The article deals with the present situation of major Polish ports and port-cities, undergoing for last 20 years major political and socio-economic transformation. Within it there are discussed both general issues associated with the influence of the transformation on the ports 'and port cities' structure as well as some remarks regarding the present transformation processes of the two key harbors: Gdańsk and Gdynia. On this basis the on-going urban redevelopment processes are also presented, including the progress of the so-called Young City Project in Gdańsk and the "Dalmor" pier project in Gdynia. These are presented within the framework of the greater redevelopment schemes and as a starting point for major redevelopment projects, which possibly can deeply influence the urban development processes of the entire Gdansk Metropolitan Area.

Socio-political transformation of the 1990-ties and its consequences to the harbor structures

After the political and economic transformation of the end of 1980-ties in Poland a new situation in the field of urban development has emerged. It is possible to define a few basic features of the urbanization process.

First group of the general features of the current model of urbanization in Poland is associated with general economic change. As the effect of the collapse of the socialist system, one could observe the rapid transformation from industry-based to service-oriented economy. Also the new industries appeared, such as computer ad bio-technological ones. This influenced heavily the structure of the cities – as many old industrial sites become obsolete, and numerous housing estates (especially ones which were constructed as the homes for large-scale industry working force) started to face major degradation processes. At the same time the new urban spaces started to be captured by emerging service companies. This has also created new transportation needs, usually met by car-based transportation.

This new economic situation also influenced the situation in the field of urban program. The old "socialist" community faced major transformation into the consumption-oriented society, with increased demand for new service facilities

(shopping, entertainment, leisure). At the same time, along with economic development of the society, the new demand for housing appeared (especially that Poland is still a country with – unadequate to the societal needs – amount of a housing stock).

Present transformation processes in Polish port cities

Transformation of the socio-economic system had also severe consequences to the evolution of ports and city-port interfaces. One of the consequences was associated with spatial re-arrangement of ports and port-related industries, which resulted from the decrease in significance of mass production based on the so called “fordist model” and – in consequence – in the decline of traditional maritime – oriented industries. The same related to ports – instead of “general-purpose” secondary harbors of XIX – the Century origin (not to mention already disused primary harbours, usually of medieval origin) the need arised to develop specialized terminals, preferably associated with deep-water basins and specialized logistics and processing facilities. These could not be easily accommodated within the existing structures, so two strategies were adopted:

– abandonment of the existing areas of the primary and secondary harbors and development of the new structures in the new, so-called “greenfield” locations;

– deep transformation and restructurization of the existing port structures (mainly – secondary harbors) and adapting them to the new purposes.

In result, the contemporary relations between a port city and its port in the post-socialist context are undergoing rapid changes. Numerous preconditions of this process make the scale of possible solutions large; moreover, specific groups of issues can be variously emphasized. This relates both to the evolution of the ports themselves, harbor cities as such and – finally – city-port interfaces, including the waterfront areas. And redevelopment of the urban waterfronts is becoming one of the highlights of these transformation, a clear sign of the “new future” for the post-socialist harbor cities.

Case studies

The most interesting of these is the case of the Gdańsk Metropolitan Area, including two major seaports (Gdańsk and Gdynia) as well as a number of other municipalities. Development of the new infrastructure and logistics connections in this area allows further deliberations on the strategies of urban development. These are associated with substantial urban regeneration opportunities as well as with further expansion of the port and transportation structures.

First projects are already completed, which allows speculation on the potential future of the other transformation areas. These speculations include possible reversal of the entire urban development policy, as substantial urban regeneration areas may become available in close future. In result, the port structures may become reconnected to the proper city, and its maritime identity may become reinforced.

Gdańsk–Granary Island and Young City

In case of Gdańsk, one can discuss the full sequence of evolving port structures, as well as appearance of both possible types of waterfronts. Present transformation of the port and its proposed expansion towards deeper parts of the Gdańsk Bay allow speculation on further advancement of the transformation process. In result, in case of Gdańsk one can identify both the waterfront areas of the medieval origin (so-called Granary Island) as well as of the XIX-th century origin (the Young City project). But what is important is the fact that during last years the entire Vistula river estuary (meaning – the entire secondary harbor) has been slated for abandonment in the sake of expansion of the new structures associated with newly constructed deep-water terminals.



Scheme of the Gdansk harbour area – port structures and waterfront sites.

Development of this new deep-water harbor structure has been originated in the 1970-ties, although the fast development of the facility and its usage for specialized cargo handling activities has taken place already in the late 1990-tes. Since then the rapid development of the area associated with creation of the new and upgrade of the exiting transport links allowed discussion of the complete relocation of the port activities towards these newly developed structures. This process has not been concluded yet, but the transformation of the sites along Vistula river has already been started. On this basis two key waterfront projects have been created: the redevelopment of destroyed during WWII Granary Island and transformation of the Gdansk Shipyard along with the neighbouring areas – so-called Young City.

Granary Island constitutes the core of the medieval Gdańsk harbor, and was losing

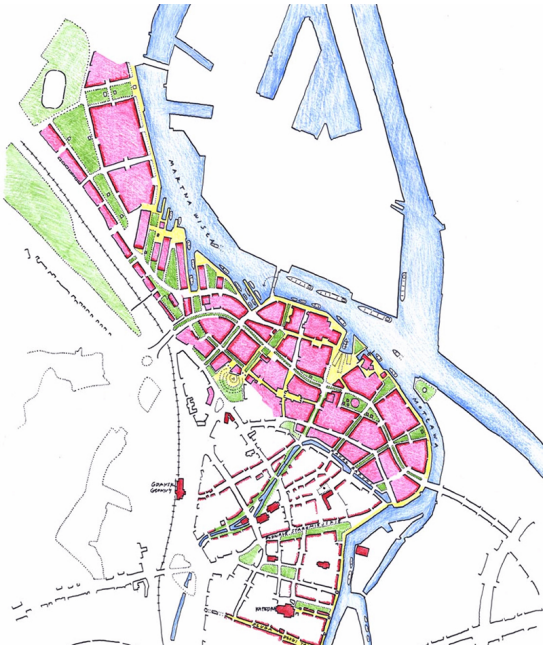
its importance already in the end of XIXth century. Almost completely destroyed during last war, has been remaining in ruins until the late 1990-ties, when the redevelopment processes were started. At present the ambitious development scheme is promoted by the municipality, although the real developments are a bit disorganized and not fully following the urban design guidelines. Despite this, the transformation process is now well under way and one can hope that within a few years this part of the city will gain the entirely new image.



Model of the proposed redevelopment scheme for the Granary Island in Gdańsk. (© Stanislaw Fischer)

Also one of the key areas is occupied by the Young City Project, which was defined as large-scale urban redevelopment project. It is located on the Gdańsk waterfront, on the site formerly used for shipbuilding purposes. The Young City was created as the real estate project in 1999, shortly after bankruptcy of the Gdańsk Shipyard and relocation of the shipbuilding activities to the island of Ostrów (located on the

northern bank of the Vistula river) and to the part of the former shipyard land located along the Jana z Kolna street. This allowed freeing the major part of the site from the shipbuilding activities and considering the area as the potential urban development area. The original idea was that the Young City would become the urban area of metropolitan importance – which means that the mode of its development will have a severe impact on the development of Tri-City Metropolitan Area. This statement was justified by the unique development potential the Young City possesses – this is the only so large and so well located underdeveloped site, which can become a place of development of metropolitan importance types of land use. This includes various commercial and municipal activities as well as city centre type of housing – apartments, lofts etc.The project faced a serious delay and only recently the first building was erected (so-called European Solidarity Centre) as well as development of the first part of the transportation infrastructure for the area has been started.



Scheme for the development of the Young City project in Gdańsk. (© Sasaki Associates)



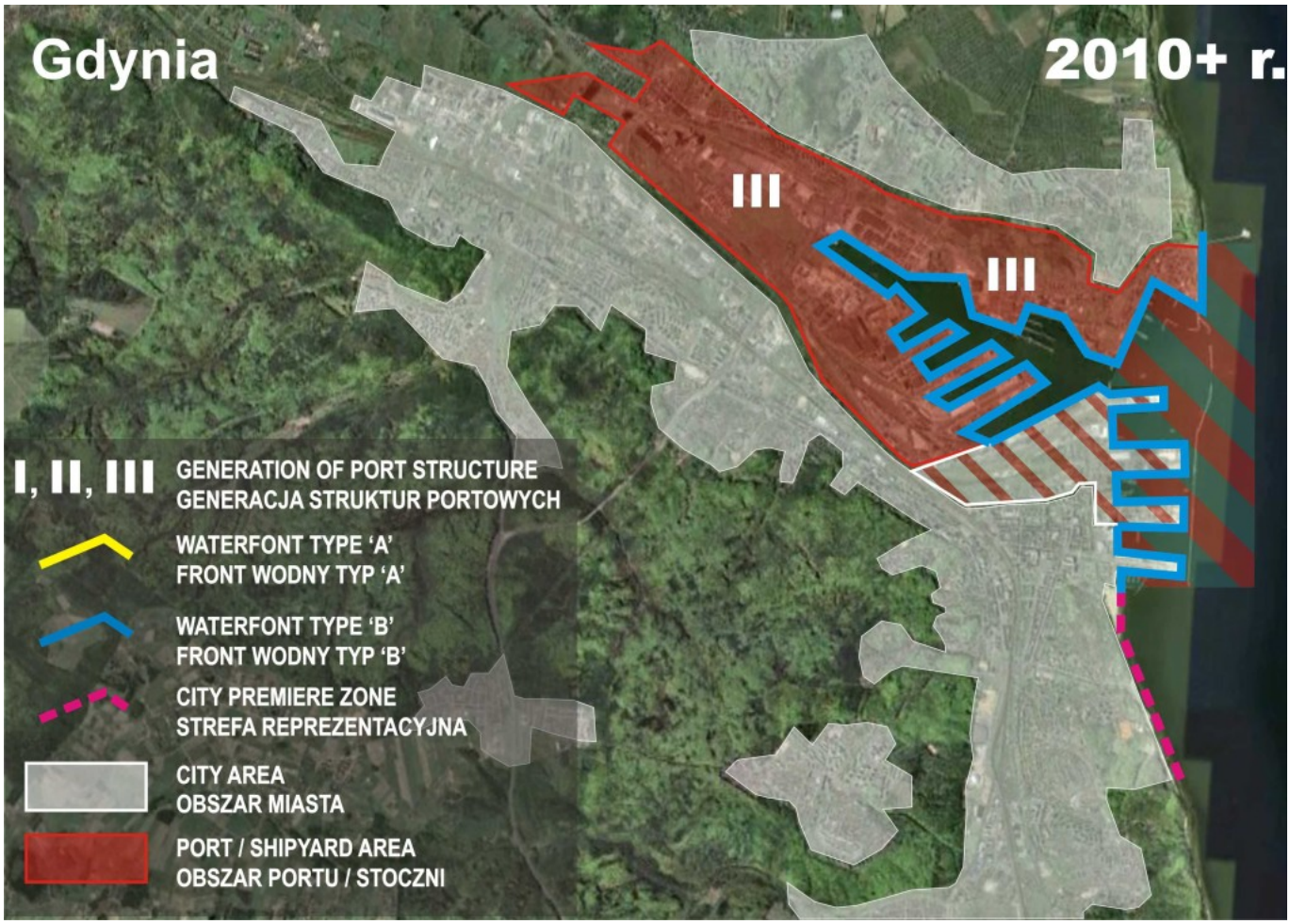
M odel of the proposed development scheme for the Young City in Gdańsk. (© Piotr Lorens and Slawomir Ledwon)

Gdynia and Dalmor Pier

On the contrary, the city of Gdynia – constructed mainly during the interwar period – does not possess the traditional medieval-type of harbor structures. But its structure includes the so-called “city premiere zone”, which plays the role of elegant seaside boulevard and was originally planned as major “waterfront forum”.

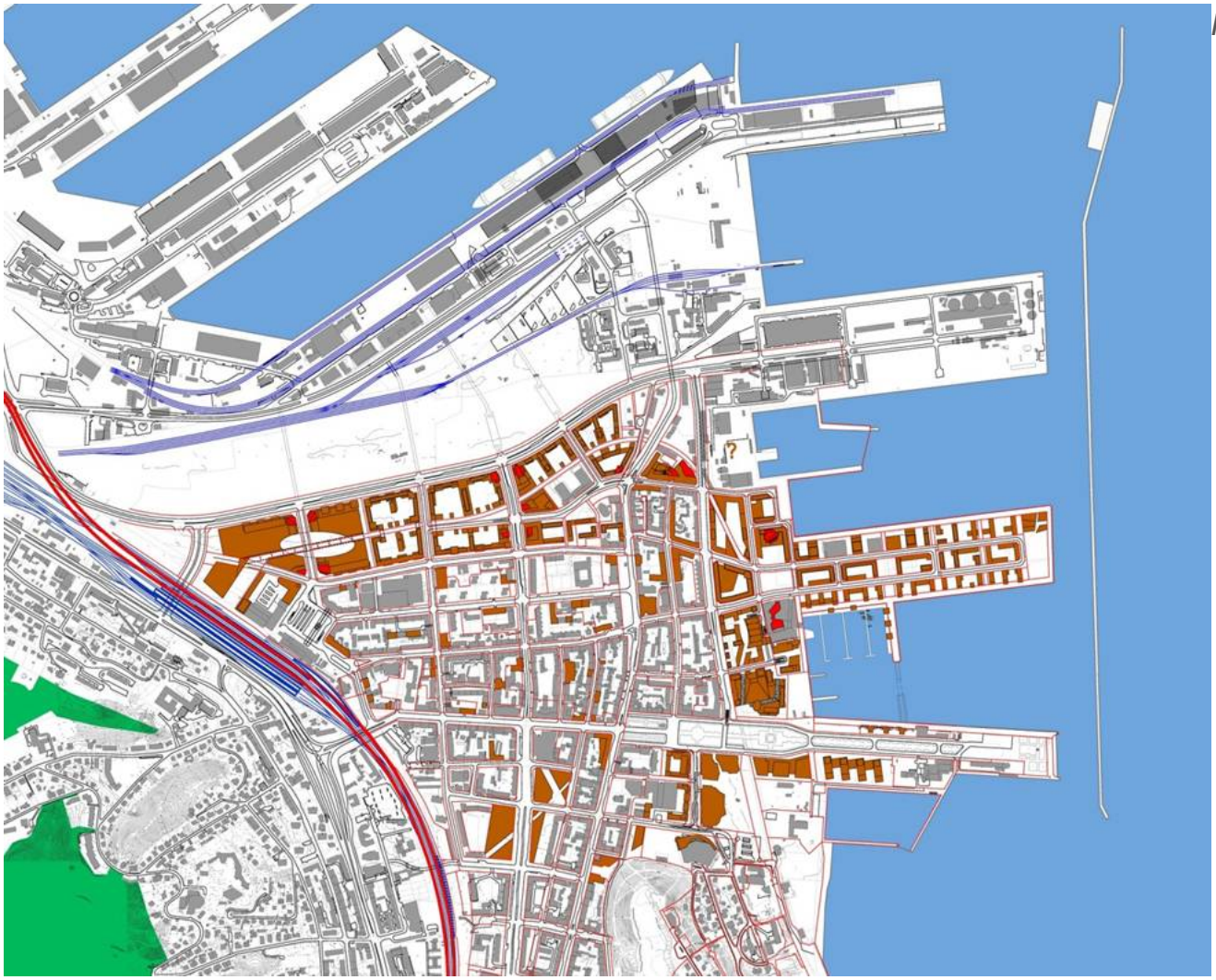
The city in recent decades has also undergone serious harbor transformation processes, which effected in concentrating the shipping activities in the selected areas, constructing the new terminals on the site of redeveloped interwar, secondary in character structures and reshaping the city-port interface. In result, the new facilities have been located in the area of the demolished or heavily

transformed previous terminals.



Scheme of the Gdynia harbour area – port structures and waterfront sites.

At the same time the large-scale waterfront redevelopment and city-port interface development programs have been introduced. These include the idea of expansion of the city center structures in the northern and eastern directions, utilizing the sites abandoned by run-down and relocating maritime industries. One of the most interesting case is the Dalmor Pier – potentially the new concentration of urban activities and future Gdynia vibrant waterfront area. The initial plans for its development include creation of dense urban structure, reflecting the development pattern characteristic for the rest of the city core.



Pla nned expansion of the urban structures in Gdynia city-port interface area – according to Gdynia municipal planning office.

Regarding these projects, the first developments are already in place (i.e. the so-called Sea Towers building) and the major further infrastructure improvements as well as subsequent private and public investments are in store.

Conclusions

Transformation of the Central- and East-European port cities is a topic that is at present rarely discussed in the professional literature. This is due to a number of

reasons: general lack of interest in this issue, low level of understanding of the socio-economic processes occurring in this part of the world after 1989, and finally – relatively small importance of these ports in the global transportation system. In result, Baltic, Black Sea and Adriatic harbors are usually recognized as the centers of secondary or tertiary importance, and this is highly justified by their marginal location and relative low importance – even for the regional economies. But at the same time they at present undergo transformation processes which are very similar to the ones that were occurring in the west-european harbor cities from the 1970-ties till late 1990-ties, and which are associated with: restructurization of the regional economies, development of the modern deep-water terminals (so-called tertiary harbours or port facilities of the 3rd generation) and redevelopment of the waterfront areas. These processes, already forseen at the beginning of the 1990-ties, have been developing steadily for the past two decades. But it seems that last years brought a couple of new chances for acceleration of this transformation which will soon occur in rapid changes observed in the area of the city-port interface.