The Role of Local Culture in the Transformation of the Port-City

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During the course of transformation of social and economic structures the typical port-city in the western, industrialized world underwent serious changes or deviations of its traditional development path. Nevertheless the changing patterns of local structures and the modernisation of the local institutional system reflect essential elements and expressions of a typical local culture. In this process the specific local culture of the port-city turns out to be a control mechanism as well as an efficient resource extrapolating the individual logic of the place. Consequently, the re-invention of the port-city does not only express a simple logic of adaptation to global dynamics. Instead, the re-invention of the port-city appears as an expression of a certain autonomy and 'individuality' which reproduces common characteristics of the port-cities as well as their difference to the territorial, inland towns.

Keywords

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Local culture and local development

Since the 1970s port-cities across the industrialised world were forced to reinvent themselves. The more distinctive the port-city, the more specialised its profile and character acquired from a legacy of centuries of maritime trading, seafaring, shipbuilding and related activities, the greater the difficulty of responding to structural change. During the second half of the 20th century port operations had ceased, the port itself had been relocated and traditional maritime industries had been lost or reduced in many places. 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 were no longer the sole major gateway between the national economy and international markets or the source of marine military power. Likewise institutional arrangements (port authorities, harbour police, customs offices, 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 eroded and made partially redundant; in any case their transformation and modernisation had become essential.

Figure 1. Symbols of decline: Abandonned street at Southampton, decayed ship-yard at Gdansk

While undergoing these processes, port-cities were seized by a feeling of uncertainty about their own identity and a loss of self-confidence. Options for further development were extremely unclear and it was difficult to take decisions. However, the crisis of the 1980s and 1990s exposed a fundamental reality: there is a close linkage between local institutions, local economic and social structures and local culture. These elements mutually support and reinforce one another in a way that leads to the typical specialisation of the port-city and also produce a highly stable development path. In this regard the development of most port-cities over the centuries 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 an 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 as well as collective values and shared basic assumptions, which are reflected in typical daily routines, particular customs or manners (Kluckhohn/Strodtbeck

1961; Schein 1992). In this way, local culture 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.

The following reflections will expose those typical characteristics of local culture which are inseparably tied up with the history and tradition of the port-city in the industrialised western world, and which can be identified in every port-city across Europe. Moreover, the discussion will focus on how and to what extent local culture still contributes to the development and re-invention of the port-city today.

Local culture as factor of stability and driver of transformation

It can be assumed that all the different cultural codes of the "aristocracy of merchants", dock-workers and shipbuilders, seafarers, port authority officials and administrators, customs bureaucracies or local politicians were generally embedded in a framework of common interest to maintain the port-cities' autonomous capacity to act and its maritime functions. This overarching framework established the foundations for a common identification – both in the local self-image as well as in the view from outside: The residents of the north German Hanseatic cities are still today seen as "Hanseatics"– even if neither they nor anyone else can 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 local culture is often seen as a folkloric remnant without any influence on current social and economic processes and, moreover, doomed to steadily fade away. 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 collective identity and memory. Therefore local culture remains an active mechanism for driving, co-ordinating and thus influencing the development of the port-city in many different ways. As key factors for the development of a specific 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 are:

- specialised systems of functions,
- risk communities,
- hubs of flows,
- centre and periphery.

Port-cities as specialised systems of functions: persistence despite diversification

In each port-city many artefacts and symbolic motifs related to seafaring and long-distance trade are to be found in the cityscape and in urban structures. As a visual expression of a maritime-oriented local culture, they are constantly reflecting its specialist functions. In each historic period a typical picture was composed of architectural forms, technical features, traffic infrastructure, etc. which until the present day can still be recognized: "Storehouses were distributed across the entire area of Amsterdam, but for the most part they were concentrated on those artificial islands that were built in the late 16th and early 17th century at the quayside. They were (and to a certain degree remain today) a strange world in miniature, a mixture of warehouses, shipyards, timber storage-yards, tow-rope lanes and sheds for drying and smoking herring" (Girouard 1987:158f).

Figure 2. Maritime symbols: Seafarers' and conquerors' memorial at Lisbon; Shopping mall at Bremen

Just as the Manuelinian Gothic Style provided a unique symbol of the rise of Portugal as a global seafaring power, many of these cultural expressions of functional specialisation lost their original meaning with contemporary development. Indeed, there are many causes which seem to confirm the hypothesis of a more and more disembedded local culture. 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. Far distant townscapes and living areas develop a similar appearance, but the worldwide emergence of a global culture also enhances the disintegration of local culture. Affiliation to or identification with, a "global" culture leads to increasing social distinction and thus to a steady expansion in the distance between the cultural codes of differently "globalised" milieus.

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 spirit of a particular place are continuously present in the urban form. On the other hand, the same expressions lose their original meaning in the 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 quality of

leisure and event associated with the use of all kinds of consumer offers. Nevertheless, all these objects, 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.

This paradoxical simultaneity of persistence and changeability is a typical characteristic of periods of uncertainty and crisis. In particular, during these processes, critical or provocative interventions are needed to initiate new discourse about potential future perspectives and options for development. In many port-cities local artists generate such innovative initiatives. 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, 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 use their individual freedom to 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.[2]

Figure 3. Traditional and modern celebration of the heritage of the Solidarnosc-Movement at Gdansk

When certain parts of local culture are questioned, they may lose their function as guideline and stabiliser of attitudes and practices. But the case of the former Lenin-Shipyard in Gdansk demonstrates the coexistence of provocation on the one hand and an affirmative handling of traditional symbols and meanings on the other. In every port-city we find the inevitable maritime museum, historic workshops, maritime heritage trails, open shipyards, maintaining tradition, old working techniques etc. Many of these institutions contribute to a certain reconciliation between modern developments and the considerable number of losers of structural change.[3] The explicit reference to the traditional elements of local culture - for instance in contemporary architecture as in the example of the Euskalduna-Concert Hall in Bilbao, whose materials and shape are a reminder of the former Euskalduna-Shipyard - is not at least an expression of respect and appreciation for services once rendered and may help to reduce the depression caused by deprivation and uncertainty.

Moreover local culture plays an important role in contributing to processes of place-making and image-building in post-Fordist renewal strategies. Maritime artefacts and

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[2] See the exhibition „Dockwatchers" of the Instytut Sztuki Wyspa at Gdansk in 2005;
http://www.kunstaspekte.de/index.php?tid=12831&action=termin
[3] A typical example of this kind of activity is the profound and informative work of Southampton City Council's Oral History Unit; http://www.newepocexhibition.org/presentacion.php?cod=54

ambience help to add a certain character and 'personality' to new forms of consumption, tourism and leisure opportunities. The individuality of the place becomes a unique selling point and is put on show. Thus the port-city becomes an 'exhibited city', which is presented as a place, where an 'authentical' local culture can be experienced.

Many examples refer to the fact that the process of place-making as well as of image-building depend on the appropriation of the specific local culture. The most obvious example of the inherent ambivalence is 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 to experience a rich maritime culture, while at the same time perceiving elements of its remarkable cultural heritage which remain hardly visible behind the giant advertisements of global brands. But, by many visitors the mere existence of these symbols of an unspecified global culture might be decoded as proof of the value and significance of the surrounding local culture.

Figure 4. Global culture and local culture at Venice

Today, in most other port-cities, bigger or smaller development projects reflect both the durability of local culture as well as its changes. 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. 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 only through the use of maritime symbols. Finally, not even Bilbao, where the 'Guggenheim-effect' is seen as an impulse for a radical change of local development, does without a local maritime museum, which, with its silhouette of old shipyard facilities, is integrated into the new inner urban development axis.

So, the various elements and expressions of local culture and their appropriation have several functions in urban regeneration processes: they may serve as inspiration and provocative incentive for innovation, as a moderator of social stabilisation, as a potential or resource for place-making and image-building. This means firstly that local culture reproduces itself or is being reproduced in the process of renewal and secondly, that the diversification of economic structures is to a certain extent bound to the individual local culture.

Port-cities as risk communities: cooperation, public spirit and maritime consensus

Historically, seafaring and long-distance trade were always characterised by extraordinary risk for humans and materials, for investment, for the physical existence and social status of the people involved. The consequences of risk materialising – 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 manifold strategies were developed in port-cities to provide a rational way of handling the highly speculative character of overseas trade and seafaring. And it is one of the fundamental experiences that strategies to reduce uncertainty and for the rational management of inevitable risk only work collectively, for instance by political coverage of trading privileges, or by distributing risk among a number of different parties.

Obviously, the establishment of the Hanseatic League was 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 efficient network which over centuries played a powerful political role in Europe. Simultaneously, mutual relationships among relevant actors 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).

So, the management of huge economic and social risk led to a culture of cooperation in the interior structures of port-cities which was also reflected in solidary forms of joint risk-sharing. A typical expression of this culture of cooperation is 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.

Traditional institutions like the «Schaffermahlzeit» in Bremen - or the «Sposalizio col Mare», which every year renews the symbolic marriage of the Venetian Republic with the sea - still play an important role in building a sense of confidence among elites in the port-city and in its communications with 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.

The traditional maritime consensus works as a mechanism for establishing and reproducing a certain commonality of interests. This becomes even more evident with the decline of industry and the intense efforts that have taken place to rebuild and diversify productive capacities. During this period nearly all port-cities began to witness deep conflict, which reflected their uncertainty about future options. Typical examples of this were the hard confrontations that took place in many port-cities 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

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[4] The increasingly complicated relationship between port and city was and is 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) or the implementation of a good practice award "On the societal integrations of ports" by ESPO; (http://www.espo.be/pages/events.aspx?EventID=88242)

for different socio-economic coalitions of interests and urban regimes struggling for dominance in local development (Stone 1993). Today these conflicts have been resolved nearly 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.

Figure 5. Working port (Fabrikenhafen at Bremen); living port (Oceanvillage at Southampton)

A particularly telling example of cooperative risk management is the radical change of direction undertaken very successfully by the City of Bilbao. The delivery of the Guggenheim Museum as a starting point for regeneration turned out to be a highly risky and speculative investment in the 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 and city-planners and architects with a major international reputation (Zulaika 2000:265). While the Guggenheim Foundation wished through its involvement in Bilbao to accelerate its transformation from a traditional cultural foundation to a global player in arts markets, representatives of the City of Bilbao described the risky change of direction like a merchant as "buying a new identity". So, 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 – Venture and Win).

There are many evidences for the fact 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 huge challenges. Therefore, in periods of high uncertainty and reduced capacity to act, local culture proves 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 character.

Port-cities as hubs of flows: foreignness as normality

As long as sea transport remained the fastest way to overcome great distances, its 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, ideas and cultural influences - met together and specific skills and competences were developed as a result of dealing with these flows. Functions such as the appraisal and quality assessment of exotic goods, the specialist expertise of port-doctors or quarantine offices, or a variety of more trivial offers in the port near red-light districts, all dealt with diversity as a normal part of

everyday business. 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 a 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.

Figure 6. Old port basin near the former Hanse comptoir at Brugge
(the quarter of the 'Oosterlingen' – the eastern people)

Inside the port-cities dealing with foreignness also became an everyday norm. Contact with diverse groups of temporary city users - pilgrims, soldiers, immigrants and emigrants, business partners, sailors, etc. – as well as the fact that a considerable proportion of the resident population itself was 'at home' on a temporary basis only shaped the functions of the town and its social life. It can be assumed that the experience of 'strangeness' as normal part of everyday life and a pragmatic understanding of diversity was the fundamental basis of business and an important source of income. A report on Amsterdam dated around 1700 provides an example of this kind of pragmatism: "Besides other malpractices at least 50 music houses are tolerated in the city of Amsterdam where slovenly persons of either sex meet and commit their turpitudes. There also is a place .. a tolerated bourse or a public meeting-house for whores and heels, where they meet and initiate their business. As an exculpation for the toleration of these sinful meetings I have heard that, when the East India Fleet comes home, the sailors are so crazy about women, that they would rape the women and daughters of the citizens, if they had not such houses at their disposal" (Carr 1701, cit. from Girouard 1987:164 f).

Meanwhile, 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. But, in the inland places differences and diversity 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 port-cities to facilitate the integration of immigrants and foreigners and to enable them to contribute to the creation of a common

culture. The more effective opportunity for identification and integration in the port-city might be the reason why the notorious city of Marseilles was spared by 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 elsewhere - even among those groups of youngsters with few opportunities. «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).

With regard to the development of the port-city, it becomes evident that cosmopolitan attitudes, social and cultural diversity and a pragmatic and mainly economically motivated form of tolerance are definitely compatible with strong ties to the place of residence as well as with a sense of public spirit and cooperation. It seems 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 of the 1980s/90s and in dealing with the newly 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 notorious red-light district of St. Pauli has developed into a well-known location for entertainment and cultural attractions for every social milieu.

Figure 7. Old granary at Bremen; museum of pop-music 'Rockheim' in an old granary at Trondheim
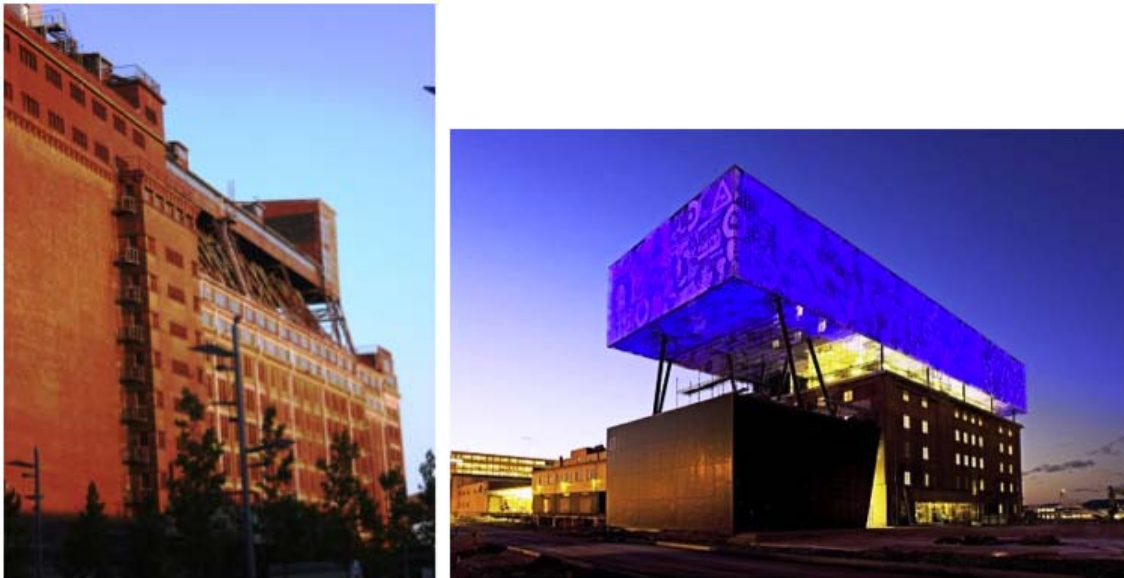
Indeed, since the 1980s, almost all European port-cities have tried to enhance their attractiveness to new target groups and transient visitors by linking into experiences, practices and traditions which are embedded in the local culture. Even if the specific form in which local culture is expressed is 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.

Port-cities as centre and periphery: autonomy and self-confidence

Another fundamental element of the port-city's local culture was the existential significance of the sea-port in relation to the national state. The sea-port's function as the most important gateway between the national market and the outside world was assured by coordinating and combining a variety of competences, skills and capacities. Throughout history, the primary purpose and reason for existence of the port-city was always to deliver, maintain and guarantee accessibility. 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.

Over the centuries awareness of 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. This allowed many port-cities to insist 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 ensured material prosperity and social welfare, self-reliance and self-confidence emerged in many port-cities as an all-encompassing characteristic of the place. Most obvious expressions of this particular self-confidence are those titles given to the formerly independent Mediterranean town republics of Venice ("La Serenissima", abbreviated from the official state name „La Serenissima Repubblica di San Marco"; The Most Noble Republic of St. Marcus) and Genoa ("La Superba"; The Splendid) which are still in use today. And it is an expression of a 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 by the wealthy Hanseatic City of Gdansk over long periods in its history: After its successful rebellion against the Teutonic Order in the 15th century Gdansk was placed under the protection of the Polish crown – but only to procure for itself multiple privileges and far-reaching political independence compared with other Polish towns.

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 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).

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'. Therefore port-cities, such as Antwerp, Barcelona, Gdansk, Hamburg, Liverpool, Marseilles are sometimes systematically described as 'second city' whose particular 'spirit loci' emerges as a result of its quality as national periphery and counter-pole to the capital (Umbach 2005).

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: The Athletic Bilbao sports club, for example, employs a unique counter-model to usual practice in the extremely globalised Spanish soccer league by appointing native Basque players exclusively. And an extraordinary self-consciousness of place is further indicated by the

fact, that Bilbao set itself up as 'second city' when 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 applied for European Capital of Culture, although port-cities had previously been rather remote from such events. But recently they have understood that the expected benefits of image- and branding campaigns were primarily an opportunity to mobilise new resources for an autonomous strategy of modernization and to enhance their own capacity to act. A particularly clear-cut example of this procedure 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 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.

Figure 8. Symbol of autonomy: the Palazzo Ducale when Genoa was European Cultural Capital in 2004; maritime regeneration of the Porto Antico at Genoa

As long as economic success and outstanding national significance guaranteed a certain degree of relative independence the ambivalent status as a 'Second City' was a key element of the local culture of port-cities 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 which 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.

Conclusion: Renewal as an expression of individuality

Through the generalisation of globalisation trends and an irreversible separation of flows, the comparative advantage of the specialist port-city was largely lost. Instead of continuing their traditional development path of specialization, all of the port-cities in the western world 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 in some cases even as port-cities without a port because the port was removed physically from the inner urban structures. The rediscovery, restoration, redefinition and re-exploitation of both material and symbolic forms and expressions of local culture and their contribution to place-making and image-building largely reflects those collective norms and orientations, which formerly emerged

from the specific tensions of risk and safety, affiliation and a sense of 'the other' as well as of centre and periphery.

Hence, the sustainability of local culture proves itself as the most stable dimension of local development, 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 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.

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