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SHAPING THE SPATIAL STRUCTURES OF POST-SOCIALIST CITIES

Abstract: This paper deals with issues and problems associated with transformation of spatial structures of post-socialist cities. The special attention is paid to the cases of Polish cities and towns and the analysis of their evolution – from the “post-communist structures” to the “cities in the age of globalization”. In the light of this the factors influencing the spatial transformation of these are analyzed. The paper is concluded with more general remarks regarding the outcomes of the discussed transformation processes.

Keywords: Globalization, post-socialist cities, urban transformations.

Introduction

The contemporary transformation of the city structure can be understood in the context of a range of factors. However, for the purposes of the current work, it refers primarily to the analysis of the forces leading to the development of contemporary forms of city structure, including shaping the forms of public spaces. For this reason, in light of a brief description of the phenomenon of globalization, the case of post-socialist cities is analyzed. The analysis of the transformation of Polish cities, which is described in light of the development of the post-communist city, permits identifying the specific factors that have facilitated the growth of theming within the structure of the European city. The conclusion of this section of the work contains several observations regarding the urban development process in the age of globalization¹, that is to say their possible, future evolution.

¹ A distinction must be made here between the “global” city and the “city in the age of globalization”; the former refers to a relatively few, large cities whose economic and cultural significance is of a global scale. However, the “city in the age of globalization” refers to a much wider group whose structures are evolving under the influence of the globalization phenomenon.

1. The impact of the phenomenon of globalization

Contemporary transformations in the structure of cities are the result of many processes occurring in the economic and social spheres of the modern world. One of these is the process of globalization, which is a consequence of modernity [Sztompka 2002]². This process is currently believed to be the primary driving force of the global economy. At the same time, globalization is a combination of a range of different processes, one of which is urbanization. While the impact of this is significant for space and the economy, it is all the more so for society [Keil, Ronneberger 2000].

Globalization is connected primarily to economic transformations, including the creation of one global market of goods and services³. One of the effects of this transformation is the world-wide expansion of so-called Western culture. The development of this results in increasing uniformity and the regression of local cultures. At the same time, as Western culture spreads across the entire globe it is simplified, diluted, and even degraded. This occurs even when the simplest, most superficial, and most primitive fragments of the culture are most readily accepted [Sztompka 2002]. This process leads to the indiscriminate copying of certain ready patterns for shaping space that have become their own kind of cultural “icon”. This type of pattern also exists for public space.

The phenomenon of globalization is concentrated primarily in the cities, which is where the consequences of it are most deeply felt. A new structure of spatial relationships is being formed, which, at once, is connected with the benefits of the big city and its suburbs and the expansion of international networks of exchange [Harańczyk 1998]. Concurrently, a new model of the “global city” is born, where increasing social-spatial inequality is noted and existing areas of extreme poverty and wealth are expanding considerably [Węclawowicz 2002]. The creation of the “global city” is also a result of the new relationships forged between the participants of the global economics game. No longer is competition played out among countries; cities are competing with each other for both capital (investment, employment) and large-

² Modernity as understood by sociologists and geographers is a system for the production of goods, elements of which include market competition and the creation of the job market. At the same time, the age of modernity saw the rise of the nation and the reorganization of social relations. One of the elements of this change was the possibility of regularly monitoring social relations within an area unlimited either spatially or temporally. For more on this topic, see: [Sztompka 2002; Giddens 2002].

³ For more on this topic, see: [Markowski, Stasiak 2003].



scale events such as the Olympics or other festivals. The tourist trade is also the subject of especially tough competition among cities. They also compete for the highly-paid, educated elite. However, in order to guarantee long-term positive development, North American and European city authorities adopt pro-development policies. Key elements of these are frequently a range of prestigious projects related to physically, economically, and culturally aiding the renewal of city centers or downtown areas. Such projects are also known as “flag projects” and are the nucleus of a wide variety of transformations on city-wide or local scales [Loftman, Nevin 2003]⁴ Many of these “flag projects” are connected with the transformation of urban public space, and to be competitive the city must guarantee placing them in a given place and time to combat the “uncityness” of the age of globalization. In effect, cities are attempting to reinforce the aesthetic identity of symbolically important areas, especially centers. They seek to reinstate a stable tradition that can be continued in the future, as both a retrospective of the past and a way of defining the future. In this way they strive to overcome the risk to identity posed by the “disappearance of the present day” by the very expansion and stabilization of the present day. Cities try to achieve a distinctive position through the creation of, among other aspects, “a ‘Mediterranean atmosphere’ with life on the streets, festivals, and summer cultural programs that are free of charge and held in open-air venues” [Goschel 2003, p. 224]. Thus, cities are seeking individual character, and cultural identity is understood to be one of the factors that guarantee stable, long-term development.

At the same time, the process of globalization, which is at once responsible for the standardization of urban architecture, can also contribute to the artificial reinforcement of the individual character of a given place so that residents or visitors remember it as distinctive from others. This ensures that the urban environment created is unique with characteristic local features.

Globalization also influences the rapid growth of real estate prices in city centers of global significance. This could be observed in the 1980s in cities such as New York, London, or Tokyo, and currently in many other cities. This results from the rapid development of new companies in the service sector that provide for global companies. In effect, the land in city centers is becoming a commodity traded on the international real estate market. Simultaneously, cities strive to attract such international investment as a symbol of economic development [Sassen 2001].

⁴ See also: [Zuziak 1998; Lorens 2001; Lorens 2002].



Although the global city can be discussed in terms of the phenomenon of globalization, no such thing as a fundamentally new spatial order exists. What must be noted, however, are the far-reaching changes related to segregation, income disparity, the lifestyles of various social groups, the tendency for the marginalization of various social groups, and the transformations of public space [Marcuse, van Kempen 2000]. Contrary to theoretical forecasts, they have not lost their significance. Quite the opposite has occurred and “place” appears to be more important than ever. It bears remembering that not all cities have been successful in the transformation processes linked to economic globalization. There are examples of battles lost in the fight for new technologies and jobs, as well as those of partial success in which the struggle with serious problems continues [Musterd 2003].

The free market economy, globalization (and the related neoliberal capitalism), and the mobility and individualism of community life have destroyed traditional public space. Simultaneously, there is a growing need among various social groups for that ever elusive product that public space has become. However, the need is not for space of a universal character but one that is adapted to the requirements of a given group. This need leads to the conscious production of meaning, the creation of atmosphere, and the development of themed space⁵. Their single goal is to guarantee as diversified and attractive way of spending free time as is possible. This apparent diversity hides the fact that ownership of such areas is concentrated in the hands of a small number of huge corporations. Contrary to appearances, this leads to the unification and standardization of the product on offer [Chatterton, Hollands 2003].

The phenomena linked to the process of globalization discussed here have a huge impact on the shaping of the city structure itself. These transformations can also be seen currently in Polish cities, which are undergoing rapid transformation as they evolve towards their own model of the post-communist city. Independently of these two instances, the phenomenon of shaping the “global city”, mentioned previously, also requires in-depth discussion.

2. Evolution of Polish cities – development model of the post-communist city

The contemporary character of Polish cities is largely the result of communist processes of urbanization and industrialization. In communist countries,

⁵ See also: [Lorens 2006].



this was, however, “directed urbanization”⁶ and “imposed industrialization”⁷, and resulted from not from market processes but from considered leadership policies. Urban development was also managed by the central planning service and all of the negative consequences this entailed for the functioning and structure of the community. The characteristics of this were the same in all of the so-called people’s democracies. The industrialization of cities within the planned economy resulted largely in the creation of principles for a new division of labor and the foundation for a new social hierarchy. This was also connected with reorienting the system of the quantitative and spatial allocation of housing resources for particular vocational groups. This is also why spatial segregation disappeared in cities that developed under the influence of communist industrialization [Węclawowicz 2002]. Despite this, Polish cities usually retained their historic character and did not surrender passively to imposed ideology during the communist period [Węclawowicz 2003].

The main characteristics of the urban structure of the “communist city” (one that is shaped largely in response to a planned economy) include the following: housing citizens with a frank disregard of their preferences for location or quality; architecturally monotonous and uniform housing developments; excessive functionality in spatial management; considerable tracts of unutilized or, conversely, overexploited space in central urban areas; building municipal infrastructure in areas regardless of land value (understood in the context of real estate prices); the domination in development policy of locating large residential complexes on the city outskirts while simultaneously neglecting the renovation of old districts and the development of social and commercial infrastructure [Węclawowicz 2002]. This description should be supplemented with the issue of the quality of the urban structure of the communist city. Unfortunately, it was often low, which stemmed from the fact that during the postwar period the main emphasis of urban planning was placed on the technical efficiency of the structure and the quick realization of housing programs leading to the implementation of a two-dimensional drawing rather than to the shaping of space [Gzell 2003]. The “communist city” began to undergo rapid change as market mechanisms were introduced and freedom of investment took hold. They did not, however, become classic “capitalist” cities; thus, they must be discussed as a specific hybrid of the two systems – “post-communist cities”.

⁶ Directions in urbanization did not stem from the economic decisions of businesses or individual investors, but from planning projects and essentially political decisions.

⁷ Decisions regarding industrial development and the location of new projects were made by economic planners and not by independent investors.



The "post-communist" city began to take shape long before the end of the communist system in Poland. The rejection of the idea of an egalitarian society was of fundamental importance to city space. This space began to become differentiated as system erosion progressed. Among the most important elements that allowed Polish cities to break free of the communist model were a return to the significance of land rents and other market mechanisms, changes in the real estate ownership structure, central control relinquished to local authorities, an increasing number of players competing for city space and particular locations, the shift in the criteria of spatial allocation from the political to the economic, and the creation of a new social and political structure in the cities⁸. These phenomena have also had spatial consequences, including in the transformations of the cityscape and in architecture, transformations in urban space and the symbolism of many places and imparting them with new value (or returning to them that which they held prior to the introduction of the communist system), an increase in the intensity of land use, functional changes (especially in central areas of cities), and changes in residents' behavior with regard to space [Węclawowicz 2002]. The political and social transformations did not result in immediate, swift changes in the spatial structure of Polish cities. This structure is in fact largely inert, due to the necessity of dealing with many problems that originated from the urban planning of the communist period [Harańczyk 1998].

For example, long-term neglect and degraded city structures that are relicts of the previous era are characteristic of many Polish cities. The current poor condition of city structures stems from factors such as changes in society and property ownership during the post-war period. The root of degradation in housing is the so-called renovation loophole, as well as the tendency for cities to spread into new terrain. Another problem is the huge fragmentation of the spatial structure of Polish cities. This stems from the fairly uncritical view of the doctrines of modernism and functionalism. The irrational management of space must also be pointed out at this point as it has left large tracts of land undeveloped and unused, while developed land is often underutilized.

Particular changes are occurring in the sorest spots of the cities, namely in the downtown areas. These changes include not exclusively the revitalization of historic monuments in city centers and the development of the phenomenon of gentrification. Concurrently, the poorer districts are becoming decapitalized and socially marginalized; this is especially apparent in post-

⁸ For more on this topic, see: [Misiak 2005].



war housing developments. The intensity of these, however, depends largely on the degree of economic success a city is enjoying under the free market system. Of equal importance are the overall changes occurring in post-communist cities, particularly with regard to their structure as a whole and their communities (in the case of large cities) within the metropolitan structure. This tendency can be described as the development of agglomerated areas as typified by a decrease in the number of inhabitants within city administrative limits, a dynamic increase in the zone near the agglomeration and the development of it as a network, as well as by an increase in the functional dynamics of the agglomeration in a diel cycle. In large agglomerations there is a simultaneous decrease in the population of the central city and an increase in the populations of surrounding cities [Markowski, Stasiak 2003].

A particular physical form of change noted in Polish cities is the appearance of significant tracts of post-industrial, military, port, and railway facilities that often exceed 30-100 ha in area and for which new ways of utilization have yet to be found. Not infrequently these areas have huge developmental potential with regard to their location and tradition of place or with regard to their significance to local identity [Mironowicz, Ossowicz 2005]. This phenomenon is not unique in the development process of contemporary cities worldwide; to the contrary, it is a manifestation of the typical phenomenon of the relocation or liquidation of various types of structures that have lost their economic *raison d'être*. This stems from economic competition and a decreasing need for particular products as well as the lack of opportunities for the development of new functions (primarily economic) in the present locations. This can also be described by the typology of this type of space⁹. What is particularly typical of Polish cities is the divergence of function and spatial management that has occurred in a short period of time and affects almost all Polish cities to varying degrees.

Independently of the structural transformations described above, the emergence of the middle class is of fundamental significance to the shaping of the contemporary and future face of the post-communist city. Transformations in society and the ownership structure lead to financial criteria having an increasingly strong influence on residential segregation within the city structure. City districts of lower social status, bad environmental conditions, or with poor access to the job market are abandoned by more mobile citizens. At the same time, a new element of the spatial organization of post-communist cities is the location of shopping centers, including supermarkets

⁹ For more on this topic, see: [Lorens 2005].



and hypermarkets [Lorens 2005]. The process of the differentiation of the commercial and service sectors in Poland is hugely dynamic.

The transformation of Polish cities as described above, including the creation of a particular model of the “post-communist city”, coincides with the worldwide tendency for the development of a new model of spatial structure for the hubs of global exchange, which the so-called global cities have become. The model of the city in the age of globalization and its particular spatial structure will doubtlessly become widespread in the near future, and, accordingly, cities that are key to the global network, including doubtless some Polish cities, will develop in this manner.

3. Development model of the contemporary city in the age of globalization

The analysis of the evolution of cities over recent decades and the current transformations of Polish cities indicate that all contemporary urban complexes are subject to cyclic change that originates from the phases of urban life as described by Klassen. This cycle is comprised of the stages of urbanization (in which the population of the city center grow faster than that of the periphery), suburbanization (in which the population of the periphery grows faster than that of the city center), deurbanization (when the entire metropolitan area loses residents) and finally reurbanization (in which the population grows relatively faster in the city center than in the periphery). While these transformations refer to all cities, they are especially significant in global cities¹⁰ or those aspiring to this designation. These cities of the age of globalization, also known as metropolises, are new links in the network of communities and push smaller cities into the shadows [Jałowicki, Szczepański 2002].

In the modernist period, the urban structure of cities was conditioned by factors such as industrialization or economic development based on production [Chakravorty 2000]. However, the phases in the transformation of cities described currently also depends on a range of economic processes, but in this instance on such factors as deindustrialization (which refers to the liquidation of ineffective or outdated industrial facilities), the development of the high-tech industry (the sector of the newest technology), and the development of the services sector, especially of the so-called productive services. These processes

¹⁰ The title of global city, according to Saskia Sassen, can be applied to only a few of the world's largest cities that are the hubs of global trade. All other cities should be referred to as cities in the age of globalization.

of deindustrialization have meant that today the economic future of fewer and fewer cities is dependent on the traditional industrial sectors [Węgleński 2001].

The transformations occurring often lead to the decapitalization and degradation of much of the industrial land located within cities. Deindustrialization has dramatic social consequences such as very high unemployment, huge increases in crime rates, and the physical degradation of entire large tracts of urban space. Despite the negative effects, these processes create an opportunity for the reurbanization of districts in the city center [Kvorning 1996]. An example of this is Copenhagen, where the development of the city center during the postwar years was blocked by existing industry. After it was relocated to the suburbs at the end of the twentieth century, it became possible to begin redeveloping abandoned terrain and to undertake new ventures to reinforce the central areas of the city.

However, the key factor in the transformation of city centers is gentrification. This refers to the process of economically weaker residents or companies being pushed out by wealthier members of the middle class or stronger companies. When this occurs with businesses it is known as corporate gentrification or “Manhattanization” [Majer 1999]. The growth of the gentrification phenomenon leads to the creation of a new type of urban structure that is subordinate to the development of consumer needs. This is connected to the creation of a new type of relationship between culture and economics as well as between middle class consumers and global corporations [Zukin 1993].

Apart from reurbanization, a concept key to the understanding of transformations in contemporary cities is suburbanization. This appeared in the United States as a result of the main intensification of the spatial development of large cities and the culmination of urban population growth (referred to as the “explosion of the metropolis”) that occurred between 1921 and 1961. This concept is used to describe the collective settling of the middle class in the suburban areas¹¹. Although this process is viewed as having a negative effect on the structure and functioning of the city¹², it did become one of the main conveyors of spatial de-

¹¹ The roots of suburbanization are in the garden-city movement of the 1920s. However, the contemporary suburb is not only a product of the exodus of people from the city center, it is also the result of the movement of people and socioeconomic activity between particular suburban areas. Interestingly, the suburbanization and peripherization not only of the city center but also of other elements comprising the agglomeration are occurring in European urban areas such as Frankfurt nad Menem. For more on this topic, see: [Keil, Ronneberger 2000].

¹² Jane Jacobs has written of the adverse impact suburbanization has on urban development. In the early 1960s, she presented a vision of social disorganization brought on by



velopment as early as during the interwar period. The intensity of this was at its peak in the early 1950s. In the twentieth century, the suburbs came to represent, primarily for Americans, a typical residential environment associated with all that is plentiful and in good taste. This contrasted with the image of residential districts inside city limits which were symbols of municipal neglect and pathology. For most Americans, such central districts have long been associated with poverty and danger [Majer 1999]. The processes of suburbanization have also led to the creation of so-called edge cities. This concept refers to the appearance of concentrations of services and employment far from the traditional city center. This is not necessarily a new phenomenon, as early as by 1937 there were at least twenty such satellite cities in the world¹³. Although the greatest expansion of suburbanization in the United States occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, it is still currently the most significant factor contributing to the polarization of the socio-spatial structure of cities. This phenomenon influences significantly the real estate market and the economic activity of historic city centers.

An extreme form of suburbanization is deurbanization, which is understood as the disappearance of the city as a limited structure in favor of a large, unlimited functional region. The lifestyle of its inhabitants can be described as an “urban-rural continuum”. Concurrently, smaller cities are developing on the outskirts of multi-centered metropolitan regions, and institutions such as industrial parks are created leading to an increased number of fully urbanized, multi-centered metropolitan areas with no large cities [Majer 1999]. These two processes are currently developing very dynamically in Polish cities¹⁴.

The spatial phenomena described are accompanied by phenomena in the economic sphere. In addition to deindustrialization and growth in the services sector described above, the delocalization of real estate ownership must also be mentioned. A new league of multi-national development corporations, such as Tishman Speyer Properties, has emerged, and the effect of this can be seen in the appearance of increasing numbers of large-scale projects in the world’s cities (for example, the London Docklands in London or Battery Park in City in New York). Obviously, what is fueling the growth of this phenomenon is the

city development processes. It is her opinion that, thanks to the processes of suburbanization and deurbanization, cities that once could be traversed by pedestrians have in recent decades become fragmented spaces with no clear distinction between the city proper and its suburbs. This results in so-called deterritorialization and “un-cityness”, which is understood as the disappearance of many of the urban characteristics of space. See also: [Ellin 1999].

¹³ For more on this topic, see: [Beauregard, Haila 2000].

¹⁴ See: [Chmielewski 2002; Lorens 2005b].



great supply of land, primarily post-industrial, that requires regeneration [Beauregard, Haila 2000]. Another factor that contributes to the new situation in the cities is their socio-spatial structurization that stems from the overlapping of former structures with contemporary changes. The effect is that there is whole range of possible models with very different characteristics [Kesteloot 2000].

The model of the contemporary city that is shaped by the processes described above can be referred to as a discontinued or fragmented structure that is far less comprehensible than its modernist equivalent. Within it there are often enclaves comprised of the headquarters of global financial institutions that neighbor districts inhabited by groups of the socially disenfranchised, the processes of peripherization proceed parallelly with those of concentration, and former industrial areas are replaced with structures connected with various forms of consumption. In effect, the spatial form of the city, which is a product of many of the forces described above, is not entirely predictable. This stems from the fact that new processes of reformation overlap in the various existing spatial circumstances and the ambitions and intensions of the players involved with the space (including architects and developers), while the existing spatial form of the city impedes significantly the rapidity and scale of changes. This results not exclusively from the considerable inertia of the architectural and urban structure, which is possible to combat only through very well-organized and far-reaching action. It should also be borne in mind that global forces do not always come into play in the same place at the same time [Beauregard, Haila 2000]. The form of the city also depends largely on the effects of the confrontation between the impact of global forces and local consumption patterns and the specifics of the construction of urban forms [Clammer 2003].

A link between the progress of globalization and increased social and economic disparity in cities can also be observed. A disproportionately large share of financial transactions occur in global cities, and the more globalized the world economy becomes, the greater the concentration of key functions is in a relatively few number of places. These places include cities such as London, Tokyo, and New York [Logan 2000]¹⁵. Effectively, the number of highly qualified professionals in global cities is rising as quickly as the number of low-skilled laborers that serve them, which is leading to the polarization of lifestyles, aspirations, and needs [Kesteloot 2000]. This can lead to a new form of social segregation that originates from the concentration in particular

¹⁵ The effect of urban transformations resulting from global trends is especially apparent in cities such as Tokyo. There are, however, differences that stem from the particulars of locality. For more on this topic, see: [Waley 2000].



places of certain categories, situations, or social experience that is highlighted by social exclusion with no access to the job market or the consumer society [Mendes, 2003]. This polarization will be accompanied by the progressing cultural differentiation of various groups thus leading to the negation of the nineteenth century model of public space¹⁶.

With regard to the issue of the globalization of cities, it can be concluded that the spatial order changes as follows [Marcuse, van Kempen 2000]:

- structural divisions of space are reinforced and inequality increases and the divisions among social groups intensify dramatically;
- specific, new spatial forms (with respect to type as well as degree of development) are created within these structural divisions;
- a set of “soft” locations or places that are undergoing change can be identified, including public space where these changes are the most apparent.

Based on this, it is possible to identify a set of new socio-spatial forms that are characteristic of a city that is undergoing globalization. While the nature of these cities is nothing new, the scale of their development is. It is possible to describe a whole range of this type of formation: “citadels” of big business and principal administrative offices, gentrified residential neighborhoods, exclusive enclaves (including gated communities)¹⁷, edge cities¹⁸, ethnic enclaves¹⁹, and ghettos of the socially marginalized. A new phenomenon has emerged with regard to spatial relationships, namely the formation of so-called “urban regions” that are founded on strict co-operation and interdependence among formerly independent urban complexes [Marcuse, van Kempen 2000].

The group of “soft places” includes those on which the impact of globalization is especially significant, including, among others:

- waterfronts – former ports or industrial structures connected to water transport. Many port-industrial cities have undergone profound transformations, and these areas are absorbed by city centers dominated by retail and services as an extension of their space to meet the needs of the new middle class. Wa-

¹⁶ For more on this topic, see: [Rewers 2005].

¹⁷ These are areas for people who desire to separate themselves from their immediate surroundings and have to means to do so. These residents are not interested in neighborhoods; they create their own micro-world. Such communities are often for retirees, among other groups.

¹⁸ These often take on a total suburban structure. These are complexes that fill business, commercial, residential, and recreational functions that are independent and are separated from the rest of the city.

¹⁹ These are probably the closest, contemporary equivalent of the working class neighborhood of the traditional industrial city. They are based on support mechanisms; new arrivals to the city with low-paying jobs keep together to offer mutual support.



terfronts, thanks to their multi-functionality and attractiveness to residents and tourists, can also increase the appeal of a city's business district²⁰:

- centrally located industrial areas that are currently being liquidated. Recently, this process has been observed in smaller artisanal and service providing businesses that support other ventures in the city center and stems from rising costs of operation and includes the price of real estate;
- degraded areas – located outside city centers and usually abandoned. This results from the difficulty of adapting these large structures for new purposes, includes environmental pollution;
- social housing is condensed – this is of varied scale and character. Due to the processes of globalization they are undergoing including degradation and “ghettoization”, this is especially true of high density complexes and is related to the difficulty of their restructurization;
- the location and extension of the central business districts (CBDs)– taking on a part of the business and services program connected with the development of the center; their transformation, however, may also depend on the gentrification described above, including corporate gentrification;
- structures of historical significance – their meaning is reinforced as determinants of local identity;
- the classic understanding of public space – undergoing substantial change with regard to both form and how the space is exploited and controlled; private control is on the rise, as is the case with Times Square in New York, and public functions are evolving in private space (one example is the multi-functional shopping center). The result of these activities is the same; the degree of the openness of space for public activity is reduced substantially.

Conclusions

As is indicated by the preceding discussion, the developing model of the global city (as well as those aspiring to this designation), which is not yet fully formed and is manifested in various ways in the physical space of the contemporary city, carries a range of important changes with regard to their spatial and socio-economic structure. The transformation of the city structure carries with it profound consequences for the system that created it. One of these, public space, undergoes the most significant transformation, as this part of the city structure is the most vulnerable to phenomenon like fragmentation

²⁰ For more on the topic of transforming waterfronts, see: [Lorens 2001].



or selective gentrification. This means that a new model of shaping public space in and of itself is created, as well as the disappearance of its traditionally understood function. At the same time, the development of the consumption culture impacts the meaning of the individual fragments of this space. Their character assumes increasingly greater significance, and, at the same time, becomes one of the elements serving both economic and municipal interests and an ancillary tool for economic players, municipal authorities, and individual investors alike. Since each and every investor aims at achieving the desired effect in the architecture of the place while instilling it with a unique character (which permits differentiating among competitors), theming is being applied with increasing frequency as a way to design a given public space. Additionally, this process is aided by the growth of the tourist industry, which applies to both historical cities and to newly-created spatial concepts. What is significant here is that the tourist industry in a wide range of cities is becoming the leading branch of the local economy, and this ensures that further development in themed spaces will be profitable²¹.

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²¹ For more on this topic, see: [Fainstein, Judd 1999; Ashworth, Tunbridge, 2000; Zuziak 1992; Zuziak 1993].



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