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Waterfront Culture and Community in Transition

Urban Regeneration of the Dublin Docklands

Reimer

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Astrid Wonneberger

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I Waterfront Regeneration in Dublin

Port cities and city ports have always attracted and fascinated people. Performing an array of functions as places where networks are formed, cargo and people concentrate, as gateways to the wider world and entries for foreign goods, information and people, port cities have not only attracted adventurers, merchants, emigrants and immigrants, entrepreneurs, sailors and prostitutes, but also caught scientific interest. Particularly in recent decades, port cities have received a lot of attention from various disciplines. Attracted by global transformation processes, which have technologically and economically restructured international ports and cities all over the world, urban planners, geographers, economists, sociologists, historians, social anthropologists and many other scholars have been increasingly studying the relations between port and city, their images and forms of representation, changing demographics and urban design.

Hoyle (1988, 1989) has identified five major phases which characterise the development of port cities. Ancient and medieval inner-city ports develop into expanding and industrialised ports which increasingly move away from the city centre. The introduction of new technologies and containers in the mid-20th century requires ever larger areas, completely separating the ports and cities. The former port areas close to the city then become obsolete and grow derelict, before receiving new attention from urban planners, politicians, developers and investors. They redevelop the derelict port area, or "docklands" as they are often referred to, thus designing a new city quarter.

Dublin is a prototypical example of this process. Over centuries, the port facilities have continued to move downriver, away from the city centre towards the Irish Sea. Attracted by abundant work opportunities, several communities emerged in the dockside area in the 19th and 20th centuries. When containers and new technologies were introduced in the 1960s, thousands of labourers lost their jobs and their families became dependent on social welfare. Rising crime rates and the introduction of drugs to the inner city of Dublin worsened

the situation. The entire dock area developed a reputation as a "no-go area": "The docklands area was a bit like Siberia. Everybody knew where it was, but nobody wanted to go there," one of my interviewees[1] describes the situation.

In the 1980s, in the middle of Ireland's economic crisis, the docklands area received new attention from politicians, urban developers and investors. The transformation of the old dock area began with a small site adjacent to the Old Custom House and was extended to almost the entire former port area in the late 1990s, accelerated and supported by the Celtic Tiger boom.

Derived from the East Asian Tiger economies, the name "Celtic Tiger" refers to a period of rapid economic growth in the Republic of Ireland in the 1990s and early 2000s. Triggered by low corporate taxation, EU funding, a low-cost labour market and a policy of restraint in government spending, which are commonly named as the causes for this boom, the Celtic Tiger has on the one hand been responsible for Ireland's modernisation, low unemployment rates and economic growth and wealth that led Ireland from a "backward" country on the Western edge of Europe right into modern Europe. On the other hand, critical voices see the downside in a widening gap between the rich and the poor.[2] The development of Dublin's docklands and the central arguments and debates that accompany this transformation are one example of the effects of the Celtic Tiger economy. Its consequences had an impact on the entire island, but became particularly visible in the docklands, as this book will demonstrate.

The process of urban restructuring, particularly in areas that were once prime locations but then fell into dereliction, is often referred to as "gentrification". Waterfront areas, situated close to the city centre, with old, port-related structures and unused water bodies which add to their investment potential, are often good examples of gentrification. The process, in a narrow sense of the term, is often started by "pioneers", for example artists or students, who move into the area looking for cheap accommodation and unusual locations. Their cultural activities enliven the area and start to attract "gentrifiers": more affluent future residents and investors, who have the financial resources to restore the dilapidated buildings and turn them into first class residential areas. This regeneration leads to rising rents and house prices, which in turn force the pioneers out again.[3]

While these stages can be observed in many examples of waterfront regeneration, Dublin is not a prototypical example of this concept in its original meaning. The regeneration was not preceded by pioneers. No students or artists moved

1 C78.
2 See in detail Coulter and Coleman, 2003.
3 Smith and Williams, 1986; Smith, 1986; Beauregard, 1986. See also Kokot, 2008:12–14.

into the docklands area prior to its regeneration, and the only population inhabiting the area were the communities who had been living close to the port and docks over generations. The transformation of the docklands is carried out and coordinated by the Dublin Docklands Development Authority (DDDA), a semi-state body. Nevertheless, the redevelopment of the docklands in Dublin includes many other features typical of gentrification, particularly if later amendments and extensions of the concept are taken into consideration[4]: the former industrialised area, which had provided work for mostly "blue collar" manual workers, went through a phase of dereliction and deindustrialisation, and is now mostly home to the tertiary sector of industry providing professional "white-collar" jobs. The physical regeneration caused an increase in rents, housing and property prices, which in turn attracts wealthier people to buy or rent property. The new businesses are directed towards the new, more affluent clientele, while at the same time the less prosperous indigenous residents are forced out by the higher prices. This last aspect is one of the major concerns in the docklands and will be discussed in detail. In this more general meaning of the term, gentrification can be applied to the urban renewal of the Dublin docklands.

The Master Plan laid out by the DDDA in 1997 includes the rejuvenation of the "docklands" over a 15-year period between 1997 and 2012. Due to this ongoing process, Dublin is a good case to present and analyse the consequences of global transformation processes on the local level. Differing perceptions and views on the city of Dublin and its port area reflect underlying social and cultural conflicts between politicians, urban developers, investors, middle-class employees, working-class local communities, visitors and the Dublin Tourist Board, each of whom try to preserve or enforce their own ideas of Dublin and its docklands' future.

Of all the actors involved in the regeneration of the docklands in Dublin this study focuses on the members of the various dockland communities. Only a few weeks into my research, it became obvious that the local communities were some of the most important, maybe even *the* most important groups of actors in the redevelopment process. In contrast to Hamburg's HafenCity, basically a non-residential area since its foundation in the late 19th century, or the London Docklands, where residents' interests had been more or less completely ignored by developers and planners, the Dublin dockland communities have been very visible in the regeneration process. Nevertheless, they had only marginally been mentioned in most of the publications on the rejuvenation that were available when I started my research. If they were mentioned, they were usually referred to as "the dockland communities", an assumed unit or

4 Cf. Clark, 2005:256–258.

entity, who had opposed many of the original plans of the transformation. This, I soon discovered, reflected only part of the reality, as the relationships between the communities and the planning and developing agents were far more complex. Furthermore, communities have long been a central research topic in social and cultural anthropology, so the choice of my focus was easy.

The aim of this case study follows two basic threads: It is firstly a study of urban transformation and its effects on the local population. What are the renewal plans for the Dublin docklands? How is the waterfront regeneration received by the local communities? How does it change their everyday lives, their culture and identities? In order to understand the effects and the ongoing debates, I have to take a closer look at the situation and the cultural characteristics of the dockland communities during and before the changes. Over decades, the dockland communities have been culturally shaped by their dependence on a port-related economy, and this history still plays an important role in their current identities and the arguments used in debates with developers. Therefore, the historical development of both port and communities will be part of this ethnography. This section, secondly, makes this study also an urban ethnographic community study, although it differs slightly from the classic rural community studies in terms of methodology and focal themes.

II Urban Anthropology and the Study of Port Cities

This study of the Dublin docklands is part of a long tradition of urban ethnographies in social and cultural sciences. Albeit its persistent popular image as a discipline studying rural and remote areas, social and cultural anthropology has been interested in urban cultures since the early 20th century, following sociological ethnographic pioneer work in urban environments.

The Chicago School of Sociology, founded by Robert E. Park, stands at the beginning of this interest. In the 1920s, their researchers carried out fieldwork in Chicago studying urbanism and cultural and social diversity in urban contexts. Their focus groups were not much different from those of anthropologists carrying out research in rural areas: They were mostly small, homogeneous, localised and marginalised groups or enclosed areas, such as gangs, homeless people, dance halls, ghettos or ethnic minorities who lived in specific urban quarters, such as the Jewish quarter in Chicago.[5] They were

5 Bell and Newby, 1971:91–102; Kokot, 1991:1–3; Welz, 1991:29–30; Hengartner, Kokot, Wildner, 2000:4–5.

perceived as "urban villages" and thus easily investigated with the usual ethnographic fieldwork methodology, first and foremost participant observation and stationary fieldwork. All these studies were driven by the question of urbanity and urbanism and the differences between urban and rural life. What characterises a city, a town and a village? What are the relationships between them? The studies resulted in the first theoretical approaches towards defining urbanism. Wirth (1938) identified as minimal criteria size, density and heterogeneity, but also anonymity and fluctuation – features that are used as defining characteristics to this day. He as well as most of the other early urban researchers perceived urbanism as something negative, in comparison to rural life, because they considered the city as an environment leading to more personal insecurity, crime, corruption, suicide and mental problems than a rural environment. They also presented an image of the neighbourhoods or groups studied as rather isolated units and overlooked their social relations with the rest of the city and beyond.[6]

At the same time as the Chicago sociologists studied their city, cultural anthropologists also started to discover US-American urban settings as a new research topic. Various towns and suburbs were studied. One of the best known was probably Robert and Helen Lynd's "Middletown" from 1929.[7]

Influenced by the research interest of the Chicago School a series of new ethnographic studies with various regional focuses arose in order to further investigate urbanism and the relationship between cities, towns and villages. Consequently, research was not only carried out in urban environments, such as the Yankee City Studies investigating American cities in the U.S., but also rural areas, preferably in Mexico, Latin America, Asia and Europe. Between the 1930s and 1950s, dozens of "community studies" were carried out, some of which turned out to become classic monographs on specific urban or rural areas. What many of these studies had in common was an often romanticised approach to rural and "traditional" life, whereas urbanism continued to be mostly associated with social change and the loss of "traditional" culture.[8] Ireland was one of the European settings to enter the focus of community studies. Here, the cultures of the communities in the rural west were often considered a Celtic, "non-Western other" society, a peasant culture which was – unfortunately – dying: the "vanishing Gael", as Fox resumed in 1975.[9]

6 Kokot, 1991:1–4; Welz, 1991:29–31; Hannerz, 1980:1–3; Hengartner, Kokot, Wildner, 2000:3–6; Wildner, 1995:2–8; Wirth, 1938 [1988²]:38–45.

7 Bell and Newby, 1971:82–130.

8 Bell and Newby, 1971.

9 Fox, 1975:116–122. Cf. Curtin, Donnan, Wilson, 1993:9–10; Wilson and Donnan, 2006:24.

In all these various studies of rural areas, the term "community" refers to small, culturally homogeneous and "traditional" villages, whose residents are connected through social networks. These villages were studied in opposition to the adjacent urban centres and the rest of the complex societies. The central themes of these studies consequently included topics as to what was perceived as traditional culture and forms of social organisation, such as economic activities, kinship systems, the role of the church and religion or gender relations, but also cultural change through the external factors of modernisation and urbanisation. The community studies were later criticised for their often static approach – change was always considered to be triggered by external factors –, for their descriptive rather than analytical or theoretical approach, for their romanticised notions of rural and traditional culture, for methodological problems and an outdated structural-functional model of the concept of "community".[10] Nevertheless, the fieldworkers gained many new insights, on the stratification of societies for instance, and produced many in-depth studies which are considered classical studies today.[11]

Parallel to the studies carried out by American cultural anthropologists, British social anthropologists also discovered their interest in urban settings from the 1930s onwards. The Manchester School carried out research in Southern Africa and British Central Africa (today's Somalia, Zimbabwe and Malawi) focusing on rural-urban migration and detribalisation in colonial cities.[12]

Until the 1960s, urban anthropological research continued to focus on homogeneous, small and localised groups, often migrants and ethnic enclaves. However, many immigrant neighbourhoods began slowly to dissolve and researchers became increasingly aware of the importance of the entire city context. The study *in* the city turned into the study *of* the city. Networks and a-spatial communities became new themes, and fieldworkers now began to abandon the idea of isolated communities and incorporate the urban environment into their investigation. The main strength of urban anthropology, however, remains the intensive study of micro-level processes applying a variety of ethnographic research methods, but still being based on participant observation and stationary fieldwork.[13]

Urban groups, such as migrants, homeless people, gangs, clubs, groups sharing an economic profession, politicians, homosexuals or youth groups, have remained central themes of investigation for urban anthropologists today.

10 Bell and Newby, 1971; Wilson and Donnan, 2006:165.
11 Bell and Newby, 1971; Wilson and Donnan, 2006:24.
12 Hengartner, Kokot, Wildner, 2000:5.
13 Kokot, 1991:7; Bommer, 1991:18–23.

But in recent studies urbanism itself has gained increasing attention. Instead of looking at a group of actors and studying their culture and how they are influenced by the urban environment, current studies often start at urban places or spaces and study their purpose and meaning for different users.[14] Or they start at urban phenomena on the macro-level, such as gentrification, economic or political change, and then look at actors on the micro-level who are affected by these changes.

All these themes and approaches can also be found in current ethnographic studies on port cities. Dramatic changes in the relation between port and cities, port economies, port cities' images and urban design have had major consequences on the urban population living close to the port or working in port-related economies. At the same time, urban areas near the port have often become the centre of migrant activities. Looking at global transformation processes and their impact on the local level in European and Latin American port areas, a series of ethnographic studies have been carried out by anthropologists from Hamburg University since 2001. This research project on Dublin is one of them. The first results of this series were published in the journal Ethnoscripts (Wonneberger 2006) and in a volume edited by Kokot et al. (2008), providing a detailed analysis of various groups of local actors, their culture and strategies facing urban change in different urban waterfront settings. The topics range from migrants and refugees in Algeciras (Alfonso 2006, 2008) and Thessaloniki (Stroux 2006, 2008) to local residents in Montevideo (Gandelsman-Trier 2008), local traders and youth gangs in Belém (Oesselmann and Oesselmann 2008), urban planners in Varna (Bothfeld 2008) and new images of Istanbul (Wildner 2008). Another focus of anthropological interest is the culture of sailors and dockworkers themselves. While early studies looked at economic strategies of dockers during the hey-days of manual work, like Miller's comparative study of the dockworker subculture (1969), contemporary fieldwork also looks particularly at the effects of modern transformation processes in ports and waterfront areas, who have specific effects on these professional groups (e.g. Dohrn 2008, Rapti 2006).

However, despite these first attempts to grasp the effects of global transformation on a local level, the majority of contemporary studies of port cities and waterfront development do not follow ethnographic approaches, but are carried out by sociologists, historians, urban geographers, urban planners and economists.[15] These studies have looked at long-term developments, the position of ports in international economies, planning strategies and the

14 Examples for such studies are Wildner, 2003. See also Hengartner, Kokot, Wildner, 2000:11–12.
15 Schubert, 2001:31–34; Kokot, 2008:7–8.

physical result of waterfront renewal. Brian Hoyle (1988, 1989, 2002) was one of the first geographers to study and compare global port developments and his comparison resulted in a model of the port-city interface which also proved useful for the analysis of Dublin's development as a port city. Since then, numerous studies have followed. Brian Hoyle, D. Pinder and M. Husain (1988), K. White et al. (1993), the International Association Cities and Ports & Saint Lawrence Development Secretariat (1993), Patrick Malone (1996), Peti Buchel and Bert Hogervorst (1997), Susanne Engelbertz and Siegfried Kotthoff (1998), Rinio Bruttomesso (1993, 1999), Han Meyer (1999), Richard Marshall (2001), Dirk Schubert (2001, 2009) and more recently Arndt Graf and Chua Beng Huat (2009) and Gene Desfor et al. (2010) – to mention but a few – they all produced edited volumes and articles studying contemporary waterfront developments all over the world, presenting case studies from mostly geographical and urban planning perspectives. Numerous articles in journals of various disciplines provide numerous additional case studies (for example Jesús Lorente 2000; Darryl Kilian and Belinda Dodson 1996), and even museums recently explored waterfront developments in exhibitions.[16] Despite this variety and abundance of data and first approaches of systematic categorisation of port and waterfront developments, much still needs to be done. Due to local differences concerning historic background, causes, planning, the actors involved, problems and the consequences of waterfront renewal, systematic comparative studies are difficult and require an interdisciplinary approach. What is urgently missing are in-depth studies of the micro-level, of planning cultures, goals, norms and values of actors, affected populations and their involvement in the ever-changing balances of power.[17] This case study of Dublin will help to close this gap.

III Urban Anthropological Studies in Ireland

Ireland has been studied by social and cultural anthropologists since the 1930s and was one of the first European countries to become an ethnographic research area. The focus of these studies has been, until recently, rural Ireland.[18] Irish

16 The Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte (Museum for Hamburg History), for example, produced an exhibition titled "Der Traum von der Stadt am Meer" ("The Dream of the City at the Sea") from September 2003 until February 2004. The companion guide was edited by Jaacks, 2003.

17 See also Schubert, 2001:34; Kokot, 2008:7–8.

18 Curtain, Donnan, Wilson, 1993:1; Wilson and Donnan, 2006.

cities and urban life had hardly been studied before the 1980s, although today more than half the population are living in cities or towns[19] and Irish cities are growing fast.[20] The reasons for this unilateral interest lie in both Ireland's past and the history of anthropology.

Irish nationalism and the fight for political independence in the 19th and early 20th century, leading to Ireland's independence from Great Britain in 1921, was accompanied by cultural separatism. To support political arguments, political leaders and nationalist activists were looking for Irish cultural traits which would serve as distinguishing markers for a non-British, Irish identity. These characteristics were found in Celtic, rural Ireland, with its "old" and "traditional" life style, while any forms of modernisation, industrialisation and urbanism were considered "British" and therefore "un-Irish".[21] The policy of support for these "traditional" Irish ways, to promote the countryside over the city and discourage industrialisation, continued until the late 1950s, particularly supported by the Republic's Taoiseach (Prime Minister) and later president Eamonn de Valera.[22] While Northern Ireland's modern industries were established quickly in the 19th century, the Republic of Ireland, with the exception of parts of Dublin, only started to industrialise after the 1950s. Urban growth in the north was consequently much quicker than in the Republic. Dublin's population and other urban areas only grew slowly.[23] Images of a rural Ireland were and still are encouraged and promoted by the Irish Tourist Board, and it is not surprising that images of the Emerald Isle, of green fields, quaint villages and Celtic ruins still dominate foreign perceptions of Ireland, as is the case in Germany or the United States.[24]

Anthropological research interests in Ireland up to the 1970s and 1980s were also influenced by academic paradigms and topics. As a classical community study, Arensberg and Kimball (1940) produced one of the best-known ethnographic case studies of a dying peasant culture in the west, which reflected a popular interest at the time and the following decades. Messenger (1969), Brody (1973), Fox (1978), Scheper-Hughes (1979) and Salazar (1996) are five more examples who followed this trend and thus shaped an academic ethnographic image of Ireland which equals that of tourists, Hollywood and popular nationalism.[25]

19 Brennan, 1996:31.
20 Ramseier, 1993²:22–23.
21 Kiberd, 1996:125, 134; Genet, 1996:139–157; Freitag, 1987:90–97; Nash, 1993:86–91.
22 Freitag, 1989:146–1953; Murphy, 1993²a:71; 1993²b:74.
23 Molitor, 1993²:148; Curtin, Donnan, Wilson, 1993:2–3.
24 See for instance studies by Haefs, 1983; Wonneberger, 1995, 2001; Bourke, 1993².
25 Curtin, Donnan, Wilson, 1993:8–11; Wilson and Donnan, 2006.

Northern Ireland, on the other hand, received attention much sooner by urban anthropologists than the Republic. While the focus of anthropological interest was put on conflict, violence, war and ethnic identities, Belfast neighbourhoods, housing estates and other, more general urban topics were also studied.[26]

For all these reasons, Irish urban cultures in the Republic only slowly became interesting for ethnographic research. The 1960s and 1970s witnessed only a few studies of urbanisation and city life, all of them based in Dublin. The numbers of studies and the variety of topics and sites increased in the 1980s, but Dublin still received most attention and, yet again, the studies remained largely dominated by classic urban anthropological themes which the fieldworkers brought with them. Urban poverty, rural-urban migration, public policies, gender, ethnic groups (the Travellers), youth cultures and gangs and gender topics were the dominating themes, as they had been in urban anthropology in general.[27] Many of these studies were studies *in* the city, rather than *of* the city.

In the last 20 years, the anthropology of urban Ireland has made great progress. Since Curtin, Donnan and Wilson expressed the need for urban ethnographic research in Ireland and introduced a series of new studies in their volume on "Irish Urban Cultures" (1993), many new ethnographic findings have been published, not only on Dublin, and these studies were not exclusively undertaken by anthropologists. Monographs and edited volumes by both anthropologists and sociologists, such as Gibbons (1996), Throop (1999), Coulter and Coleman (2003), Slater and Peillon (1998, 2000), Corcoran and Peillon (2002, 2004, 2006), Murphy-Lawless (2003), Wonneberger (2011) have covered a variety of topics ranging from the dichotomy of private and public domains in Dublin, the Celtic Tiger and its impact on the local level, popular culture, sports, urban horses, drug abuse, the effects of globalisation on modern Irish society and gentrification, to mention but a few examples.

Particularly immigration has become a new focus. Until the early 1990s, foreign nationals in Ireland had been almost non-existent, but with the Schengen Agreement and Ireland's booming Celtic Tiger economy, Ireland has turned into a country of immigration. Tens of thousands of immigrants from inside and outside the European Union immigrated to Ireland each year. In 2009, about 15% of the residing population were born outside the Republic of Ireland and 4% outside the EU. 63,000 Poles, 42,000 Africans, 24,000 Lithuanians

26 Curtin, Donnan, Wilson, 1993:8–9.
27 Curtin, Donnan, Wilson, 1993:7–14.

and 11,000 Chinese have added to the country's growing diversity.[28] While some of these immigrants have scattered all over the country looking for work, most have stayed in Dublin, where their presence is becoming increasingly visible.[29] As a traditional field of ethnographic research, groups of immigrants and ethnic communities have been studied in the last few years. Studies on the Polish community (Pohlmann 2010, 2011), the Indian diaspora (Eisenberg 2009, 2011), the rights of asylum seekers (Loyal 2002, 2003), Dublin's "Little Africa" (White 2002), Dublin's new ethnic face and urban practices (Corcoran 2006a), but also prejudices and racism (Peillon 2000; Fanning 2002; Shandy 2008) are but a few examples.[30] All these recent studies have demonstrated that Ireland is not the homogeneous, rural island so often described in the past, but diverse and complex, just like any other modern society.

Although Dublin is the largest and oldest international port city in Ireland and its port crucial for both Dublin's and Ireland's import and export economy, until recently only little has been published on the port and docks area. In 1988, H.A. Gilligan presented a detailed History of the Port of Dublin, including the physical and political developments of the port and harbour, ship building, repairing and cargo handling. Since the 1970s, local historians and numerous community-based heritage groups, often supported by training schemes run by the National Training Agency FÁS, have produced studies on the local past and collected oral histories of people's lives in the inner city to preserve memories of their living conditions and work on the docks. Various publications by the Sandymount Community Services (1996, no year), North Inner City Folklore Project (1992, no year, Wren 1993, Fagan and Savage 1995, no year, Fagan 2002, Fagan and Hiney, no year), St Andrew's Heritage Project (1992, 2003, no year, Wonneberger, forthcoming) and similar community projects (e.g. O'Carroll and Fitzpatrick 1996, Dowling and O`Reilly 2002), and local historians, such as Kevin Kearns (1991, 1994, 2001), Arthur Garrett (1985), Fred Kennedy (1997), Éamonn MacThomáis (1976), Jimmy Wren (2001), Arthur Flynn (1990), Jim Cooke (1989) have produced local history books mostly by collecting oral histories of the inner city and dockland areas. Local poets, writers and priests published their perceptions of a changing urban quarter in the form of poetry, novels and heritage publications based on people's memories and experiences. Ronan Sheehan's and Brendan Walsh's portrait of inner city living (1988), Theresa Farrington's publications (1991, 1994), Martin Byrne's numerous volumes, Peter Sheridan's memoirs

28 CSO, 2009.
29 Corcoran, 2006a:181.
30 Cf. Wilson and Donnan, 2006:137–151.

(1989, 1999), Pat Reid's fictitious novel of a portside community (2001) or Tony Gill's poems (Crilly 2006) are only some examples of local attempts to preserve old memories and discuss the current transformations.

From an academic perspective, the dockland area only slowly became visible in the 1980s, when redevelopment got under way. Dozens of newspaper articles in the local and national newspapers covered the development of the International Financial Services Centre, the flagship project of the dockland regeneration in the 1980s. Economists, historians, urban planners and geographers quickly followed and studied the politics and economic effects of this first step in the dockland transformation. From 1996 onwards, when the plans for the redevelopment of the rest of the dockland area were revealed, the docklands received a new wave of attention, by both journalists and academics from a variety of disciplines. Literally hundreds of dockland related articles have appeared in local and national newspapers and magazines since, over 250 articles between 1998 and 2004 in the Irish Times alone. Frank McDonald, environment correspondent for the Irish Times, summarised some of these debates in his bestselling book "The Construction of Dublin" in 2000, and there is no recent popular book on the city of Dublin that does not mention the docklands in at least one chapter. Pat Liddy's artistic approach (2000) is only one example.

Apart from journalists and popular writers, academic researchers have also begun to show their interest in the transforming docklands. Mostly city planners and urban geographers, but also sociologists have begun to study the urban planning processes and their impact on changing city images and architectural features, the economy, and – to a lesser degree – on the social level. Apart from Irish and Northern Irish scholars, such as Patrick Malone (1993, 1996), Jim N. Berry, Stanley McGreal and Lorraine Kelly (1993), Mary Corcoran (2002), Brendan Bartley and Kasey Treadwell Shine (2003), James Hogan (2005, 2006, book forthcoming) and Niamh Moore (1999, 2002, 2008), international researchers have also become aware of what is happening in Dublin. The Dutch Peti Buchel and Bert Hogersvorst (1997), Dirk Schubert from HafenCity University Hamburg (2006, 2008) and my own project are but a few examples. Furthermore, the Dublin Docklands Development Authority, the semi-state body in charge of coordinating the redevelopment of the docklands since 1997, have published their own views of the past and future of the docklands area, carried out by travel writer and historian Turtle Bunbury (2009). All these studies give a detailed account of the planning process and the underlying politics of the dockland regeneration in Dublin and served as useful background information for this study.

Nevertheless, despite numerous recent contributions to the understanding of Irish urban life in general and the docklands in particular, much still needs

to be done, many questions remain unanswered. Irish urbanism, urban space and place, planning cultures and transformation processes and their impact on a local level, the influence of globalisation and migration on Irish cities and towns, local and global networks – all these are topics that have only marginally been studied yet. Although the most recent sociological studies by Moore (2008) and Hogan (forthcoming) have left the macro perspective and not only looked at planning processes, changing city images, economic and political issues, but have also taken local representatives' views into account, their analyses only touch the most visible and public debates and leave many questions in terms of cultural effects unanswered. As a link to the outside world, as an important industrial centre in Dublin and one of the largest areas of urban transformation in Ireland, the docklands is an ideal setting for another contribution to the study of Irish urban cultures.

IV Research Topics

Based on these reflections, a variety of questions and topics arose for a detailed case study of the Dublin docklands. The strength of ethnographic research is the intensive study of small units on the local level, in this case the dockland communities. However, these communities are not separate entities in space and time. In order to understand the current situation, both the historic development and the city context have to be taken into consideration.

The first group of topics therefore deals with the port and dockland area in the city's historic context. When did the dockland neighbourhoods emerge? Which factors led to the shift of the port industry away from the city centre and the downfall of the once economically important dockside along the quays? Where and when did the waterfront revival start? *Chapter One* will set Dublin's waterfront development into global perspective, based on Hoyle's model (1988, 1989) and Schubert's (2001) comparative study on global waterfront developments.

The second half of the chapter will be devoted to the port-city interface. How important is the industrial port for Dublin today? Does it only play an economic role, or is it, like in Hamburg for instance, also part of the city image and used as an attraction for tourism? Finally, what kind of relationship exists between the industrial port, the newly designed docklands and the communities who were formerly dependent on the port economy? How visible are the port and the docklands in Dublin and what images do Dubliners have of the port and docks? This chapter will also clarify the differences of the terms

"port", "docklands", "dockside", "docks" and other related terms which are frequently used in this context.

Chapter Two will introduce the main actors of this study: the dockland communities. Which communities are living in the docklands? A group of people who perceive themselves as a communal unit always construct their identities along boundaries and "the others". Who are these units? Which markers are used to differentiate one's own from another group? What are the (perceived) differences and boundaries? Due to their similar situation in the regeneration process, the dockland communities are often summarised as one entity, and for political purposes this is also supported by community activists themselves. However, as this study will show, the local identities as separate units remain very strong and often lead to rivalries, which influence the current transformation process. For this reason, this chapter will provide ethnographic community profiles in terms of local historical development, demographic features, perceived inner and outer boundaries and institutional organisation. Furthermore, it will introduce the most important local regeneration schemes which will repeatedly play important roles in the subsequent chapters.

Despite many differences and perceived community boundaries, the dockland communities share a similar history and many social and cultural features. All of them were, until the 1970s, dependent on port- and port-related industries, they all suffered severely from the global transformation processes in modern shipping industries and the subsequent decline of port activities in the city centre. They are all situated in the middle of an urban area that was earmarked for urban renewal on a scale that was absolutely new to Dublin. Therefore, in order to analyse influences on local culture, these original cultural traits have to be studied first, as they are the starting point for many debates and changes. What exactly does "dockland culture" mean? Which political, religious and economic features have shaped the culture of the dockland residents? What roles do the cityscape and built environment play for these communities? Which traits are considered so important by the residents today that they are meant to be preserved? Which features are better changed? *Chapter Three* provides a detailed ethnography of an urban city quarter and its various neighbourhoods.

One of the most important aspects in the current debate about waterfront renewal is the concept of community. So far, I have used the term "community" for the local, indigenous or old-established neighbourhoods and their residents who have been living in the area for decades and over generations and who feel closely connected to the history of the place; and with this meaning I will continue using the term. "Community", however, also refers to a specific kind of social organisation shared by these residents. Both meanings cannot

be separated from each other. Furthermore, the term is used differently in different contexts and by different actors, so as the key argument in any debate within dockland regeneration, it needs special clarification. *Chapter Four* will therefore provide a detailed analysis of various meanings of the concept of community. What does the term mean for the residents of these dockland "communities"? What are the different emic perceptions and explanations of this term? How is it used as a political strategy? And how does all this relate to anthropological meanings of the term?

Based on these analyses of dockland history, culture and concepts of community, *Chapter Five* will take a closer look at the transformation processes of the waterfront renewal and the actors involved. I will show to what extent the dockland communities have been involved in the planning processes of the different phases of dockland regeneration. While their voice remained entirely unheard in the 1980s, at the beginning of the renewal, their political activism succeeded in direct representation on the planning agent, even though their degree of influence is still debated by many community members. Nevertheless, community activists fight for their community interests to this day. In view of huge economic profits by the developers and urban planners carrying out the redevelopment of this once derelict urban area, all representatives and community members share one goal: They want to profit as communities. But what exactly are their interests? Which aspects of the Master Plan are welcome? Which elements are criticised and rejected, and why? What are the underlying motives and arguments? And in what aspects have their demands been successful?

One central debate concerns mostly contradictory images of Dublin and the Dublin docklands. While the planning agents favour a new image of the area as a "world-class city quarter", as the Dublin Docklands Development Authority advertise their project in one of their brochures, many long-term residents cling onto the old working-class image of their urban quarter, as it reflects what they perceive as their history and cultural traditions. This debate about "modern" and "traditional" forms of representation of the docklands and Dublin in general, carried out by the local communities, developers, urban planners and the tourist industry, demonstrates how important the physical environment is for the local population, their culture and social organisation. Again, concepts of community are the underlying theme in this debate.

Another important set of topics centres on notions of space, place and boundaries. Changes of the physical environment do not only affect images and forms of representation, they also have fundamental consequences on people's everyday lives. New administration boundaries create new forms of exclusion for individuals as well as entire former dock areas. New physical

boundaries in the form of walls, gates or major roads, are responsible for the creation of privatised spaces, social exclusion and the division of neighbourhoods. Finally, the new architecture of living spaces is often criticised for its community-unfriendly design. The entire section of this chapter analyses the ever-close relationship between the dockland communities and their urban territory, and the analysis of the ongoing debates illustrates the localised character of these urban groups.

While many cultural features, including community as a form of social organisation, are seen as important characteristics and strategies for the future of these communities and therefore need to be preserved, other features from the past are perceived as hindering the improvement of living conditions. Instead of continuity, change is more than welcome in terms of education, employment and health, for instance, as the old-established patterns of education, economic strategies and health issues no longer meet today's standards and requirements on the labour market. All these issues are also on the agenda of the communities and the Dublin Docklands Development Authority as the main developing agent, but the degree of financial support is still a matter of debate, particularly since the economic crisis of the second half of 2008.

On the one hand, the various forms of support by the developing agents and investors are very welcome to the communities, and to have achieved this support is perceived as a great success. On the other hand, some members see their communal self-organisation and independence threatened by this economic dependence on this new agent. They are concerned about the over-visibility of this umbrella agent and its influence on the communal level. Furthermore, they wonder what will happen when the regeneration will be completed and this source of funding terminates. Will the communities then fall back into social deprivation and invisibility or even cease to exist?

These concerns are also nourished by thousands of new residents in the docklands who do not seem to mix with the old established population and differ extremely in terms of demographic, social, economic and other cultural characteristics. *Chapter Six* deals with these new dwellers, their motives for moving into this area, their cultural traits and social networks. The chapter also analyses the relationship between the communities and the new residents, their images and perceptions of each other and efforts to create new and socially integrated dockland communities.