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EDITORIAL

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

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Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3   Ibid., 213.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Port cities and the construction of cosmopolitan culture

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

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

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

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

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

Urban and architectural monuments for port city prominence

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

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

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

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

Heritagization as future practice

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

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

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

Carola Hein is Professor of the History of Architecture and Urban Planning at Delft University of Technology. She has published widely and received a Guggenheim and an Alexander von Humboldt fellowship as well as other major grants. Her books include *The Urbanisation of the Sea* (2020) *Adaptive Strategies for Water Heritage* (2019), *The Routledge Planning History Handbook* (2017), *Uzō Nishiyama, Reflections on Urban, Regional and National Space* (2017), *Port Cities* (2011), *The Capital of Europe* (2004), *Rebuilding Urban Japan after 1945* (2003), and *Cities, Autonomy and Decentralisation in Japan* (2006), and *Hauptstadt Berlin 1957-58* (1991).

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