Work Organisation, Technology, Community and Change: the Story of the Dublin Docker

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'*Every ship is a different factory*'[1]

In his famous article 'Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism', E. P. Thompson describes the gradual internalisation of a clock-based working time. He argues that this process occurred unevenly and over generations, and that 'irregular labour rhythms were perpetuated (and even institutionalized) into the present [twentieth] century, notably in London and in the great ports'.[2] This article describes the changes in work organisation that occurred on Dublin's docks in the twentieth century. It tells the story of how dock work became regular, and the effects this had on the dockers' experience of work and on the occupational communities to which they belonged. In particular, it examines the way in which the dockers' occupational culture was shaped by the nature of dock work and by the conditions under which it was conducted. In addition, it examines how this culture acted as a bulwark against the insecurity of casualisation. The article is based on interviews with retired dockers, which were conducted in 1994 as part of an ethnographic study that analysed the social practices of Dublin dockers.[3]

Throughout the world dockers are noted for their strong occupational culture and communities. As Turnbull and Wass have noted with respect to English dockers, the source of this identity lies both in the work itself and in those who performed it.[4] In this article the links between occupational culture, community and the labour process are examined by looking at the various changes that occurred on the Dublin docks. The article is divided into five sections followed by a conclusion. The first gives a brief overview of the main changes that occurred on Dublin's docks. The second describes the nature of dock work during the initial 'casual' phase. The type of work undertaken and the experience of working under casualisation are both outlined. The third section looks at docking communities and in particular the way in which these communities acted as a buffer against insecurity. The fourth examines the effects of decasualisation on the experience of dock work and the docklands communities. Finally, the fifth describes the effects of containerisation on the labour process and community formation.

The organisation of dock work in Dublin

In 1707, an Act of Parliament gave the Corporation of the City of Dublin the power to erect a Ballast Office and responsibility for the conservation of the port. Thus the port of Dublin was born as a legal entity.[5] In the years that followed considerable improvements were made to the port; the river channel was deepened and widened, timber jetties were constructed, deep water quays were built on the north and south sides of the river, the quay was extended to provide deep-water berthage, the harbour was dredged, and land was reclaimed. A deep-water jetty was constructed on the north side of Alexandra Basin.[6] By 1960, the port consisted of the north and south quays, Alexandra Basin and Custom House Docks. It was five miles long, two-thirds of which was deep-water berthage.

Dockers tended to specialise in either deep-sea cargo or cross-channel trade. The deep sea sector included ships going to the continent of Europe, the Far East and Africa as well as some ships going to the United Kingdom. Among those arriving at the port were the 'Liberty ships', which carried grain from Norfolk, Virginia, and ships carrying second-hand cars from Japan. Coal was also imported through the deep sea sector; dockers specialising in this work became known as 'coalies'.[7] In the cross-channel sector dockers worked for companies such as B&I, Bristol Steam and Burns and Laird.[8] Dockers here were paid less than the 'coalies', where the work was dirty, and the deep sea sector, where the work was less regular.[9]

In the early days of Dublin Port sailors themselves did the job of unloading ships. In 1823 the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company was inaugurated. From that point onwards the replacement of sailing ships by steamships led to an increased need to reduce turnover time, and so specialised crews of dockers took over the task. The early history of docking is not documented, however docker lore has it that local crews (known as hobblers) would row out to the ships from the port. The first man on board would be entitled to negotiate a rate for unloading the ship with the captain. With this practice, the hobblers became Master Stevedores, the middle men who leased the dockers' labour to the ships' owners. (In other countries the word stevedore is synonymous with docker. In Ireland, stevedore more normally refers to these middlemen.) They usually came from powerful local families.[10] As they became established, responsibility for arranging the discharge of the ship often moved from the ship owners to the importers. There was no longer a need to row out to the ship; instead messages were sent in advance to the stevedore detailing the nature of the commodity and the labour required.

The conditions under which dock work was conducted can be divided into four phases: under casualisation, dockers were hired and paid on a daily basis. They had no guaranteed jobs or income. Their work was based on the docks in general rather than being tied to a specific employer. Under the 'button system', introduced in 1947, 'button men' were given first preference when jobs were being distributed. However, in all other respects the work remained the same. It was still casual, with no guarantee of job or income. Under decasualisation, which was introduced in 1971, the button system was abolished. A dockers' register was established so that dock work could only be given to registered dockers. Weekly pay-rates were introduced instead of piecework, as well as 'fallback' money (payment made when no work was available). A rotational system, whereby the available work was shared equally and a pension scheme were also established. Until this point, dockers could be hired by any one of the many stevedores located on Dublin docks. In 1982 these stevedores were replaced by Dublin Cargo Handling (DCH), which was licensed as the sole stevedore in the deep sea section of Dublin Port. From this time point onwards, dockers worked for this one employer. Dock work became permanent. In 1992 DCH went into liquidation and the work was re-casualised: fallback pay was discontinued, piecework was introduced, dockers were assigned to work for specific companies and restrictive manning and work practices were abolished. Alongside these organisational changes, dock work itself – the unloading and loading of cargo – underwent major change in the 1960s as containerisation became dominant. Previously dockers removed cargo piece-by-piece, but containers were lifted off the ships as units. Both decasualisation and containerisation were to cause major changes to the nature of dock work.

Decasualisation was introduced in 1961 for men in the channel sector, and in 1971 this was extended to those working in the deep-sea docks. In terms of the life of a Dublin docker, the experience of work under decasualisation was not typical. Decasualisation lasted only a short time, as one docker commented: 'in 1972, they decasualised us. In 1982, they made us permanent, and in 1992, they casualised us again'. Though the twenty years of decasualisation were the exception to the rule, by looking at the contrast between the new and old organisation of work, and the way in which the docker experienced such changes, we can shine some light on the nature of docking work.

Dock work under casualisation

As Dublin docks dealt primarily with imports, most of the dock work was concerned with the unloading of goods. A wide variety of goods passed through the port, making the work varied and interesting. The dockers interviewed were vivid in relating their memories of the many cargos they worked with. Coal was unloaded with a number seven shovel, which could lift up to four stone of coal. Grain was shovelled into sacks, the dockers avoiding the fat rats that feasted in the hulls. Timber and cement were carried off on shoulders. Metal ore, which would make tongues go green, was unloaded through the use of a narrow number five shovel. The list goes on: tea, newsprint, steel, fruit, machinery, coffee, beer and brandy, gifts and wedding presents for the Hector Greys shops, all arrived at Dublin docks. Perhaps the most memorable cargo was guano, fertiliser from bird droppings that had to be shovelled out of the hold of ships (of the latter, one docker said with characteristic wit that 'it had an awful smell out of it - nobody robbed it!').

Not only did the working day vary, but the dockers were free to organise the way in which they worked. The basic organisational unit of work was the gang, and within this unit there was little supervision, the pace and operation of the job being set internally. In a study of London dockers the 'freedom' of the job was singled out by 98 per cent of dockers as an advantage of dock work over other jobs.[11] This was freedom to organise the work, freedom from working a continuous five-day week and freedom from working for any one employer in particular. A Dublin docker describes his negative experience of factory work in Birmingham: '[I] couldn't settle for it, you know . . . In the factories . . . I nearly went crazy in them I did.' Docking has been described as a job with high intrinsic rewards. Studies of dockers at Southampton have found that most cite the friendly atmosphere and variety of work as important contributions to job satisfaction[12] and these results, as we shall see, were echoed by the Dublin dockers. There was, however, a contradiction at the heart of dock work under casualisation. On the one hand, dockers had a job they enjoyed, on the other hand they had to face the tyranny of daily selection, and its accompanying insecurity. It is to this that we shall now turn.

Until decasualisation was introduced in the 1970s, dockers had to turn up every day at a certain point in order to get work. From there the lucky would be taken on, the unlucky left to try again. In Dublin this was known as the Read. The competition could be intense, as this quote shows:

> Me mother bought me a pair of boots, out of that [the first] job . . . and I never done another day's work. I wore the boots going up and down the docks looking for work, but I never got another day's work. They were big hobnailed boots for the next coal boat I was going to get. Jesus. I got nothing again for that whole summer. There was over 1,000 people down on the docks that time, so they had plenty to choose from. We were the last of the last. Every morning we went out at a quarter-to-eight, go to the different yards and see if there was a bit of work, see if the boats were up, but you were usually left standing there.

The decision whether to employ or not lay with the stevedore (the middleman who hired dockers' labour to the ship-owners) and his foreman. As one docker describes it, 'You had to show that you were able to do it, because the boss would be looking at you and if there was anything wrong, you'd be looking in his face for the next few weeks and you wouldn't be wanted.' The stevedore was king. If he did not 'like your face', he did not pick you. The dockers interviewed, though in their seventies, remembered vividly the depression felt on being refused:

> - When you didn't get a job, the depression, that feeling, I don't know what it was ... you couldn't believe that you were looking forward to getting a day's work and you don't get it, you come up to a place and there is no work.
>
> - You get two days one week and the next week you mightn't get a day, you might be unlucky, the depression it put you in was terrible.

> - He'd [the foreman] be up in the stand and he'd point you, you, you, you . . . he knew your name, he worked with me father, the whole lot; you, you, and you would be left out and you wouldn't get a job, it was very humiliating now.

When there were long periods of unemployment, such as during the Second World War when docking all but dried up, dockers were forced to emigrate to England, returning to their wives and families once a year at Christmas.

Casualisation and dockland communities

The response to this casualisation was the development of resistance strategies based on protection of the docking community, and in Dublin this was particularly linked to the family. In terms of who performed the work, Dublin had three dockland communities: Ringsend and City Quay on the southside, and on the north side, the inner-city area surrounding Sheriff Street. These areas, according to those who lived there, were the 'real Dublin'. One docker described 'anyone from about four miles out' as a 'culchie'. The communities were bound up with extensive family networks. As another said, 'If you threw a stone in Ringsend it would hit a relation.' Here, one man describes how he became a docker:

> I remember the day I got my first job on the docks. I was on my summer holidays from school. That was in 1935. I remember my mother sent me down to the dock with some tea and sandwiches for my father who was working discharging a coal boat in Spenser Dock on the Sutton's bank. I was 14 years old at the time. My father came over to me and said "son go home and take them short trousers off and put a long pair on you". So I looked at him and he said "Go on, I'm after getting you a job working with me". So I rushed home and changed my trousers and went back down to him. I remember getting down into the hatch of the coal boat . . . I was so proud to be working with my father . . . I knew from that day on I was going to be a docker.

Throughout the world, docking is associated with the maintenance of insular communities. Morgan, writing about London's docklands, describes how local culture emerged as a defence of local labour markets for local people.[13] In Dublin, as the above quotation highlights, docking was a family profession, passed from father to son. In addition, as the quotations below illustrate, many dockers, particularly in the casual era, were related to the stevedores who would recruit as far as possible only members of their own family:

> - I have no doubt that my father spoke to the stevedores whom he knew and said "that's a son of mine over there, if there is any work give him a job by all means".

> - What used to happen in latter years was . . . fathers were seen in the Read standing behind their son and pointing to him and the stevedore would say, right that must be Willie Murphy's son. [He'd call] "Willie Murphy", and when he would call Willie Murphy, the younger Willie Murphy would walk out and get employed, but Willie Murphy [Snr] had already been employed and gone off about his business, so that is how they would get to know them.

The importance of a family connection with docking was made formal with the introduction of the Button system. During the Second World War cross-channel shipping fell while the deep-sea docks lay idle. After the war, an increase in trade was accompanied by an increase in work on the docks, the return of dockers who had emigrated to England during the war years, and an influx of new workers. Those who had stayed during the lean war years resented that their commitment to docking was not being recognised by the stevedores. At the Read they had to compete for their jobs with those who had no legacy of dock work. In addition, dockers resented being forced to bribe foremen in order to get work. One docker commented that 'men used to buy their work at one time.' Others told of being paid in pubs by the foreman who would expect a drink in return, or of leaving the price of a pint in a box of matches with the barman for collection later.

Strong union solidarity is as much part of the dockers' tradition as is family and community ties. Irish dockers were first represented by the British-based National Union of Dock Labourers (NUDL),

and subsequently by Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU). In 1924 much of the Dublin base of the ITGWU, including dockers, joined the newly-formed Workers' Union of Ireland (WUI). Other unions representing dockers included the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers' Union (ATGWU), which was set up in 1922, and the Irish Seamen and Port Workers' Union (ISPW), established in 1933. In 1957 the ISPW union split, with the dockers becoming members of the No. 2 Branch of the Marine Port and General Workers' Union (MPGWU).[14] The MPGWU merged with SIPTU in 1998. Sadly, for all the importance of the dockers to Irish labour history, very little has been written of their union struggles since the foundation of the state, with little analysis of the unions' role in negotiations around the dramatic changes to dock work.

The grievances of the war and post-war years mentioned above led to increasing dissatisfaction with the casual nature of dock work. On 28 June 1946, 1000 dockers went on strike for holiday pay.[15] The strike ended on 3 August with Sean Lemass, the Minister for Industry and Commerce, promising to introduce a scheme to abolish casual work the following year.[16] The Harbour Act of 1946 established a harbour authority and Section 62 provided for the possibility of setting up a dockers' register.[17] Buttons were issued the following year.[18] Those on the register were given priority at the daily Read. These were the 'button-men', so named because the union button or badge they wore indicated that they had the right to be called before any 'non-button' men. In this quote, a docker explains the button system and speaks of the intense competition for jobs that existed:

> The button meant you had to get a job before an outsider. At that time a stevdore could come along and pick anyone for the job, so long as they were button men . . . it was the poorest form of security, if it was security. It was badly abused that time. I worked with professors, school professors, digging coal – the first time they dirtied their bibs in their life. It was the dumping ground for all of them . . . they never got buttons. They'd be working casual.

The button could be passed from father to son, in cases of ill heath or retirement, thus further institutionalising the family nature of docking.

Family ties aided recruitment but there was another aspect to family membership, as Turnbull explains: 'The dockers' work and social environments were complementary and this created both a high degree of solidarity and a pattern of norms and obligations which gave psychological comfort and support to dockers during periods of unemployment and distress.'[19] In many parts of the world docking communities are not only tightly-knit and self-contained, but isolated and marginalised. Their pariah status in the wider society is matched by a strong community identity and occupational pride. Kasinitz and Hillyard[20] studying the Redhills dockland area of New York, and Morgan[21] looking at London's docklands, identified the tendency of dockland communities to deflect their sense of exclusion by creating a positive collective identity. Respondents in Dublin would emphasise that 'we were the top dockers'. This identity was linked to the work that they did (in Dublin, deep sea unloading was seen as 'real docking'), the areas where they lived (Ringsend, City Quay and the Northside dockland area), and the families to which they belonged. A dockland paper, *The Waterfront*, produced by port workers in the 1960s, always carried a feature on famous families of the port, families who could trace their contribution to docking back over three or four generations. The docking community therefore gave status to dockers who felt separated from a wider society, and psychological, physical and material support in times of little work, insecurity and poverty.

Casualisation also shaped docking communities and docking occupational culture in other ways. For example, dockers were paid daily, which had two effects: one was that dockers' wives did not know how much their husbands earned, and those interviewed reported that new dockers were warned not to give wives more than a rate that was seen as acceptable among the group. Extra money stayed with the docker. Secondly, the importance of being part of a gang for recruitment led to pressures to socialise with the gang.

As mentioned earlier, dockers were renowned for their trade union militancy. Turnbull argues that 'under casualism . . . "one out, all out" was a product of necessity if dockers were to hold any standards or preserve even the most meagre conditions in an industry subject to the vagaries of casual engagement and the fluctuation of trade.'[22] In the UK, an increase in industrial action in the period following the Second World War led to the commissioning of a number of reports to investigate the problem. Devlin proposed decasualisation as a solution in 1967, as it was the casual nature of the work that was held to be responsible.[23] In the following quotation, a Dublin docker describes the extreme insecurity attached to dock work: 'The dockers worked very hard. They had rough justice. If one of the dockers was smoking, cursing or interfering with the work, the foreman sacked him there and then and if there were men hanging around he'd take one on.' In the UK, dockers were held to be more casual than building workers, and dockers' wages were subject to greater variability. However, what also differentiates dockers from other casual workers is the gang system and ships' dependency on tides, which afforded the dockers considerable power.[24] A threat to 'go slow' or to withdraw labour had immediate and direct financial repercussions. This power was used in the negotiation of 'dirty money' – occasional additional payments demanded by dockers when they were asked to handle cargo they considered exceptionally awkward or difficult. The practice of using collective methods to increase payment was used as a matter of course. The gang was both the basic unit of work and the basic unit of resistance. Gang coherence was solidified by the recruitment process, the payment process, the nature of the work, and the docking communities from which dock labour was drawn. This coherence conferred considerable strength on the dockers when it came to trade union struggles. Dockers had a reputation for frequent 'unofficial' wildcat strikes, which were made possible by the tight solidarity of the gang.

Decasualisation and communities

In 1971 casualisation and the button system were replaced by decasualisation. Decasualisation disrupted the docking family networks. Whereas under the button system the button could be passed from father to son, the permanency granted under decasualisation was not transferable. It also altered the selection process. Now, work was rotated, with men being called alphabetically. Gang membership was no longer necessary to get selected and socialising with the gang in pubs started to decline. The new selection process caused other problems as feuding family members ended up in the same gang. Work groups based on friendships were broken up and replaced with groups made up of individuals who were antagonistic to each other. This further undermined the sociability of docking. With decasualisation came the introduction of a weekly wage and some felt that this finally gave dockers a stake in normal society. However, when dockers were paid daily, 'every night was a Saturday night', and some of them missed the socialising that went with being paid cash-in-hand every day. Changes to the Read and the selection process not only altered a docker's working life, but also how he spent his leisure time:

> It gave them a promise of work or pay if you report for work. If you get the work you will earn X pounds or so. If you don't get any pay, at least we will give you as much for reporting, that's fall back pay and at least this gave them the dignity of a wage and a pension scheme. They began to get a future.

Dockers were now paid by cheque which visibly demonstrated their earnings and enabled them to budget, and save:

> There is this much for the Missus, this much for the housekeeping, this much for my pocket money and now I have this left over. It was then that they started to think of 'saving' and it became obvious materially. Up until the sixties there were only bicycles, then after the sixties you saw the arrival of cars on the docks and people were now travelling in from the suburbs, and not from the surrounding neighbourhood.

Casualisation created communities that were separate and isolated from the mainstream. Mars notes that 'dock work is noted for the solidarity it develops among its workers . . . and this solidarity was re-enforced by their overall "pariah" status in the wider community'.[25] Docking was not seen as respectable work. Dockers were felt to be lazy or drunken; one docker remembers been described as 'another brat for the docks' by a teacher at school. Part of this view may be linked to the fact that dock work broke many of the work norms of society. Dockers could choose not to work if they wanted to; hence they were seen as lazy, though of course often, inactivity was forced upon them. Their manner of payment, cash-in-hand every day, was perhaps seen as suspect. Moreover, as seen above, this made it difficult for dockers and their families to plan for the future; perhaps this unpredictability further set them apart. Thompson argues that a lack of time-discipline was often interpreted as laziness or weakness.[26] He cites Bernstein's account of Mexican mineworkers: 'His lack of initiative, inability to save, absences while celebrating too many holidays, willingness to work only three or four days a week if that paid for necessities, insatiable desire for alcohol — all were pointed out as proof of a natural inferiority.'[27] This account echoes the life of a casualised docker, and the pejorative way in which dockers felt they were seen by wider society. Even after decasualisation, high levels of absenteeism remained and this can be seen as a rejection of the 'factory worker' ethic and the regularity of work which decasualisation attempted to impose.

Containerisation

Casualisation was not the only factor affecting occupational culture; the nature of dock work also had an impact. This can be seen when, contrary to what was expected, some dockers felt that after decasualisation, the status of the dockers was diminished. As one docker commented, 'the pride started to go', and in the words of another, 'it killed everybody'. These feelings are probably related to the structural changes that coincided with decasualisation. Employers agreed to decasualisation only if dockers agreed to accept new technology in return. By the end of the 1960s container operators had almost 100 per cent of the short sea general cargo market. Not only did the introduction of pallets, containers and roll on/roll off systems reduce the number of men necessary to unload the ships, it also changed the type of work that was undertaken. Earlier technological advances such as the introduction of cranes and forklift trucks 'facilitated the cargo handling process, but left the methods of dock work largely intact. Unitisation transformed the very nature of dock work and accelerated the decline of port labour requirements way beyond initial expectations.'[28] Under casualisation, docking was sociable work; as one docker explained, 'you had this job and the eight hours wouldn't seem like five, with the old fun and the craic'. In contrast container work was monotonous and isolated, as the work is done individually and requires little skill. Turnbull quotes John Connelly, of the Transport Workers' Union (TWU): '[conventional] stowage takes the form of a conceptual frame within which the dockworker weaves a fabric of cargo. By comparison, stowing containers is only marginally more imaginative than stacking bricks of equal size.'[29]

So while the work was no longer as physically demanding, its social nature began to be undermined. As one docker commented, 'as the work got handier, which it was, the spirit it seemed was going out of the docks . . . we lost a lot of comradeship.' In the words of another, 'We'd lost a lot of the old craic that we'd have when there was twenty-one men in the gang and that was reduced to, what? – ten and then six'. Containerisation drastically reduced the numbers working on the docks. In the 1960s up to one thousand people were on the dockers' registers in Dublin. With decasualisation that number was halved. By 1990 only 135 dockers remained.[30] Turnbull argues that 'customs and understandings are not the automatic result of structural conditions, but have to be developed and maintained.'[31] So, as the number of dockers declined, so did the strength of docking culture.

Conclusion

The insecurity of the casual system was mitigated by the positive nature of dock work, its social nature, variety, and freedom from managerial control. These aspects were undermined by containerisation. As one docker interviewed put it, with characteristic Dublin humour: 'There is no docking now, it's not the same class of work, it is all containers now. If you felt the weight of that, I'm telling you, you wouldn't lift it!' Dockworkers have been replaced by 'port operatives', 'cargo operatives', 'berth operatives'. In Liverpool, Turnbull reports, dockers referred to themselves as POWs. In the past the negative effects of casualisation were softened by the strong occupational culture of docking. In Dublin for example, not only did the dockers have the strong trade union solidarity that is characteristic of dockers worldwide, but in the 1960s they established a Mutual Benefit Society centred on a paper called *The Waterfront*. As its by-line proclaimed, this was 'the paper for the port, produced for the workers, by the workers'. Not only did the paper seek to present the port workers' side of the story, but the Society employed three doctors, introduced a sick and medical pay scheme for all port workers, men and women, introduced Christmas savings schemes and children's scholarship schemes. Turnbull argues that 'dockers were invariably made by economic and technological forces, urbanisation, immigration, state policies and the like, but they also "made themselves", or at least helped create themselves out of the world they found around them'.[32]

In *The Waterfront* we see an example of this creative process. The creation and maintenance of this culture was in part related to a work that no longer exists, and to workers who are no longer employed. Containerisation revolutionised dock work, changed forever the shape of the docks and the communities that lived around them. It dramatically reduced shipping costs and increased reliability. The cost of shipping goods accounts for between one and two per cent of the retail value. This is 90 per cent less than before containerisation.[33] This introduced a new era of global trade as it made it financially viable to locate manufacturing centres far away from markets. It also changed the nature of dock work. The community and gang is no longer as important. The numbers employed are much less. When the decasualisation scheme was introduced in 1971, it covered 550 men. By 1992, when casualised work was re-introduced after the collapse of Dublin Cargo Handling, there were forty-two permanent dockers (who were offered work first) and 100 part time dockers in a supplementary pool.[34] Dock work is once more insecure, but has lost the positive attributes of work, family and community that once made it attractive and provided a measure of support and solidarity. The likelihood is that today's dockers will be as vulnerable, if not more so, than those in the past, particularly if dockland employers are successful in employing non-unionised labour.[35]

Notes

1 Interview with Michael Donnelly, president of the Marine Port and General Workers Union: 'I'd say dockers don't see it as an occupation. They see it as a way of life and [there] is a joke: "every ship is a different factory".'

2 E.P. Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism', *Past & Present,* vol. 38, no. 1, 1967, p. 74 .

3 Unless otherwise stated, all dockers' quotations in the text are drawn from the interviews conducted as part of this study.

4 P. Turnbull and V. Wass, 'The Greatest Game: No More Redundant Dockers and The Demise of 'Dock Work'', *Work, Employment & Society*, vol. 8, no. 4, 1994, pp 487-506.

5 In 1786 the Committee was succeeded by the 'Corporation for preserving and improving the Port of Dublin'. This became known as the Ballast Board and functioned until 1867. Responsibility then passed to the Dublin Port and Docks Board. This became the Dublin Port Company in 1987 (*Thom's Directory* (1960), pp xxx-4; Dublin Port Company, Corporate Information, http://www.dublinport.ie).

6 *Thom's Directory* (1965), p. xvi.

7 A. Traynor, 'Dublin Port and Docks Board and Stevedoring: The History of the Boards Direct Involvement in Stevedoring Through its Subsidiary Dublin Cargo Handling' (Master of Business Studies, unpublished thesis, University College Dublin, 1993), p. 61.

8 ibid. p. 61

9 ibid p. 61
10 In the interviews the names 'The Kelly', 'George Bell', 'Carricks' and 'Kit Murphy' were mentioned.
11 J. G. West, 'Report on a Survey of Registered Dock Workers at London who have Accepted Severance', *National Port Council Bulletin* 6, Summer 1974, p. 36.
12 P.T. Allen, 'Size of workforce, morale and absenteeism: a re-examination', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 20, no. 1. (1982), pp 83-100.
13 G. Morgan, 'Frustrated Respectability: local culture and politics in London's docklands', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 11, no. 5, 1993, pp 525-541.
14 The number one branch was left open and empty in the hope that the seamen who had departed would return to the MPGWU [interview with Michael Donnelly, former president of the MPGWU].
15 *Irish Times*, 28 June 1946.
16 *Irish Times*, 3 August 1946.
17 'A harbour authority may either alone or in co-operation with any other body or bodies, take such steps as they think proper to improve conditions of employment of casual workers at their harbour and, in particular, may institute a system of registration of such workers and of confinement of employment to registered workers, but the harbour authority shall not exercise any of their powers under this section where such workers and their employers have themselves instituted any such system.' (Harbour Act, 1946).
18 Interview with Michael Donnelly, former president of the MPGWU.
19 P. Turnbull, 'Dock strikes and the demise of the dockers' occupational culture', *Sociological Review,* vol. 40, no. 2, 1992, p. 308.
20 P. Kasinitz and D. Hillyard, 'The Old-Timer's Tale: the Politics of Nostalgia on the Waterfront', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1995, pp 139-164.
21 Morgan, 'Frustrated Respectability'.
22 Turnbull, 'Dock strikes', p. 298.
23 *Final report of the Committee of Enquiry under Lord Devlin into Certain matters concerning the Port Transport industry* (HMSO, 1965).
24 Arguably, modern casual workers employed on 'Just In Time' systems have a similar power.
25 G. Mars, 'The Stigma Cycle: Value and Politics in a Dockland Union', in S. Wallman (ed.), *The Social Anthropology of Work* (London, 1995), p. 133.
26 Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism', p. 91.
27 M.D. Bernstein, *The Mexican Mining Industry, 1890-1950* (New York, 1964), pp 179-182
28 Turnbull, 'Dock strikes', p. 305.
29 ibid., p 317.
30 Traynor, 'Dublin Port and Docks Board', p. 6.
31 Turnbull, 'Dock Strikes, p. 298.
32 P. Turnbull, Rethinking Dock Work', *Labour History Review*, vol. 66, no. 3, 1991, p. 372.
33 A. Donovan, 'The Impact of Containerization: from Adam Smith to the 21st Century', *The Review of Business*, vol. 25, no. 1, 2004, pp 10-15.
34 Traynor, 'Dublin Port and Docks Board', p.163.
35 Ocean Manpower Ltd (OML) took over the running of the deep-sea section of Dublin Port in 1992. In 2000, OML attempted to employ fifteen new dockers. This became the subject of a Labour Court case (*Irish Times,* 15 May 2000; Labour Court Recommendation No. LCR16495 (CC99/1363)). The Labour Court recommended that permanent employees be given a guaranteed employment of sixteen hours a week, but also that a single Read system be introduced as requested by OML. OML closed in 2003.