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Notions on Community and Family in the Context of Urban Regeneration

8th Congress of the European Society on Family Relations (ESFR)
Changing Family Relations – Gender and Generations 2016



Call for Papers

“Megatrends like globalization, increasing migration, the neo-liberal transformation of labor, individualization and pluralization as well as demographic ageing profoundly influence families today.” [...] families are often challenged to find *their own ways* to deal with the consequences of these megatrends [...].” (italics mine)

Ethnographic Fieldwork

- 2002-2010 (over 20 months in Dublin in total)
- over 100 structured and semi-structured interviews with more than 120 interviewees
- 50 mental maps
- 30 network interviews (network analysis)
- 5 genealogical interviews
- consensus survey
- unpublished documents and photographic material
- participant observation: active involvement in community and family life









East Wall

North Wall

Pearse Street

Ringsend/Irishtown

Community

- close social networks based on daily face-to-face relationships and multiple ties of kinship, friendship and acquaintance
- relatively small, about 4-9,000 people each
- numerous institutions serving families/members
- Families have lived there over generations: docklands as traditional, cultural territory with practical and symbolic meanings
- communal identities and group solidarity
- common aims and objectives

Community

In 1954 there was
165 of us [my
family] related in
the one street
only.





Community

Most of my relatives are from Ringsend. I have relatives in many streets, my grandparents live down there, my aunts and uncles live there. Then my mum's family, my granny's family still live down there. Sometimes you would hear people say 'Jesus, you are related to every second person down here.' And it is true. You hear the expression 'in-breds' sometimes down here. They are all in-breds down here. And that's because every second person is related to each other.

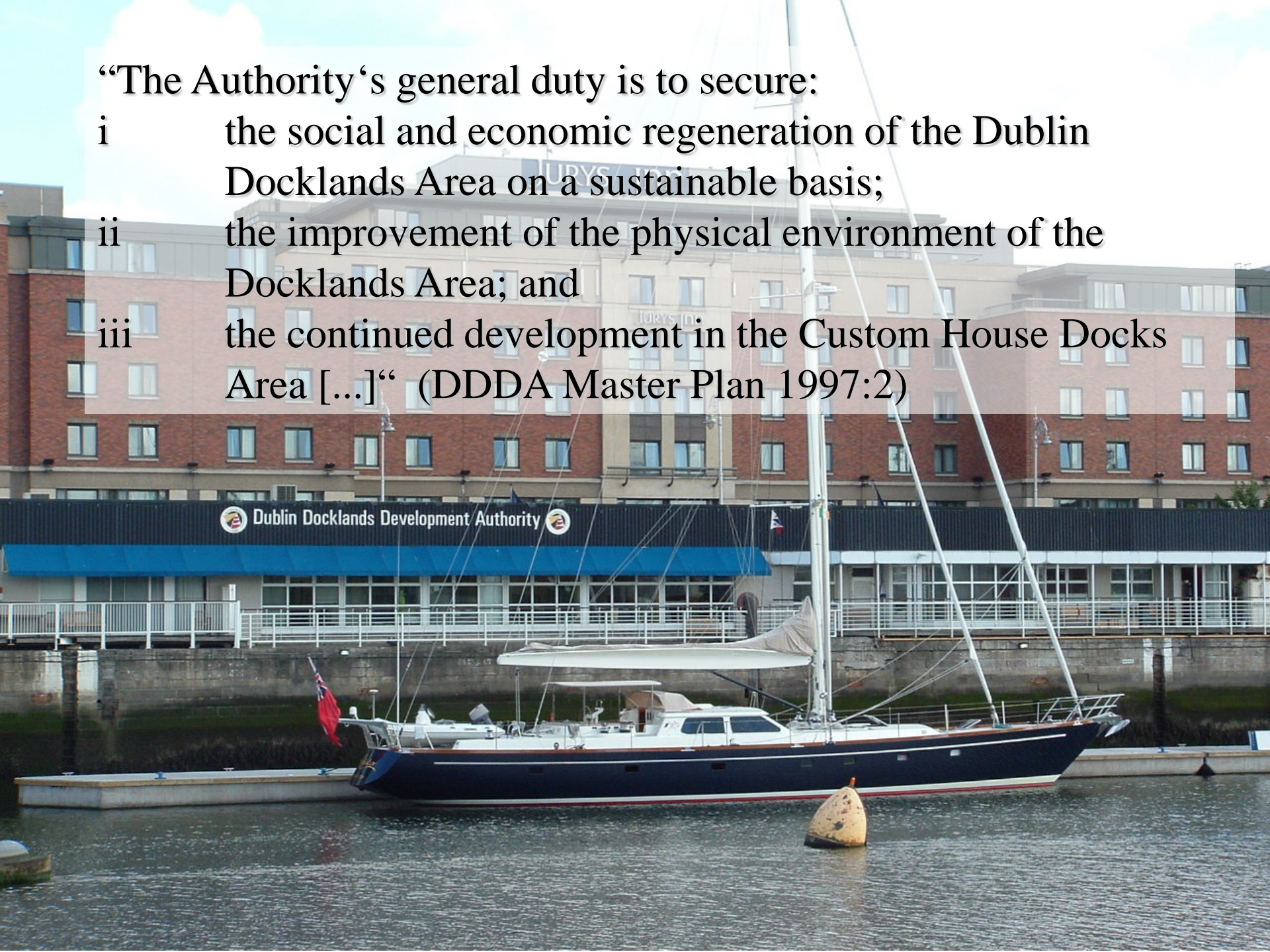
What effect did and does the regeneration of the docklands have on the situation of the communities and families?

What role do the communities play in this context?



“The Authority’s general duty is to secure:

- i the social and economic regeneration of the Dublin Docklands Area on a sustainable basis;
- ii the improvement of the physical environment of the Docklands Area; and
- iii the continued development in the Custom House Docks Area [...]” (DDDA Master Plan 1997:2)



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- The background of the slide features a dramatic sunset sky with warm orange and yellow tones. Several construction cranes are silhouetted against the sky, their long jibs extending across the frame. The sun is a bright, glowing orb in the lower right quadrant, partially obscured by a dark structure. The overall scene conveys a sense of industrial activity and the end of a day.
- traffic, infrastructure, public spaces
 - Health issues
 - Training, education, employment
 - Housing
 - Support of communal institutions
 - Community- and family-friendly design and image

Images of the Docklands

GRAND CANAL HARBOUR dublin 2
the city's new waterside quarter



docklands





South Docks Festival
21st-23rd

South Docks Festival
21st-23rd

21st-23rd

P
No parking
any time
any day
any day

Conclusion

- Families as parts of communities
- Communities as important political actors to enforce family interests
- Community as identity-forming social unit
- Community as beneficial and resilience factor for families in disadvantages areas and in times of urban transformation
- Community as an ideal and political objective

Desiderata

- To pay more attention to families and communities together. For a long time, “this study of community contexts was eclipsed by a far greater preoccupation with looking inside the family, to the exclusion of looking outside the family.” (Mancini and Bowen 2013)
- To study families and community not only in problematic settings (and negative impacts), but also benefits and as factors of resilience