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NEO-LIBERAL REALITY IN POST-INDUSTRIAL WATERFRONTS OF THE POST-SOCIALIST CITIES: THE POLISH TRI-CITY CASE

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ABSTRACT: *A natural problem of post-industrial cities, which results from economic change, is their heritage in the form of degraded and unused post-industrial areas. They are often situated in central districts. Thus, it is obvious that local authorities consider them important, and prioritize them in spatial development. The very special and significant areas of coastal cities are waterfronts that have experienced, and are still experiencing, transformations, which constitute indelible elements of development. This paper is an attempt to evaluate the directions of waterfronts' developments in Poland; taking into account the fact that while on the one hand, Polish cities are struggling with the socialist legacy, on the other hand, they are under pressure from the neoliberal development paradigm.*

Keywords: *waterfront, neoliberal city, post-industrial city, flagship projects, Poland*

JEL Classification: R11

1. POST-INDUSTRIAL CITY

Fifty years of development and transformation of urban spaces, taking place during intensified industrialism and modernist urbanism, have left behind dispersed urban structures in defragmented and dismembered cities consisting of many heterogeneous elements, which are meant to create some kind of aesthetic homogeneity. Such an amorphous city seems to be abstract, disordered, complicated and illogical. This abstract space, in a social sense, defragments symbolic and expressive relations among different city users, and inevitably leads to a feeling of loss and longing for a better, if not ideal urban environment (Marshall, 2001). The main reasons for the transformation of cities are radical changes in production systems and no less radical socio-economic restructuring that is combined with the growing importance of environmental protection. These fundamental changes have also been caused by globalization and deindustrialization of the nations, which can also be described as a shift from national to global economy - from fordism to postfordism - based on the society of knowledge and new technologies. The above-mentioned processes have been accompanied by several demographic, social and cultural changes, including the increasing role of global institutions and emergence of the sustained development paradigm. A post-industrial city is mainly characterized by

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multilevel transformation processes, which do not aim to create a new city model - in the traditional meaning - but to trigger the processes of adaptation and restructuring of the already existing urban spaces and establishing new systems of agreement for urban development policies (Billert, 2012).

In this paper, special attention is paid to the analysis of changes taking place in the post-industrial city - in the context of the neoliberal reality - and the roles that local authorities, local urban planners and administrators play. The complexity of socio-economic needs; the pressure exerted by new investment forces; and the inefficiency of the current management instruments show that there is a strong necessity for creating a system of agreements between administration bodies, various social bodies and business entities (Billert, 2012). There are some justified worries about the actions taken up by local authorities, which are clearly focused on implementing new investment projects and on creating an image of open and modern cities. Therefore, local authorities are often too submissive to investors and developers, who are given special rank and opportunity to exert direct influence on urban spaces. It is a situation where a simple economic calculation becomes the driving force behind these actions, and the city, itself, as well as its citizens, are fed the neoliberal doctrine, which usually does not pay enough attention to the many significant social issues, and some important cultural and historical conditions, of a given city. These concerns are also expressed by scientists and researchers who emphasize the importance of seeking the balance between the things “for sale” and the things “for people.”

Gierat-Bieroń (2012) points out that building more skyscrapers, office blocks, business districts or parks does not mean that a given city is modern, in the cultural sense. The author strongly disapproves of devastating old buildings and destroying the cultural landscapes of cities through commercial projects and submissively obeying the rules of “savage capitalism.” Modernity ought to be perceived as a specific way of conceptualizing the culture. It is a constant awareness of owning some precious cultural goods, and a skill of understanding them and deriving their message. It is respect for the history combined with curiosity to explore modernity.

Dominiczak (2013) is concerned with vanishing urban landscapes, which are crucial for properly understanding their uniqueness. These landscapes give people an opportunity to remember the urban history of cities through the authenticity of the places where this history took place. The author criticizes modern urban planning rules based on the dictatorship of road infrastructure development, which destroys old street systems and demolishes old residential and industrial buildings. He summarizes his observations with the conclusion that a consequence of expressing and implementing this type of approach is that some unique cities have become the main promoters of globalization, and they produce the so-called magma of urban “non-places”³ at a dizzying pace. That is why he sees the necessity of changing this urban doctrine that demolishes public space in cities. Creating a modern city is not only about its functional efficiency, but also about a sustained value of a dialogue that takes place in a shared urban space. Nawratek⁴ has also

³ Term defined by Marc Augé (2013).

⁴ Interview with K. Nawratek, published in Szewrański (2011).

commented on the issue of post-industrial cities which “lose” the driving force of their development – the industry. Moreover, he claims that withdrawing the industry from a city causes major changes, disintegrating it socially and spatially.

The post-industrial development of cities has caused a dilemma in space and created a paradox, as there are two simultaneous processes happening: investing in real estate in the city center and accelerating the urban sprawl (Hackworth, 2005). It seems that local authorities are particularly interested in renovating inner-city districts and certain spaces that are considered vital in urban space. They are motivated by the necessity to open cities to new impulses by creating some incentives and special offers for investors. At the same time, they try to create a city that is an attractive place for tourists and other city users.

2. REVITALIZATION PROCESSES VS. NEW INVESTMENTS IN INNER-CITY DISTRICTS

A natural problem for post-industrial cities, resulting from the economic changes, is their heritage in a form of often degraded and unused post-industrial areas. These are mostly situated in central districts. That is why local authorities consider them perspective, and prioritize them during spatial development. In order to increase their investment and/or residential attractiveness, several actions are usually taken to revitalize them and assign them some new urban functions.

Murzyn (2006) points out that revitalization, as a multidimensional process, should constitute a vast and integral vision. Implementing this vision should lead to a resolution of economic, social, ecological and other problems identified in the area that undergoes transformation. In a spatial dimension, revitalization should contribute to the process of creating some new space and change the city's physiognomy, or it ought to be useful in the process of restoring spatial order by consolidating, exposing and preserving the unique character of old districts and buildings. Belniak (2009) also emphasizes the complexity of this process, as well as the importance of integrated actions taken up in the scope of local policies that are initiated by local authorities in order to implement technical, economic and social schemes, which correspond to the principles of sustainable development and the rules of territorial cohesion, and preservation of the natural environment. These undertakings should be followed by some additional initiatives aimed at preventing the degradation of culture, economy and society, which facilitates a progressing and deepening process of social exclusion in a given region.

Among the many problems of revitalizing post-industrial areas, special attention should be paid to their transport accessibility. The existence of a well-planned transportation network increases the probability of making decisions on revitalizing brownfields, as developers are more willing to revitalize those post-industrial areas that are well-accessible thanks to already existing, and properly designed, transport infrastructure (Amekudzi & Fomunung, 2004).

Kaczmarek (2001) states that a given post-industrial area can be opened through many different and specific functions that begin to fill up the area in urban space and organize this space in a way that allows it to become an integrated part of a city. Marshall (2001) emphasizes an important meaning of revitalizing post-industrial and degraded urban areas. These transformations are usually evaluated positively, as they offer two kinds of advantages:

- in the context of urban space development – the reconstruction of a city's image and regeneration of economic investments;
- in the context of social life – an increased level of attractiveness, which invites people to a given place that was abandoned in the past.

In inner-city districts, the process of functional and spatial development proceeds in two ways: through completing and modernizing the already existing and well-shaped structures; or through some new, large-scale undertakings that have the power to change their image immediately and give them some new impulses for further development (Lorens, 2004). The so-called flagship projects of architectural and town-planning can trigger some significant space transformations. They can become the driving force behind the implementation of some new urban concepts and visions, which, in some cases, may be perceived as turning points in the process of urban area development. In fact, they actually affect cities as they create or stimulate the growth of new centers and functions through the concentration and intensification of the process of infrastructural development. Apart from their structural influences, the flagship projects can also carry some symbolic values, as they might target great icons, or they can take the form of mega events, referring to the cultural heritage of cities, which is extremely important in the context of preserving local identity (Lecroart, 2011).

3. URBAN WATERFRONT AS A SPECIAL REGION WHERE “NEW” AND “OLD” COEXIST

The renaissance of urban waterfronts took place in the context of deindustrialization in Western Europe and the abandonment of the principles of modernism (Tölle, 2010). Urban waterfronts have experienced, and are still experiencing, transformations that constitute indelible elements of development. Urban transformation – the shift from an industrial city of production to a post-industrial city of consumption – affects waterfronts in an obvious way, as they were parts of harbors or industrial areas. Those areas were usually inaccessible and blocked public access to the shoreline. As a result of economic transformation, some of them have been abandoned, degraded and become non-functional. Currently, those forgotten and unused parts of urban space have a chance to turn into attractive inner-city areas. This is possible under the condition that some specific actions are taken in order to increase the quality of these areas, and to fit them into the frames of a new socio-economic reality.

That is why, since the 1970s, urban waterfronts have become crucial development areas often mentioned in the revitalization strategies of many cities around the world.

Waterfronts are former port and industrial structures connected with maritime transport. In many post-industrial cities, they have undergone deep transformations and their space has been absorbed and dominated by trade- and service-based city centers, which satisfy the needs of a new middle class (Lorens, 2006). Increasing interest in restructuring and revitalizing urban waterfronts has shortly become an impulse to their transformation (Kocaj, 2010). Transformations of harbors has mainly resulted from technological changes - changes in the character and ways of transporting goods (development of container transport especially) - which have triggered the metamorphosis of urban waterfronts (Kaczmarek, 2001; Lorens, 2001, 2010).

Furthermore, the crisis in the shipbuilding industry has also led to the emergence of vastly degraded and unused port areas situated in central districts (Kocaj, 2010:107). Therefore, an important direction of spatial transformation in seaports is the revitalization of old port structures, combined with the diversification of their functions. This process is mainly about reactivating those port areas that have been liberated from the typical port functions during the phase of rapid industrialization of sea ports, and the technological development of maritime transport based on introducing large ships in fleets. The areas that have been recaptured this way are usually situated in central districts of cities, and have access to shallow port basins. They are often old urban waterfronts with intense, but depreciated land structures. Very often, large-scale projects are introduced in the process of their revitalization (Szwankowski, 2004). Thanks to technological and economic changes, and taking the important shift of industrial areas in the spatial structure of the city into consideration, such urban waterfronts have become of high importance for the process of creating urban environments where the many ideas of modern cities, societies and cultures can be brought to life (Marshall, 2001).

The era of postmodernism and global economy encourages, or even forces, countries, regions and cities to take part in constant competition for investors, consumers and resources (Iwata & del Rio, 2004). Waterfronts are also under this pressure, as they are often situated in very attractive districts of high rent land. Many revitalization projects implemented in waterfronts (in Western Europe and North America) are characterized by their large financial scale. It is also typical that local authorities, investors, groups of urban planners and architects are highly involved in these projects. As a result, some new inner-city areas emerge, sometimes even whole new residential districts that meet the requirements of the so-called post-Fordist ways of living, working and consuming. After their implementation they become distinctive landmarks and symbols of successful socio-economic restructuring of a given city (Tolle, 2009). Tolle (2010) further cites Venhuizen (2000) who underlines that contrary to the industrial era fragmentation of cities - by excluding some of its parts, especially port areas from residential use - nowadays, waterfronts and their land structures are perceived, by architects of residential structures, as inspiring and the sea is no longer "an enemy," but "a friend".

According to Gordon (1996), when planning, designing and managing the process of waterfront development, three important rules concerning the following issues should be obeyed: changing the image and character of the waterfront, improving its accessibility

and preserving its environment. Firstly, urban planners should be aware of what is a public good, and define it during the initial phase of planning. Through social participation, a strong image of a given waterfront can be successfully created, the image that will help people identify with an “old – new” place. Secondly, better accessibility can change the established stereotype that former port areas are isolated and inaccessible to ordinary citizens. The only thing conditioning this change is the choice of a development direction that anticipates the creation of some attractive public spaces.

Regeneration of waterfronts allows the improvement of the economy, and promotes seaside cities. Jones (1998) underlines that some of the most important advantages of revitalizing waterfronts are:

- increased value of real estate (stronger economy);
- increased number of developers investing in degraded areas;
- increased tourist and investment attractiveness;
- better environment quality due to implementation of the principles of sustainable development and the preservation of coastal ecosystems;
- better cultural heritage protection;
- better image of a city, which leads to improved marketing strategies;
- transportation systems and social services of a better quality etc.

The importance of issues connected with the waterfronts’ revitalization was confirmed in July 2000 during the world conference on the future of urban space, URBAN 21 in Berlin, when a document titled “10 Principles for a Sustainable Development of Urban Waterfront” was issued. Bruttomesso (2001) formulated the main factors that guarantee success when creating urban waterfronts, especially in the context of gaining new and attractive residential space, which may resolve the problems connected with the suburbanization processes. Another factor is their attractive localization as waterfronts are mostly located in direct proximity to the city center. It creates the opportunity to reclaim some space in order to reuse it and assign it some new functions. The role of already existing infrastructure is also important, and the heritage that they constitute should be protected as they still create or preserve the specific and symbolic meaning of a given place.

In this context the symbolic and distinct value of waterfronts is also emphasized as they create awareness of the history of a given place, which is often a symbol of prosperity and strength of the whole city. Another factor is reclaiming direct access to the sea, and the possibility to reconstruct a proper waterfront – land reclamation after many years of negligence. Reconstructing the resources hidden in such places and changing their meaning from “dangerous” and “disturbing” into a “friendly” space full of new possibilities for living, working and relaxing should be a positive result of waterfronts’ transformation.

On the basis of some selected revitalization projects, Frenchman (2001) listed a few “soft” factors, which are also significant in the context of creating an expressive and lively waterfront. In the author’s opinion, the aim of transformation cannot be only to attract

more newcomers, but also to create a spirit of unity. When designing a functionally and socially new waterfront the fact that each and every city or region is one of a kind, should be unconditionally respected and that is why we should search for a unique way of changing it based on its own history and heritage, avoiding copying and transferring the ideas and patterns used by the others in the process. As long as they are appropriate for one region or city they may not be suitable for the others as they might be geographically or culturally different. Therefore, the first step undertaken in order to introduce some physical transformations should be understanding the history and making it the basis of these changes.

That is why the process of revitalizing waterfronts is perceived positively as they create new opportunities for urban development. They offer places for living, relaxing, taking up cultural activities and developing trade or services in a very attractive environment. Revitalization has returned waterfronts to the people, and has created places offering lots of possibilities for social interaction, in a truly public space.

Unfortunately, as many examples show, some waterfronts in Western Europe have lost the battle for their welfare. Breen and Rigby (1996) point out, that the development of waterfronts might not serve all users of their space. People of lower social and economic status are often omitted, ignored and transferred to other parts of cities, usually against their will, because they do not “fit” the new space. In a socio-spatial sense, a typical process of gentrification leads to social exclusion there. The already mentioned projects of waterfront transformation usually reflect the needs of local societies as a starting point for urban planning and decision-making. However, the term “needs of local societies” might be used only as coverage for the temporary game of interests, which glorifies one group of people and marginalizes the others (Dovey, 2005).

When implementing new urban waterfronts, the attention is usually only paid to the scale and prestige of planned buildings; to their potential to attract people; to create special offers and incentives for investors and other potential users; thus, solely to spatial and economic dimensions of transformation. The social dimension is usually forgotten, although, as already mentioned, it is equally important. It concerns the users of residential space (previous and new ones) and the users of public spaces of as well. Carr et al. (1992) explain that public spaces cannot be evaluated only by assessing the quality of their environment and buildings, but also by estimating their capacity to meet public needs and to respect the rights of all their users, for comfort, relaxation, leisure, and/or social participation.

4. FUNCTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL OF WATERFRONTS IN TRI-CITY

Tri-city is an informal urban structure consisting of three administratively separate cities: Gdansk, Gdynia and Sopot. They are situated adjacent to one other, on the coast of the Baltic Sea. Tri-city is the largest conurbation in northern Poland having a population of 745, 000 citizens. Within its administrative boundaries there are approximately 52 kilometers of coastline running along the Gdansk Bay and 44 kilometers of artificial coastline along the Gdansk and Gdynia waterfronts. The structure and morphology of these waterfronts are highly diverse: four major morphological, spatial and functional types can be distinguished. However, until 1989 the waterfronts were performing mainly port functions. Then, they lost them as a result of the socio-economic transformation of the year 1990. Their current functions are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: *Morphological, spatial and functional dimensions of the Tri-city waterfront*

Port and post-shipyard areas constitute 54 kilometers of the total length of the waterfront (56%); natural areas (forests, beaches, cliffs)⁵ constitute 36 kilometers (38%); while typical urban areas constitute only 6% of the whole Gdansk, Gdynia and Sopot waterfront. Increasing interest in revitalizing of the post-port and post-shipyard areas and some already planned or even implemented projects may significantly increase the amount of the urban areas and change the structure of the waterfront. An estimated potential of the post-industrial areas is about 25 – 27 kilometers. Figure 2 shows spatial and functional diversity of the Tri-city waterfront.

There are two sea ports located in the waterfront which are still in operation – in Gdansk and Gdynia. As a result of transport technologies' development and changes in the

⁵ Areas without any buildings, relatively untouched by humans. There is only some not burdensome tourist infrastructure.

structure of transported goods those two ports have slightly changed their location in order to be able to provide services to much larger container ships.

Figure 2: *Spatial range and major functions of Tri-city waterfront*

In the case of the port in Gdańsk (Figure 3) two areas can be distinguished: the inner port along the Dead Vistula River and the port canal as well as the outer port on the coast of the Gdańsk Bay. The total length of the waterfront is 23,7 km and the total area of the port is 652 hectares.

Figure 3: *Port in Gdańsk*

Source: <http://www.portgdansk.pl>

The port in Gdynia (Figure 4) is a universal harbor, situated on the coastline of the Baltic Bay with a large artificial waterfront. The total length of the waterfront is 17,7 km and total area of the port is 508 hectares.

Figure 4: *Port in Gdynia*

Source: <http://www.port.gdynia.pl/>

As a result of restructuring processes, both ports have started to operate in areas situated further from the centers of Gdynia and Gdansk. Therefore, the cities have a chance to reclaim some attractive lands which, after their revitalization, can gain new functions. The functions are important to the citizens and other visitors to the both cities. The necessity of reclaiming such areas is undisputable but their character, accessibility and the functions which have already been planned for them are quite moot.

The post-shipyard areas are the spaces which are of special interest. They lost their functions at the beginning of the 1990's and later when Gdansk Shipyards went under bankruptcy. Nowadays, a revitalization project named "Young City" is being implemented there (Figure 5).

Figure 5: *A visualization of the „Young City” project*

Source: YoungCity. New Waterfront Destination in Gdansk (www.gdansk.pl_26067.pdf)

This project has already aroused emotions because it is being implemented in a place which is both special and symbolic for Gdansk and Poland – the Gdansk Shipyard, which is the cradle of the Solidarity movement. The “Young City” is a new and commercial district with many skyscrapers, office blocks and shopping malls designed by a private investor. That is why the citizens of Gdansk are concerned about the future of the shipyard’s building, which is perceived as a symbolic element of the historical and cultural heritage of the city and Poland (Figure 6). The residents of Gdansk, architects and local social activists were especially concerned about the action to sell or/and destroy the shipyard cranes, as they are considered to be the authentic symbols of the place (Figure 7).

Figure 6: *A degraded post-shipyard building in Gdansk*

Fot. Michał Szlaga

Figure 7: *Destroying the cranes in the former Gdansk Shipyard*

Fot. Michał Szlaga

A strong reaction of the local society and a media campaign influenced the local authorities to cease action and redeem the cranes in order to preserve them (Figure 8). It was also decided to make the first complex register of the shipyard monuments, structures and objects (buildings, production halls, railway tracks, fences, street lamps, inspection chambers) in order to create an urban cultural park in the future.

Figure 8: *The logo of a social initiative for protection of the historical heritage of the Gdansk Shipyard*

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/StoczniaAlive?fref=ts>

Gdynia also includes several attractively located post-port areas, which are of main interest to the local authorities and investors. They are situated in the city center. Nowadays, there are two post-industrial areas in the Gdynia waterfront which are crucial as the works on their revitalization are highly advanced. The first area was used and owned by the Nauta Shipyard⁶ until 2012. It is situated only a few hundred meters from the strict center of Gdynia (Figure 9, Figure 10), covers the area of 8,5 hectares and is a significant part of a developer project called “Gdynia Waterfront” along with the President’s Basin (Figure 11 and Figure 13) as well as some other post-industrial areas of the Fishermen Pier (Figure 11 and Figure 12). The long-term spatial policy of Gdynia assumes intense development and modernization of post-industrial and post-port areas. Ultimately they are to be converted into modern and prestigious urban districts.

In the case of Gdynia, which is a very young city (only 90 years old), it is much easier to introduce procedures connected with urban and investment planning, as there are not many conditions that a given project has to meet in order to gain a planning permit⁷. That is why we can anticipate that the revitalization of this part of the waterfront will run smoothly and efficiently. Urban planners have already prepared the area development plan and have resolved all ownership issues. In addition, a larger part of these areas (the President’s Basin and the areas of the Nauta Shipyard) is already at the investors’ disposal and work in the President’s Basin has also already started.

6 Nauta Shipyard has been moved to areas owned by Gdynia Shipyard which went into liquidation in 2009. Therefore, the city reclaimed some really attractive areas. The areas of former Gdynia Shipyard are also starting to regenerate and they may become a new and dynamic area connecting two different functions: production and urban ones.

7 The major problem of Gdynia in the context of new projects is a complicated ownership structure of many properties located in the city center. However, this problem does not apply to the areas described in this paper.

Figure 9: *The former areas of the Nauta Shipyard in Gdynia*

Fot. Tomasz Bolt

Figure 10: *Visualization of a revitalization project designed for the areas of the former Nauta Shipyard areas*

Source: www.gospodarkamorska.pl

The revitalization processes which have been already planned and partly implemented in Tri-city will contribute to reclaiming some particularly attractive areas which will gain typically urban functions. However, a vital problem is mitigating the pressure exerted by the investors and developers which results from the neoliberal thinking about space and the neoliberal ambition to maximize profits.

Figure 11: *The President's Basin and the Fishermen Pier in Gdynia*

Fot. M. Szmytkowska

Figure 12: *Visualization of a revitalization project designed for the Fishermen Pier in Gdynia (in the background)*

Source: www.gdynia.pl

Figure 13: *Visualization of a revitalization project designed for the President's Basin in Gdynia (under implementation)*

Source: www.swedecenter.pl

The local authorities are expected to play a significant role in these processes. The newly created areas should not be dominated by commercial buildings. They cannot emerge as gated and inaccessible places and it is the local authorities' obligation to take care about the necessary balance. In this context it is very important to preserve a proper amount and quality of public spaces as these new urban areas should be integrated with the urban tissue of Gdynia not only in a spatial way, but also in a social way.

5. FLAGSHIP PROJECTS AS SPECIAL ELEMENTS OF THE TRI-CITY WATERFRONT

Urban flagship projects are meant to change the morphology of a given area where they are implemented and they significantly affect the image of a given place. The main aim of such projects mentioned by urban (and regional) politicians is to create a cultural offering and public spaces of high quality. However, their real objective is to establish a desired image of a city and compete successfully for investors and tourists. Usually, they are located in symbolic places or in degraded inner-city areas of low quality and a disadvantageous image. It must be mentioned that flagship projects often result in very high social costs. They frequently worry the residents of areas where they are implemented, as they trigger the previously-mentioned processes of gentrification.

In the case of Tri-city the situation is less complicated, as the flagship projects are or are to be situated in uninhabited, usually degraded post-industrial or post-port areas, so the issue of social costs is less relevant. Table 1 shows the major flagship projects which are to contribute to reviving the areas of their implementation.

Table 1: *The major flagship projects of Tri-city waterfront (planned and under implementation)*

Project	Function	Type	Rank	Status
The Polish Baltic Philharmonic, Gdansk	cultural	revitalization	regional	implemented
The Museum of the Second World War, Gdansk	cultural	new	domestic	under implementation
European Solidarity Centre, Gdansk	cultural	new	domestic	under implementation
The Culture Forum, Gdynia	cultural	new	regional	project
The Emigration Museum, Gdynia	cultural	revitalization	domestic	under implementation
Artificial Island, Sopot	recreational	new	domestic	project

As Table 1 shows, the cultural function of the projects dominates. It is also worth mentioning that three out of all implemented projects are of particular local character, referring directly to the historical and cultural heritage of the cities. As this heritage is also of national meaning, those projects are supported and co-financed by the state. They are: *European Solidarity Centre* (Figure 14), *The Museum of the Second World War* (Figure 15) and *The Emigration Museum in Gdynia* situated in the building of the former Marine Station which was the starting point for all emigrants setting off to the USA during the interwar period. Another flagship project which will be a continuation of the idea from the interwar period is *The Culture Forum in Gdynia* (Figure 16), which is an attempt to recreate the strategic meaning of the place, assign it a cultural function, and create attractive public area at the edge of the sea.

Figure 14: *The project of European Solidarity in Gdansk*

Source: www.architektura.info

Figure 15: *The project of The Museum of the Second World War in Gdansk*

Source: www.culture.pl

Figure 16: *The project of The Culture Forum in Gdynia*

Source: www.forumkultury.gdynia.pl

CONCLUSION

The overview of the Tri-city flagship projects has shown that they can be compared to the examples of flagship projects described in the literature. Domination of cultural projects is clearly noticeable. They are situated in symbolic places. Their primary objective is developing new functions and creating new images of the cities which are to affect their attractiveness and competitiveness.

Although these assumptions seem obvious and advantageous for the cities, they also create controversy because they require large financial investments. Another problem is their maintenance. Some of the citizens and opposition politicians claim that such a large amount of money could be spent on projects which are more necessary and may improve the citizens' living conditions and their quality of life.

However, there is also a positive aspect of such an urban policy. Instead of choosing a simple way of selling these important and symbolic areas to private investors, the local authorities have decided to implement the above-mentioned projects and preserve their public and symbolic character. Obviously, the authorities assume that their attractiveness and popularity will be a factor increasing the number of tourists and other city users (for example businessmen, scientists, students) interested in the cities and triggering the well-known "Bilbao effect" connected with implementation of the Guggenheim museum project. Regardless of the motives, it seems that this way of the waterfront transformation is a positive example of development as it creates accessible public spaces and improves their attractiveness in a long run.

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