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1
Introduction

Port cities are elemental and captivating: the salt in the air, the connection to distant shores, the ebb and flow of diverse cultures and cargoes. From Osaka to Hamburg and Vancouver to Istanbul, port cities worldwide share narratives of cosmopolitanism and even exceptionalism. But many port cities also share global legacies of empire, colonialism, inequality, and political unrest. These global legacies are contradictory and intertwined. They encompass the nostalgic and the forgetful, the radical and the reactionary, the parochial and the worldly. They are uncomfortable subjects of denial, debate, and ambivalence. This book argues that the concept of 'global legacies'—enduring forms, processes, or ideas of the 'global' that shape urban identity and politics—is an important lens for analysing difficult pasts and uncertain futures in struggling port cities.

Port cities have distinctive global dynamics, with long histories of casual labour, large migrant communities, and international trade networks. As such, port cities offer an important urban context for examining new and old aspects of the 'global'. Information technology has been at the forefront of debates about globalization since the 1970s (cf. Bell 1973; Castells 2000; Masuda 1980). However, many scholars have underestimated the continuing significance of material seaport trade to global capitalism. Ninety per cent of the world's trade is transported by sea.[1] As Levinson (2008) argues, containerization is one of the most significant technological and economic transformations underpinning globalization. The development of intermodal freight transport using shipping containers enabled cheap, efficient, and standardized transport across land and sea. The first container ship was built in 1956 by the American trucking entrepreneur Malcolm Maclean. Containerization rapidly spread throughout the 1960s, and by the early 1970s the

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container had become the dominant mode of global transport. Containerization facilitated the development of post-Fordist 'just-in-time' production, where products could be assembled from all parts of the globe. It also contributed to the decline of manufacturing in Western industrialized economies as companies moved their factories to countries with cheaper labour and resources (cf. Harvey 2001; High and Lewis 2007).

While the story of containerization is often neglected in accounts of globalization and deindustrialization, it has been central to accounts of port cities. Container shipping greatly reduced the need for intensive dock labour in waterfront communities and required new forms of port technology and capacity. Echoing global patterns of deindustrialization, many old ports failed to modernize, while new deep-water hub ports emerged, shifting the concentration of leading economic ports from Europe and North America towards Asia (cf. Desfor et al. 2011; Miller 2012; Schubert 2008). Some port cities have become relative success stories of transformation, particularly global hub cities such as Hong Kong and Singapore. The European ports of Rotterdam, Antwerp, and Hamburg have also been heralded as success stories in maintaining strong volumes of container trade, although the extent of 'success' within their wider urban economies is uneven in relation to employment and social inclusion (cf. Warsewa 2006). However, most Western port cities have faced urban and economic decline since the 1970s, with varying degrees of recovery through culture-led and tourism-led waterfront development. As Wang et al. (2007: xv) argue, 'seaports that were significant for a "slower" but no less global economy have been undergoing transformation, re-imagining and re-inventing themselves, to stay economically and culturally "relevant" '. Even the hub ports are not immune from decline; shipping is intimately tied to the vicissitudes of global capitalism. In 2009, in tandem with the global recession, the maritime economy witnessed the sharpest decline in the volume of global merchandize trade in several decades. Massive container ships lay empty in hub ports across Asia.

This research focuses on three post-industrial Western port cities with different but related histories and fortunes: Liverpool, Marseille, and New Orleans. These were significant global port cities at the turn of the twentieth century, but they have since declined in economic importance. Their stories of former wealth and success are linked to the ruthless expansion of capitalism and empire between the eighteenth and early twentieth centuries, and their subsequent decline and attempts at recovery are marked by these legacies. Precarious work

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and multiculturalism, important issues in recent debates about globalization, have thrived in these port cities, as in others, for centuries. Traditions of working-class and grassroots radicalism are also strong in these intensely divided cities, with heated political battles between different social groups.[2] These three former ports of empire and colonialism provide important contexts for examining some of the most enduring and challenging issues of the modern world.

This book advances the concept of 'global legacies' as a critical analytical lens for understanding struggling post-industrial port cities, casting light on uneven and interrelated histories and geographies. Port cities are distinctive and revealing sites of global legacies: older global forms and processes which can be traced back centuries, to the early days of merchant capitalism, empire, and political conflict. These older global forms and processes live on today, alongside more recent forms and processes of globalization. But they are not only vestiges of the past to be discovered as passive objects of history; they are dynamic, active, and productive of complex forms of urban identity and political action.

Port cities and global legacies

Port cities have been the subject of a wide range of interdisciplinary scholarship. Researchers have emphasized the significance of global networks in port cities, particularly in relation to urban and economic development and urban planning (cf. Gandelsman-Trier et al. 2009; Graf and Huat 2008; Hein 2011; Miller 2012; Wang et al. 2007). *Port Cities: Dynamic Landscapes and Global Networks* (Hein 2011) analyses the international exchange of architectural and urban planning ideas through port city networks, with a range of international examples. Hein (2011) argues that port cities are hubs within dynamic maritime networks, with interconnected urban and built environments of 'port cityscapes'. In *Ports, Cities, and Global Supply Chains*, Wang et al. (2007) also examine port cities in relation to global networks but from the perspective of business and economics, focusing on how port cities adapt to uncertainty within rapidly changing logistics and economic environments. These studies offer valuable theoretical, empirical, and comparative insights from different disciplines into port cities and the global maritime economy. My research takes inspiration from these networked approaches, but my focus is ethnographic, historical, and sociological.

An interesting ethnographic comparative analysis of port cities is offered by *Port Cities as Areas of Transition: Ethnographic Perspectives* (Gandelsman-Trier et al. 2009). The authors use case studies of different

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port cities around the world to study the local effects of global post-industrial change and waterfront development. From a historical perspective, *Europe and the Maritime World: A Twentieth Century History* (Miller 2012) provides a rich and compelling account of the interrelationships between port cities, shipping, and the spread of globalization, arguing that European ports dominated the maritime world until the late twentieth century. Miller's study situates the rise and fall of European ports and the recent rise of Asian ports in relation to global dynamics of empire-building, colonialism, capitalist development, and containerization. He suggests that these historical periods represent two global ages, the first dominated by Europe and the second dominated by Asia, each with different cultural, economic, and political dynamics. Miller's book is somewhat exceptional within the scholarship on port cities as a sole-authored comparative analysis which takes account of unequal global relations of empire and colonialism.

My research builds upon Gandelsman-Trier (2009) in my use of ethnographic case study methods and Miller (2012) in my attention to historical, comparative interconnections and in my analysis of formerly dominant Western port cities of the 'first global age'. My research also seeks to address some gaps within the scholarship on port cities and globalization. Little attention, for example, has been paid to the contradictory ways in which global legacies have shaped contested urban identity and forms of political action in port cities.

This book draws inspiration from three analytical approaches: critical political economy; global history and sociology; and extended and distended ethnographic case study methods. These approaches are important for a critical sociological analysis of post-industrial port cities and the interconnected global legacies of capitalism, empire, casual labour, and radicalism. Critical political economy focuses on the uneven forms, processes, and practices of global capitalism and on sites and strategies of political resistance. This literature is based on the idea that capitalism is constantly expanding to seek new markets, through a process of 'creative destruction' (Harvey 2000; Schumpeter 1965). The uneven geography of capitalism has many implications for patterns of urban development, gentrification, and political resistance, particularly in waterfront areas of cities (cf. Harvey 2012; Peck 2005; Smith 2002). Two notable contributions to a critical political economy of the maritime economy are Allan Sekula (2003) and Neilson and Rossiter (2011). In *Fish Story* (Sekula 2003), an innovative combination of critical realist photography and essays, Sekula argues that the sea is a 'forgotten' space that is largely invisible yet integral to global capitalism, the site

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of tremendous profit-making as well as some of the worst labour abuses. He provides stark examples of precarious workers and migrants from ports around the world, pointing to the relationship between industrialization in Asia, deindustrialization in Western countries, and unequal global container routes by sea and land of production, consumption, labour, and migration. Neilson and Rossiter (2011) make a similar argument, showing how maritime logistics and precarious labour operate 'strangely out of time' across the sea as an 'extra-juridical space'.

Global history and sociology also offer important critical perspectives for examining the role of global dynamics and interconnections in shaping port cities. The concepts of 'entangled histories' (Kocka and Haupt 2009; Randeria 2006) and *histoire croisée* (Werner and Zimmermann 2006) highlight the importance of entanglements between the local and the global in the context of studying global history. Similarly, Subrahmanyam's (2005) 'connected histories', Fernando Coronil's (2007) 'relational histories', and Bhambra's (2014) 'connected sociologies' stress ideas of global connections across different times and places, particularly in relation to colonialism. These theories highlight uncomfortable connections between capitalism and empire. As Bhambra (2014) argues, connected sociologies challenge modern and postmodern approaches, which tend to privilege particular Western or Eurocentric 'metanarratives'. Connected histories and sociologies pay attention to the integral connections between hidden and difficult pasts, presents, and geographies. Following these approaches within global history and sociology, this study aims to challenge dominant narratives through examining 'silenced' histories (Trouillot 1995) in the context of contested urban memory and identity. The method relates to Foucault's (1980) idea of 'subjugated knowledges' and to his method of tracing genealogies of knowledge.

Throughout this book, I use historical as well as ethnographic methods, reading legacies of the past not only within documents but also within landscapes, interviews, and ethnographic observations (cf. Benjamin 1996; Davis 1990; Frisby 2001; Lefebvre 1991).[3] My aim is to understand the present through reading traces of the past. My ethnographic approach to study global legacies in port cities draws on 'extended' and 'distended' ethnographic case study methods (Burawoy 1998; Peck and Theodore 2012). Burawoy's (1998) extended case method investigates how the 'global' is itself constituted within the local through ethnographic study. While ethnography traditionally focuses on micro-level studies of communities and subcultures, Burawoy's ethnographic approach straddles both macro-level

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and micro-level scales, drawing out relationships between global socio-economic processes and everyday lived experiences. My research also takes inspiration from Peck and Theodore's (2012: 24) related 'distended case study' approach to policy mobility, which

> is not associated with a fixed methodological repertoire, but gives license to an open-ended embrace of methodological experimentation and reflexivity, ranging from policy ethnographies to genealogical analyses and social constructivist diffusion studies.

While my research is not concerned primarily with policy mobility, except in the case of waterfront development policies, Peck and Theodore's outline of an open-ended methodological repertoire provides inspiration for researching networked, embedded, and interconnected histories and sociologies of port cities.

Together, these three approaches inform my analytical concept of global legacies, which aims to show how older global forms and processes endure and adapt over time and space. The notion of 'legacies' is widely used within research in the social sciences and humanities, particularly in relation to empire, colonialism, war, communism, post-socialism, dictatorship, and environmental degradation (cf. Avineri and Sternhell 2003; Biess and Moeller 2010; de L'Estoile 2008; Hargreaves 2005; Tyler 2012). It is often used in a negative sense, to refer to the residual features and collective traumas of less 'progressive' eras. It is also used in a nostalgic sense, of pining for the remainders of former eras, however problematic—the loss of riches, prestige, and security. Finally, it is sometimes used in a positive sense, as a legacy of a worthwhile project or visionary leader. My use of 'legacies' deliberately captures the contradictory and ambivalent meanings of the term. Legacies speak to inheritance and persistence, of what remains through processes of change. They are rooted not only in processes of ruination and decline, but also in processes of resistance and recovery. Legacies denote a sense of continuity amidst disruption and change.

My analysis of global legacies in port cities relates closely to the concept of 'ruination' as a destructive material and embodied legacy of both empire and capitalism. In *Imperialist Debris: On Ruins and Ruination* (2013), Stoler distinguishes between the concepts of 'legacy' and 'ruination' in relation to the durable traces of colonialism. Stoler (2013: 12) suggests that the concept of a 'colonial legacy' is deceptive because it deflects rather than clarifies analysis: 'In the case of imperial formations, a "legacy" makes no distinctions between what holds and

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what lies dormant, between residue and recomposition, between a weak and a tenacious trace.' She argues that 'ruination' is more powerful because it directs attention to how people live with and in ruins, and 'to the common sense such habitations disturb, to the critiques condensed or disallowed, and to the social relations avidly coalesced or shattered around them' (Stoler 2013: 13). Like Stoler, my research is concerned with 'ruination': examining the processes of destruction, violence, and injustice that persist through the interrelated workings of capitalism, empire, and colonialism. In fact, my approach builds on my previous research on industrial ruination as a lived process in old industrial cities (Mah 2012), further developing my interest in how people live with difficult processes of ruination and recovery. However, I argue that the concept of 'legacies' should not be ousted by the concept of 'ruination'—indeed, it has considerable analytical and critical power.

My research focuses particularly on the global legacies of empire, capitalism, casual labour, and radicalism in the port cities of Liverpool, Marseille, and New Orleans. Inherent within these legacies are processes of both ruination and recovery. The twin processes of ruination in each city—of empire and of commerce—are deeply entangled and embedded within collective memories, identities, and forms of political action. Processes of urban recovery in each city have attempted to disentangle positive and negative global legacies, encountering multiple contradictions and limitations along the way. Global legacies are evident throughout the world, across a range of national, regional, urban, and rural contexts. The former 'great' port cities of Liverpool, Marseille, and New Orleans are particularly revealing sites in which to explore these complex and contradictory legacies. Through these case studies of three Western post-industrial port cities, this book traces global legacies in relation to cross-cutting themes of urban identity, waterfront work, and radicalism.

Urban identity, waterfront work, and radicalism

Urban identity is the first theme of this book, encapsulating multiple contradictory global legacies, particularly the legacies of empire and capitalism. Urban identity refers to the collective identity of inhabitants of a city, including shared ideas of belonging, attachment, affiliation, and community. However, urban identity is fragmented and contested rather than unified, reflecting different social groups and interests. My approach to urban identity draws on diverse literatures on place

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identity, social and collective memory, and intergenerational memory (cf. Boyer 1994; Cappelletto 2003; Hague and Jenkins 2005; Keith and Pile 1993; Nora 1989; Olick and Robbins 1998; Perkins 2012). As Olick and Robbins (1998: 133) suggest: 'Memory is a central, if not the central, medium through which identities are constituted.' In particular, Nora's (1989) concept of 'sites of memory' ('*lieux de memoire*') is useful for thinking about the relationship between urban space, memory, and identity. For Nora (1989: 12), sites of memory

> originate with the sense that there is no spontaneous memory, that we must deliberately create archives, maintain anniversaries, organize celebrations, pronounce eulogies, and notarize bills because such activities no longer occur naturally.

My research examines port city spaces, narratives, and representations as 'sites of memory', or more precisely 'realms of memory', following many scholars' observations that the term 'site' is too literally spatial to capture the breadth of Nora's meaning (cf. Balderstone et al. 2013: 3). My analysis of memory and identity is primarily concerned with understanding the present through the past—or how the past continues to shape the present within the context of socio-economic change.

Global legacies of empire and capitalism are evident within various realms of urban memory and identity. However, these legacies are complex and difficult to trace empirically. Visible remainders of empire and colonialism can been found within material urban landscapes of architecture, streets, and institutions. They are also evident in multicultural ethnic geographies and in vibrant food and music traditions (cf. Campanella 2008). At the same time, legacies of empire and colonialism persist through forms of racism, injustice, and violence. One can trace these legacies through examining 'silences' of the past that have entered the production of history at various moments, following the lead of post-colonial scholars (cf. Bhambra 2014; Trouillot 1995). These legacies are complicated and do not involve a straightforward transmission through history. As Trouillot (1995: 18–19) provocatively argues, 'The perpetuation of US racism is less a legacy of slavery than a modern phenomenon renewed by generations of white immigrants whose own ancestors were likely engaged in forced labour, at one time or another, in the hinterlands of Europe.' My research investigates uncomfortable global legacies of empire throughout the book, but most explicitly through the example of museums of slavery and colonial history in port cities (Chapter 4).

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Tracing legacies of capitalism is perhaps even more difficult, as capitalism is a pervasive global economic system and different theories about the nature, extent, changes, varieties, and inevitability of capitalism abound (cf. Boltanski and Chiapello 2005; Gibson-Graham 1996; Hall and Soskice 2001; Hardt and Negri 2000; Jessop 2001). My analysis investigates capitalism as a varied, uneven, and dynamic system which has evolved and thrived across its long durée (Braudel and Colin 1987), from earlier forms of merchant capitalism to the present. In doing so, it follows critiques of rampant, unmitigated capitalism which argue that capitalism produces inherent inequalities, develops unevenly, and concentrates wealth and privilege in the hands of few, as opposed to the '99 per cent' (Graeber 2013; Harvey 2012; Sennett 2006; Wilkinson and Pickett 2010). Port cities have gone through intensive historical phases of capitalist development, from the early days of mercantilism through to contemporary waterfront regeneration and global super-container ports (see Chapter 3). Even at their height of prosperity, most ports of empire and colonialism were deeply stratified: gentlemen merchants occupied luxurious grand houses, while the poor ordinary masses were crowded in slums in the inner cities and along the docks. The intense inequality of this former era has persisted within port cities, through different waves of capitalist development.

The second theme of the book, waterfront work, intersects with questions of urban identity and relates most explicitly to global legacies of casual labour. Dockworkers are iconic symbols of urban identity within port cities. In many ways, the history of the waterfront represents the backbone of historic port city identities and mythologies. This old form of casual labour is associated with place identity in a similar way that old industrial workers are associated with old industrial cities: the steelworkers in Sheffield, for example, or the autoworkers in Detroit. However, dock labour is also distinct from manufacturing work, characterized by irregularity rather than regularity. Dock labour is a male-dominated, traditional form of waterfront work, associated with militancy, casualism, close-knit communities, and anti-authoritarian politics (cf. Davies 2000; Phillips and Whiteside 1985). Dockers' communities also reflect historical migrant labour patterns in each port city: black and white segregated dockers in New Orleans; Irish dockers in Liverpool; and Mediterranean and North African dockers in Marseille. Yet in the context of shrinking waterfront labour markets and the roll-back of employment protections since the 1970s, each dock labour force has become highly insular, with strong intergenerational traditions of sons following fathers onto the docks.

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There have been a number of studies about the organization, politics, and culture of casual dock labour since the late nineteenth century (Arnesen 1994; Davies 2000; Phillips and Whiteside 1985; Pigenet 2001; Rosenberg 1988; Turnbull and Wass 2009; Wilson 1972). Most scholarly work on dockworkers focuses on the period up to the early 1980s, tracing the histories of trade unionism, regularization, and containerization on the docks. The Liverpool Dockers' Strike of 1995–1998 sparked a new wave of research on dockworkers and their struggles, and reflections on the future of dock labour in an era of neoliberal restructuring (cf. Carter et al. 2003; Losada 2010; Saundry and Turnbull 1996). More recently, studies have focused on international dock labour in the context of globalization, highlighting the deterioration in dockworkers' terms and conditions of employment in an international 'race to the bottom' (cf. Turnbull and Wass 2007). My analysis of waterfront work is more ethnographic in focus, examining narratives, memories, and lived experiences of intergenerational working lives in relation to wider urban, regional, and global dynamics.

The third theme of this book addresses global legacies of radicalism within contemporary alternative politics in port cities. As Lefebvre (1991) suggests, the city constitutes not only the 'setting' but also the 'stakes' of political contestation. Thus, cities are political in a double sense: cities are not only locations in which politics take place but also objects of struggle in their own right, both in and over space. 'To think about politics and power', writes Tonkiss (2005: 59), 'is nearly always to invoke a set of spatial relations: from the surface of the body to the distribution of property, the spatial order of the senate chamber or the "theatre" of war'. Urban spaces provide sites for political action and are themselves politicized in struggles over access, control, and representation. Port cities are particularly interesting political sites of struggle, with strong traditions of working-class solidarity and grassroots social movements.

Legacies of radicalism are evident within contemporary forms of alternative politics in Liverpool, Marseille, and New Orleans, as many activists coalesce primarily around traditional labour and social movements. Grassroots radicalism and solidarity are rooted in old working-class and migrant communities in these post-industrial port cities and embedded within collective memory and urban identity. However, just as the maritime economy of each city has declined, so too has the strength of popular political action. Not one of these cities has supported a mass social movement or protest in recent years. Despite their radical self-image, they cannot really be termed 'rebel cities' at the

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