The particular character of local culture therefore is also the basis and the expression of a particular collective identification and local identity.

From the 1970s this pattern no longer reproduced itself. As it became less possible to influence economic decisions locally, local institutions lost their drive and regulatory efficiency and an increasing number of local elites identified more with a global culture rather than with the framework of local rules and norms. At exactly the same rate, the former coherence and stability of the traditional development path also disappeared. A change of direction, or at least a serious deviation from the traditional pattern of development, not only became possible but proved to be inevitable because the social and economic costs of maintaining coherence and continuity would far exceed the anticipated benefits (North 2002).

For this reason port-cities across the western world sought to diversify their economic structure. Depending on their individual local circumstances, modern service industries, such as culture, leisure, history or creative industries, special consumer attractions for cruise and ferry passengers or other tourists and temporary city-users, institutions for maritime education or marine sciences, were developed and in many port-cities innovative structures for material production (e.g. offshore or windpower technologies) as well as related facilities for information, research and development emerged – all of which in various ways perpetuated former structures and traditions.

During this process of reinvention the stabilizing and homogenising function of the framework of locally shared norms and conventions was to a certain extent replaced by a regime of difference, in which the distinct cultural codes of different social milieus and classes seemed increasingly to diverge and lose their former common point of convergence. As a result, since local culture partially reproduces global trends while also promoting the adaptation to those trends, its effects are doubly contradictory: Firstly, the traditional elements of local culture and identity work as a conservative force for permanence, supporting the location's resistance to change and protecting its specialisation and traditional character against those global and unifying forces of acculturation. But, at the same time the local culture undergoes a process of self-change while undergoing modernisation and diversification, acting as a carrier of future-orientated trends. Secondly, culture and identity are not only a creative force affecting social and economic development; at the same time they are a socially created force, which can itself be shaped, modified and modernised, taking on an important, and occasionally innovative role in the process.

2. Typical use of symbolic forms: Spinnaker Tower at Portsmouth

So, while local culture, common values and collective identity are increasingly (i) released from the ties that bind them to the existing institutional system and traditional economic forms and are (ii) disaggregated by the loss of the framework that held the various forms of cultural production and reproduction in different social milieus together, local culture becomes an independent dimension of local or regional development processes. And therefore – depending on specific local conditions – local culture can work as a barrier against the thoughtless adaptive modernisation of urban structures while also enhancing its adaptation and a far-reaching change of orientation. In this way the impact of local culture can either lead to an erosion of the specific type of "port-city" or contribute to its renewal and stabilization. Both tendencies are combined in the reality of the revitalisation and reinvention of this particular type of European City and contribute to the mix of patterns we are able to identify empirically in different port cities.

2. LOCAL CULTURE AS FACTOR OF STABILITY AND DRIVER OF TRANSFORMATION

As long as the dominant expectations, norms and conventions remained coherent with the local economic and institutional conditions of seafaring and long-distance trade, they were expressions of a collective identity, which was able to bridge the different interests of class and milieu. Different cultural codes represented the obvious social distinction between the "aristocracy of merchants", dock-workers and shipbuilders, seafarers, port authority officials and administrators, customs bureaucracies etc. or local politicians, and likewise it can be assumed that the essential components of local cultures were dominated by the interests of these local elites and ruling milieus. Nevertheless, those differences were generally embedded in a framework, which was built on a common interest. This overarching framework established the foundations for a common identification – both in the local self-image as well as how this was viewed from outside: The residents of the north German Hanseatic cities are still seen today as "Hanseatics"– even if neither they nor anyone else can precisely define a Hanseatic personality (Wegner 2008); the inhabitants of Liverpool are called "Scousers" after their seafarers dish "and *Scouse* is everything that constitutes a Liverpudlian soul, in no matter which corner of the world its origins lie. *Scouse* is the barely understandable dialect, the merciless sarcastic humour or the deliberate refusal of London's dominance - all widely distributed across the motley population of Liverpool."[1]

Within the context of globalised relations this kind of expression is often seen as a folkloric remnant of local culture, without any influence on current social and economic processes and, moreover, doomed to steadily fade away (Hauck 2008). But this is only one side of the coin: as a direct result of increasing competition between regions and cities, local culture is being rediscovered and put on stage as an indicator of uniqueness in the course of regeneration strategies and image campaigns. Additionally, it is the nature of this framework of shared norms, values, attitudes and meanings to consolidate itself over the centuries in the collective memory. Therefore the framework of local culture remains an active mechanism for driving and co-ordinating the development of this subtype of European City in many different ways. As key characteristics of the particular local culture we can identify four typical qualities, which - in various shapes and forms – play an essential role in the thinking and behaviour of port-cities and of relevant actors found there:

- Port-cities as focus of shared meanings and understanding;
- Port-cities as risk sharing communities: Co-operation, public spirit and maritime consensus;
- Port-cities as hubs of flows: Foreignness as normality;
- Port-cities as centre and periphery: Autonomy and self-confidence.

2.1 PORT-CITIES AS FOCUS OF SHARED MEANINGS AND UNDERSTANDING

In each port-city many material objects and symbols related to seafaring and long-distance trade are to be found in the cityscape and in urban structures. As a visual expression of the emergence and consolidation of a maritime-oriented local culture, they are constantly shaping the face of the port-city and reflecting its specialist functions. In each historic period a typical picture was composed of architectural forms, technical features, circulatory infrastructure, etc. which until the present day can still be recognized and reconstructed. Typically, directly adjacent to the port facilities we find the markets, warehouses, pubs and nightclubs of the port district and also the quarters where dockers and shipyard workers lived; the structure of streets and traffic axes, and in particular the special railway infrastructure dictated by the port function. In many port-cities specialist buildings were developed to optimise the combination of housing with business and storage of certain kinds of goods. In this way spatial and socio-spatial structures are largely shaped by the functional requirements of the port-city. Finally this expression of a particular urban character is reinforced by a large number of different and widespread symbols - from all kinds of representations of ships and other maritime equipment to the architectural forms of storehouses and sheds or the typical skyline of funnels, cranes and masts. All these maritime motifs are used to design and decorate the public and private space – both the inside and the outside of merchants' and ship-owners' mansions or seafarers' houses as well as the gardens and backyards of fishermen or dock-workers.

Just as the Manuelinian Gothic Style at Lisbon provided an impressive symbol of the rise of Portugal as a global seafaring power, many of the cultural expressions of functional specialisation lost their original meaning with contemporary development – possibly due to the erosion of their economic base, or through the disappearance of certain social milieus with their supporting cultural practices or meanings or possibly because of the destruction of the framework of shared expectations, conventions and practices brought about by new cultural influences and dynamics. Indeed, there are many causes which seem to confirm the hypothesis of a more and more disembedded local culture. 'Disembedding' in this sense means that the appearance and characteristics of local culture in the port-city lose their individuality through their dissolution from the social relationships in a given place in the course of globalisation (Giddens 1990). The global convergence of living conditions and lifestyles finds its expression in a steadily growing identity of material and functional elements in all cities as well as in the adaptation of social relations, communication and cultural practices. In this way far distant townscapes and living areas develop a similar appearance.

This kind of adaptation is mainly brought about by the middle classes whose lifestyle and affections currently derive more from a global than a local and traditional cultural framework. At least, in those parts of towns and regions where their lifestyle and attitudes are dominant, international uniformity replaces traditional independent identity, locally shared conventions, language, norms, etc.; in short: replaces local culture. But, since these urban middle classes always form certain, mainly well-educated milieus, the worldwide emergence of a global culture results not only in local culture being disembedded, but also leads to its disintegration (for the connection between social integration and cultural differentiation; see Müller/Dröge 2005: 79ff). Affiliation to or identification with, a "global" kind of culture leads to increasing social distinction and thus to a steady expansion in the distance between the normally deployed and accepted cultural codes of differently "globalised" and "modernised" milieus (Robertson 1995; Featherstone/Lash 1995).

Both of these processes – disembedding and heterogenisation – result in a paradoxical situation: on the one hand, many of those images, symbols or material objects which produce and reproduce the sense and spirit of a particular place, and which are decoded as an expression of particularity and common identity, are continuously present in the urban form. On the other hand, the same expressions lose their original meaning in this process of disembedding of the local culture; thus becoming a matter of reinterpretation and a new attribution of sense. The typical outlines of sheds and warehouses for example once symbolized the exuberant wealth of manifold goods, but also the hard physical work needed to handle those goods; these days they mainly represent a particular look-and-feel-quality associated with the use of all kinds of consumer offers. Nevertheless, all these objects, artefacts, symbols and signs demonstrate by their very survival and adaptability to new uses a certain durability of local culture - even when it is disentangled from its social and economic base.

3. New meaning for a traditional symbol: The iron gate of the former seafarers home at Liverpool at the entrance of the shopping mall "Liverpool One"

For port-cities, as for many other towns, growing cultural plurality and "internationality" means the emergence of an extending potential of local culture production, which appears critical or at least indifferent or reserved to specific local, social and economic relationships. In particular, during periods of far-reaching upheaval, when perceptions of deprivation and pressure dominate, critical or even provocative interventions can initiate new discourse about potential future perspectives and reasonable options for development. In many port-cities participants in the local cultural scene generate such innovative initiatives, for example, young artists find new work opportunities in old buildings or use former port facilities for their individual productive output. Occupying and redefining traditional places, old symbols and their meanings – such as the young artists who set up a viable centre for contemporary art, architecture and urban planning at the former Lenin-shipyard in Gdansk – they provoke disputes about traditional meanings and conventional attitudes related to the history of the place, which in other social groups or milieus are unquestioned. While, for instance, the history of the Solidarnosc-movement is celebrated in Gdansk by an impressive exhibition entitled "Road to Freedom", the young artists at the Lenin-shipyard put their newly-acquired freedom to use in a variety of productions that tackle the sometimes mythical transfiguration of the more recent history of the location and question the societal treatment of those ideals which guided the pathways to freedom in the early 80s.

But the case of the former Lenin-shipyard in Gdansk also demonstrates, as with many other examples, the coexistence of provocation and uncertainty on the one hand and a very careful and affirmative handling of symbols and artefacts which still convey traditional meanings on the other. In every port-city we can find the inevitable port or maritime museum, historic workshops, maritime heritage trails, shipyards

open to the public, etc. continuing old traditions, for example by maintaining traditional working techniques and crafts. Most of these institutions have been set up by and operate with the involvement of former employees of the maritime industries and thus contribute to a certain reconciliation between modern developments and the considerable number of losers of structural change.[2] Nonetheless, by their explicit reference to the traditional elements of local culture in contemporary architecture – as in the example of the Euskalduna-Concert Hall and Congress Centre in Bilbao, whose materials and shape are a reminder of one of the largest shipyards in the world which was previously located on the same site – this practice is an expression of respect and appreciation for services once rendered and may help to reduce the depression caused by deprivation and uncertainty.

As well as contributing to the collective management of deprivation and decay and helping to stabilise social identities, local culture plays an important role in contributing to processes of place-making and image-building, constituting a prominent part of post-fordist renewal strategies in port-cities as it does in other types of city. Maritime artefacts and ambience help to add a certain character and 'personality' to new forms of consumption, tourism and leisure opportunities; in this way such references to maritime history, tradition and culture, as well as their re-use and redefinition, always constitute a major element in modernisation processes.

Many examples refer to the fact that the process of place-making (i.e. of constructing a place with a typical shape, offering the opportunity for identification and a typical quality of experience) as well as processes of image-building (i.e. of the construction, exposure, branding and commercialisation of the particularity of the location) are dependent on the appropriation of the local culture (Bürkner 2005, Jivèn/Larkham 2003, Richardson/Jensen 2003).

The most obvious example of the inherent ambivalence of this connection is to be seen in the historic City of Venice, which has very successfully presented itself as a city on show since the decline of its political and economic power in the 18th century. Venice as a city on show means on the one hand having the chance

4. Small shipyard preserving old crafts and techniques at Malaga

5. Waterfront regeneration for the knowledge society: National library at Kopenhagen

6. Traditional urban infrastructures in use for postmodern events: Arsenale at Venice

7. New mixture of postindustrial functions at Port Vell, Barcelona

to experience a rich and thoroughly maritime culture, while at the same time being able to experience elements of its remarkable cultural heritage which remain hardly visible behind the giant advertisements of global brands. It is nevertheless possible that the mere existence of these symbols of an unspecified global culture is decoded by many visitors as proof of the value and significance of the surrounding local culture.

In the same way that Venice presents itself as a homogeneous urban ensemble, so, in most other port-cities, many bigger or smaller development projects represent current processes of modernisation, reflecting both the durability of local culture as well as its changes. Huge projects like Darling Harbour in Sydney, the London or Dublin Docklands, the Port Vell in Barcelona or the Porto Antico in Genoa, the Overseas-City in Bremen or the Hafen-City in Hamburg are producing a new sense of place on the site of the city's former economic base where its identity was coined. Establishing a new economic base in these places, adapted to the globalised information and knowledge society, all of these numerous revitalisation projects, are primarily symbols of modernity and future orientation. But, polarisation and a typical quality of experience and ambience is given to the emerging mix of marinas, office buildings, lofts and high quality housing estates, shopping malls, multiplex-cinemas, food-courts, congress-centres, museums, aquariums etc. only through the use of local and maritime symbols. Finally, not even Bilbao, where the 'Guggenheim-effect' is seen as an impulse for a radical change of direction in local development and as the starting point for a totally new city identity, does without a local maritime museum, which, with its silhouette of old shipyard facilities, is integrated into the new inner urban development axis.

So, regardless of the development of new culture, knowledge or leisure businesses, of service- or goods-production, local culture may serve as inspiration and provocative incentive for innovation, as a moderator of social stabilisation, as a façade, potential or resource for place-making and image-building. This means firstly that local culture is reproducing itself or is being reproduced, as these processes take place and secondly, that the diversification of economic structures, far from taking a discretionary form, is to a certain extent bound to the individual local culture.

2.2 PORT-CITIES AS RISK SHARING COMMUNITIES: COOPERATION, PUBLIC SPIRIT AND MARITIME CONSENSUS

Historically, seafaring and long-distance trade were always characterised by extraordinary risk and uncertainty for humans and materials, for investment, for the physical existence and social status of the people involved. The consequences of risk materialising – potential loss of cargo and ships, depreciation through the volatility of markets or political intervention, illness or even death or social deprivation – were concentrated in port-cities as much as the potential for profit. None of these uncertainties were ever completely controllable, but over the centuries manifold strategies were developed in port-cities to provide a rational and calculable way of handling the highly speculative character of overseas trade and seafaring. The objectives of these strategies were (and still are) on the one hand the maintenance and optimisation of the ability to take action in the face of uncertainty and on the other hand the reduction of risk and the minimisation of costs for risk-avoidance.

It is one of the fundamental elements in the stock of collective experiences in port-cities that strategies to reduce uncertainty, for example by avoiding travel over the risky winter months or by political coverage of trading privileges, and strategies for the rational management of inevitable risk, for example, by insurance or by distributing risk among a number of different parties, need collective action. Therefore numerous forms of risk-sharing and collective risk assurance were developed and this tradition has led to the formation of a common base of values which reveal a pronounced spirit of co-operation and a calculated willingness to take risk.

The establishment of the Hanseatic League with its regionally distributed association of merchants and towns can be seen as such a mechanism for risk-sharing. Within and among the towns involved the mechanisms for the regulation and coordination of behaviour were, in addition to hierarchical power and market-oriented competition, characterised by a strong element of cooperation. Merchants and towns formed an extraordinarily modern, flexible network which over centuries was able to play a powerful political role in Europe. Simultaneously, mutual relationships among relevant actors constantly fluctuated and permanently changed from cooperation to competition and vice versa and this is the reason why the towns involved never allowed the Hanseatic League to establish itself as a durable or statutory political institution (Picchierri 2000).

As for the need to reduce risk by cooperation and collective behaviour, it was not by chance that modern forms of banking and insurance were in part invented and to a substantial degree developed in port-cities (Evers/Nowotny 1987). For example, the potential for innovation inherent in the intense interplay of trade and seafaring, local institutional arrangements and cultural practices is evident in the development of the banking system in 17th century Amsterdam, which by operating rapidly and efficiently, thus contributed to the success of the Netherlands as a seafaring and trading power (Girouard 1987:158 f).

Despite a prevailing culture of strong competition in business and the use of hierarchical power, the management of huge economic and social risk led in due course to a culture of cooperation in the interior structures of port-cities which was also reflected in the number of different solidary forms of joint risk-sharing. A typical expression of this culture of cooperation is for instance the annual "Schaffermahlzeit" in Bremen, originally devoted to helping ship-owners and merchants care for sailors and their families. Before the ships set sail again after the winter break, more than 300 participants gather for a farewell dinner, for which both the menu and rules have remained unchanged since 1545. During the event the pension register was (and is still today) completed by ship-owners and merchants.

There are many other examples of this kind of 'culture of cooperation' in port-cities, one that is deeply-rooted in collective risk management and mutual dependencies. To this day this specific element of local culture finds expression in various forms of political, economic and civil institution. Traditional institutions like the "Schaffermahlzeit" in Bremen - or the "Sposalizio col Mare", which every year celebrates and renews the symbolic marriage between the Venetian Republic and the sea[3] - still play an important role in building a sense of confidence among elites in the port-city and in its communications with key elements of the outside world. In this way, these institutions not only symbolise the former ruling maritime consensus and its underlying values, but also bring about its gradual reproduction in many contemporary forms - i.e. of civil engagement, sponsorship and patronage. This is especially true of decision-making and economic and political developments, but both create a strong and lasting incentive for self-identification among large parts of the resident population. For this reason the maritime consensus is deeply embedded in local culture and works as a mechanism for establishing a political direction which implements and reproduces a certain commonality of interests.

This becomes even more important with the decline of industry in the maritime sector and the intense efforts that have taken place to rebuild productive capacity, which have led to a reinforcement and continuation in the differentiation of interests, orientations and preferences inside port-cities. Typical examples of this were the confrontations that took place between those in favour of maintaining existing port functions (the 'working port') and those advocating large renewal projects aimed at establishing a new "living port"[4]. 'Working port' and 'living port' not only represent different functional, architectural and spatial concepts, they also stand for different socio-economic coalitions of interests and urban regimes struggling for dominance in local and regional development (Stoker 1995; Stone 1993). Today these conflicts have been resolved virtually everywhere and the protagonists of the emerging new mix of post-industrial functions, such as real estate business, tourist and leisure industry, have evolved into the renewed maritime consensus.

A particularly telling example of the effectiveness of this typical mix of a readiness to embrace risk and cooperative risk management is the radical change of direction undertaken very successfully by the City of Bilbao during the 1990s and early 2000s - transforming an old industrial town into a service and cultural location of international character. The delivery of the Guggenheim Museum as a starting point for regeneration of the city turned out to be a highly risky and speculative investment in the continuation and expansion of global arts, culture and tourism markets and could only be achieved by the collaboration of a network of highly confident local players, external professional experts from the global arts market (The Guggenheim Foundation) and city-planners and architects with a major international reputation (Gehry, Calatrava, Foster) (Zulaika 2000:265). While the Guggenheim Foundation wished through its involvement in Bilbao to accelerate its transformation from a traditional cultural foundation to the role of global player in arts markets, or to a 'Disney world of high culture', representatives of the City of Bilbao described its risky change of direction,

not as an exhausting effort, but as "buying a new identity". In this sense, the entrance of Bilbao into the global casino of arts and cultural markets could just as well have been headed up by the traditional slogan of the Hanseatic merchants of Bremen: "Buten un binnen - wagen un winnen" (engl.: Outside and inside – venturing and winning).

There are many prominent examples which suggest that taking recourse to traditional elements of local culture eases the process of overcoming internal controversies and helps to mobilise the energy needed to respond to the challenges of structural change. Therefore, in periods of high uncertainty and reduced capacity to act, local culture – in particular common values, such as a sense of public spirit, a culture of cooperation, and a willingness to take risks arising from the historical need to manage multiple risks - prove to be an important resource for coping with the crisis. Even where the societal consensus, previously completely focused on the functioning of the port, now integrates new functions with their social representatives, it has retained its character of steering mechanism. As such, the renewed maritime consensus contributes to the ability of the port-city to retain control over its actions and to the preservation of a maritime direction to development even in a time of crisis.

2.3 PORT-CITIES AS HUBS OF FLOWS: FOREIGNNESS AS NORMALITY

As long as sea transport remained the fastest, and at times the only, way to convey heavy loads over great distances, its outstanding function as the hub of different flows was a major characteristic of the port-city. This was the place where all kinds of flows - goods, capital, information, people or cultural influences - met together and specific skills and competences were developed as a result of the process of dealing with these

8. Marseille presented itself as the centrepoint of Mediterranean cultures when it was European Cultural Capital in 2013

flows. Functions such as the appraisal and quality assessment of exotic goods, the specialist expertise of port-doctors or quarantine offices, and a variety of more trivial offers in the port near red-light districts, all dealt with diversity as a normal part of everyday business in the port. Perceived elsewhere as an exception, a permanent process of arriving and departing and the constant presence of many different foreigners was a normal feature of the port-city, influencing urban life and the attitudes of residents. The capacity for cultural exchange and profitable dealings with foreigners and their culture were vital ingredients to securing successful seafaring and long-distance trade as well as the successful functioning of the port as the hub of flows.

In foreign relations this was reflected in the creation of a certain 'exile-ability', i.e. the qualification for 'leaving' and 'functioning' home- and interest-related, even when far from home and working for long periods of time in unfamiliar conditions (Sloterdijk 2000).

A typical example of this practice was the establishment of Hanseatic Offices in medieval times as the home-like base of merchants' communities in their principal destinations

or the common practice among merchants of sending their sons for apprenticeship to the offices of other merchants in foreign countries. Combined with collective strategies for risk management, these arrangements also contributed to creating cosmopolitan attitudes and at the same time extensive connection with the place of origin and its functionality. One of the most important consequences of this tradition was the rather slow and hesitant development of universities in later decades in many of these towns. Just like travelling or simply confronting foreign cultures, higher education was judged purely on the basis of its usefulness to the port and its trade functions, and for this reason in many port-cities only specialist higher education institutions such as schools for seafaring and other 'useful' sciences like economics or law had been set up prior to the 20th century.

In inverse proportion to the extent of foreign relations in port-cities the constant processes of arriving and departing also characterized internal social and cultural practices with the result that dealing with foreigners and foreignness became an everyday norm. Contact with diverse groups of temporary city users as well as the fact that a considerable proportion of the resident population itself was also 'at home' on a temporary basis only shaped the functions of the town and its social life. Many of the references to a port and sailing romanticism, along with frequently idealised descriptions of tolerance and open-mindedness, convey an impression of the intense social and cultural linkages within the port-city. Whether it is a result of local culture that port-cities are more open-minded and tolerant in their dealings with foreigners, minorities or subcultures than towns elsewhere needs to be examined empirically in more detail. But it can be assumed that the ability to understand 'strangeness' as a normal part of everyday life and to transform this understanding into practical public and private relations is cultivated more strongly in those places where dealing with diversity is the fundamental basis of business and an important source of income.

Meanwhile, however, port-cities have lost the exclusiveness of their function as universal hubs and this means that in part they have also lost the economic basis for pragmatism in dealing with diversity and foreignness. During the period of industrialisation port-cities had already been forced into growing competition by the railway, trucks and airplanes. Later on, the enormous flexibility and acceleration of communications contributed to the decoupling of worldwide flows of goods, capital, people, information. As a result, these flows no longer met in the port-city or intermingled as a matter of course. Compared with their former unique position, port-cities are now in stiff competition with every other (big) city. That which throughout history was true for port-cities only has now become a general principle: the needs and interests of the resident population cannot be the only self-evident and undisputed norm for the shaping of local circumstances. For economic prosperity, each of the bigger cities now has to adapt the range and quality of infrastructure, services and other offers to an increasing number of temporary users and their interests instead (Martinotti 1996).

So, those who in former times had been pilgrims, merchants, immigrants, emigrants, soldiers or seafarers in port-cities, are now festival- and culture-goers, commuters, migrants, business-people, students, Ryan Air customers, football fans, congress-attenders and science nomads in every town. And, as a result, inland cities like Brussels, Paris or Warsaw no longer lag behind port-cities like Antwerp, Marseilles or Gdansk in the heterogeneity and dynamics of all kinds of residents and user

groups. But in inland places differences and diversity in people are still not yet, as they are in port-cities, perceivable as part of a background of common and shared experiences. The local culture of the port-city has traditionally been a 'globalised' culture for centuries and it includes a widespread familiarity with the change of roles and perspectives. Therefore it is a typical feature of the local culture of port-cities to facilitate the integration of immigrants and foreigners and to enable them to contribute to the creation of a culture that is typical of the place.

Contrary to the indifferent and 'blasé attitude' of the city-dweller when confronted by cultural and social diversity, which was already characterised by Georg Simmel as constituting the urban way of life in recent times (Simmel 1903), the port-city still offers a more effective opportunity for identification and integration. This might be the reason why the notorious city of Marseilles was spared the youth riots of 2005 when cars burned in the suburbs of Strasbourg, Paris and Lyon. There is a suspicion that, despite social deficits, the traditions of the port-city still cause a stronger attachment to the town than is the case elsewhere - even among those groups of teenagers with few opportunities or perspective on life. "Marseilles does no better than other towns with deprived workers' residential areas. But I feel a very strong identity and a mixed culture. What is most important is undoubtedly a certain sense of belonging" (Le Monde 1-14-2006; see also: Parodi 2002).

Moreover, it would seem as though port-cities learnt very quickly to make use of the particular combination of diversity and strong self-identification which proved to be an important prerequisite for successful economic development in response to the depression arising from this structural crisis and in dealing with the developing global culture: Liverpool succeeded in demonstrating its outstanding role for the development of pop music and becoming an internationally recognized trademark when it was European Capital of Culture in 2008. This could only be accomplished on the back of a specific local culture. Barcelona, Bilbao or Genoa present themselves as contemporary centres for global culture-, congress- and city tourism; in Hamburg, the district of St. Pauli has developed into an internationally recognised thriving location for entertainment and culture, by publicising both its former image of a notorious red-light district while at the same time offering leisure and cultural attractions for every social milieu and entertainment need.

9. Regeneration through culture: Liverpool as European Cultural Capital in 2008

Indeed, since the 1980s, almost all European port-cities have tried to enhance their attractiveness to new target groups and transient visitors by linking into experiences, practices and traditions which are embedded in the local culture. Even if the specific form in which this local culture is expressed appears in many cases as a nostalgic and romantic symbol of a distant past (such as for instance in shanty choirs or pirate festivals), often replaced by modern forms of cultural activity, port-cities for the main part succeed in making use of their traditional ability to deal with diversity and with transient visitors. In such cases local culture serves as a resource for new or modernized services and economically successful regeneration.

2.4 PORT-CITIES AS CENTRE AND PERIPHERY: AUTONOMY AND SELF-CONFIDENCE

Another fundamental reason that contributed to the local culture of the port-city was frequently one of self-confident independence relating to the long-standing existential significance of the sea-port in relation to the national state. The sea-port's function as the most significant gateway between the national market and the outside world was assured by coordinating and combining a variety of competences, skills and capacities and this was the fundamental purpose of the port-city. So, throughout history, the primary purpose and reason for existence of the port-city was always to deliver, maintain and guarantee accessibility, i.e. a physical connection to and communication with distant partners.

10. The Roland- Statue, the symbol for republican spirit and freedom in the market square of Bremen

So, as soon as globalisation set in, that which had been a reality for port-cities for centuries became a reality for other cities too: physical accessibility and informational connectivity were determining variables for the quality and pace of local development (Fishman 1991). People in port-cities had always been aware of this correlation and thus a major part of their local identity was based on the existential significance of this safeguarding of accessibility and connectivity. All of the competences and capacities required for this – highly differentiated functional systems like construction in water and hydraulic engineering, maintaining the safety and security of shipping, ship-building, the careful handling of various kinds of goods and transport technologies right up to the sovereign regulation of tax and customs affairs or the resolution of the complex legal and contractual problems of international sea trade – had been assembled in the port-city and only in such places was it possible to organise the fluent interplay of all these functions and responsibilities.

Over the centuries awareness of the particular significance of the port and the particular function of the port-*city* as a 'centre of competence' for the smooth operation of the port was one of the essential elements of the identity of the port-city. Their actual function allowed many port-cities to insist forcibly - and successfully - on relative autonomy and maintain their right to self-regulate internal and even foreign affairs. As long as the interplay of local culture, economy and institutional structures operated satisfactorily and ensured material prosperity and social welfare, there was a good reason for particular self-reliance and self-confidence. Most obvious expressions of this are those titles given to the formerly independent Mediterranean town republics of Venice ("La Sereni¬ssi¬ma", abbreviated from the official state name „La Serenissima Repubblica di San Marco") and Genoa ("La Superba") which are still in use today. And it is an expression of a very similar attitude that the formal titles of both the German town republics - the "Free Hanseatic City of Bremen and the "Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg" - are a reminder of their continuing special status in the national context. An analogous status was claimed for example by the formerly exceptionally wealthy Hanseatic City of Gdansk over long periods in its history.

In current times the embeddedness of the port-city within its respective national multi-level systems of politics and administration and their prevailing institutional arrangements reflects only by way of exception this historic particularity. Nevertheless it was often in these places that a certain mixture of pronounced self-confidence, a republican attitude and 'free spirit' developed and flourished. And this mix was, and still is, recognised by others as well as in self-perception, as an outstanding element of the specific local culture of the port-city, which still manifests its impact today: Although, for instance, the active competition between London and Liverpool in the 19th century was finally determined long ago, the dominance of the capital has never been totally accepted and is still caricatured in Liverpool to this day.

The relationship between Liverpool and London refers to another, and in many cases typical, condition for the development of big European port-cities. Since the rise of the nation-state, in the large territorial countries of Europe, port-cities have been and still remain both centre and periphery at the same time. While they perform a central function as hub of different flows, they represent in the framework of the national state the specialist edge, obliged to hold its ground against the predominant claims of the nation-state, principally embodied in 'the capital'. The difference often was, and is true today, that the inland capital as a rule covered a larger number of different political, administrative and productive functions and thus showed a more diversified economic structure and better conditions for development. Therefore port-cities, such as Antwerp, Barcelona, Gdansk, Hamburg, Liverpool, Marseilles are sometimes described as 'second city' whose particular 'spirit loci' emerges 'inter alia' as a result of its quality as national periphery and counter-pole to the capital (for the concept of the Second City see Umbach 2005).

Acting in self-confident independence did not only correspond to the attitudes of local elites, it is also led back to the specific and class-encompassing quality of the place. The free 'spirit of an old, and for a long time independent and self-reliant Hanseatic town' (Röhl 2004) is, for example, seen as a reason for the fact, that the Polish Solidarnosc-Movement had her origins in Gdansk only: "Here these movements of the Solidarnosc have their roots - not in Szezcin, Wroclaw or Warsaw. There is a spirit of liberty in Gdansk which expresses itself in a traditional deep distrust to those who rule and this spirit of liberty has been alive in Gdansk for many centuries" (Adamowicz, in: Röhl 2004).

Even today we can find numerous pieces of evidence for the cultural particularity of the Second City and for its antagonistic relationship to the national framework: In this way, Bilbao in Spain for example, appears - surely as a result of its traditional 'internationality' as an important port and trading centre - as the

11. Exhibiton"Roads to Freedom" celebrating the history of the Solidarnosc at Gdansk

12. Leisure and touristic attractions at the Porto Antico at Genoa

'least Basque town of the Basque region', only about 8% of the population speaking Basque as opposed to about 40% in other Basque cities (Zulaika 2000:263). At the same time, however, the Athletic Bilbao sports club employs a unique counter-model to usual practice in a globalised soccer market by appointing native Basque players exclusively. A very special self-consciousness of place is further indicated by the fact, that Bilbao set itself up as 'second city' when, during a very difficult period of structural decline, it declared its intention to "challenge the country" (Zulaika 2000:267) with its renewal strategy.

Since the 1980s, many port-cities have consistently sought to host special events, such as the Olympics, world exhibitions or be declared European Capital of Culture, although port-cities had previously been rather remote from such events, concentrating on their everyday business. But recently they have understood that the expected benefits of image- and branding campaigns were primarily an opportunity to mobilise new resources to enhance their own capacity to act and for an autonomous strategy of modernization and structural change. There are many examples which demonstrate that one of these resources is the concentration of the energies of relevant protagonists and residents on a common purpose - such as presenting themselves to the world as a suitable host for the Olympic Games or as an attractive European Capital of Culture. And it can be shown that such major efforts can be achieved by (re)activating the local culture of co-operation and public spirit. Another extremely important resource for the Second City in times of crisis is financial support from multiple donors, which can be mobilised and concentrated more easily in the framework of a 'festivalisation' strategy. By raising financial support from national government, foundations and private investors or by tapping into European programmes, the longer-term modernisation objectives can be advanced at the same time as short-term aims. In this way port-cities regain a certain degree of action and control and are able to implement their own renewal strategies in relative independence from single sponsors and supporters. A particularly clear-cut example of this procedure, which is based on the simultaneous use and enhancement of relative independence and the capacity to control its own activities, is the development of Genoa. The 'Genoa model'symbolises the strategic grouping of regional, national and international resources on sequential occasions (Football World Cup 1990, Columbus Year 1992, G8-Summit in 2001, European Culture Capital 2004), all capable of being managed and organised on the spot and by local authorities. Just as in the case of port-business the combination of local management and supra-regional, national or international significance and attractiveness allows the port-city to use such events to carry out self-defined urban development strategies, even in opposition to outside authorities.

So, as long as economic success and outstanding national significance guaranteed a certain degree of relative independence as well as the ability for action to be taken locally, republican attitudes and self-confident attempts to achieve relative political autonomy could arise as a key element of local culture across all social milieus. With the decline of port functions, the political and economic basis of this mechanism was eroded, but this key element of local culture survives as an independent orientation for decisions and strategies directly affecting the reinvention of the port-city. There are many examples to demonstrate that the coping strategies of port-cities in times of crisis are aimed at maintaining this key element of their local culture in a modernised form, which at the same time can be successfully deployed as a resource for substantial regeneration.

3. THE PORT-CITY WITHOUT A PORT

Through globalisation trends and an irreversible separation of flows, the comparative advantage of the specialist port-city was largely lost and therefore for the first time in history port-cities started to take a divergent path: Barcelona, Bilbao, or Bremen, as for London, Liverpool or Lisbon and many others, either completely lost their port function or their 'working port' was moved to a distant location and lost its once dominant significance.

Instead of continuing their traditional development path of specialization, all of these places now seek to carry out a future-oriented modernisation of their economic and institutional structures. But, despite every effort to diversify, the maritime character of the port-city not only survives, it is actually essential, reinforced and manifested in many ways. Port-cities are renewing themselves so to speak as port-cities without a port. The rediscovery, restoration, redefinition and re-exploitation of both material and symbolic forms and expressions of local culture and their contribution to the 'aestheticisation' of urban structures, to place-making and image-building largely reflects those collective norms and orientations, which formerly emerged from the specific tensions of risk and safety (section 2.2), affiliation and a sense of 'the other' (section 2.3) as well as of centre and periphery (section 2.4).

Hence, the sustainability of local culture proves itself as the particular dimension of local development, both limiting deviation from the path, as well as carrying forward path-dependency during the process of reinvention of the port-city. Nevertheless, the extent to which path deviation or even a change of direction gains acceptance is primarily determined by the degree to which local culture and identity themselves dissolve into different 'globalised' parts and subcultures. So, in no way is local culture and identity diluted or removed by globalisation processes, on the contrary it proves to be the strongest force for stability and configuration in the interplay of local economic and social structures, institutional arrangements and culture. Even when the economy and institutions lose their functions, local culture takes over as a steering mechanism and a reservoir for important resources that make a considerable contribution to defining the direction of local development.

So, the renewal of the port-city does not in any way follow a purely adaptive logic, which makes the impact of global dynamics the crucial determining factor in local development. Instead, there are many examples which demonstrate that the development of port-cities over recent decades is an expression of a certain autonomy and individuality, which, in the process of renewal and reinvention, also reproduces typical differences with inland town as well as the typical commonalities of port-cities.

1. http://www.welt.de/reise/article1516954/Eine_Stadt_im_Ohr_der_ganzen_Welt.html (last access 9.6.09)
2. A typical example is the extraordinarily profound and informative work of Southampton City Council's Oral History Unit; http://www.newepocexhibition.org/presentacion.php?cod=54 (last access 19.5.2009)
3. Formerly combined with a fair attended by merchants from across Europe and culminating in Venice with a banquet dinner for diplomats and foreign representatives.
4. The increasingly complicated relationship between port and city was and remains for a number of years one of the major issues being debated across the maritime world; see for example: "Charter for a sustainable development of port cities"; approved by the General Assembly of the International Association of Cities and Ports, Sydney 2006 (http://www.aivp.org/charte_sydney/charte_en.pdf , last access 9.6.09) or the implementation of a good practice award "ON THE SOCIETAL INTEGRATION OF PORTS" by ESPO; (http://www.espo.be/pages/events.aspx?EventID=88242; European Sea Ports Organisation; last access 9.6.09)

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