

# IMPONDERABILIA

IMPONDERABILIA

The agency of the border between land and sea

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## ABSTRACT

The globalization that we are facing completely transformed the world as we knew it fifty years ago. The historical era we live in today is characterized by the use of technology, which is one of the factors that made globalization possible. While some time ago it was possible to define and identify the “center” of powers, of cities, it became more challenging today. Nowadays different types of centralities exist, ranging from the new transnational networks of cities to electronic space (Sassen, 2001). The urban question addresses the cities as the main places where the activities that arose from globalization are focused and they are characterized by different degrees of virtuality. Finance is one of them, probably the most virtual, thanks to the liberalization that happened in the eighties of the last century (Harvey, 2007). (Sassen, 2001) proposes a challenge to the architects and urbanists in this sense: are we able to study and imagine projects for the places of intersection between the global, mostly virtual dynamics, and the local realities?

The research that is explained here wants to take up this challenge. It focuses on the topic of the global commercial networks that have been developing in the last years. Such corridors aim at creating new connections between cities around the globe, by building new infrastructure in strategic points, among them harbors too. The practice of allowing denser flows between these areas is less virtual than the activities of finance, for instance. Every commercial corridor needs to take into consideration the question of logistics, mobility and consequently infrastructure whose physical implications are tangible. Similarly, some of the flows that pass through the hubs are flows of very tangible objects such as containers or liquids. Along with the concrete passengers of the commercial there will be the unofficial ones, whose presence is intrinsic every time there is an exchange of goods: the knowledge and culture from the places connected by the new economic corridor. Just like in the case of finance, explained by Sassen (2001), there is a variety of other activities and spaces that emerge along with it. This research wants to address the ones that emerge and could emerge from the development of harbor cities in the current logic of globalization and growth of global flows.

This research wants to underline that the answer is not in the obedient acceptance of the conditions that the global powers dictate. That is why, the outcome of this thesis wants to be a new method, and a new lens through which we can all choose to look at the urban paradigm of harbor cities.



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# INTRODUCTION

## Motivation

Since the beginning of the journey as an Architecture student first, and an Urbanism student after, I have been fascinated by the urban discourse and its intertwining with other social, economic and political questions. Authors like Bernardo Secchi, who was a constant presence especially throughout my three years of Bachelor's degree, developed a reflection about the spatial form and developments in relation to the different disciplines (Secchi, 2013). In his latest book, he looks at the growing social and financial inequalities in urban areas as consequences of urban space planning and design. With his literature, I have learned to look at urban paradigms and urban questions with a tendency to range between multiple scales and time frames. Secchi introduces the urban version of the query "was there chicken or egg first?". Does the economy shape the city and its society, or do cities' forms and spaces convey the social and economic developments? And the answer is probably that they come to life simultaneously and in the same place. However, Secchi proves that the discipline of urbanism is so tightly connected to the economic and social questions, that it sometimes drastically influences them. Relating to Secchi, I understand the practices of urban planning and urban design as practices that require a constant vertical movement across scales, a horizontal reflection on the connections with other sciences and arts embedded in the urban question, and a crucial consideration of the uncertainties of the future.

The journey I undertook a few years ago at the Urbanism department of the Faculty of Architecture at the Delft University of Technology has represented me the opportunity to immerse myself in all kinds of perspectives on the urban. This research is the result of the ending graduation year. It is a continuation of the fascinations and reflections that have characterized my journey until now, which I hope to continue deepening in the future. The Transitional Territories graduation studio, with its context of complex relations between these actors and the conviction that there is the need for change, has welcomed my ideas and allowed me to develop them in this thesis.

## EX-ANTE POSITIONING

### The individual and the global

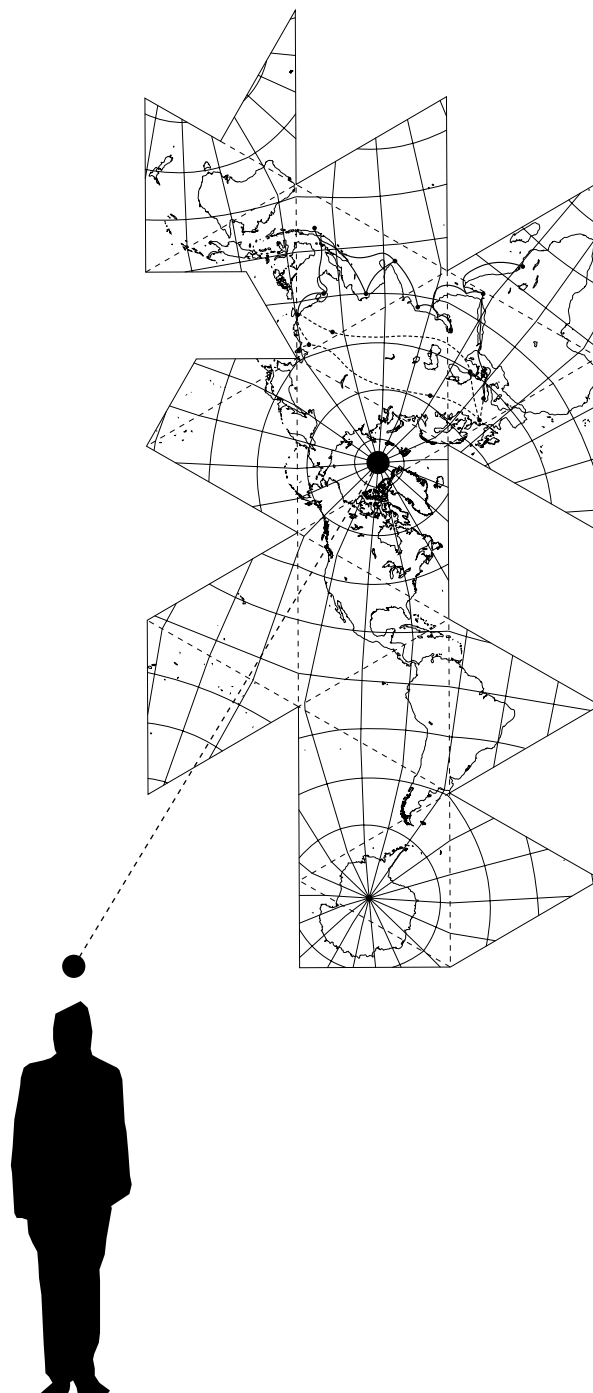
The cities we inhabit are the places where the functioning of the global dimension manifests in various physical forms. The form and materiality of the spaces it creates are dictated by the global flows that they must host. Furthermore, many of the processes we follow in our daily life are dictated by the dynamics of the global systems: financial, commercial, social. We buy goods that arrive in the drawers of our kitchen from a field situated in a faraway country on the other side of the world. The systems of the global trade allow us to buy that good for a relatively low price. In some cases, smaller than those needed for the same thing, coming from our territory. The roads we drive and the cities we inhabit, maybe our workplace, are the spaces that we share with the global flows of goods and information. It is not always easy to get to know the information about the goods and the processes they have gone through. We do not immediately know where nor who produced or harvested a product. It is not clear where has that good been before coming in our home. The public is not always able to access this kind of information because the powers that shape and control the global flows are often intangible, physically unreachable or even unknown. The global flows wage enormous amounts of objects, liquids, people and information daily. Therefore, when they finally reach the cities, they are brought to places that are closed, separated and inaccessible to the public, to avoid accidents and maintain the system's maximum possible efficiency.

It does not come as a surprise that, as a consequence, the citizen feels alienated from the environments he inhabits, and he does not get how his choices and decisions are affecting them. The global flows, and the spaces of cities where they manifest, are not something he feels part of, but he passively experiences them every day. Furthermore, the massive use of the information technologies to communicate with the world and his community, has narrowed the possibility for the citizen to experience what is not in his immediate physical and ideological closeness.

Plato's allegory of the cave is an image that we can employ to describe the situation we experience today, but with a higher degree of complexity. The people are chained, but it seems as they voluntarily are. The shadows they see are projections of the world, given to them in the form of electronic, virtual images, propagated through the new information technologies. And they are able to leave this virtual polarized reality, if they want to. But they do not feel the urge to do that yet, as they do not know of its existence.

This thesis claims that through urban design, it is possible to overturn the tendencies of conceptual and existential separations between the indi-

viduals and the global flows, by developing places and spaces that allow new relations between the two. In this way, the spaces of our cities gain the capacity of proving and highlighting the differences between *doxa* and *epistème*. This project, its spaces, its objects, do not expect to unveil a path towards the universal truth, but rather, to trigger a reflection in the individual standing in front of the complexity of the global flows: that of his own volume and role in them.





*fig01: The performance Imponderabilia (1977), by Marina Abramović and Ulay*  
Retrieved from: [https://roma.repubblica.it/cronaca/2012/09/10/foto/mario\\_carbone\\_posto\\_fisso\\_-42290974/1/](https://roma.repubblica.it/cronaca/2012/09/10/foto/mario_carbone_posto_fisso_-42290974/1/)

# IMPONDERABILIA

## The creation of consciousness

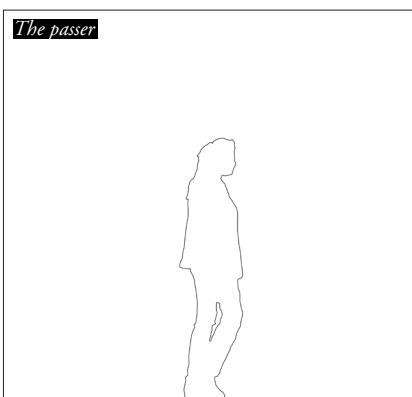
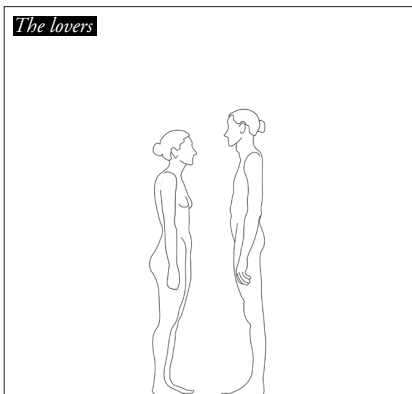
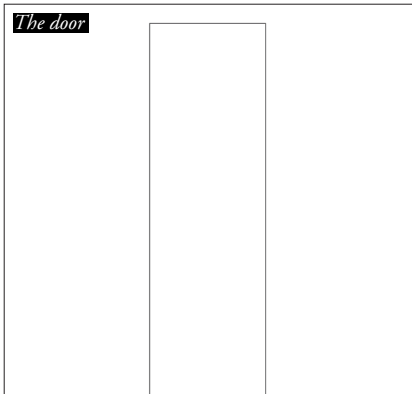
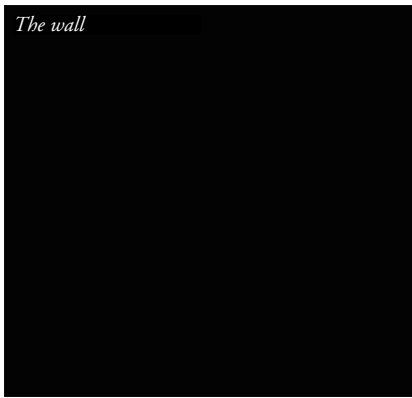
This research wants to address the problem of the loss of interrelationships between the individuals and the global dynamics they are part of. We inhabit cities that are globally interconnected. The connections take place thanks to the crystallisation of the infrastructural necessities of the global flows and the new information technologies that keeps us interconnected every second of every day. However, these practices keep us alienated from the organisation and decision making of these dynamics. So we tend to group with people who only share our primitive certainties, religion, nationality, beliefs. In the new capitalistic logic, the person is eventually reduced to a passive and consuming entity and therefore put in opposition with the cultural values of human experience (Castells, 1996).

This research proposes a conceptual framework that tries to remove the abstract divisions, by allowing the continuation of the physical ones that exist the individual and the global flows, by activating the borders that exist between them. The borders are, in fact, the spatial elements with the power to bring these two profoundly different dimensions on the closest possible distance.

It is impossible to certainly know whether the inhabitant of the territory can perceive what is going on around him. Every day, by experiencing the territory while travelling to the workplace, attending a social event, collecting his t-shirt in a tight box at his front door, he comes in touch with the global flows. Nevertheless, it is impossible to assess whether he completely captures the extent to which these actions, these movements through space, are capable, or not capable of existence in and influence of the territory.

Although, through design, we can imagine an experience that triggers perceptions of the two realities. The performance *Imponderabilia*, presented Marina Abramović and Ulay, creates a space which triggers reflections and consciousness of decisions. *Imponderabilia* consists in the two artists standing naked in the main entrance of a museum, facing each other. A person entering the museum needs to pass sideways through the narrow space that the two artists' bodies draw, to continue with their plans and their lives.

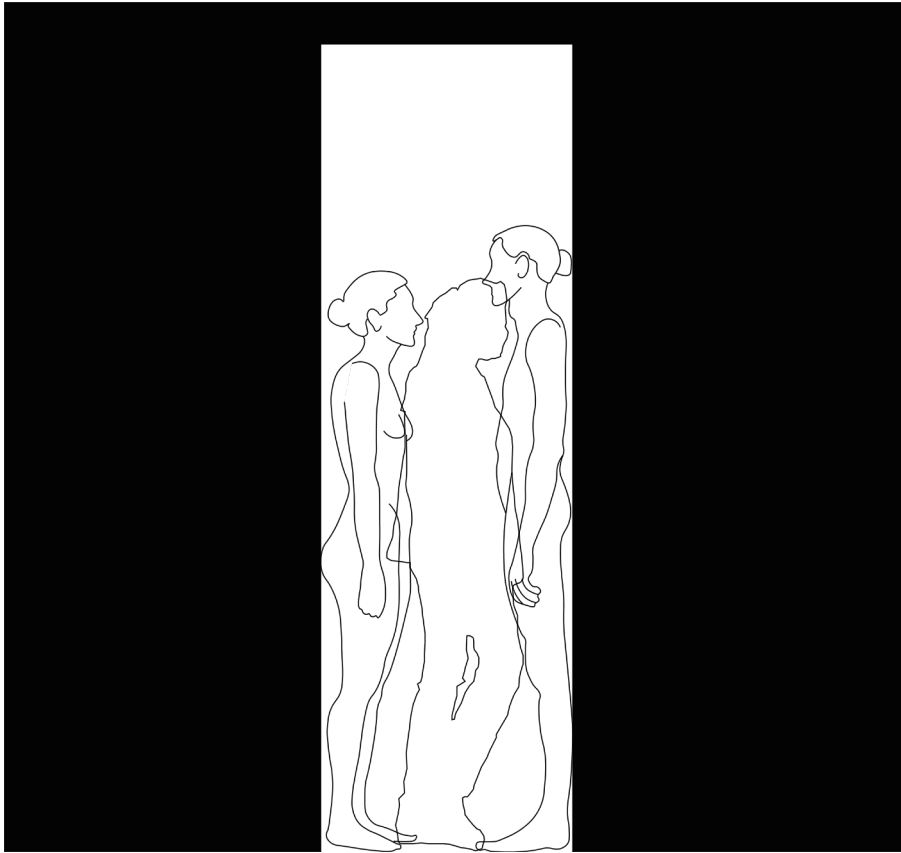
Therefore, experience of the passer starts as a mere need of reaching the other side of the door: the person decides, to enter the space between Marina and Ulay to reach the other side. But to be able to pass, the person needs to do it sideways, since the space between the artists bodies' is so narrow. He does it almost subconsciously, to, in fact, accommodate the need or desire to reach the inside of the museum. Although, once the per-



son is on the other side, he finds himself thinking of the decision he just took: why did he take that decision?

“Whenever people decided to walk through, then they had to turn either to her or to me, to the male or to the female. And that was of course the game, that is called imponderabilia. That in the flash of a second you have to make a decision and you make a decision before you figure out why.” Ulay’s comment in the movie about the performance (Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, 2017)

This thesis wants to research how spatial interventions in cities can do the same. Their forms and their spaces can make the person see the two sides states of his existence: in the local landscape and in the global network. For Imponderabilia there is a series of elements that are crucial for the outcome it wants to achieve. First of them is the wall, in Abramović’s and Ulay’s case, it is the external wall of the museum: dividing the visitor from the place he has to reach. The second element is the opening through which he has to pass to reach the inside: the door. The third one is the two bodies, the two lovers. There is a strong relationship between the two of them, they are the home and the world: there is no one without the other. The last element is the visitor, the passer, who is determined to go to the other side, to he goes through the small opening between the two bodies.



## **DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM FIELD**

### **An overview on the Global Network**

The globalized world is a world controlled and shaped by flows. Manuel Castells explains the new dynamics in the three volumes that build his work *The Information Age*. Throughout the trilogy, the author discusses the characteristics of the new global economy. It has developed since 1980, with the emergence of neoliberalism politics all around the world (Castells, 2000).

The Information Technology Revolution has triggered a series of drastic changes that affected our lives, since its beginnings in 1980, marking the start of the globalization economy. As Castells explains, this event allowed the reorganization of the capitalist system and slowly gave birth to the new, Informational Capitalism, which functions and revolves around the structure of networks. Together with the use of massive physical connections between cities, the new information technologies have been used for the maximization of the efficiency of the network. Moreover, the cultural reality has undergone a fundamental reorganization as well, resulting in *The Culture of Real Virtuality*, which is characterized by the use of virtual communications, such as social networks, computer communication in general, and thank to which new virtual communities have arisen (Castells, 1996).

The new global economic organization is characterized by the ever-moving flows of information, finance, goods and cultural communication. Their intrinsic global dimension allows them to escape from the national borders and therefore, national rules since these often lack flexibility in a world where it became crucial. Consequently, Castells claims that the networks organize power too. Both from a functional and procedural point of view. Everything that produces profit finds its place in a network structure, from finance to illegal and criminal activities:

“They are national councils of ministers and European Commissioners in the political network that governs the European Union. They are coca fields and poppy fields, clandestine laboratories, secret landing strips, street gangs, and money laundering financial institutions in the network of drug traffic that penetrates economies, societies, and states throughout the world. They are television systems, entertainment studios, computer graphics milieux, news teams, and mobile devices generating, transmitting, and receiving signals in the global network of the new media at the roots of cultural expression and public opinion in the Information Age” (Castells, 2000, p.501)

The model of the network is preferred as it allows very high efficiency in acting on the global scale, where physical distances are immense. Networks are a set of curves and lines, which sometimes intersect. When this happens, they create a node. Nodes and networks vary in their forms and functions between governmental institutions, criminal networks of trafficking, television systems and others. The network structure is highly efficient since it answers the needs of the current economic system: it is highly flexible, open and dynamic (Castells, 2000). Therefore, it imme-



diately able to include or exclude nodes inside of it, when they do not perform as they should. Therefore, we can claim that those who can make changes in the deployment of the networks and nodes hold enormous power. Furthermore, in a reality where many networks exist, the power to interconnect them and the ability to make changes between two or more networks is fundamental to shape and guide societies as well. Castells, in this case, gives the example of the financial flows, controlling media empires, shaping political processes (Castells, 2000).

The global organization through networks shaped the social structure and the urban form too. The individual of the society that emerges from these new dynamics needs to encounter the characteristics of the network: he needs to be flexible and dynamic. Richard Sennet presents his research about this in his book *The corrosion of a character* (Sennett, 1999). This title is exhaustive. The inhabitant of the city embedded in a global network is isolated from the institutions that are supposed to represent him because they are not able to perform as the networks expect them to. It is a confusing world for the individual citizen. So, he tends to group with people that share his primary needs and beliefs, such as people with the same religious, ethnic or geographic backgrounds (Castells, 2000). Through the societies, the global flows impact the cities and natural landscapes. Castells, in this case, states that the relation between the space and society is that of the expression of the last: the society expresses itself through space. So, it is possible to claim that space is not a mere reflection of society; somewhat, it is shaped from the people through different historical moments. In this sense, Castells claims that

“Indeed, space is crystallized time.” (Castells, 2000, p.441).

From Castells’ analysis, it is possible to understand that the network structures are incredibly resilient. They can rapidly move geographically, turning on and off nodes, whenever they do not answer the needs of the network. Consequently, they have the power to exclude and include entire territories and communities, cities and individuals. As a result, the proof of existence and identity of the individual inside the new global organization is at risk.

The human being is not able to directly communicate with the global flows, as he does not possess the right means, and he structurally disappears:

“Not that people, locales, or activities disappear. However, their structural meaning does, subsumed in the unseen logic of the meta-network where value is produced, cultural codes are created, and power is decided. The new social order, the network society, increasingly appears to most people as a meta-social disorder. Namely, as an automated,

random sequence of events, derived from the uncontrollable logic of markets, technology, geopolitical order, or biological determination.” (Castells, 2000, p.508)

So, a split occurs, between the cultural heritage and the future: apparently, in the space and time that the cities offer today, the individual human being and the global flow cannot coexist.

## Harbours as nodes of global networks

Harbours are one of the nodes typologies that nowadays constitute the networks of global flows. They are a fundamentally physical manifestation of global networks in our cities. They allow fast and smooth transportation of goods all over the world. So, we can buy a television for a few hundred euros produced in South-eastern Asia, or a car for a couple of thousands from Korea: the cost of the transport does not influence the final price of the products (Mario Sommariva, 2019). This is how every day, every one of us, crosses the global flows of the harbour, without probably knowing it.

Castells claims that all other activities that exist in the “nodes” today emerge to generate the profit. Afterwards, they invest it in the global flows again in the constant attempt to remain an essential node inside the networks. Alternatively, even become a new node in another one. Furthermore, he highlights the new controversial relation between labour and capital: “At its core, capital is global. As a rule, labour is local.” Sommariva claims that to understand the effects of harbours in cities, we need to look at the economic effects that the harbours indirectly trigger. Moreover, he adds that this is the best way to address the glocal dimension of the harbour activities. In other words, in his opinion, the actual connections through which the citizen perceives the global networks appear in the relation between employer-employee.

Mario Sommariva has recently drawn some guidelines for the understanding of today’s dilemma that evolves around harbours as global nodes. First of all, by analysing the current situation, it is possible to define two main approaches in the management of harbours. In many cases, the local governments invest massive amounts of resources in building new infrastructural entities, that would allow the gigantic ships to make use of their hub. On the other side, other harbours have already an efficient infrastructural deployment, that has been abandoned or not used for specific periods (M. Sommariva, 2014). There are some aspects that we need to keep in mind when talking about the harbour question. First, the concentration of the traffic is in the hands of a limited number of companies, usually referred to with the word liners. 57% of all shipments is nowadays controlled by only four of them. At the same time, if we widen the sample to the first ten operators, we reach the number of 82% (M. Sommariva, 2014). The second aspect is the excess of the hold. In the last ten years, we have witnessed a gradual enlargement of the ships’ medium-size, which allows to transport more generous amounts of goods and eventually results in a decreased freight. Sommariva (2014) mentions that when the producers complete the current order book, the 5% of the fleet will have a space hold of between 10.000 and 18.000teu, which corresponds to the

20% of the total hold potential. Therefore, the dimension of the ships can today reach almost 400m: in April 2020 the HMM Algeciras shipped for the first time from Quingdao, with its 399.9m length and 61.03m width. Consequently, harbours all over the world will need to implement their infrastructure and make all the interventions in their coastal environments to be able to accommodate such gigantic ships (M. Sommariva, 2014).

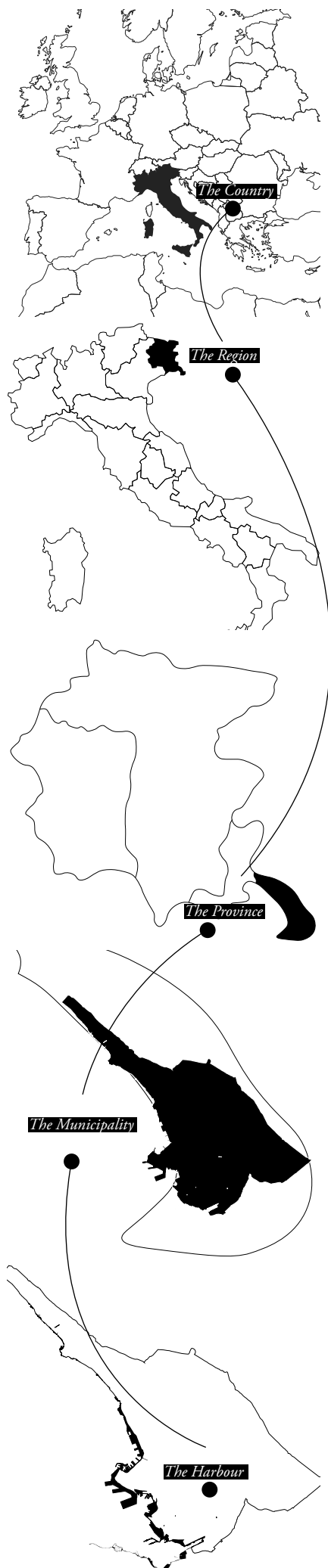
The naval gigantism pushes the harbour limits, both in the direction of land and sea, since much space is required for hosting the gigantic ships and all the cargo they bring along. The larger quantities and the need of being faster and more efficient also challenge the harbours in the networks from this point of view. Consequently, the harbours try to answer with a higher degree of automatization of the processes of handling and transportation. For instance, Sommariva (2019) mentions that for managing the containers, the harbour needs shiptoshore gantry cranes higher than 40 meters, with an outreach of 24 rows of containers, with a total distance of more than 60 meters. The price of one of them is more or less five million euros.

The city, on the other side, answers by introducing new functions and activities to the urban and natural environment. Many new functions and activities are born to answer the “indirect” needs of the harbour. One of them is undoubtedly the need for an appealing international image and highly specialised labour, mainly in the research and manufacturing sectors.

The practice of building new infrastructure for better connections with other nodes of the network and the practice of expansion of harbours to host bigger and bigger ships is a risk. First of all, from the point of view of ecology. The loss of maritime areas and colonisation by the Anthropocene. Consequently, the natural landscapes are polluted, and biodiversity is lost. The climate change and the sea level rise also bring a substantial degree of uncertainty, to some areas more than others, but no one is left behind from this point of view. With the rise of the sea level, many coastal regions are expected to be exposed to more and more frequent flooding and extreme climate events. At the same time the melting ice in the arctic sea, bring the possibility of new shipping routes through the north, resulting in the abandonment or at least underutilisation of the harbours in some maritime territories, such as the Mediterranean Sea.

The situation is different when it comes to the interface between the city and the passenger terminals. These are the places that nowadays represent the highest degree of communication between the city and the global flows. Therefore they represent an excellent opportunity for new ways of

interaction. Although, they too follow a standardisation logic, as they are designed for the mass of numerous Everyman. For him, places are designed in the same way, either he is in the harbour of Marseille, Rotterdam or Shanghai. Furthermore, the mixture of the local citizen and the traveller seldom happens.



## The port-city of Trieste

Trieste is a city in the Northern Adriatic Sea. It is a relatively small urban cluster, with a population of around 200.000 people. In the last one hundred years, the relationship it holds with its harbour has been tormented.

The harbour had been the most important seaport of the Hapsburg Empire, until the first world war. After the two world wars and the period of independence after them, the harbour of Trieste and the demographic growth have suffered a remarkable decline. In the last few years, it seems that the policies of the current president of the port authority, Zeno D'Agostino, the harbour faces a phase of rebirth. Until a few months ago, the CCCC (China Communication Construction Company) was planning to invest substantial sums of money in the Triestinian hub. Furthermore, the port authority works towards the reconnection with the original and natural hinterland of Trieste. When Trieste was the principal harbour of the Austrian Empire, the authorities provided many connections with the rest of the country, throughout central Europe. Therefore, conspicuous investments in the harbour of Trieste also come from Hungary, Austria, Germany and Slovakia.

Professor Sergio Bologna directed the analysis of the impacts of the harbour in the city in 2018. From this research emerges that the harbour directly employs 5070 people, and 2142 indirectly, which corresponds to the 12% of the occupation rate in the municipality of Trieste and 2% in the region of Friuli Venezia Giulia. Many investors have been interested in Trieste in the last few years, especially due to its free-port status, which foresees a long list of benefits that ships and companies get while in the freeport area:

- non-discriminatory right of entry of ships and cargo
- prohibition on customs intervention when loading and unloading goods
- no time limit on the storage of goods
- no customs formalities to be completed
- no customs duties to pay or to guarantee
- lower harbour dues than other Italian ports
- simplified transit for commercial vehicles directed abroad that are in transit to/from the Port of Trieste
- manipulation of goods permitted (eg. packaging, repackaging, labelling, sampling, eliminating brands, etc.) as well as their industrial transformation, completely free from any customs bond
- application of the customs deferred payment scheme: duties and taxes on goods imported into the EU market through the Free Zones can be paid up to six months after the date of customs clearance at a particularly low annual interest rate (50% of 6M Euribor)

- mixtures of every kind may be made within the bonded area between products subject to excise duty
- customs status of goods (foreign country, EU free circulation without payment of VAT, import, export, transit) can be changed without the need to physically move the goods
- operators can access other alternative treatments permitted by EU and/or national legislation (eg. tax deposits, VAT deposits), if more favourable

(“Free Port – Autorità di Sistema Portuale del Mare Adriatico Orientale,” n.d.)



fig02: *Dedizione di Trieste all'Austria*, by Cesare dell'Acqua. Retrieved from: <https://www.triestealnews.it/2019/09/29/30-settembre-1382-637-anni-dalla-dedizione-di-trieste-allaustria/>

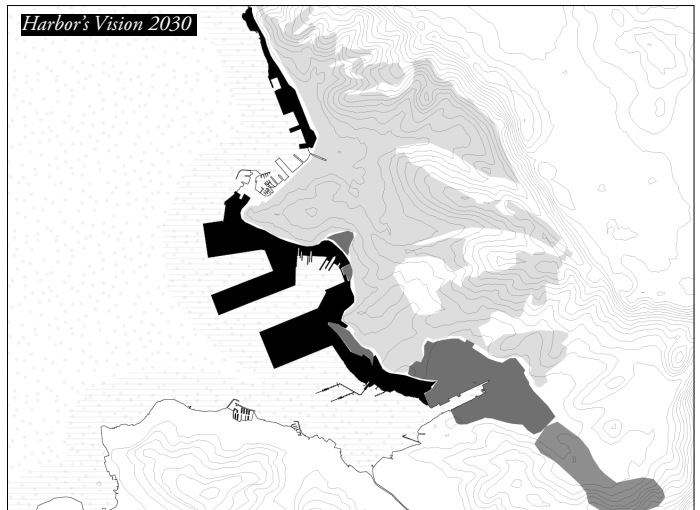
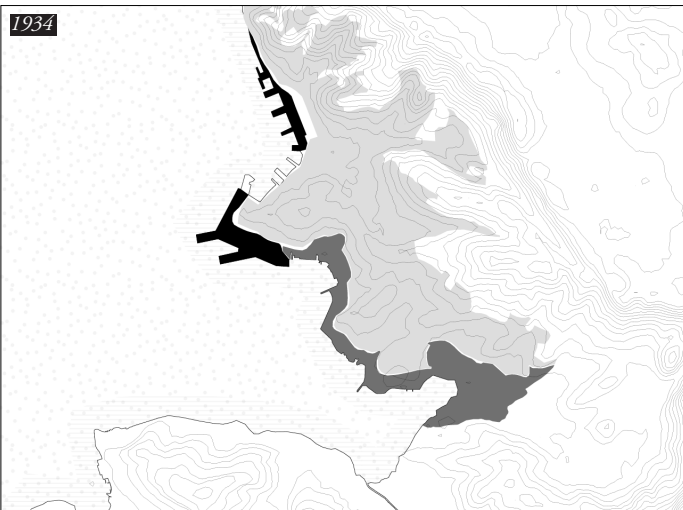
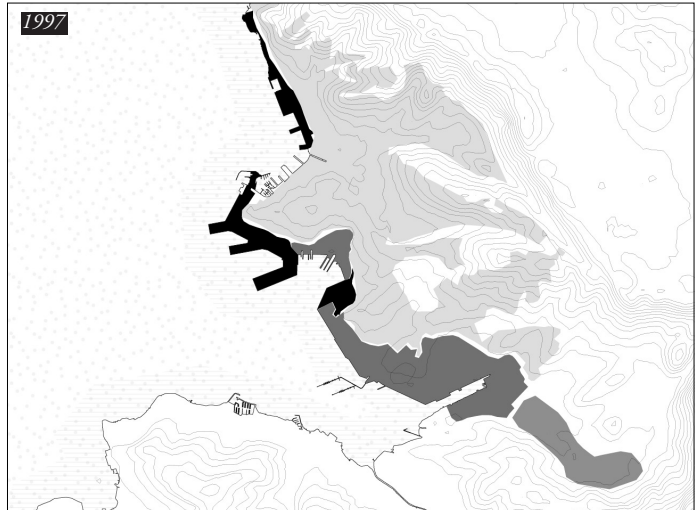
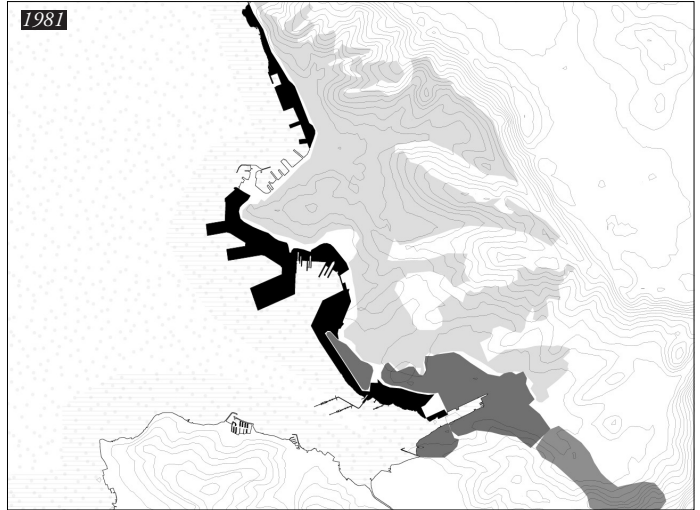
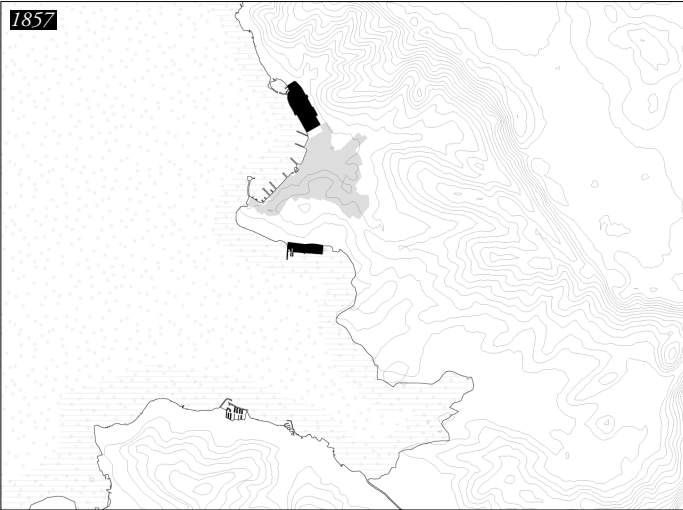
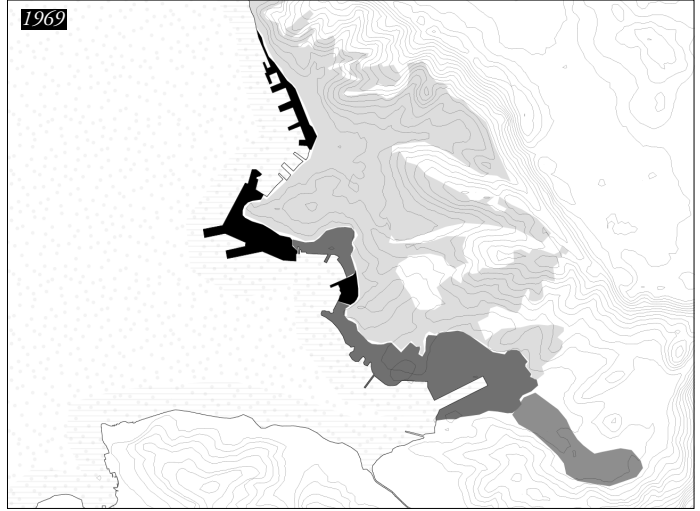
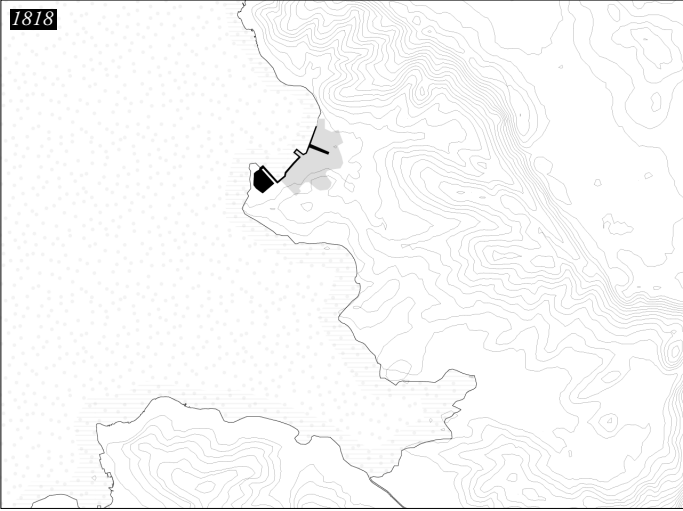
### The evolution of the interface

The maps depict the historical evolution of the city and the harbour of Trieste in relation to the city and to the industrial function.

The situation today is the same as in the 1997.

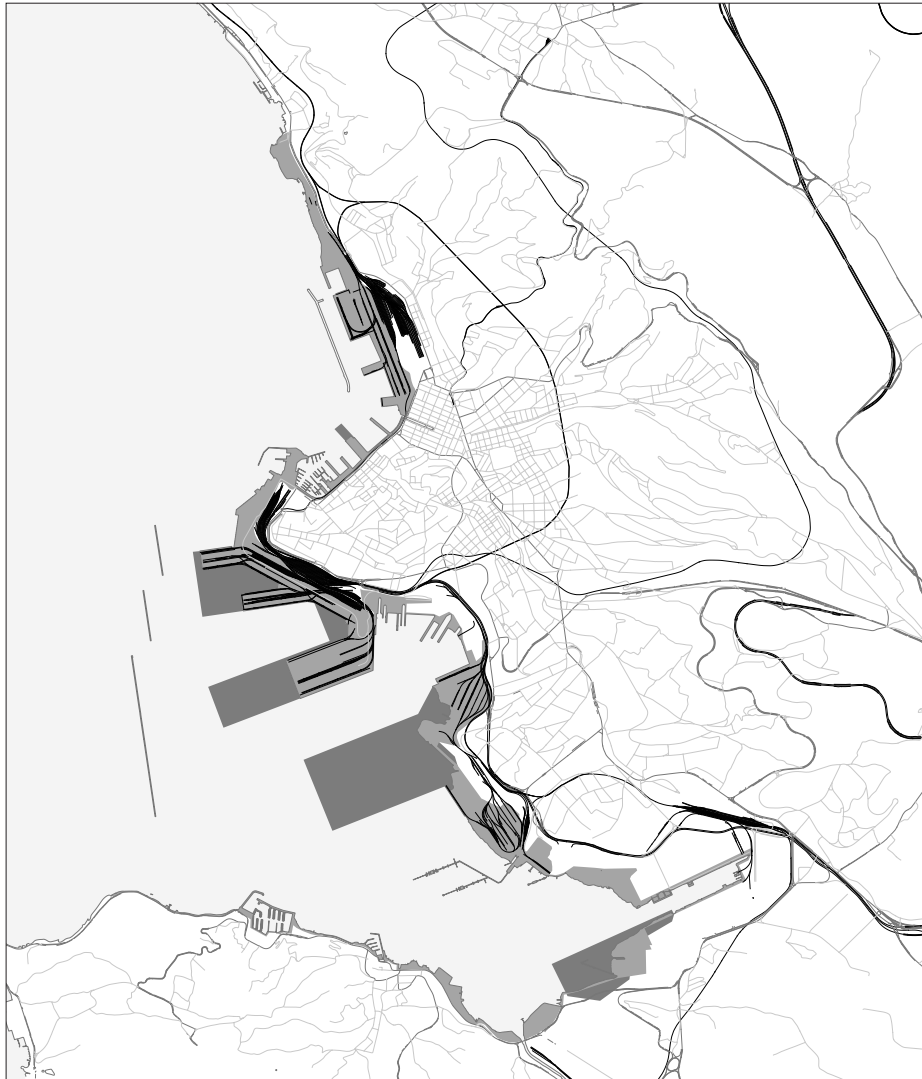
*Data retrieved from: <http://www.catasti.archiviodistatotrieste.it/Divenire/index.htm>*





The port authority, together with the national, regional and municipality governments, have drawn up many development plans for the next years. They created, in 2015, a new Piano Regolatore Portuale, in parallel to the Piano Regolatore Generale Comunale. In the first document, the needs of the global flows dictate the new primary interventions: the extension of the docks towards the sea, in order to create more prominent areas, and therefore a higher potential of the goods handling (Autorità Portuale Trieste, 2014). The city plan, on the other hand, mainly focuses on the former Austrian harbour, that has been abandoned after the second world war, and has never been brought back to life (Comune di Trieste, 2015). The plan foresees the complete elimination of the harbour activities in that area, to leave space to undefined museum areas, conference centres and touristic functions.

Furthermore, a legislative instrument such as the Piano Regolatore, many times lacks flexibility and rapidity that are crucial to the global flows.



*The darker grey areas are the expansion planned for the harbour of Trieste in 2015.  
Adapted from: Piano Regolatore Portuale*

The obvious evidence comes from the events that have characterized the period from February until now. The pandemic, which drastically arrested the global dynamics for quite some time and provoked an arrest in the flows and economic growth. A withdrawal of the nomination of the Porth Authority president, Zeno D'Agostino, because of bureaucratic incompatibilities from four years ago. The event stopped the functioning of the harbour for several days, due to the protests of the workers. USA Geopolitical strategies that brought to Trieste American diplomatic men through the whole summer. They succeeded, also ensuring the "economic permanence" of Trieste and its harbour in the Atlantic Pact. Eventually, the port authority signed an agreement with the terminal operator Hhla, from the port of Hamburg, confirming, even more, the transnational connections that Trieste has with the central and eastern Europe, as a reminiscence of its natural hinterland, highlighted during the period of the Hapsburg Empire.


**HUFFPOST** CORONAVIRUS USA 2020 LIFE GUEST BLOG RICOSTRUIAMO FUTURO TERRA

**ECONOMIA** 30/09/2020 12:43 CEST | Aggiornato 30/09/2020 17:16 CEST

**I tedeschi entrano nel porto di Trieste (prima dei cinesi)**

Al colosso di Amburgo Hhla il 50,01% della Piattaforma nuova di zecca. D'Agostino: "Non regaliamo niente a nessuno, ma l'Italia si svegli". Russo (Confetra): "Siamo l'unico Paese a non avere un campione nazionale, così restiamo tagliati fuori"

By Claudio Paudice

HP trieste

Tutti guardano con preoccupazione ai cinesi, come se fossero gli unici stranieri ad aver messo gli occhi e le mani sui porti italiani: non è così. Nell'arco di poche settimane investitori tedeschi e ungheresi hanno siglato accordi che garantiranno loro uno sbocco sicuro nel porto più strategico della penisola: Trieste. La questione, particolarmente sensibile per gli interessi geopolitici in gioco, non è tuttavia etnica o ideologica, come spesso viene raccontata, ma è pura politica

**TENDENZE**

- Alfonso Signorini, il Grande Congiunto (di S. Baldolini)
- Bimba di 6 mesi salvata con farmaco più costoso al mondo, 1,9 milioni di euro per un trattamento
- "Rischio esodo prima del 21 dicembre. Serve la denuncia penale contro chi aggira i divieti"
- "A dodici anni sapevo tutto ma non sapevo di saperlo". Conversazione con Daria Bignardi
- Covid, Conte, grillini: la realtà e il suo racconto non si incontrano più (di A. Barbano)

fig03: An article announcing the investments of the Hhla in the harbour of Trieste, retrieved from: [https://www.huffingtonpost.it/entry/i-tedeschi-entrano-nel-porto-di-trieste-prima-dei-cinesi-il-colosso-pubblico-di-amburgo-rileva-la-nuova-piattaforma\\_it\\_5f72ec37c5b6f622a0c3eff3](https://www.huffingtonpost.it/entry/i-tedeschi-entrano-nel-porto-di-trieste-prima-dei-cinesi-il-colosso-pubblico-di-amburgo-rileva-la-nuova-piattaforma_it_5f72ec37c5b6f622a0c3eff3)



*fig04: The demonstration in early June 2020, against the decision of the ANAC, at the entrance of the harbour area. Photo by author.*

The “ethnic impurity” of Trieste is evident also in its social and cultural identities. The territory that the citizens of Trieste experience, is not inscribed in the municipality or national borders: that is why it is possible to claim that Trieste is a border city at its core. The city has a strategic geographical position between the West and the East. It was crucial for the harbour development. From then on, also for the cultural and social identity of the city. Until then, the historical heritage of Trieste was not particularly busy. As Marx theorized in one of his articles, this also was a crucial characteristic for the enormous growth of Trieste under the Hapsburg Empire, compared for instance to Venice, that was too rooted to its history and therefore less open to changes (Marx, 1857). This excellent mixture of religions, traditions and identities has suffered many attacks since the first world war. Significant conflicts arise in the city today too, and in the last years they have emerged again, and events of violence happen more and more often. The city enormously suffered, especially during the second world conflict. At first, with the racial laws announced by Mussolini from the main square of Trieste, Piazza Unità. Moreover, still, after the war, when loads of people with the Italian mother tongue, had to leave their home in Istria (current Croatian territory) during the exodus. The shreds of evidence are still there, in the territory, at every corner, in the local literature. Unfortunately, internal divisions are emphasized by the current local governments, from the right-wing. Not only do they encourage divisions between religions and ethnicities, but also between the different social realities. Far-right extremists are coming back in a city where anti-Semitism arose the first time. Such polarization is a characteristic of the Network Society (Castells, 2000). Castells himself claims that in the new organization of the status quo:

“Cultural expressions are abstracted from history and geography, and become predominantly mediated by electronic communication networks that interact with the audience in a diversity of codes and values, ultimately subsumed in a digitalized audio-visual hypertext” (Castells, 2000, p. 507)



fig05: Call for demonstrators against immigration policies in Piazza della Libertà. Retrieved from: <https://www.triesteprema.it/cronaca/son-giusto-migranti-trieste.html>

MENU | CERCA **la Repubblica** ABBONATI | QUOTIDIANO **R** | ACCEDI

## Cronaca

CERCA

Trieste, bufera sul vicesindaco che getta le coperte di un clochard e si vanta sui social

A Monfalcone l'assessore Massimo Asquini pubblica una filastrocca che denigra i migranti

05 GENNAIO 2019 PUBBLICATO • DI UN ANNO FA 1 MINUTI DI LETTURA

**f** TRIESTE - Un vicesindaco che si vanta di aver buttato via le coperte di un senzatetto, un assessore che si inventa una filastrocca che denigra i migranti e la fa girare sui social. E' polemica per le due iniziative xenofobe degli amministratori del Friuli Venezia Giulia.

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Abiti e coperte abbandonate. Forse solo lasciati per pochi minuti da un senza tetto. Non ci ha pensato due volte il vicesindaco leghista di Trieste Paolo Polidori, in nome della tolleranza zero in fatto di pulizia. Nelle vesti di un "normale cittadino che ha a cuore il decoro della sua città", come spiega nel post sul suo profilo Facebook (poi rimosso). "Ho visto un ammasso di stracci buttati a

**Leggi anche**

**Trieste, cadavere con la gola tagliata infilato in un sacco**

**Trieste, grave diciassettenne accoltellato in rissa tra giovanissimi. Due coetanei in questura**

**Precipita da 20 metri e muore nel Carso: tentava di attraversare il confine sloveno**

fig06: An article by Repubblica, describing the actions of the vice-mayor of Trieste, who threw away the clothes of a homeless person and wrote about it on social networks. Retrieved from: [https://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2019/01/04/news/vicesindaco\\_di\\_trieste\\_butta\\_nel\\_cassonetto\\_le\\_coperte\\_di\\_un\\_senzatetto\\_pulizia\\_tolleranza\\_zero\\_-215820557/](https://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2019/01/04/news/vicesindaco_di_trieste_butta_nel_cassonetto_le_coperte_di_un_senzatetto_pulizia_tolleranza_zero_-215820557/)

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

### **Problem Statement**

There is a constant desire for development of harbour infrastructures to accommodate and the need for permanence in global networks and maintain the economic growth. Harbours invest enormous sums of money in strengthening the existing infrastructures or building new. The global flows moving in harbours need to be fast and move smoothly, without compromising the safety of the public and of the workers. Therefore, the spaces of the harbour functions and the public and private spaces of the city are strongly divided.

Consequently, the new kind of interface between the harbour and the city characterises a contemporary port-city. It is hermetically closed by walls, armed guards, and interwaving mobility infrastructures. Therefore, the organization around global networks are drastically reorganizing our societies and territories too. As Castells (2000) explains, citizens of such urban areas are more and more polarized, isolated from the reality happening inside the cities, alienated from the historical heritage of the territory.

Accordingly, parallel to the need for economic growth, there should be a concern about the cultural, natural and identitarian needs of the territory. Future projects or development plans cannot ignore the need for projects that put the many identities of Trieste back in contact. Therefore, the main issue that the thesis addresses is that of the creation of spaces for citizens in parallel with those for the global flows. There is an urgency for urban design proposals that trigger new ways of relating to the heritages of our territory and at the same time, giving proof of the existence of the volume and role of the citizen in the global networks.







## METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an outline of the process that the research follows after the definition of the problem field. The frameworks presented in this chapter represent the basis of the thesis' hypothesis and address the design proposals:

In this chapter the following frameworks are presented:

1. Spatial framework
2. Strategic and design framework
3. Strategic and design framework
4. Evaluation framework

Furthermore, this chapter clarifies how the research questions will be solved by the various frameworks and on the various scales taken into account.

## **HYPHOTESIS**

### **An Urban Space of Imponderabilia**

In the light of globalization and the infinite yearn for economic growth, the constant expansion of global infrastructure bring heavy divisions inside the territories we inhabit. The discourse of harbours is the same. There is a constant competition between cities, to be able to remain inside the global networks that have nowadays the power to decide of the destiny of our landscapes and cities. Here the places that host the global flows focus, but they do not let everybody in. As a consequence, the dynamics that once characterized the uniqueness of port-cities, are disappearing. Instead, the society is becoming more and more closed towards the different, the opposite, the passer.

Therefore, the limit between the maritime and land territories, where cities and harbours are close to each other, should be activated through interventions of urban design, architecture or even art, and eventually create spaces of representation of the global flows and the human being at the same time, and in the same place, without compromising the smoothness of the global flows movements.

Learning from the performance of Imponderabilia, studying the case of port-cities, raising awareness and consciousness of what is the place that the citizen occupies in the complex dynamics of global flows, becomes the new urgency.

By interfacing the local and the global dimension, it is possible to assure the continuation of the movements of the global flows, but at the same time urbanism and architecture can indicate an alternative way of experiencing the presence of the global flows inside the territories.

To make this hyphotesis true, it is crucial to rethink the deployment of infrastructures, by trying to exploit the existing infrastructural palimpsest that territories have to offer. The development of this hyphotesis will bring to the urban environment a new experience of the spaces, that will not end when the passer will leave them, but will continue, by triggering reflections and questions.



## Current State

### The Standing Still

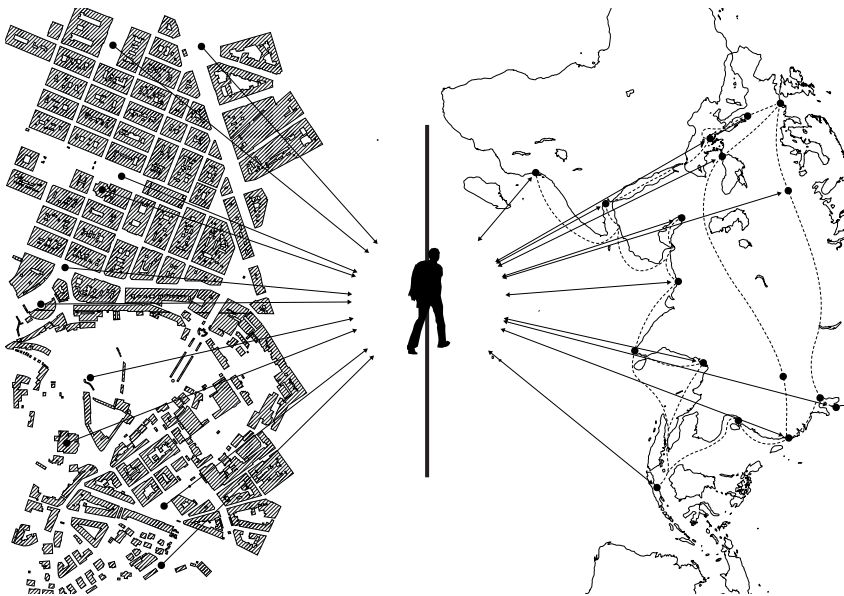
#### Isolation

#### Tendencies

Infrastructural expansion to remain in the network.

Unconsciousness

Ignorance



## Hyphotesis

### The Passer

#### Trespassing, Reflecting

#### Tendencies

Sharing space

Producing Knowledge

Awareness

# RESEARCH QUESTION

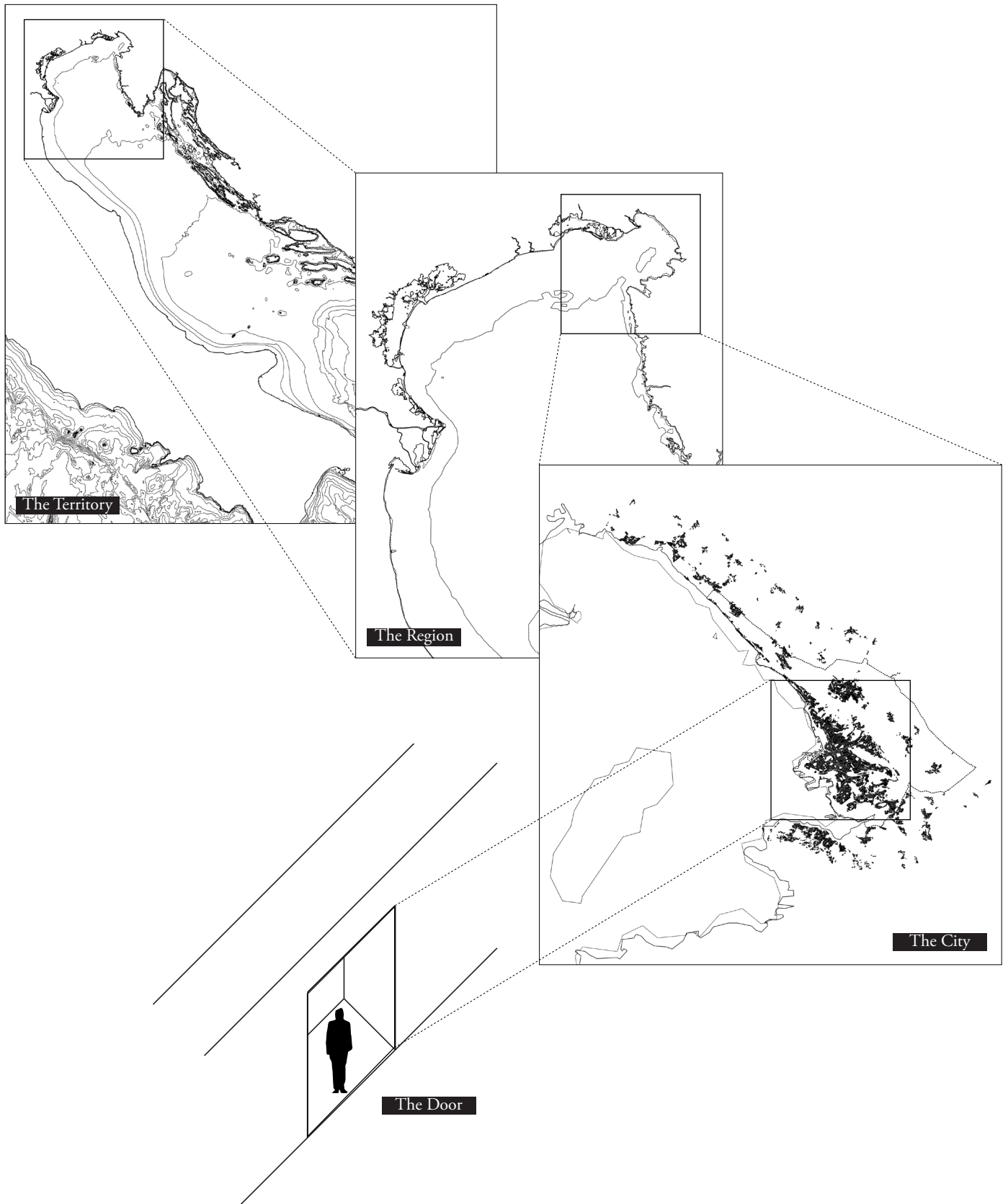
## How To See and To Be Seen

How can the project of the areas dividing the global flows and the territory work as a tool for synchronization between the two?

	Framework	Scale
<u>Subquestions</u>		
1. What kind of relations it possible to establish today between harbours and cities, without compromising the harbour's functioning and the safety of the citizen?	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Theoretical &amp; Conceptual</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Analytical</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">City</div>
2. What aspects of the logic of networks and global flows can be connected to humans' life and rhythms?	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Theoretical &amp; Conceptual</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Analytical</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Territory</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Region</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">City</div>
3. What are the scales on which is it possible to establish such connections?	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Theoretical &amp; Conceptual</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Analytical</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Territory</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Region</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">City</div>

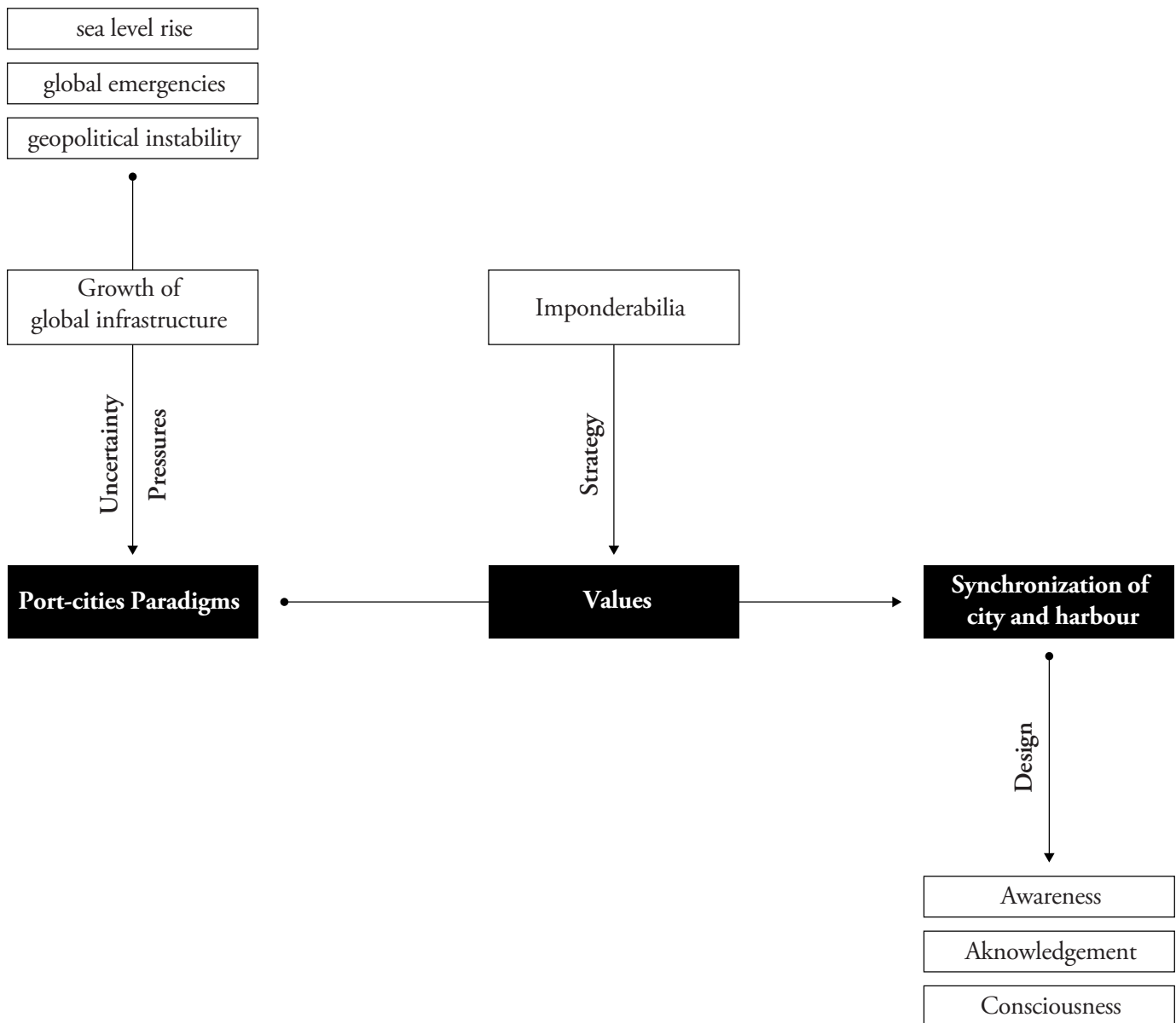
# SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

## Multiscalarity



# STRATEGIC AND DESIGN FRAMEWORK

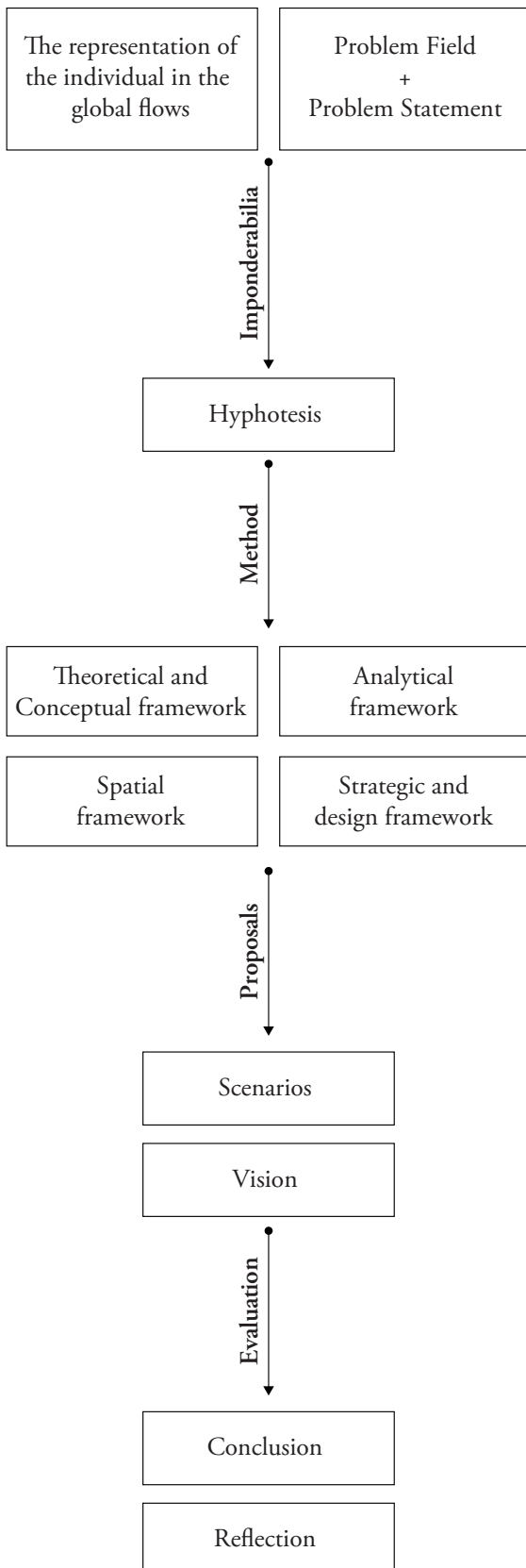
## A roadmap





# RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

A roadmap





## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents a framework for the theoretical underpinning of the thesis. The main theories that the thesis will employ for the understanding of the current relational reality between harbour and city are listed here and explained. The theory paper itself provides a part of the theoretical underpinning.

### Space of flows and space of places

Manuel Castells in his book *The rise of the Network Society* defines the notion of the Space of Flows. He claims that our society is built around networks, and therefore the society reshapes the spaces it inhabits in the logic of the networks. Castells claims that there is a new characteristic spatial typology of such social practices:

“The space of flows is the material organization of time-sharing social practices that work through flows. By flows I understand purposeful, repetitive, programmable sequences of exchange and interaction between physically disjointed positions held by social actors in the economic, political, and symbolic structures of society.” (Castells, 2000, p.442).

In the spaces of flow, time breaks the biological rhythms, otherwise distinctive to the Space of places. Under classic capitalism, time was money, in the sense that whoever was the fastest to invest and the fastest to get the money back, consequently had the power to reinvest immediately and so on. When flows of money became global, they needed a time independent from geography and perpetuated through computers. To define the new time, Castells explains the concept of timeless time:

“a kind of time when in a given context, such as the network society, there is systemic perturbation in the sequential order of the social practices performed in this context.”

In other words, timeless time is a time without any connection to the social time of consequent actions and activities. Nevertheless, timeless time does interact with the life of the citizen through the new communication of real virtuality by:

“solidifying the social differentiation between the interactive and interacting elite, on the one hand, and the ‘interacted’ mass of the population enclosed in the fragmented space of places, on the other.” (Bromley, 2013)

To this first understanding of the urban environment today, we can add Marc Augé’s definition of the Anthropological Space. Marc Augé (2009)

defines the anthropological space as opposite Non – lieux, the non-place. The constitutive elements of the anthropological space are the geometric elements of the lines, of their intersections and the points of intersection. Translated to the real world, they result in itineraries, paths and axis that lead a person to the places of encounter. The space is anthropological when it is either, historical or relational or concerned with identity. A place is historical when it passes on the consciousness of its roots to those who inhabit it. Augé stresses the fact that these are not only places of memory, where the inhabitants learn something that he is not anymore. The historical place that Augé defines has a different relation to history: it does not live in history, but it gives the space to history to happen (Augé, 2009). A place is relational because through its organization and functional structure, it is able to make the citizen interact with others. The space is concerned with identity, because it makes the individual recognize himself in them. An example can be the childhood house, or the building of political institutions.

On the other hand, the non-places are those that lack of the three characteristics described above. Augé states that we spend the most of our time in such places: waiting rooms, supermarkets, airports, highways and similar. Augé also explains that the anthropological and the non-place are never pure, they do not represent two separate typologies that can categorize all the places of the world. Rather, it is possible to find characteristics of the anthropological, also in a non-place. The places that nowadays constitute the interface between the harbor and the city are predominantly non-places. This is a consequence of the standardization practices that have been used in the last years to answer the needs of the global flows.

The research will use Castells' and Augé's theories to assess the current spatial reality and urban space of Trieste and of its harbor.

## The relational territory

Claude Raffstein explains the relational steps away from the Anglo-American understanding of territoriality. Thus, Raffstein territory does not imply a controlled territory from the part of the centres of power. Instead, the territory that Raffstein proposes and this thesis take into account, is a place of relationships with the world (Klauser, 2012). The territoriality is therefore established through everyday life:

“or, in more philosophical terms, territoriality opens the way to a geographical ontology of human being-in-the-world” (Klauser, 2012, p.110).

The thesis in the analytical phase uses Raffstein’s theorization to frame the territory of Trieste. This choice is mandatory because of the city’s historical background, which shifts between nations and ethnicities.

## The port-city interface

Through history, harbour and urban forms have had a variety of different relationships, depending on geography, geopolitics, technology and others. Accordingly, they have shaped the urban form, and at the same time, influenced the very core of the societies which have inhabited them. A common thread throughout the whole history has been the relationship between commerce and the waterfront of the port: the waterfront was the entrance, where the city was able to present itself as it liked, inviting some flows or drive out others (Hoyle, 2000). Although, because of many factors in history, the connections and distances between the city and its harbour changed.

Hoyle (1989) describes these movements in the city with the following diagram.

In ancient times, the cities and harbours were strongly interconnected.

STAGE	SYMBOL ○ City ● Port	PERIOD	CHARACTERISTICS
I Primitive port/city		Ancient/medieval to 19th century	Close spatial and functional association between city and port.
II Expanding port/city		19th–early 20th century	Rapid commercial/industrial growth forces port to develop beyond city confines, with linear quays and break-bulk industries.
III Modern industrial port/city		Mid–20th century	Industrial growth (especially oil refining) and introduction of containers/ro-ro (roll-on, roll-off) require separation/space.
IV Retreat from the waterfront		1960s–1980s	Changes in maritime technology induce growth of separate maritime industrial development areas.
V Redevelopment of waterfront		1970s–1990s	Large-scale modern port consumes large areas of land/water space; urban renewal of original core.
VI Renewal of port/city links		1980s–2000+	Globalization and intermodalism transform port roles; port-city associations renewed; urban redevelopment enhances port-city integration.

*fig07: Stages in the evolution of port-city interrelationships. Source: Hoyle, 1988*

After the industrial revolution at the end of the nineteenth century, harbours began to employ new technologies, such as the railways or steamships. The result was the expansion of the city and the port area, which started to move outside the limits. In the middle of the twentieth century, the shipping world started to employ containers. At this point, the city and the port are both still growing in dimension, but now another factor is crucial for the port: the complete separation from the city for the majority of port areas, mainly for safety reasons. The fourth phase, between the 1960s and 1980s, is characterized by the loss of the connections between port and city. Therefore the harbours retreat from the old areas and abandon their original infrastructure there. Although, from the 1970s, a new tendency of restoring the empty areas emerges. They often do not return to the status of port areas. Instead, they are restructured, and they are from then on used by the city. The new historical moment we inhabit is characterized by the pursue of naval gigantism, in order to remain inside of the global networks of global shipping routes. From the assumptions just described, it is possible to draw a new phase to Hoyle's diagram. The needs of the network now dictate the developments of the relationship. They decide the form and the spaces of the interface. Therefore, the harbours continue to expand and move towards deeper waters, so to be able to accommodate the gigantic ships.







## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### The border space

The border studies comprehend a wide variety of disciplines: anthropology, law, geography, urbanism, history and others. They all gave life to researches that propose the understanding of the border as a dual interweaving of the territorial profile and the one that evolves in the sphere of identity and belonging (Salvatici, 2005).

The border is an edge, a margin. In contemporary discourse, the edges often assume a negative acceptance. It is considered to be an element of rigid division set upon a territory, between two different entities that from then on, will be separated. In the urban and architectural imaginary, the edges are undefined places that have been abandoned by the design and planning practices. They exist at the end of the cities, beyond the peripheries, between the urban and the natural environment. The border is above all a project category: a project of the edge is a practice that can solve the conflicts of the urban fragmentation (Macera, 2012). In other words, the projects of urban margins can solve the internal cracks of the city and eventually propose new relations between parts of the urban environment. Such a project does not frame a margin as a simple division between two identities, countries, spaces. Instead, the border envisioned here becomes an identity, a space on its own, with a volume and a width. This thesis relies on the fact that the border has the power to bring together the two things that usually appear as divided.

In history, the human being has used the border for the imposition of delimitations since ancient times. In the territories, we come across two main typologies of the border. It is concrete or virtual. Therefore it can influence the form of the landscapes, as much as the cultural structure in the territory.

“i confini muoiono e risorgono, si spostano, si cancellano e riappaiono inaspettati. Segnano l'esperienza, il linguaggio, lo spazio dell'abitare, il corpo con la sua salute e le sue malattie, la psiche con le sue scissioni e i suoi riassetamenti, la politica con la sua spesso assurda cartografia, l'io con la pluralità dei suoi frammenti e le loro faticose ricomposizioni, la società con le sue divisioni, l'economia con le sue invasioni e le sue ritirate, il pensiero con le sue mappe dell'ordine.”, (C. Magris, 1991)

From the beginning of humanity, for thousands of years, the act of borders creation has been proof of power. Through the establishment of borders, the human being expressed power and ownership over a particular territory or area. By doing that, they defined a series of limits, giving life to measurable and controllable entities. The human being expresses this kind of border through concrete objects, walls, fences, punctual elements or just through symbols, virtual lines represented in some maps.

Since the first manifestations of urban clusters in history, the border has

been a fundamental tool. The early use of borders wanted to establish a clear difference between the “chaos” of the natural landscapes and the regulation and order of the urban environment. At the same time, this border represents the protection against external attacks and invasions. Therefore, the border usually got the form of a wall. So, the consequent question that arises is that of the apertures in it. They had to connect the inner city with the outside agricultural land and later also with other cities. The doors inside the wall are apertures in the border. As such, become the elements of control of what and who enters or leaves the city. At the same time, the walls and the doors also affect the inhabitant of the urban cluster. They foment the desire of the human being to cross them, both with a military aim of invasion or for the personal curiosity and interest in going beyond his limits. For instance, Leonardo Benevolo and Albrecht Benno, when explaining the renaissance theories of the perspective projection mention that:

“ogni veduta dipinta e ogni sistemazione architettonica include il punto di fuga all’infinito, ma presenta un insieme di oggetti omogenei, entro una gamma limitata di misure che appartengono alla spazio urbano tradizionale; il mondo paesistico sta fuori, e compare come sfondo della rappresentazione, staccato da un salto di scala deciso” (Albrecht & Benevolo, 1994, p.86)

In other words, the walls and their doors are the urban elements that allow the citizen to grasp and to discover new things about the natural environment as opposed to the city (Albrecht & Benevolo, 1994). The object of the wall also includes the checkpoint.

To control the border means to decide about inclusion and exclusion of some aspects in a specific social or urban environment. Many times, the borders are not directly built in the space of the city and of the territory. Some invisible lines in the urban fabrics and the territory bring to life social divisions.

Il confine, sebbene non sia segnato da un oggetto fisico, è il luogo in cui si presenta uno scarto, un’incoerenza tra le due diverse parti che divide. (La Cecla, 2003, p. 159)

With this statement, Franco La Cecla introduces the concept of the border as the space of the “malinteso”, misunderstanding. He claims that the border is a space where different social entities meet, confront, and discover the differences between them. Therefore, La Cecla continues saying that the borders become a neutral zone, where the identities are given the possibility to provide evidence of their existence (La Cecla, 1997). The border now becomes a place to overcome intolerances towards the differences and to favour interaction between the two realities it divides. Ugo Fabietti, on the occasion of the conference *Confini* in 2004, addresses this question with the anthropologic meaning of a border. He claims that the

construction of borders through history has always defined two things. On one side, the distinction from something, and the identification and belonging to something on the other (Fabietti, 2005). In other words, by drawing a border, you establish what you are, and what is not you. Fabietti also addresses the concept of the border translated in the globalized world. Even if it is characterized by intense flows that move across the globe, globalization brought to life a paradox. There are more and more episodes of opposition, the establishment of new borders, the proclamation of their own “diversity” (Fabietti, 2005). Globalization tried to connect all the parts of the world by trespassing national borders, for instance, with the deployment of infrastructure for transportation and new informational technologies. The massive transportation infrastructures are one of the fundamental means for the movement of the global flows. During the period of modernism urbanism, the ring roads, the elevated roads and railways, have entered the urban environment and are now a constitutional part of the contemporary city. Although, in both urban and natural landscapes, they nowadays represent hard internal borders of cities (Secchi, 2000).

From these notions of the border, we can draw some conclusions. The borders can have the potential of connecting different entities by placing them on a short distance. When they interact, the border becomes a place where their differences and conflict between them crystalize. Although, with the doors inside physical and virtual walls of borders, it is possible to trigger new relations between the separate parts, in order to propose a way in which their conflicts can be solved, or, at least, make them acknowledge the existence of the other. Borders can be found at the margins of a nation, or city, but also inside of them.

This research wants to propose a design for a space that solves the negative impacts of global networks. The thesis will primarily focus on the fact that the citizen does not feel represented in the city anymore. At the same time, it will address the issue that citizens are unconscious of what is going on in the spaces of global flows. The thesis envisions the space of the border, as the element with the intrinsic potential to bring these two realities on a small distance. Afterwards, the proposal focuses on the topic of the doors. They are the ultimate urban and architectural element that creates actual connections between the two sides.

Furthermore, the border has an inter-scalar character. At every scale, the border always maintains the characteristic of dividing two separate entities and realities. Whenever you cross one, you perceive a change: in legislation, traditions, aesthetics. The borders are elements that separate countries, and gardens with different owners: in the transition between two fundamentally different dimensions and situations, the concept of the border does not change. The thesis will profit from this aspect to frame

the assessment and analysis of the current reality of the study case.

### The body as the mean of interaction

Some studies analyse how the body is used as infrastructure. Anadeusa and others, propose a paper which analyses how the body has been employed in recent history. They claim that the bodies:

“have been (re)produced as infrastructure, emphasising the violence of abstraction in capitalist modernity that transforms the productive body into a technology of calorific inputs and outputs” (Andueza, Davies, Loftus, & Schling, 2020, p. 1).

In this scenario, the goal of social interaction is reduced to the logic of capital production. This emphasises the alienation among bodies and between them and their territory.

The body should gain another role and importance in contemporary discourse. Cristina Bianchetti in her recent book *Corpi tra Spazio e Progetto* explains how urbanism and architecture have proposed projects for the body throughout (mainly contemporary) history (Bianchetti, 2020). The architectural and urban project has taken the body as the object of their design in many ways. As seen in the previous parts of this thesis, the citizen in his body is nowadays exposed to stress, phobias, neurosis. Bianchetti, therefore, states that:

“A fronte di quest’ombra che incombe su di noi urge, un risveglio. O meglio, un riposizionamento, come instancabilmente ripete la letteratura sull’antropocene di questi tempi.” (Bianchetti, 2020, p.29)

The thesis will therefore propose a design of a series of urban spaces that take make the bodywork for itself, sometimes in opposition with the capitalistic logic embedded in the global networks. Bianchetti proposes many ways to frame the movements and actions of the body through the project by listing a variety of body-models. This thesis employs two of them. The first one is the body “open to the world”. Here Bianchetti explains two main projects that have a different approach to treat the project for the body by proposing the element of the urban park. She gives two examples, the Parc du Sausset and the Parc de La Villette. They are two examples of how the body can open to the world. In the first case, by proposing a space where the urban, rural and natural can interact and therefore, the body can experience all three. The second example is a park for the body that is open to the new economic reality of neo-liberalism, as Tschumi would say, flexible, creative and free (Bianchetti, 2020). The theme of the park beco-

mes therefore crucial also for this research, to achieve a space for the body to be open to the world, this time that of the global networks.

### The theatre as the place of learning

The research employs the concept of the theatre as the functional model, which can trigger new relations between the citizen and the other individuals, the inhabited territory and with the global flows. Similar approaches were developed in many cases. One is, Il Teatro Anatomico, literally translated as the Anatomical Theatre. It is a structure first developed in the late 16th Century in Italy, for the University of Padova, very famous for the Medicine track of its University at the time. It was a space used for teaching and learning about the human body, its anatomy, hence “anatomical”. The dissecting table stands in the centre of the lowest level of the theatre. Around it, every level has a circular balcony that retreats from the lower one. The structure creates a cone which apex is on the table where the professor teaches and spreads knowledge to his students, the audience. On the balconies, they learn by watching him and the microsystem of the human body (figure below).

Another theatre space was developed by the Italian philosopher Giulio Camillo, who theorizes it in his essay *L'idea del Theatro* (Camillo, 1554). He calls it Teatro Della Memoria, the theatre of memory. This model creates a different relation between the audience and the performance. First of all, it is not meant for a numerous audience, but only one visitor. The shape is that of a Vitruvian theatre, but the spectator stands on the stage. The performance is held on the seats, where there are 49 figures from ancient history, mythology, and religion that are rooted in our culture and often present in our daily lives. They represent a sort of encyclopedia, from which the visitor can acknowledge the notions that are at the basis of the creation of the world as we know it (Camillo, 1554).

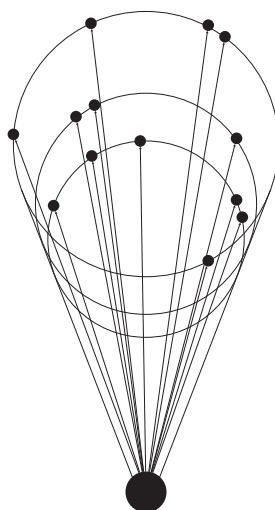
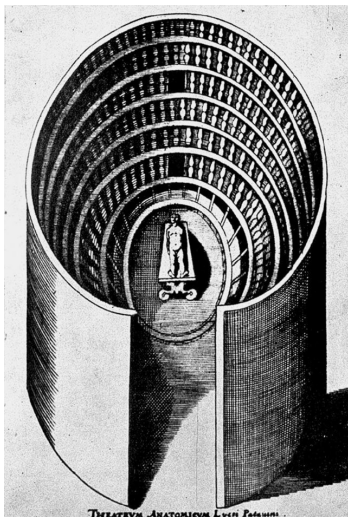


fig08: A drawing of the Teatro Anatomico, Retrieved from: [https://www.wikiwand.com/it/Teatro\\_anatomico\\_di\\_Padova](https://www.wikiwand.com/it/Teatro_anatomico_di_Padova)

fig09: A diagram showing the direction of the knowledge flow in the Teatro Anatomico, drawing by author

Nevertheless, Matussek (2012) argues that Camillo also wanted to encourage and provoke critical thinking in the visitor. The latter would arise by creating connections between the very basic concepts or figures that

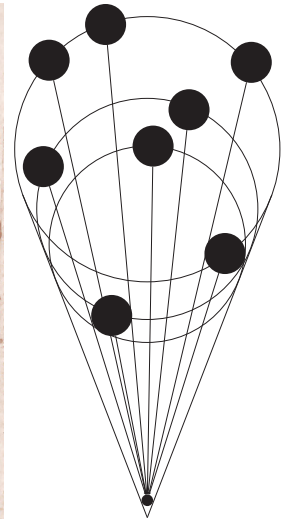
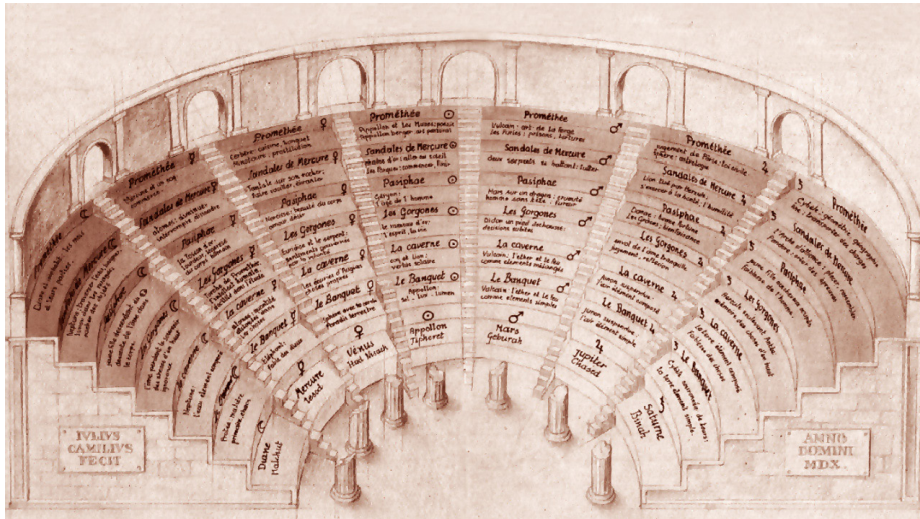


fig10: A drawing of Camillo's Teatro della Memoria. Retrieved from: <https://www.teatrodiessuno.it/doc/teatro-memoria-delminio>

fig11: A diagram showing the direction of the knowledge flow in the Teatro della Memoria, drawing by author

he represented in his theatre (Matussek, 2012). The volume of the (half) cone is again visible and present, yet in this case, it has its apex in the individual spectator, who observes the symbols and elements that constitute the “everything”.

These two concepts have the power to draw relations between the audience and the complexity of the microcosm of the human identity in one case, and the “world” in the second case. When inside the volume of the theatre, the inhabitant of the city affected by global networks, can finally stand in front of the extreme complexity of the global flows. From this point of view, the global flows can be envisioned as performers who have the potential to spread information and knowledge, that is now framed and proposed to the citizen in the form of a performance, a dance in the seawater and on the docks. At the same time, the citizen gives evidence of the territory, by showing his daily life, his identity and rituals when using the model of the theatre in the openings of the border.

The theatre is a space that accommodates the need for interaction and the transmission of information. There need to be two mandatory figures in the space of the theatre: the performer and the audience.

This research aims to create a space with the same characteristics of a theatre, to take advantage and exploit a situation where the individual body is at the same time an integral component of the process of knowledge production and the user of the latter (produced by other figures) in the volume of the global flows. Such interaction is possible even if the two worlds will never physically touch each other: a visual connection is enough. The theatre this thesis proposes will be a place of two-way confrontation between the body and the global network, who will be at the same time producers and users of knowledge and consciousness. The theatre will give them the space to create them.







## **THE MILIEU**

### **Analysis of the Relational Territory of Trieste**

The research carries out the analysis of the chosen site using the notions and concepts that the theoretical and conceptual framework highlighted.

The analysis tries to understand the evolution and changes that have happened throughout history in the port-city interface. Furthermore, this chapter highlights the global networks that can be found in the territory.

The concept of the border brings in multiple scales. The analysis of the next pages therefore creates maps from this point of view: envisioning the city of Trieste as a border.

The conceptual notion of the theatre also gives the basis for the analysis, which also focuses on the movements and rituals that the citizens carry out in correlation to the Sea. At the same time, through the chapter, the rituals of the global flows are defined as well.

The chapter is divided in three main parts. It starts by analysing the global networks and global flows found in the territory. Afterwards, the research focuses on the analysis of the identities of the city, from the point of view of culture and ecology. The last part of the chapter is dedicated to the understanding and mapping of the Sea - Land border.

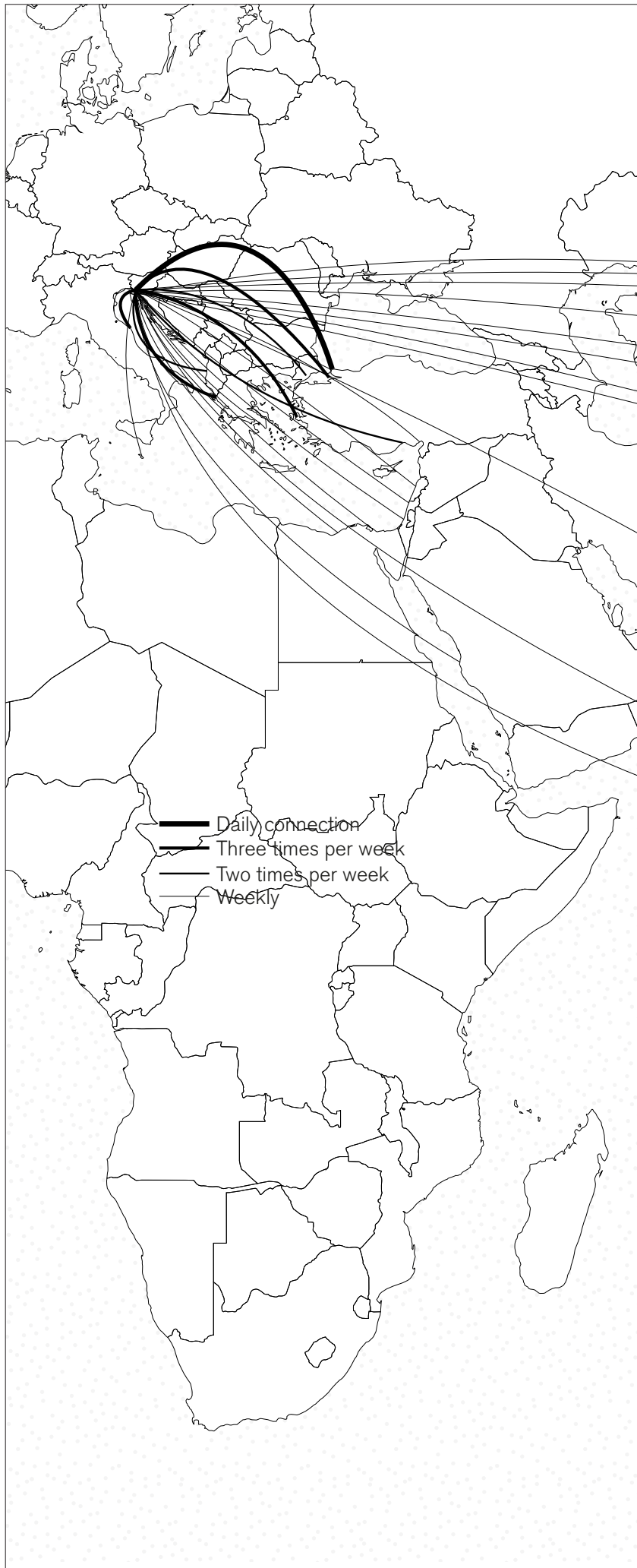
The analysis employs the tool of mapping, photography and diagrammatic schemes.



## **The harbor as space of flows**

The city of Trieste is currently embedded in a variety of global networks. They are mapped and highlighted in the next pages.

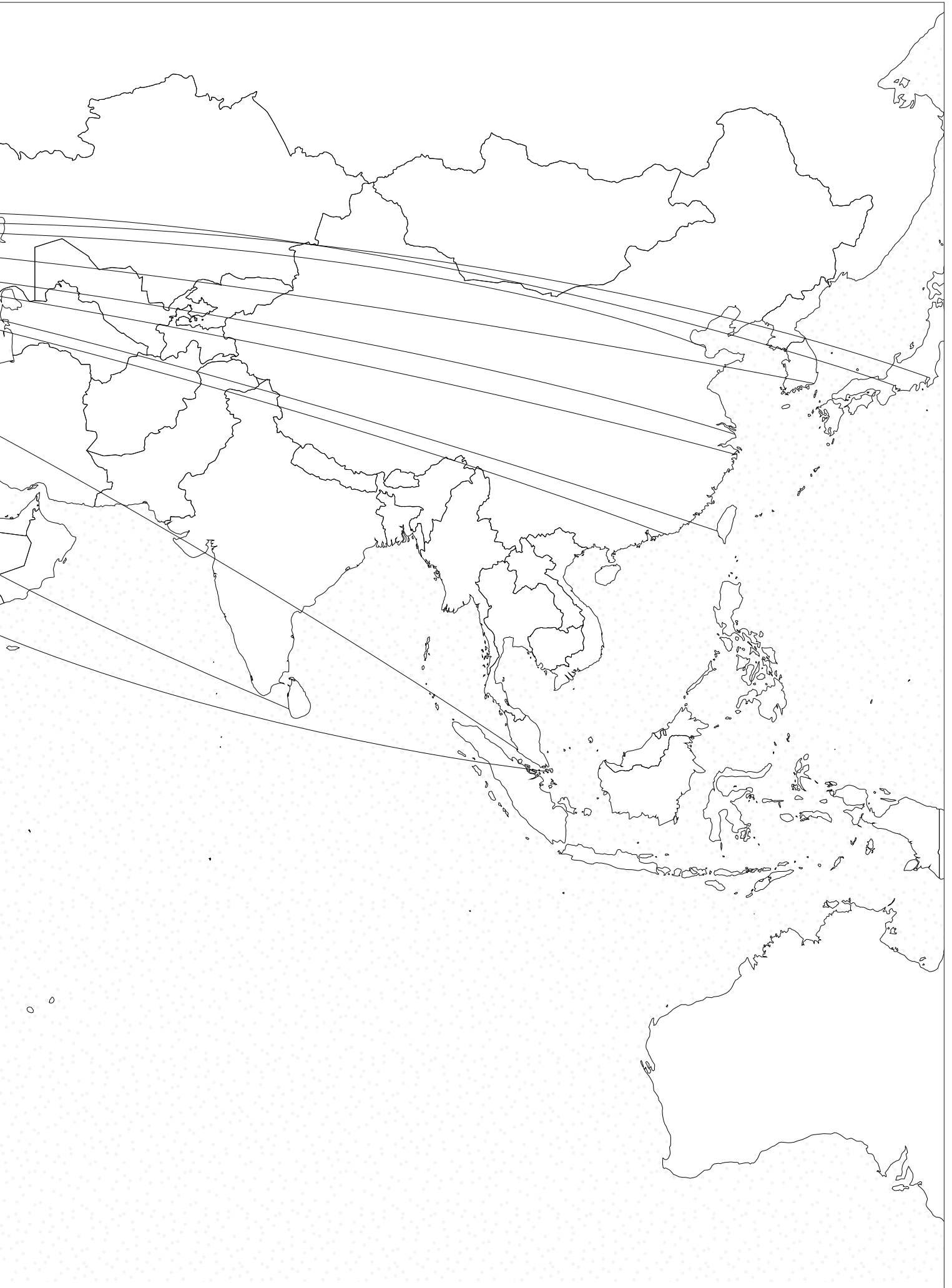
The analysis is mainly focused on commercial and infrastructural networks, the spaces they inhabit and create, the rules and logics they follow.



### Maritime Connections

The map shows the direct maritime connections from the harbor of Trieste. The direct routes mainly connect Trieste with Asian harbors and harbors of the Eastern Mediterranean Sea.

Data from: <https://www.porto.trieste.it/eng/port/ship-ping-routes>



### The Rail Network

The map shows the direct railway connections from the harbor of Trieste. It is possible to conclude that the city is very well connected to the European continent, but less inside its country.

*Data from: <https://www.porto.trieste.it/eng/port/rail-intermodal-network>*

- Cities cities
- Railway Connections



### The harbor as the node of the TAL

The Transalpine Pipeline (TAL) is an oil pipeline which covers the oil needs of Southern Germany (100%), Austria (90%) and Czech Republic (50%).

*Data from: <https://www.tal-oil.com>*

- Cities connected to the pipeline
- direct access to the pipeline
- indirect access to the pipeline





### The harbor as a node of the NAPA network

The Napa is the North Adriatic Ports Association, which ensures cooperation between the harbours of the Northern Adriatic Region: Ravenna, Venezia, Monfalcone, Trieste, Koper and Rijeka.

The map shows the amount of the flows that the harbors handle, using two indicators: the Teu and the number of passengers.

In the first case, Trieste handles the major amount of traffic, while Venice occupies the first place when it comes to passenger flows.

*<https://www.porto.trieste.it/eng/port/napa-eng>*

- harbours
- passenger traffic
- goods traffic

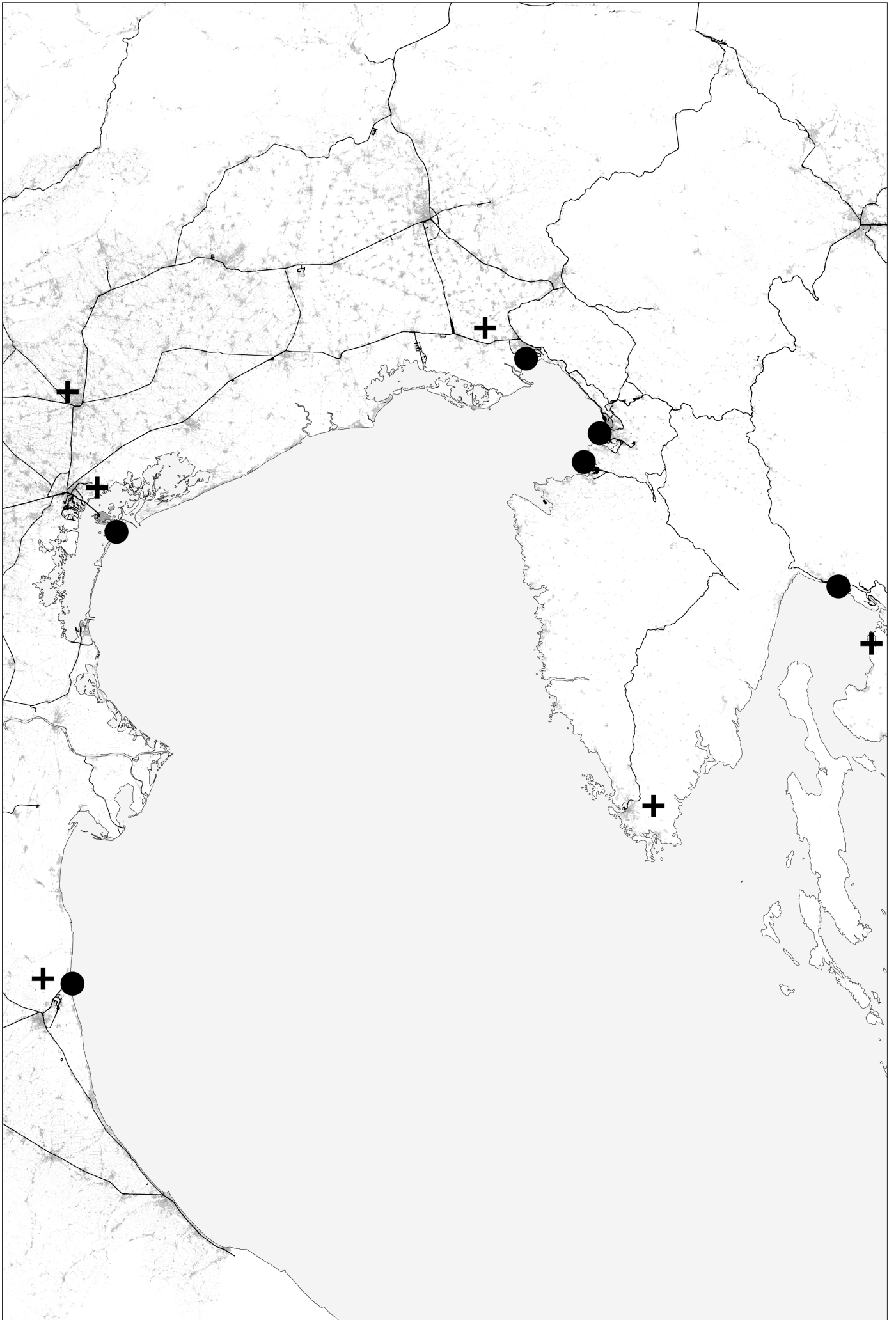


### The harbor as a node of the NAPA network

The map shows the deployment of railway, maritime and aerial infrastructure in the NAPA network.

*<https://www.porto.trieste.it/eng/port/napa-eng>*

- maritime connections
- + aerial Connections
- railway Connections



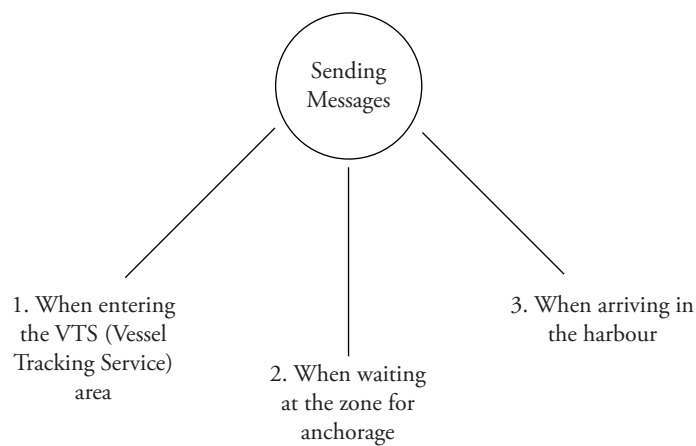
### The global flows in the harbor of Trieste

The map highlights the terminals of the harbor and the main goods they accomodate.

In the northern part of the area the old harbour is situated, called *Porto Vecchio*. This area is characterized by small amounts of goods' flows, since the majority of the buildings in that area were built under the Hapsburg Empire and have been later abandoned, to become obsolete today.

*Data from: <https://www.porto.trieste.it/eng/port/terminal-operators>*



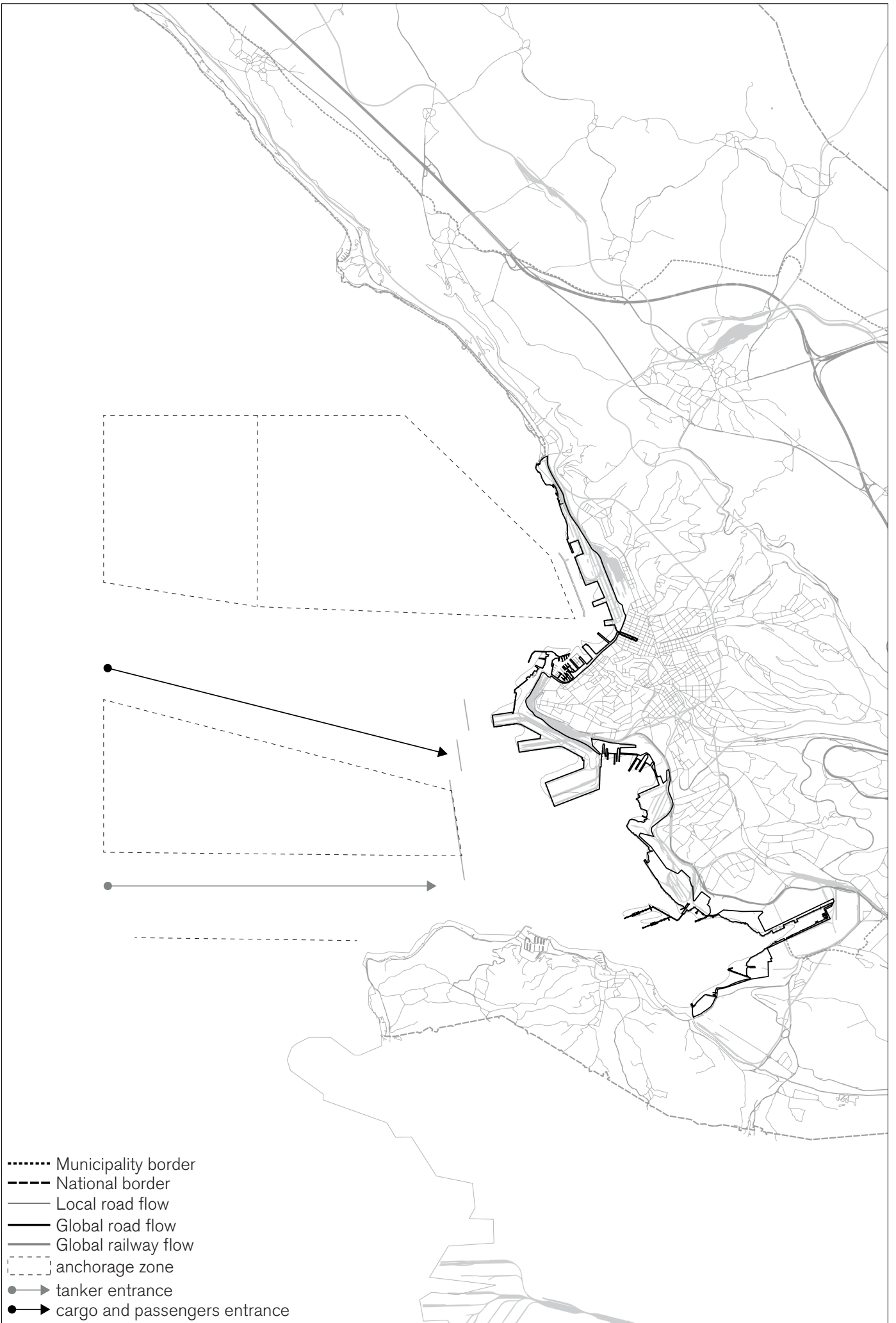


### The rituals of the global flows: entrance in the harbour

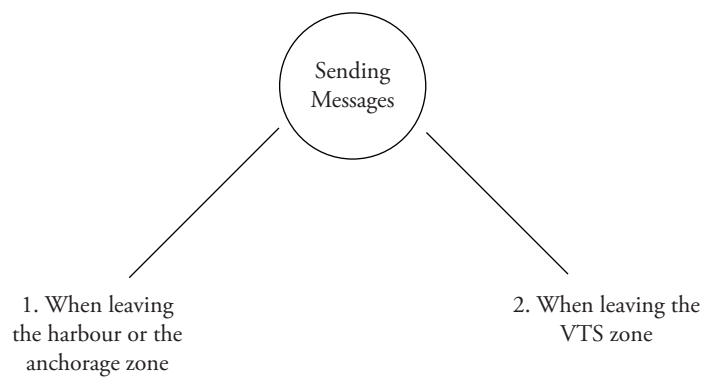
The networks described in the previous pages crystallize in the Land - Sea border. The global flows moving through them, follow a set of rules and rituals when entering or leaving the border. The map depicts the routes and other rules that the ships need to stick to when entering the harbour. Moreover, the ships must send a series of messages to the port authorities. This process is described in the diagram on this page.

*Data from: [http://www.yachtcharters-croatia.com/images/stories/nautical\\_maps/MK-01\\_Trscanski\\_zaljev.jpg](http://www.yachtcharters-croatia.com/images/stories/nautical_maps/MK-01_Trscanski_zaljev.jpg)*





- Municipality border
- National border
- Local road flow
- Global road flow
- Global railway flow
- anchorage zone
- tanker entrance
- cargo and passengers entrance

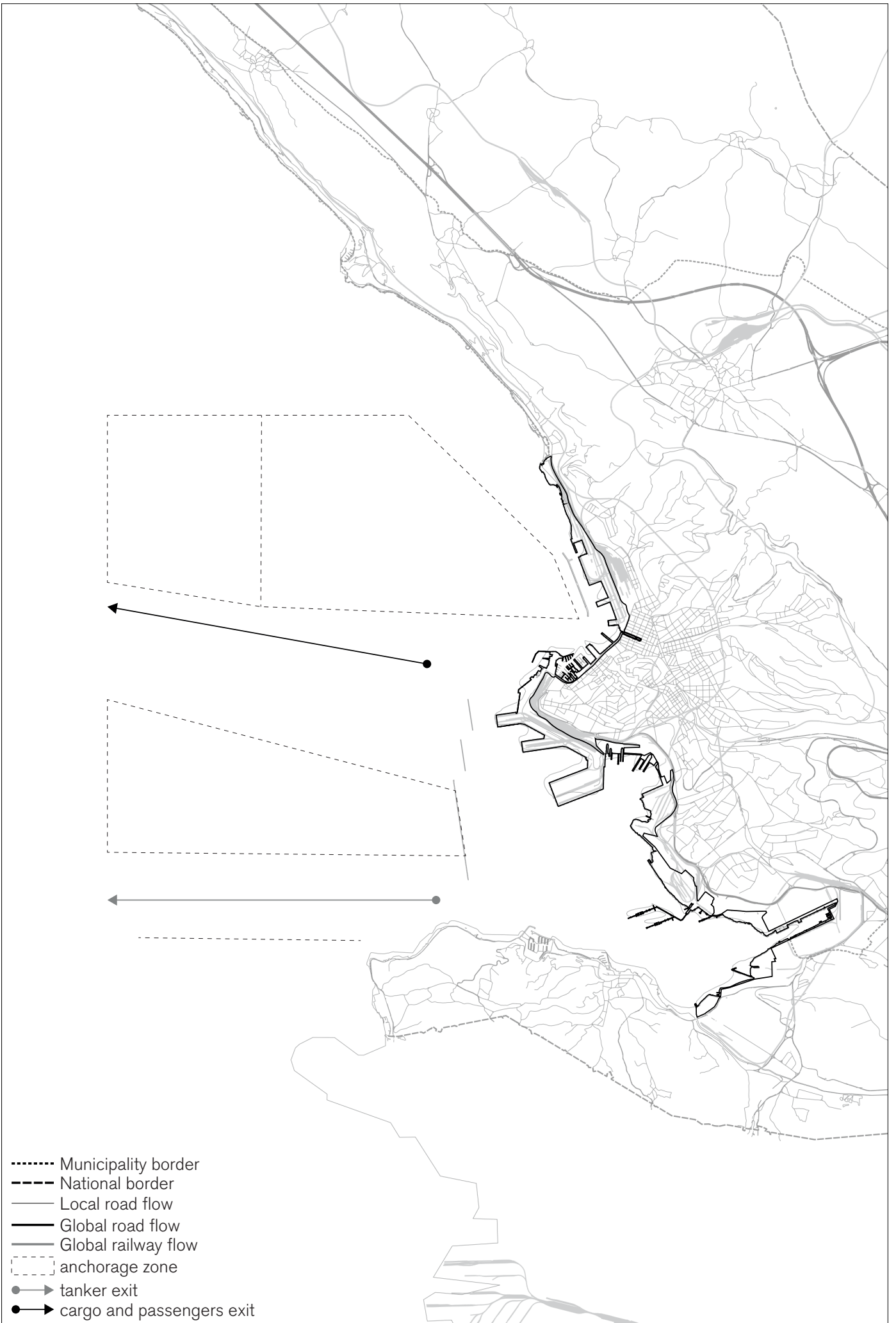


### The rituals of the global flows - tunker ship

These diagrams and photos show the movements and processes of the ships inside the harbour. The analysis in this case focuses on the tanker ships.

Furthermore, the photo of the infrastructures needed for handling are showed.

*Data from: [http://www.yachtcharters-croatia.com/images/stories/nautical\\_maps/MK-01\\_Trscanski\\_zaljev.jpg](http://www.yachtcharters-croatia.com/images/stories/nautical_maps/MK-01_Trscanski_zaljev.jpg)*





## **Cultural and ecological identity**

In the next pages, the maps highlight the powers, historical events and natural phenomena which have shaped the territories and landscapes in which Trieste is embedded.

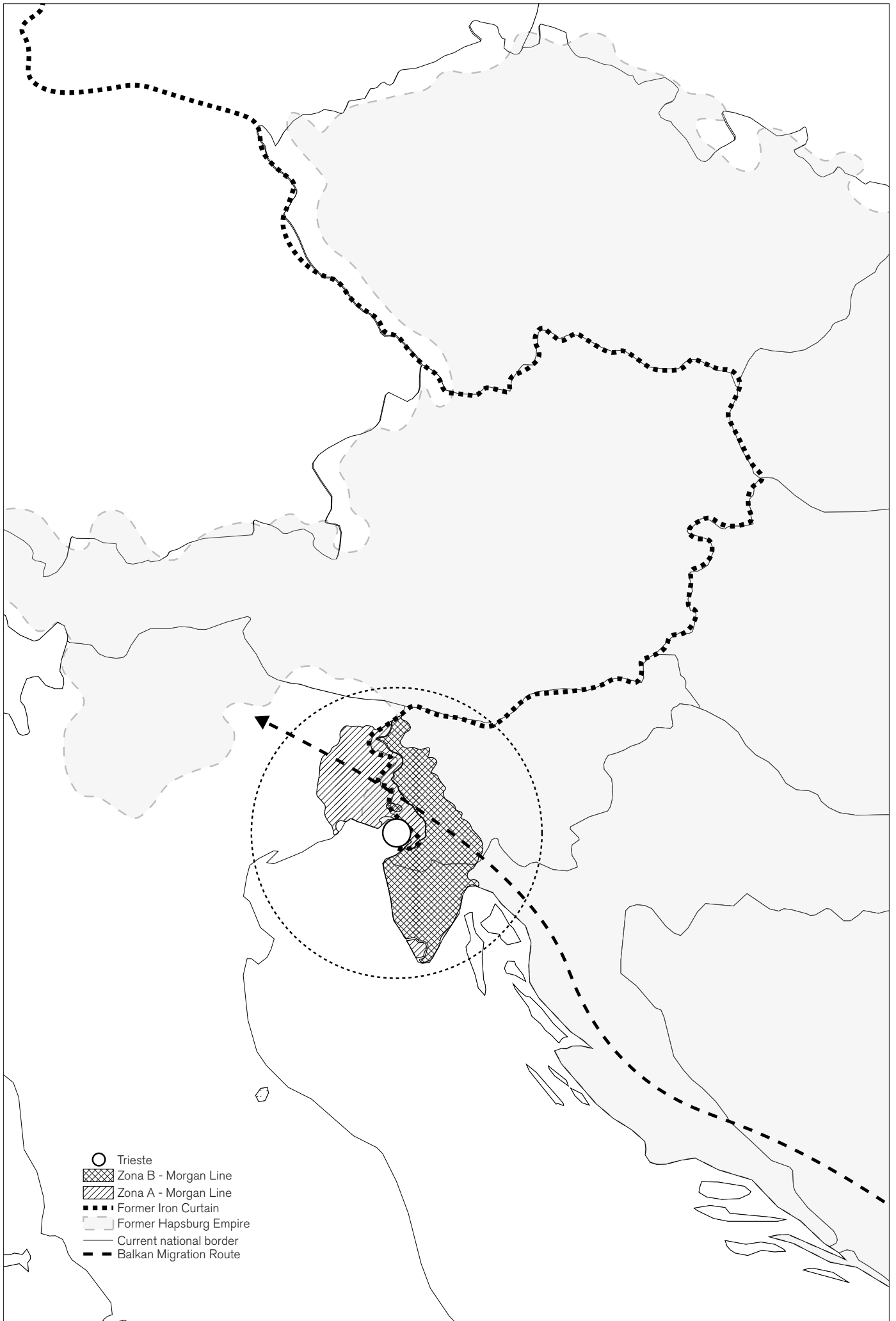
### Trieste as a social border

The map shows the historical and current international events and political disputes that drastically shaped its existence and identity.

Trieste has always been a border between the West and the East. In this drawing just some and the most relevant “phenomena” are shown, from the national borders of the Hapsburg Empire, to the contemporary flows of migration that cross Trieste, traveling from Asian countries and the southern territories of former Yugoslavia.

*Data from: [https://hub.arcgis.com/datasets/a21f4b-46d23e4ef896f31475217cbb08\\_1](https://hub.arcgis.com/datasets/a21f4b-46d23e4ef896f31475217cbb08_1)*

- Cities cities
- Railway Connections



## Legislative Powers

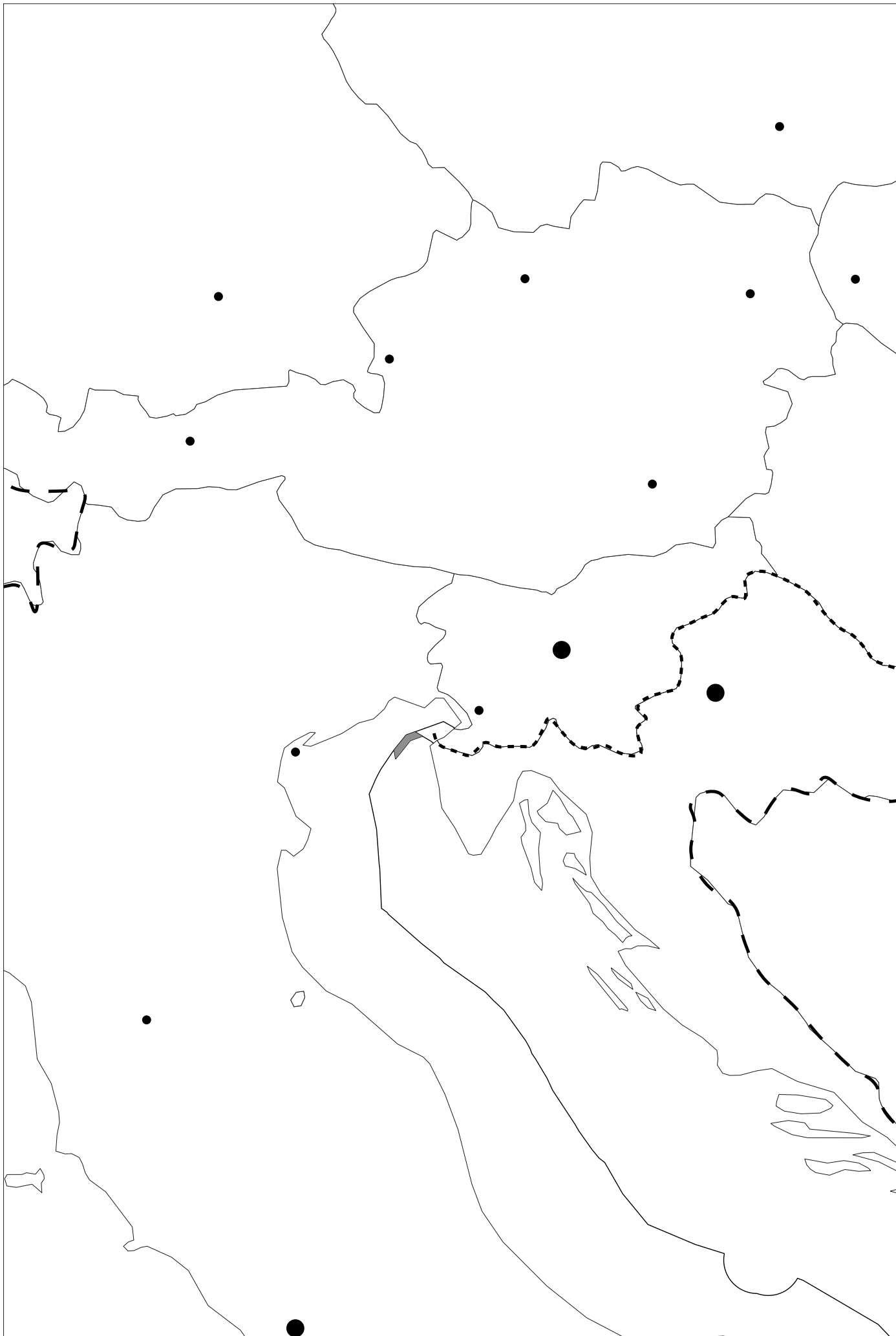
The map shows the various national powers that exist around the Adriatic Sea and the borders of international legislative institutions.

In the map we can also see a internationally contested area in the maritime surface between Slovenia and Croatia.

*Data from: [https://hub.arcgis.com/datasets/a21fdb-46d23e4ef896f31475217cbb08\\_1](https://hub.arcgis.com/datasets/a21fdb-46d23e4ef896f31475217cbb08_1)*

- Important urban areas
- Capital cities
- International diplomatic conflicts
- National border
- Exclusive Economic Zone
- European Union border
- .... Schengen Area border












### Political Affinities

The map shows the political orientations of the governments of the countries of this region. There are some extremist and populist governments at the moment, for instance in Slovenia. The current Italian government is defined as of center-left orientation. The current majority in the Parliament consists of a center-left (Partito Democratico) party and a populist party that is not clearly aligned (Movimento Cinque Stelle). However, the governments of the Region Friuli Venezia Giulia and the Municipality of Trieste are both right oriented. The first one is a populist government (Lega), while the second is liberal (Forza Italia)

*Data from: <https://www.ednh.news/it/governi-in-europa-sempre-piu-di-coalizione/>*

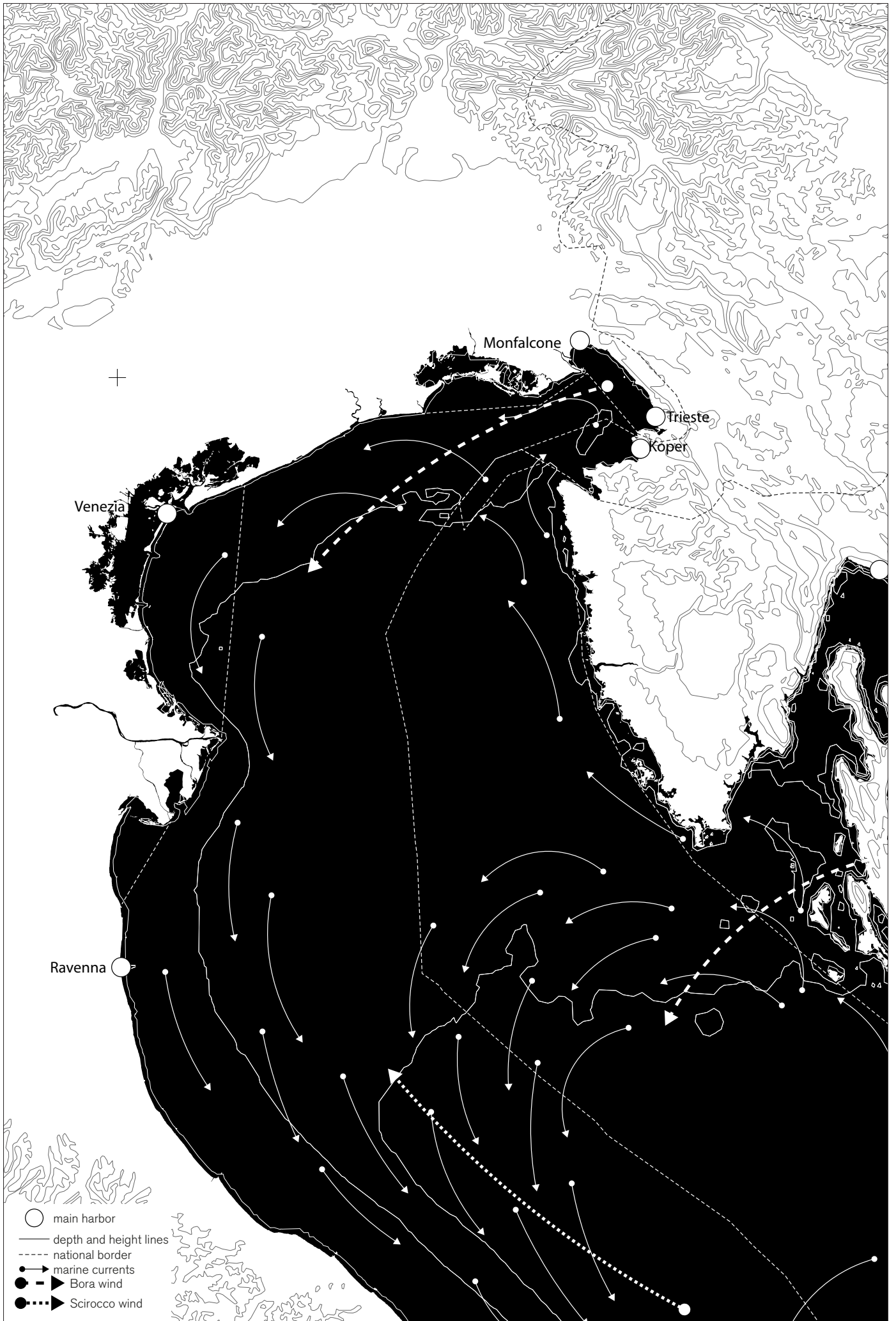


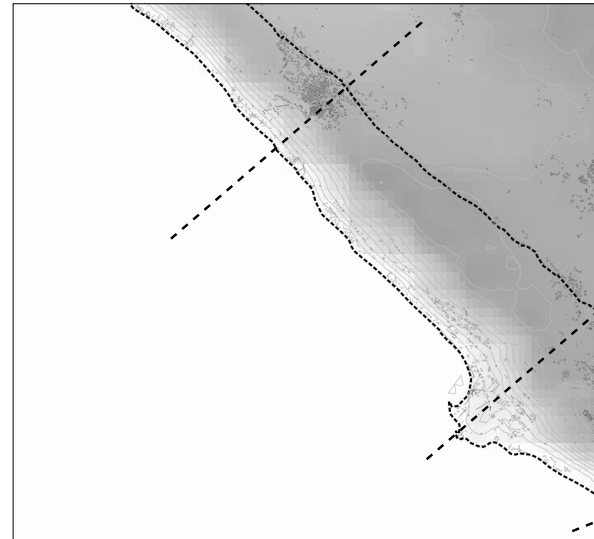
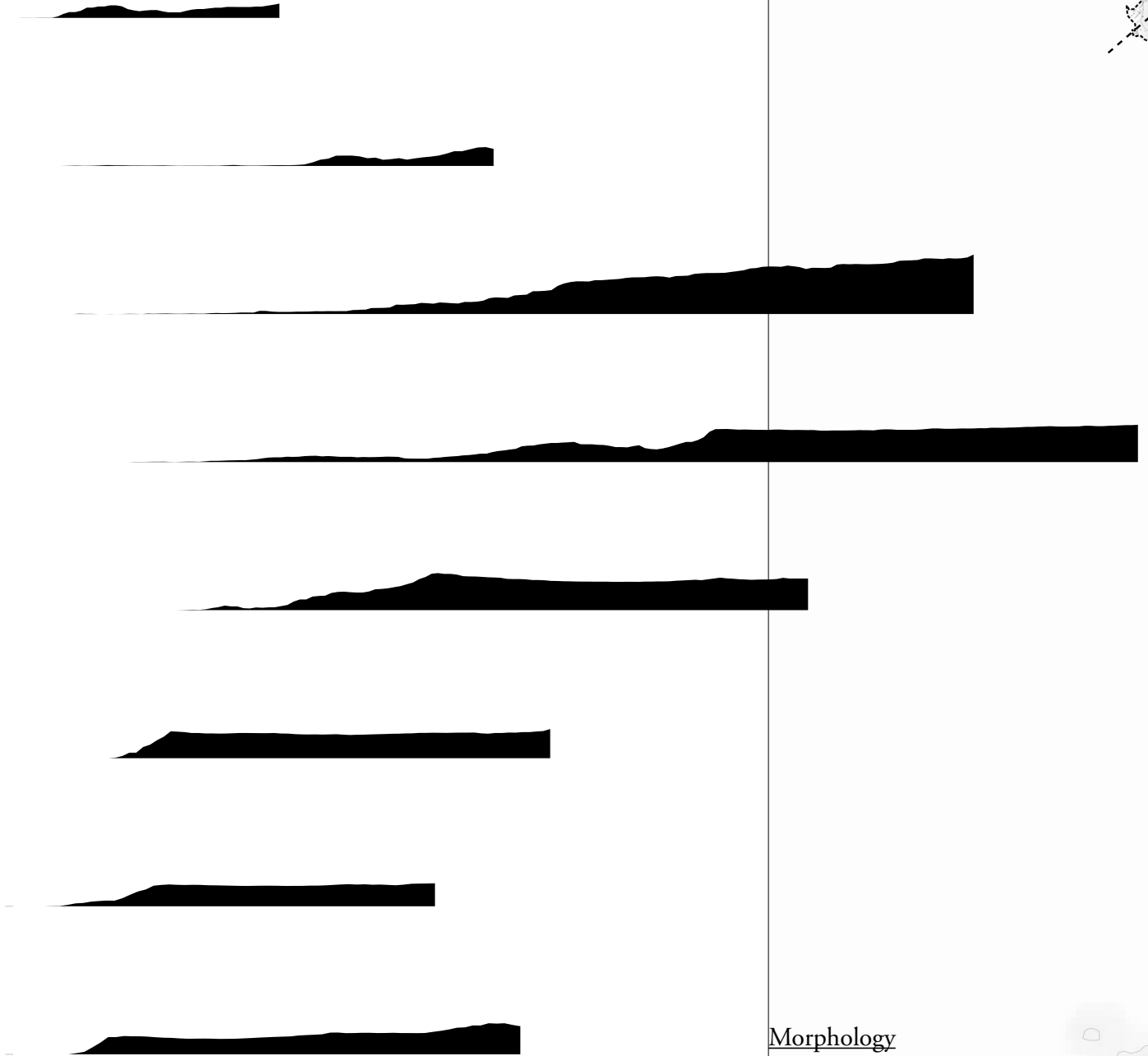
-  Capital city
-  Important city
-  Center - right
-  Right
-  Center - left
-  Exclusive Economic Zone
-  National border

### Natural flows

The map shows the main marine currents in the Northern Adriatic Sea. Furthermore, it shows the two predominant winds of this territory: the Bora and the Scirocco.

*Data from: <https://slideplayer.it/slide/613031>*

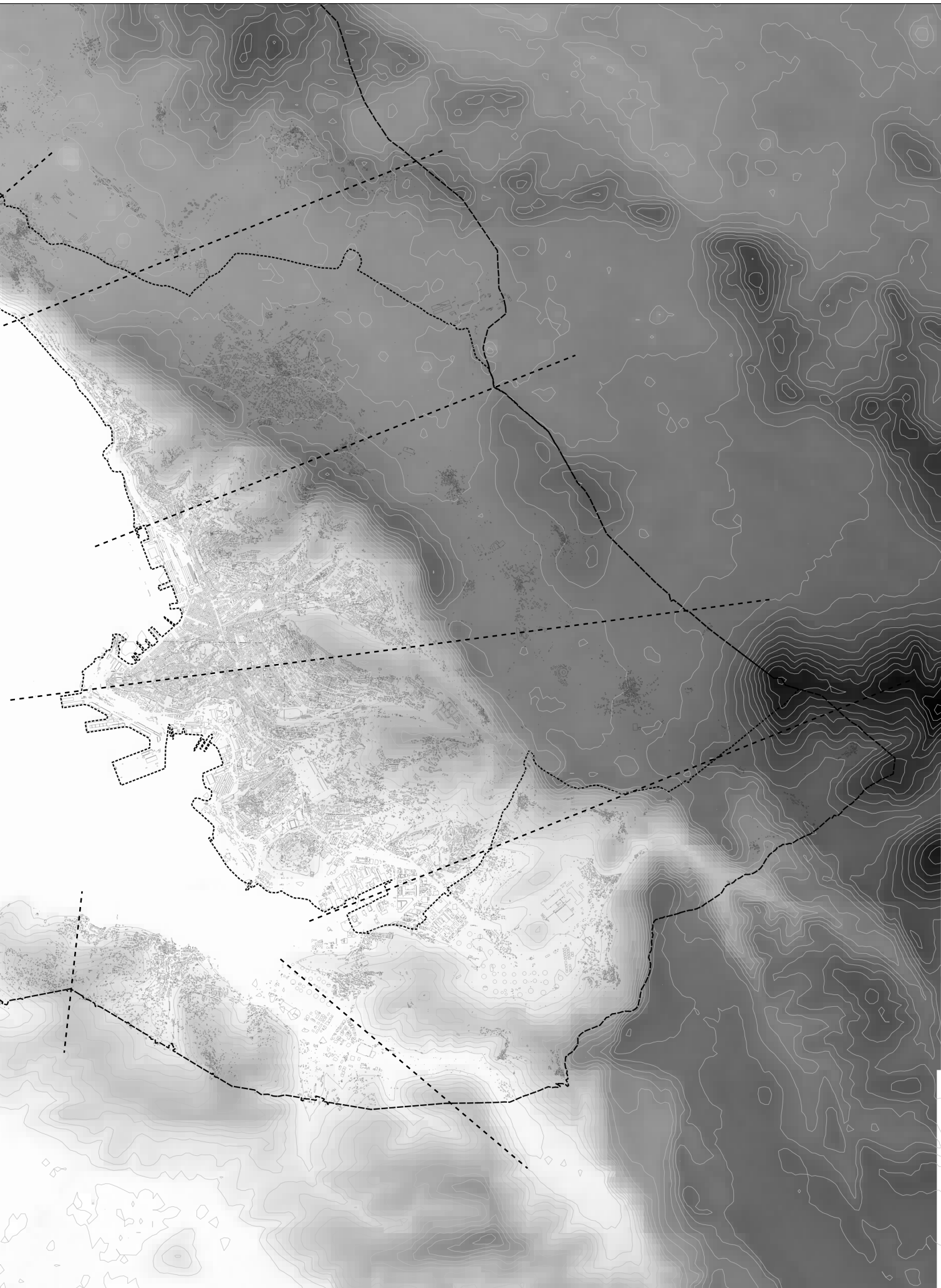




## Morphology

The map and the sections allow to understand the morphology of the city and its surroundings. The city is surrounded by the Karst plateau. The dense urban environment is mainly focused on the coastal area, while the plateau presents a series of small urban clusters.

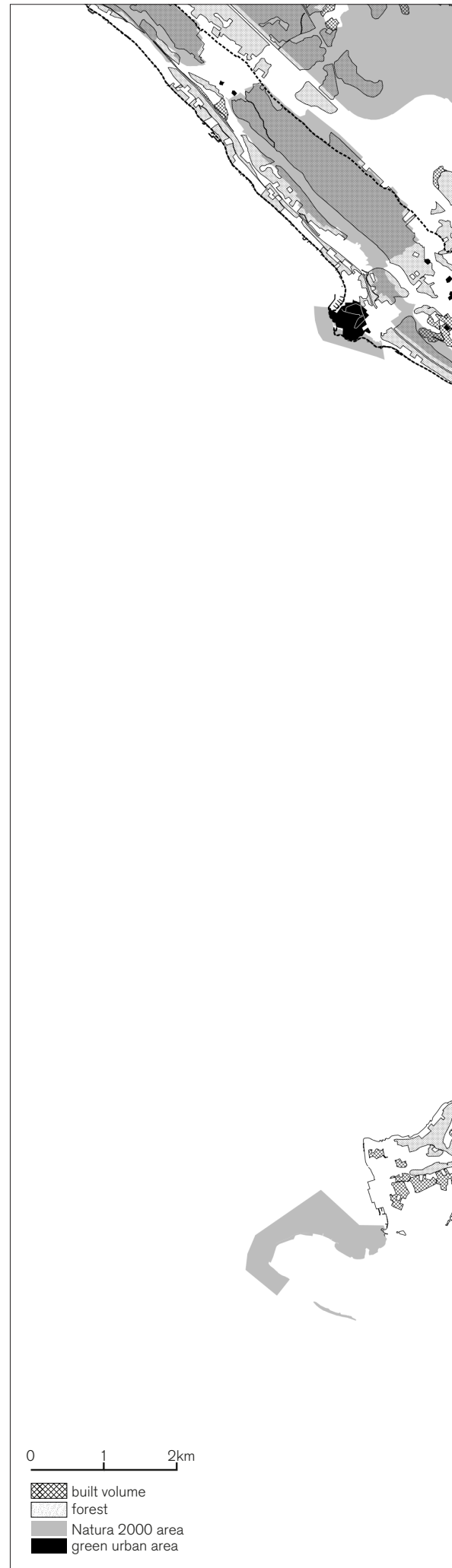
*Data from: <https://land.copernicus.eu/local/urban-atlas>*



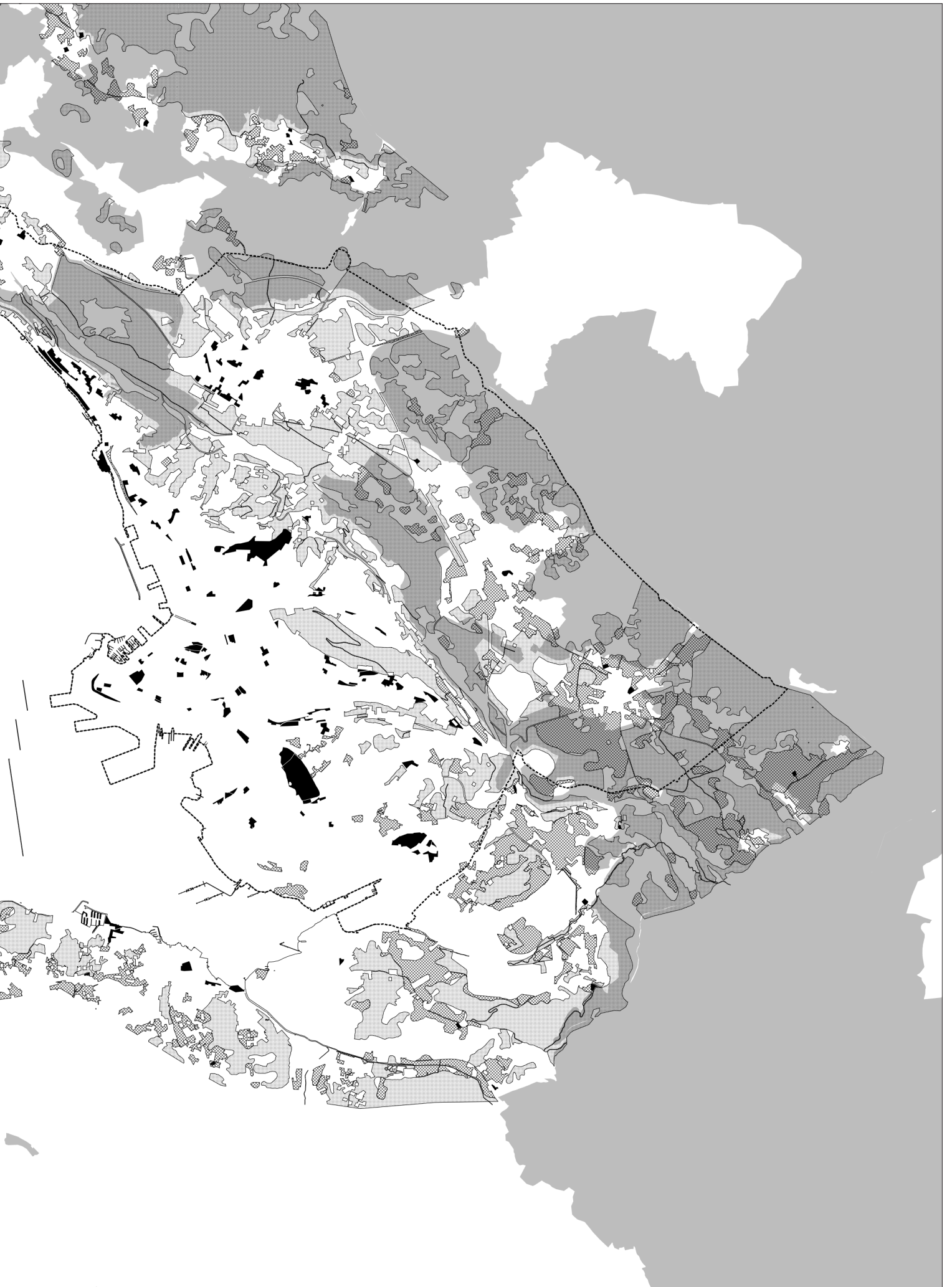
### Green Areas

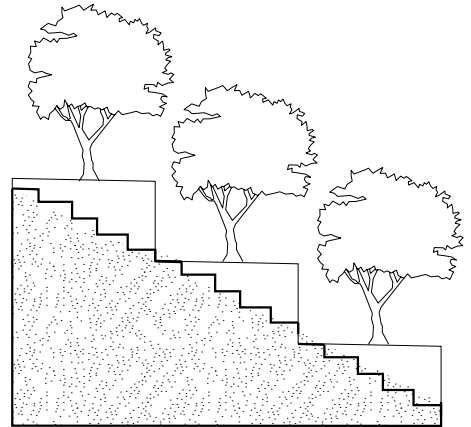
The map shows the main marine currents in the Northern Adriatic Sea. Furthermore, it shows the two predominant winds of this territory: the Bora and the Scirocco.

Data from: <https://land.copernicus.eu/local/urban-atlas>  
<https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/data/natura-11>









### Productive Green Areas

The map shows the areas where the agricultural production takes place. The agriculture in Trieste mainly focuses on the production of oil and wine. Especially the latter product has been of special interest to the Port Authority. In fact, this product has been the starting point for the establishment of many overseas connections, especially with Asia, mainly China.

The autochthonous and also most produced olive species are the *Carbona* and *Biancheria*, while the grape species that are mostly found in the area are the *Vitovska*, *Malvasia*, *Teran* and *Glera*.

The areas where the olives and grapes are produced are one of the most characteristic features of the Triestian landscape in the coastal area.

This organization of the agricultural land is called *pastini*. A section explaining this structure is shown above.

Data from: <https://land.copernicus.eu/local/urban-atlas>





## Mapping the Sea - Land Interface

In the next pages, the maps and the photos describe the spaces along the Sea - Land interface of Trieste. This results in an analysis that is focused on the urban areas where the local and global dynamics focus and manifest themselves.

The analysis first focuses on the general features built environment and land use of the areas along the interface between land and sea. Afterwards, the analysis shifts and focuses on the rituals that the inhabitants perform in relation to the water surface.

## Morphology

The map shows the morphological characteristics of the city.

It is possible to see that there is an important height difference between the denser urban area and the surroundings of the city.

The higher portions of the landscape stand on the Karst plateau.

*Data from: [https://hub.arcgis.com/datasets/a21fdb-46d23e4ef896f31475217cbb08\\_1](https://hub.arcgis.com/datasets/a21fdb-46d23e4ef896f31475217cbb08_1)*

- harbour area
- railway area
- contour lines (1.5m)



### The built environment

The map underlines the fact that the border between land and sea is characterized by a dense urban fabrics. An exception is the northern part of the border, where the built environment is made mostly by independent houses and villas.

*Data from: <https://land.copernicus.eu/local/urban-atlas>*



- continuous urban fabrics (S.L. > 80%)
  - discontinuous dense urban fabrics (S.L. 50-80%)
  - discontinuous medium density urban fabrics (S.L. 30-50%)
  - discontinuous low density urban fabrics (S.L. 10-30%)
  - discontinuous very low density urban fabrics (S.L. < 10%)
- 
- harbour area
  - railway area
  - roads

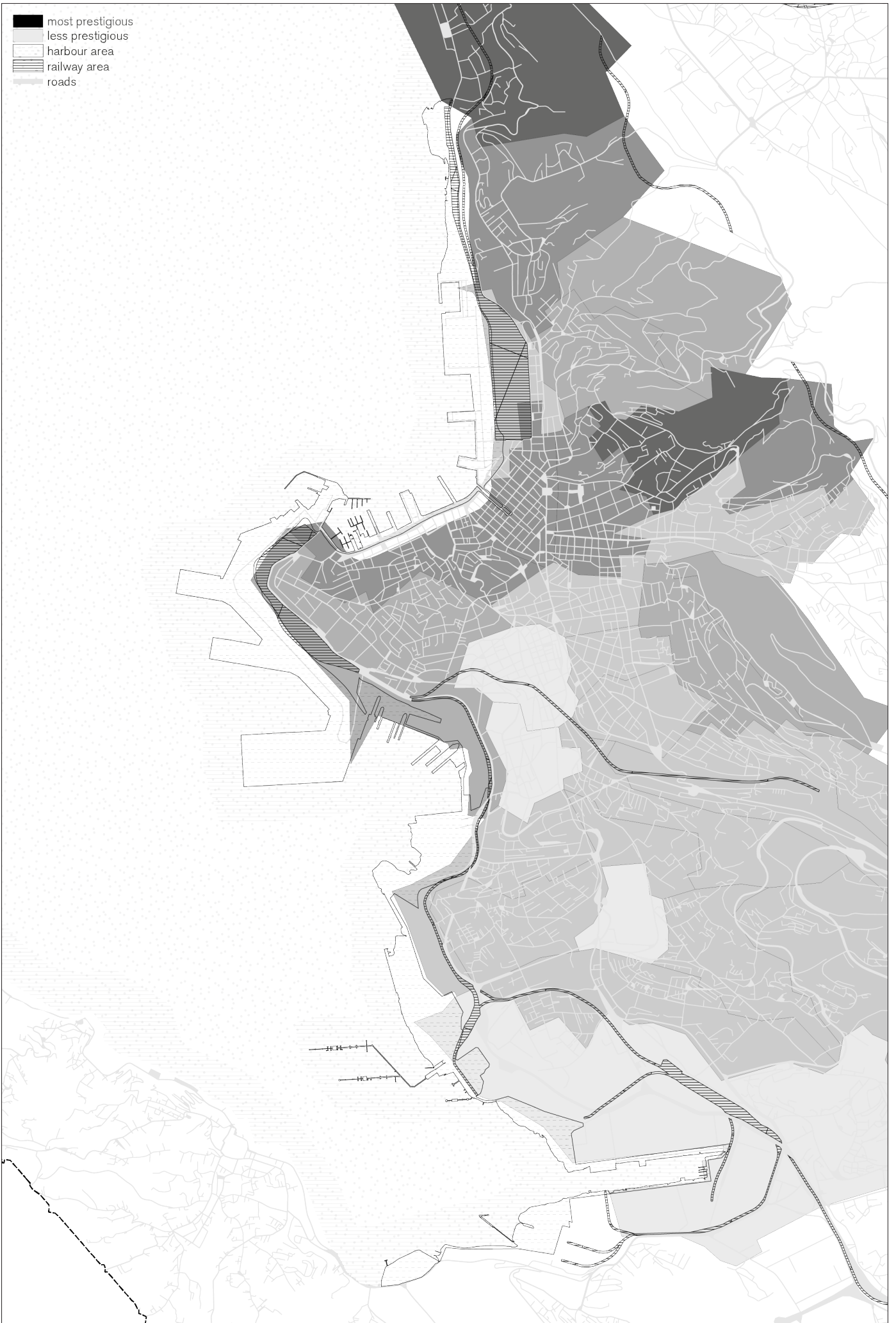


### The built environment

The map shows the differences in real estate value along the interface. It is possible to see that the value falls drastically when approaching the harbour areas where industrial functions are located.

*Data from: <https://land.copernicus.eu/local/urban-atlas>*

- most prestigious
- less prestigious
- harbour area
- railway area
- roads



## Land Use

The map shows the land organization of the areas along the harbour.

It is possible to claim that the majority of the public spaces are located in the central area of the city. On the northern part of the city's coast is occupied by the abandoned buildings of the old harbour. The southern part of the interface presents some wide public areas, but they are not of high spatial quality. There is a wide area occupied by a variety of cemeteries that remember the complex historical framework of the city. Another wide area is the cluster of the sports facilities, which plays an important role in the feeling of membership for the citizens.

*Data from: <https://land.copernicus.eu/local/urban-atlas>*

- public space
- green space
- residential and mixed use
- industrial
- railway area
- roads



The rituals of the citizens on  
the land-sea border

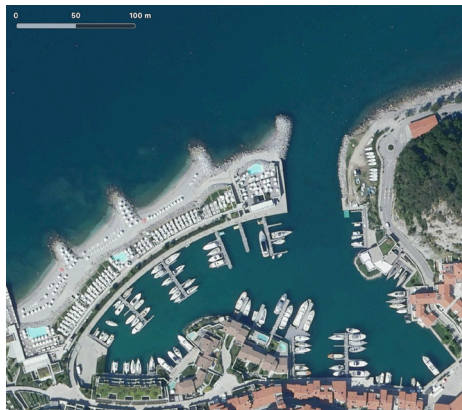
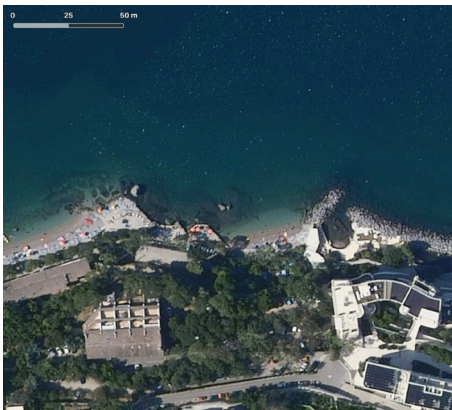
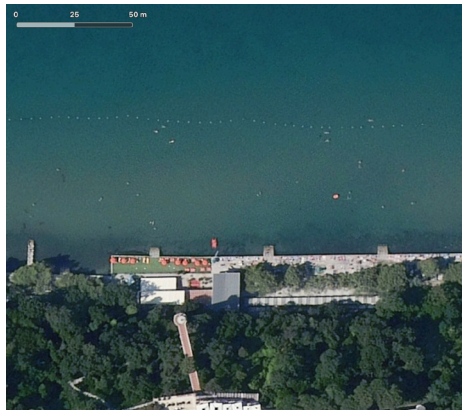
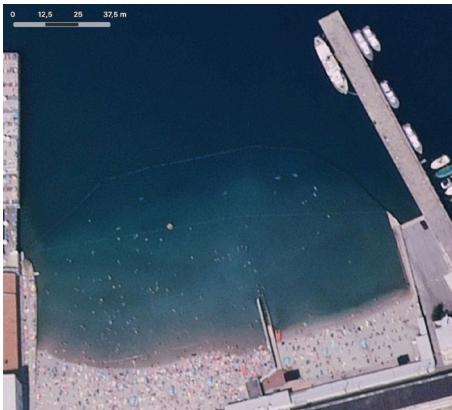
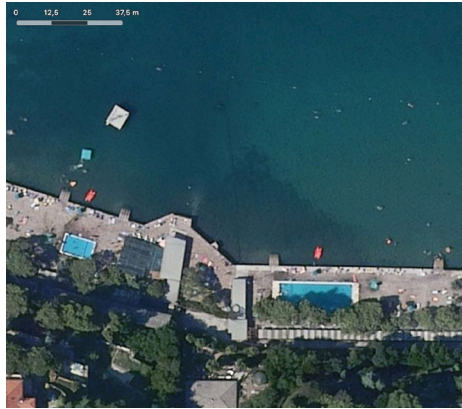
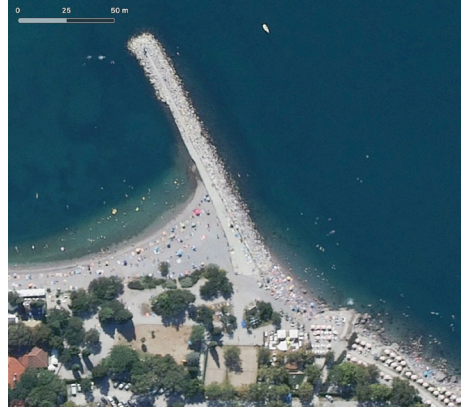
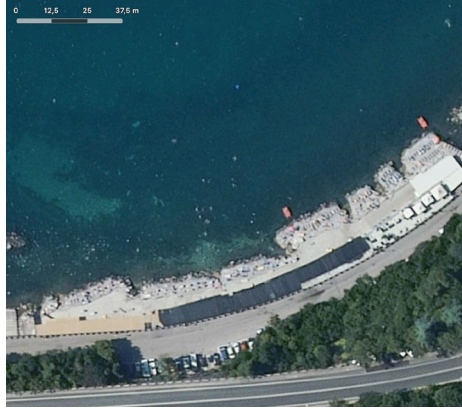
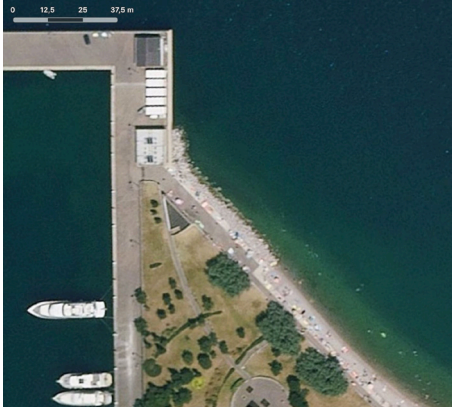
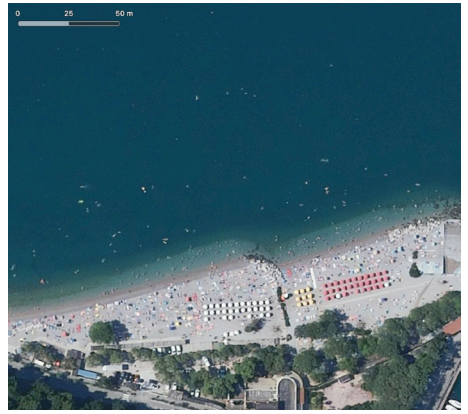
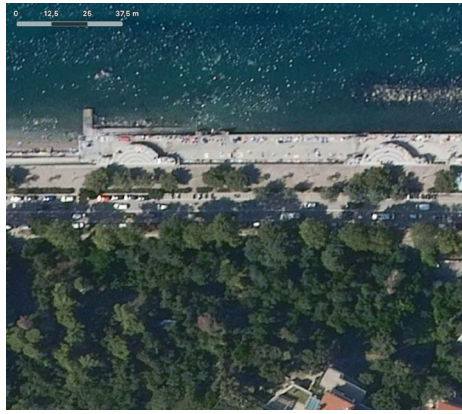
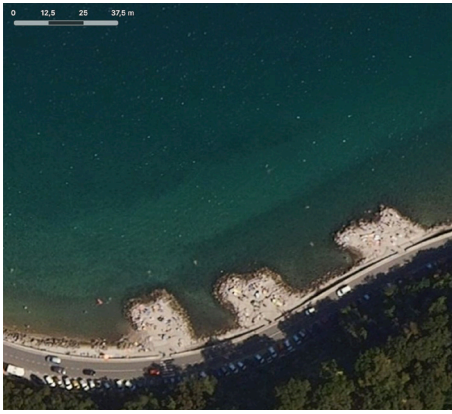
The coast of Trieste borders the whole city. Therefore, the harbour and the maritime region of the Adriatic Sea have shaped the identity of the citizens of Trieste for centuries. This page is dedicated to the activities, or rituals, that are often seen in the Sea - Land border.



fig13: The gulf during the Barcolana race. Retrieved from: <https://www.pressmare.it/it/regate/barcolana/2020-09-28/presented-by-general-a-trieste-dal-2-all-11-ottobre-28234>



fig14: Photo in a bathing zone, by Mario Magajna. Retrieved from: <https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/Media/Gallerie/La-Trieste-di-Mario-Magajna>



### The ritual of Bathing

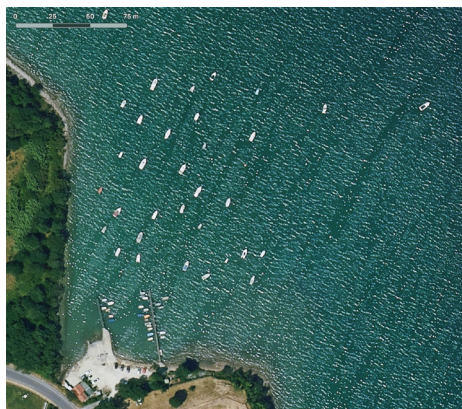
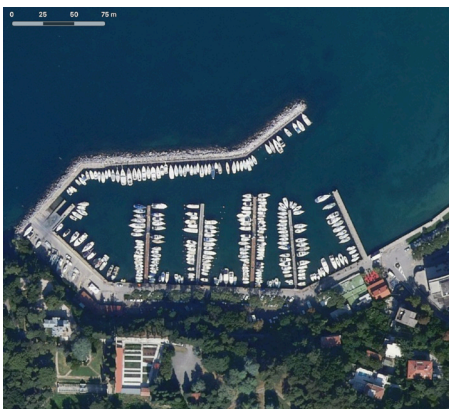
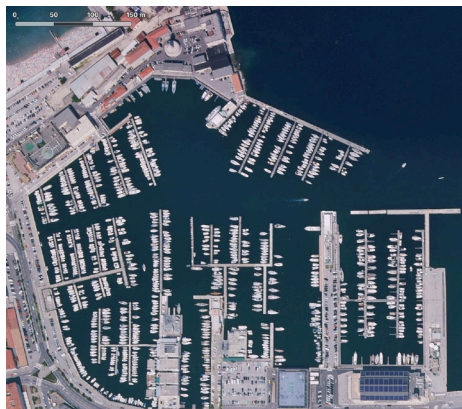
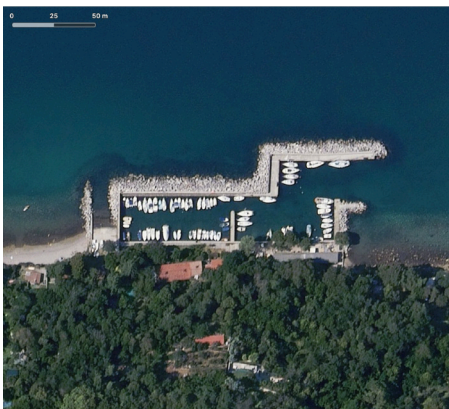
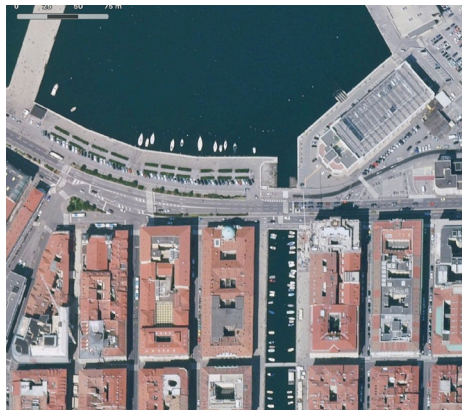
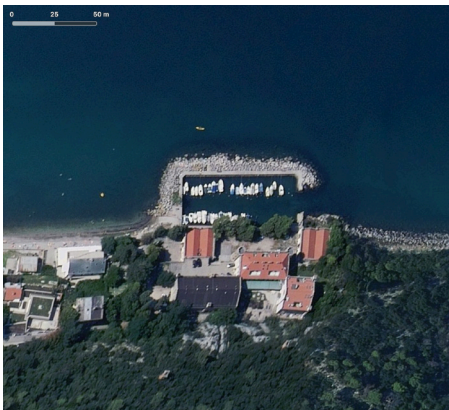
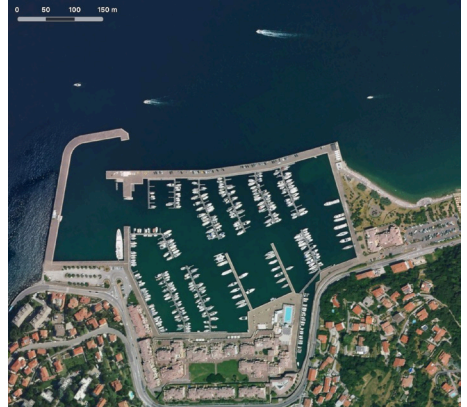
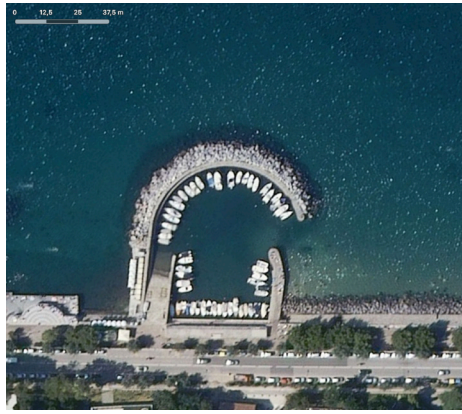
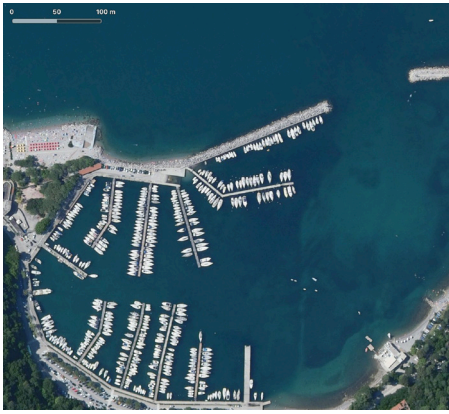
The map shows the bathing zones of Trieste. Many of them are not proper beaches. Instead, the northern strip of the city has access to the sea through a paved road and cliffs.

The pictures on this page correspond to the points in the map, they are listed from North to South. All photos are retrieved from Apple Maps.

Map adapted from: <https://sites.google.com/site/triestepatica/home/9---informazioni-varie-various-information/spiagge-in-provincia-di-trieste>







## The ritual of Sailing

Probably more than the bathing zones, the Sailing activities are those that really connect the citizen of this territory to the sea.

The marinas and sailing clubs are mainly found in the less urbanized parts of the coast, in the northern and southern part of the Gulf. They are mainly of small dimension. In the city center, there is a bigger marina and a canal. These are areas of the first harbour.

The pictures on this page correspond to the points in the map, they are listed from North to South. All the photos are taken from Apple Maps.

Map adapted from: <https://sites.google.com/site/triestepatica/home/9---informazioni-varie-various-information/spiagge-in-provincia-di-trieste>



### Accessibility of the waterfront

In this map, the different activities and spaces existing between the border and the sea are defined.

From this map it is possible to see that the majority of the border that runs parallel to the new harbour is almost mostly unaccessible. This is also where most of the global flows focus and move.

In the next page sections are presented that deepen the investigation of the different situations we can find along the coast.



## The Sections

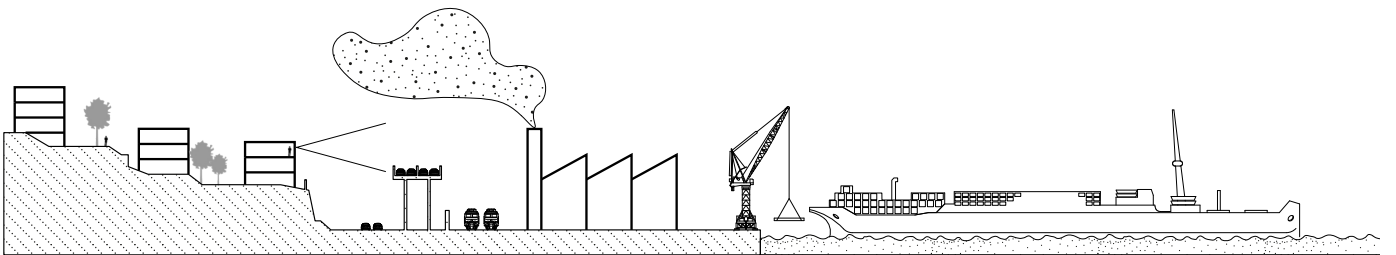
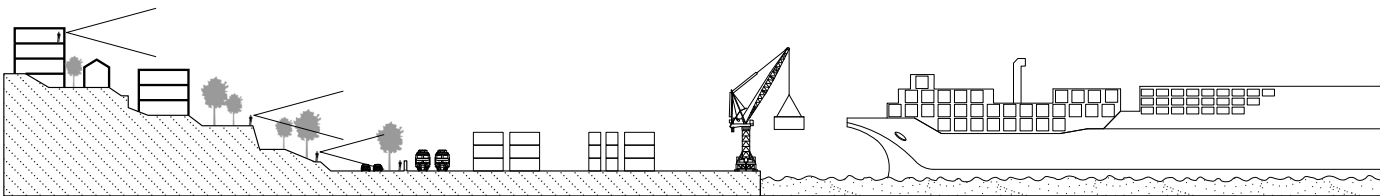
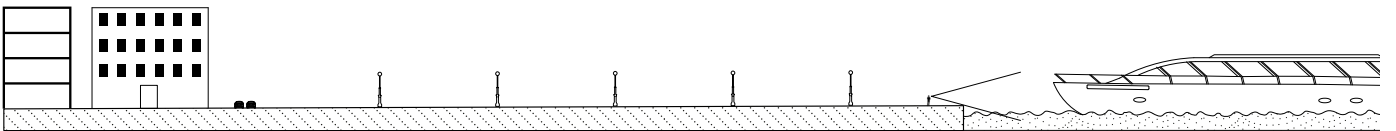
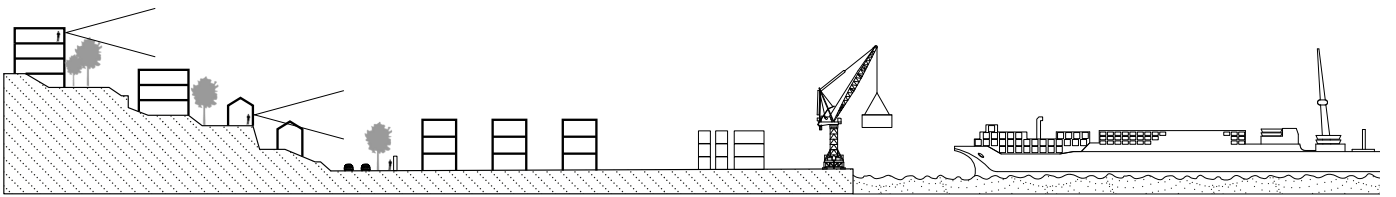
The diagrammatic sections in the next page depict the four typical situations found on the border between Land and Sea.

The first situation describes the relation between the city and the harbour on the northern part of the border, in the area of *Porto Vecchio*.

The second situation is an exception, as it is the section that describes the area of Piazza Unità, the main square of the city overlooking the sea. In addition to the square, where all the buildings of the main administrative institutions stand, the peer Molo Audace can be defined as a public square, or a continuation of Piazza Unità.

The third situation describes the organization of the area of the new port (Porto Nuovo). This area is characterized not only by a wall that divides the two sides, but the division is amplified by the presence of major infrastructural connections, such as highways and railways.

The fourth situation talks about the industrial parts of the harbour. Similarly to the previous case, the two sides are divided by both walls and heavy infrastructure. The area in the harbour hosts industries, the most important is the steel factory, which is a crucial actor of the harbour.

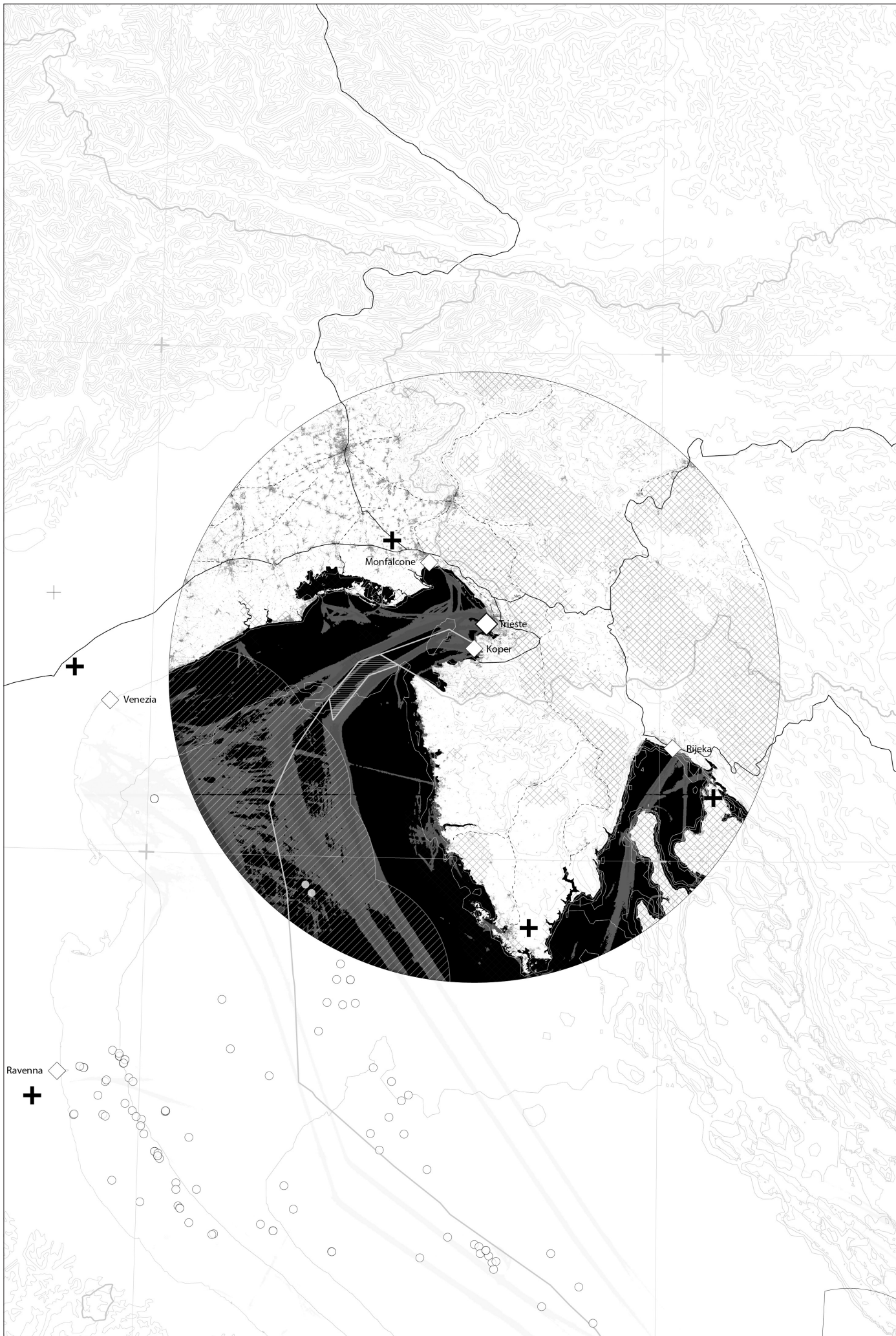


## FINDINGS

The analytical framework has brought to light some crucial characteristics that a future vision for the city should consider:

- The flows of the harbour are the element that affected the urban forms and patterns the most during history, starting with the establishment of the freeport. The city of Trieste is a relatively small reality, therefore it needs to build connections with other harbours that share the same maritime region.
- The historical identity of the city is complex and as a consequence, so is the social structure. The citizens of the relational territory of Trieste are strongly connected to the surrounding countries, especially those of former Yugoslavia.
- The global flows entering the harbours follow strict rules, thus it is possible to say that they perform predictable rituals. The process of entering and leaving the harbour are the movement that is most easily defined and guided.
- When taking into account the urban scale, it is possible to define natural characteristics as well. First of all, the natural flow of the wind, precisely Bora, which characterizes the cold months of the year. The surroundings of the city present wide forest and green areas, which give life to ecologic corridors. The agricultural land is also focused on the outskirts and on the transition from the Karst plateau to the city, they are organized in the traditional form of the *pastini*. On the other hand, in the city centre the green areas are rare and not interconnected.
- The border between land and sea is completely bordered by the area of the Port Authority. Although, in some cases, especially around the city centre these areas are completely connected to the city, in some cases a typical maritime infrastructure such as a pier creates a proper public square.
- Beside the above mentioned exceptions, the people mostly dialogue with the Land-Sea border in three occasions: to sail, to bath and to walk. While the second one mostly occur only during warm months, the other two are performed throughout all the year.





## FUTURE SCENARIOS

### Speculations on the border's permeability

Scenarios arise through the speculation about different degrees of permeability through the border on different scales and for different actors.

#### Scenario 1: The Status Quo

In this scenario the city and the harbor continue to operate like they do now. There are no proper integrations between them. Therefore, the citizen continues to feel alienated from the global flows. The borders are open for the global flows, that move freely. On the other hand, the people cannot enter or perceive the place of flows, which is segregated behind a wall.

#### Scenario 2: Synchronizing Performances

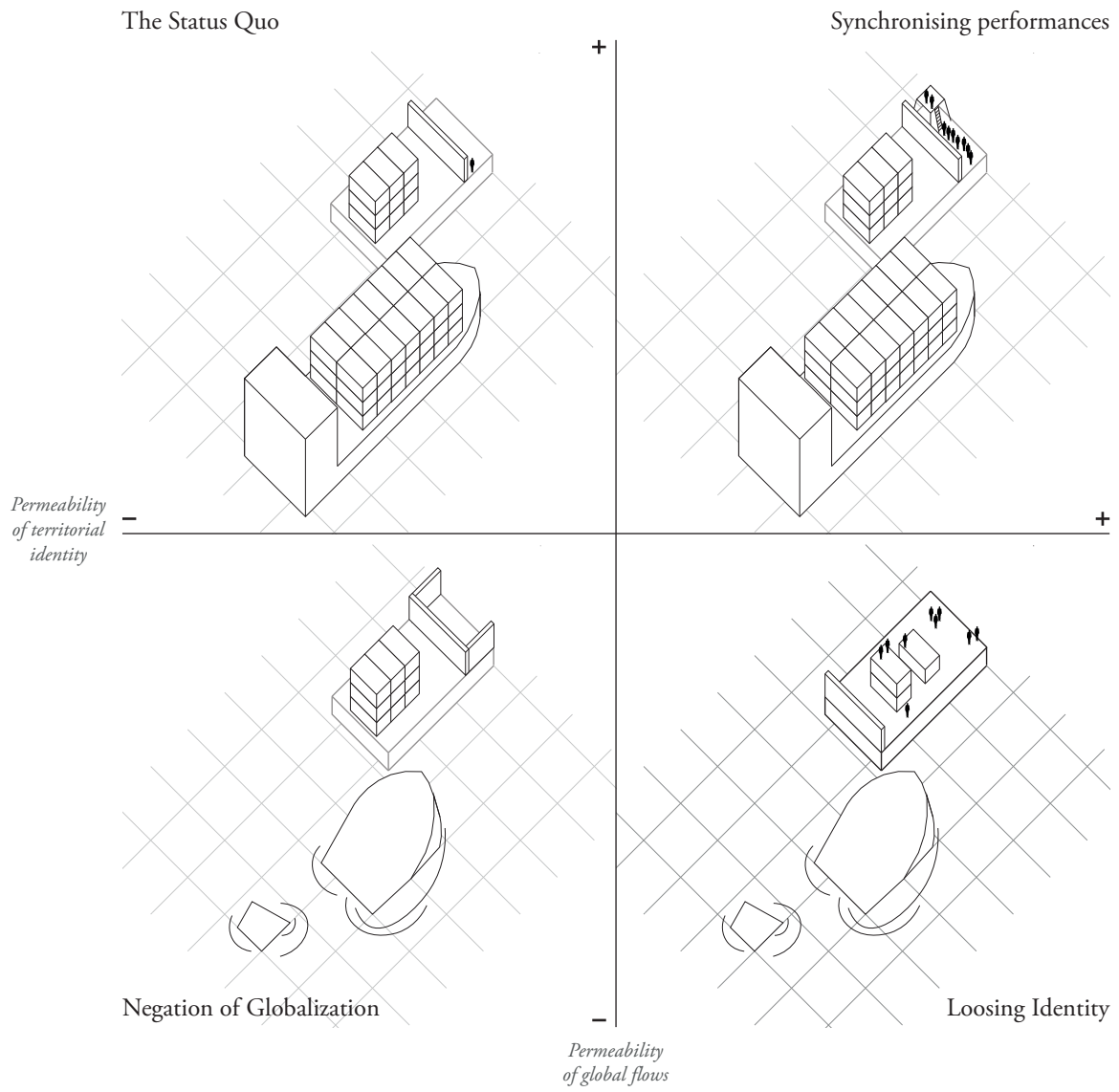
In this scenario the citizen is able to see and understand the harbor. The rituals of the two entities do meet thanks to the composition of the space. The citizen is able to use his body to give proof of his existence and consequently he sees and understands the volume that he occupied in the global networks. The border between the space of flows and the space of places has openings in them, through which the citizen can see the space of flows on the other side.

#### Scenario 3: Negation of Globalisation

In this scenario, the national borders are hermetically closed, both for the global flows in the harbour and towards the cultural diversity introduced by the entering of other people in the territory.

#### Scenario 4: Losing Identity

In this scenario, the border is only permeable for the entering of international flows of people, the global flows of goods are not allowed anymore. This results in the loss of the maritime identity of the citizen of Trieste.



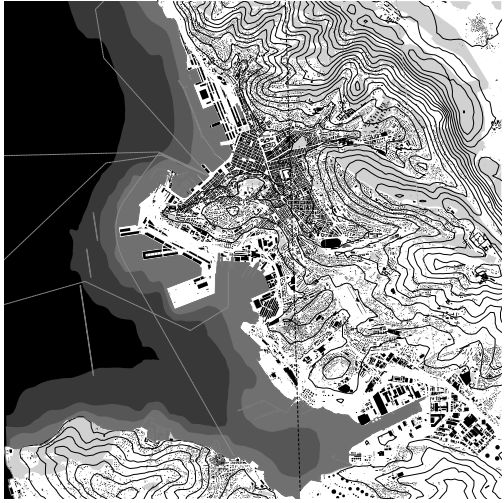
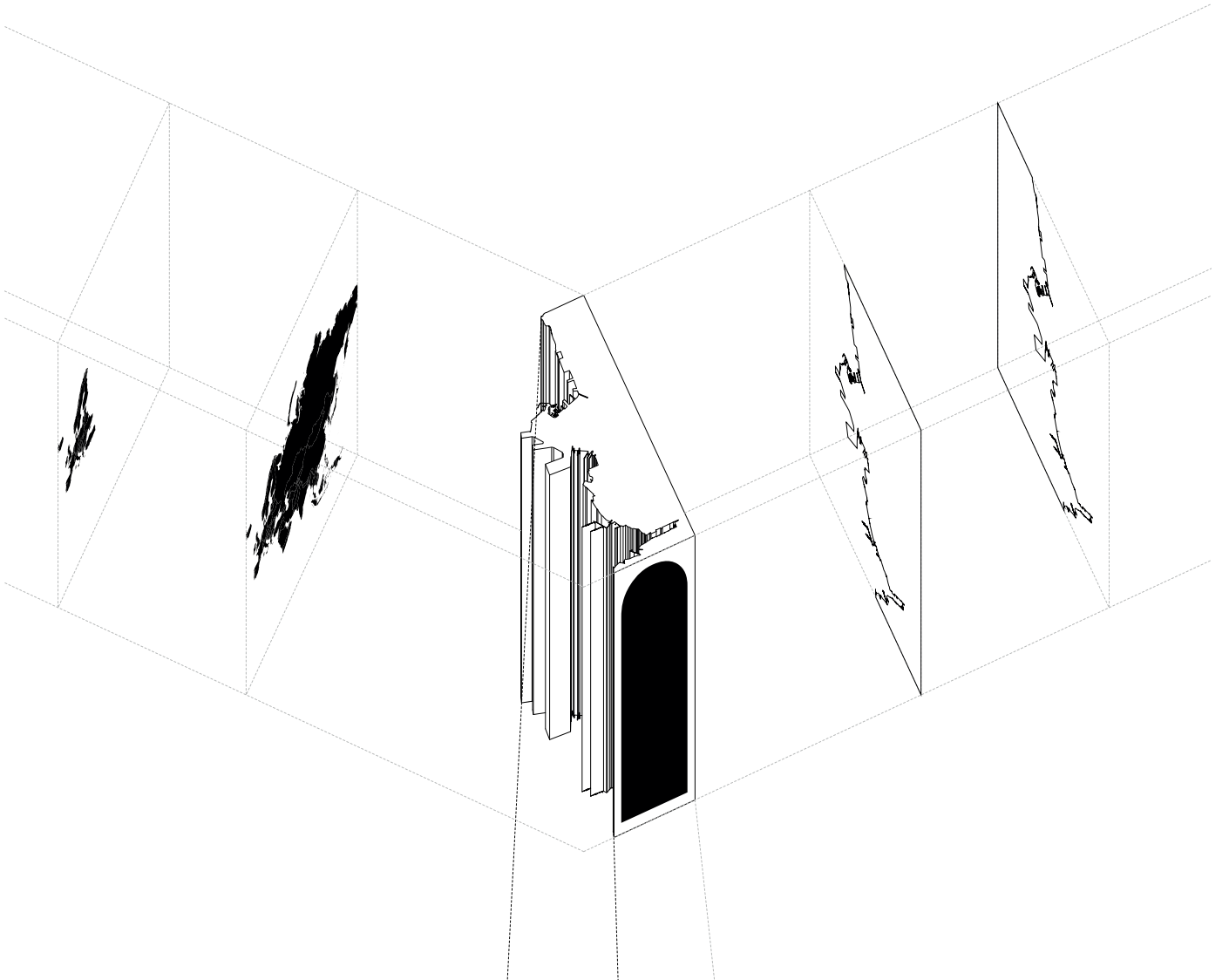
## **SYNCHRONIZING MOVEMENTS AND NEEDS**

### **The agency of Sea-Land border**

The characteristics of the traces of the relational territory crystalize in the fabrics of the coastline of the city, through the layers of functions, historical events and social interactions.

From the sea, flows of ships, currents of water, traveling people arrive. Their needs also cristallyze on the same line.

The agency of the border is to allow them to exist there, all at the same time, despite the conflicts they can create, the contraddictions and the different scales they usually inhabit.

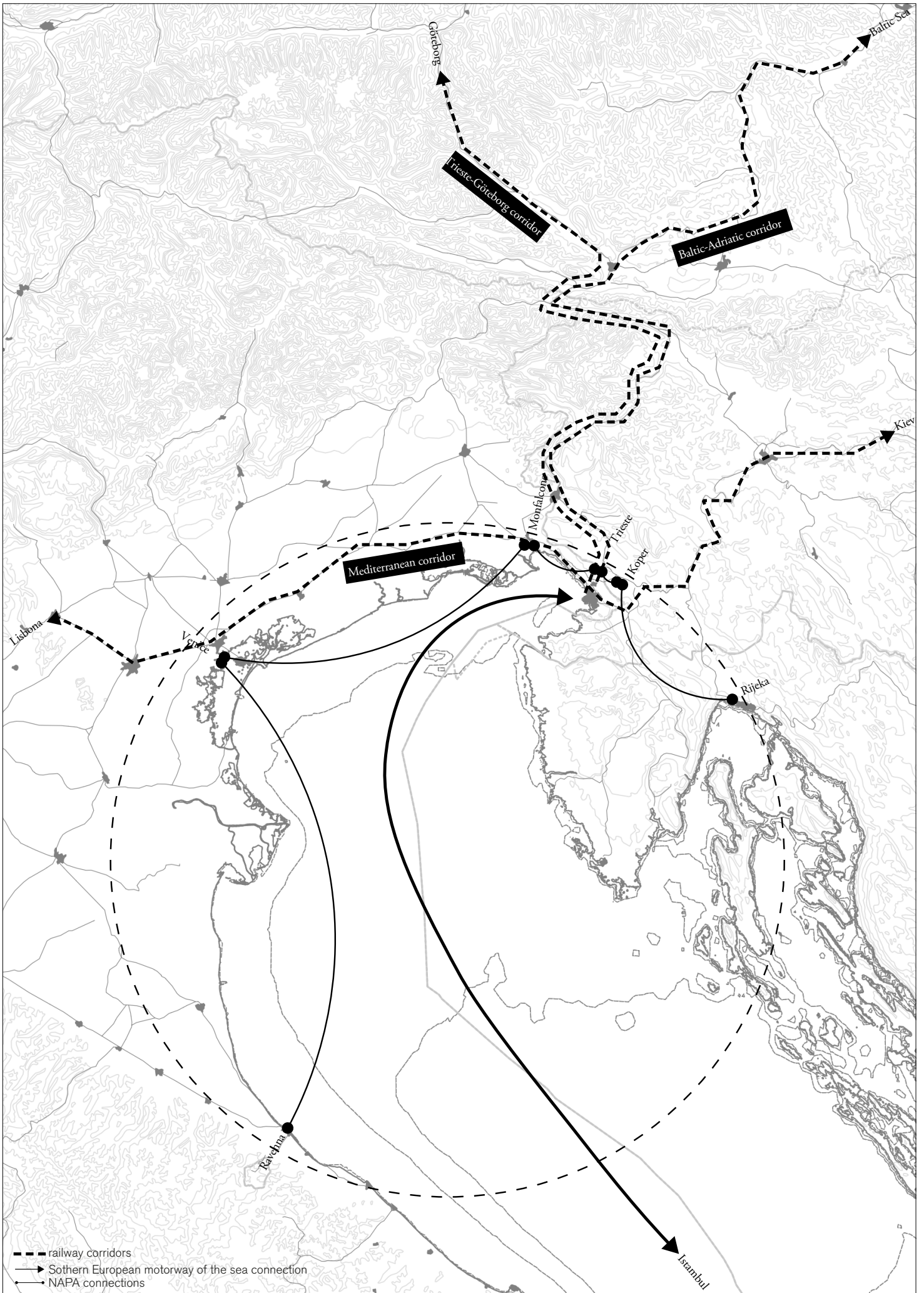


## **VISION**

### **The territorial scale: investing in the global flows**

The Vision for Trieste is of a port that performs as a border between the maritime movements and railways. The existing railway infrastructures allow the city to be connected both with the Northern Europe, reaching the Baltic Sea, and with the most Eastern and Western parts of the continent. These are connections that have been already playing an important role in the harbour. To these two, a new corridor is added, the Trieste - Göteborg. The latter represents a new opportunity that has arisen from the latest investments in the harbour by the German company HHLA.

On the other side, through the maritime territory, it is connected with the important ports of the northern Adriatic region, embedded in the NAPA, both spatially and in terms of governance. Furthermore, Trieste becomes crucial in the path of the southern European motorway of the sea.



- railway corridors
- Southern European motorway of the sea connection
- NAPA connections

## **Vison**

### **The urban Scale: Strategy to accomodate the growth of global flows**

In light of future engagement in the networks of global flows and taken into account the territorial vision, the vision for the urban scale necessarily needs to align with it. Therefore, the Vison here proposed confirms the deployment of the territorial infrastructure, crucial for the permanence in the global network, and therefore answer the demand of wider areas and smoother connections. Although, this proposal frames the expansion interventions should first exploit the existing deployment of infrastructures used for the movement of the flows coming from and going to the harbour.

First of all, it is possible to reactivate some of the areas that are embedded in the domain of the free port. In this sense, it is crucial to rethink the organization of the harbour terminals. Part of the older harbour that is now almost completely abandoned, is dedicated again to its primar function. The structure of the older harbour is not able to host big ships, nor the containers they transport. The smaller ships, otherwise headed to the current fruit terminal, will be directed to the north-western part of the gulf, in *Porto Vecchio*.

Furthermore, the recent activation of some of the old railway lines, brought to light the possibility to transport the cargo with the trains towards some areas in the outskirts of the city, such as Opicina, where a rail yard already exists. Although, this infrastructure does not present the status of a free-port, therefore there are no financial benefits. This will make the area of the Opicina rail yard a place for short-term stays.

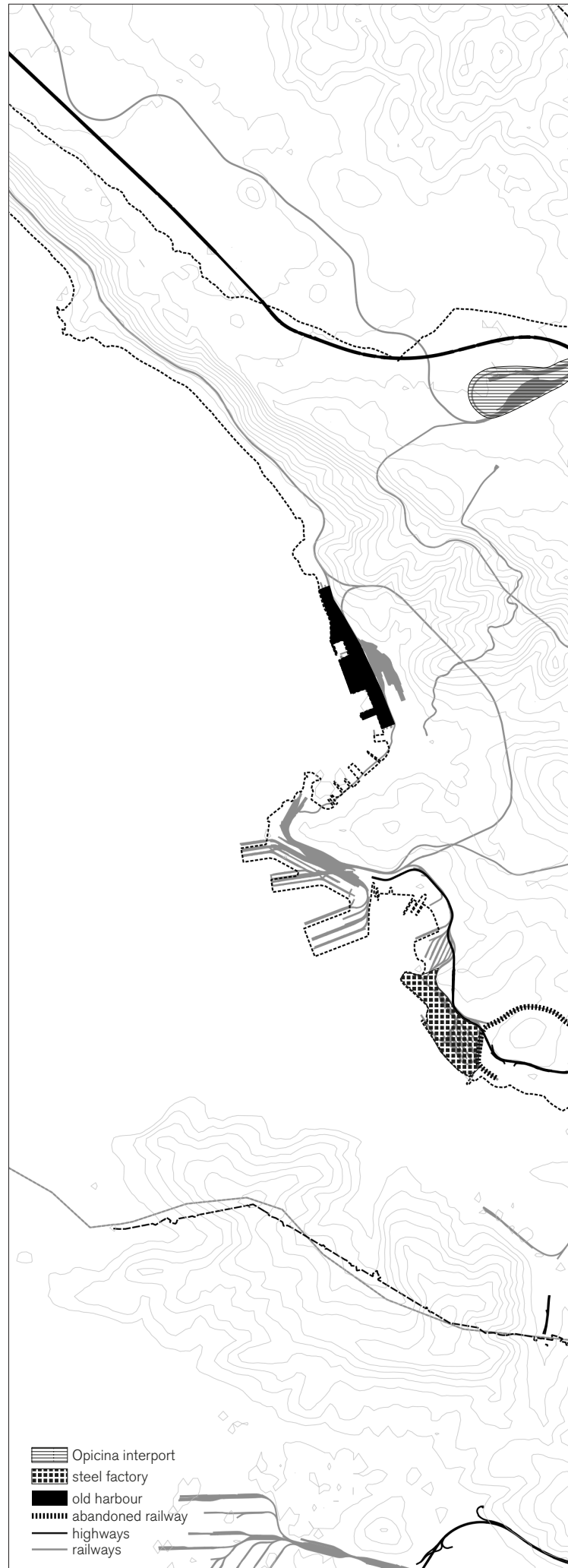
A third intervention that needs to be implemented is in the area of the former steel factory. With the disposal of the current infrastructure, the site gives the possibility of expanding the harbour activities in this area as well. Although, there is the problem of highly polluted land as a consequence of the steel factory activities. The proposal that the Port Authority presented envisions the remediation of the soil with very expensive techniques.

The last intervention that should be implemented on the urban scale to answer the needs of the the harbour should be the riactivation of the railway line that connects the former steel factory and the industrial facilities in the eastern part of the city. In this way, the industrial area would have a direct railway connection with the port, which could lower the use of road transport and consequently the carbon footprint.

The map on the next page spatially represents the vision and the points of interest.









## A Vision

### The Urban Scale: border between sea and land as the urban element of synchronization

The project envisions the element of the border between land and sea as the urban space that creates connections between the scales embedded in the urban dynamics and those of the global flows.

The Vision imagines four connections on which the city should be organized, in order to finally allow new spaces

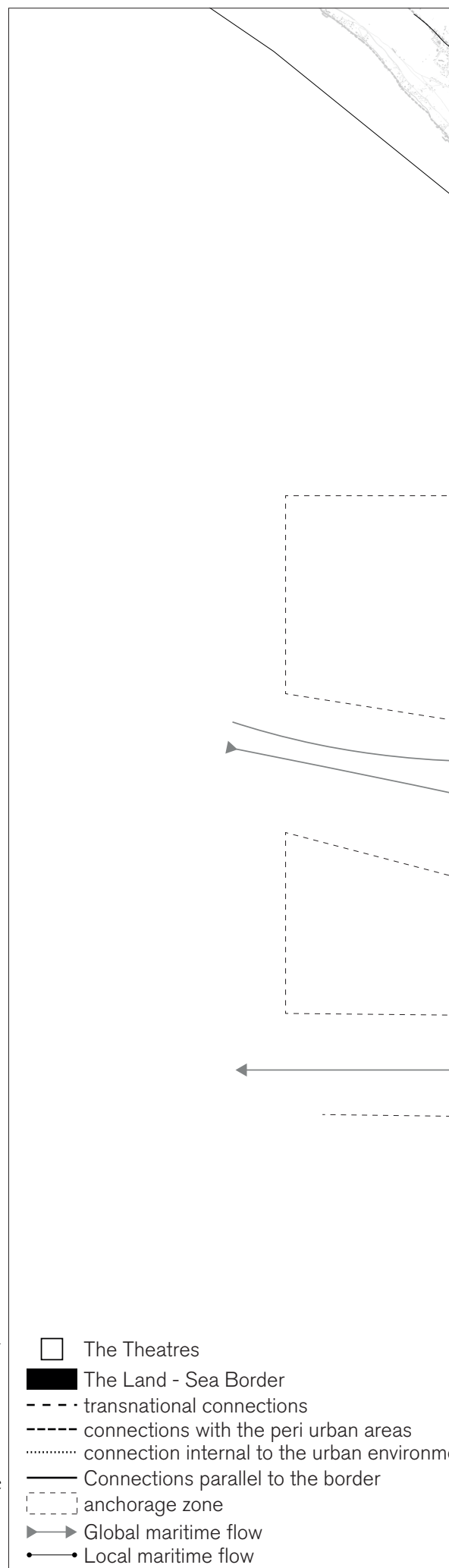
The first level is the city-harbour interface, which is not dealt with as a line anymore, but as a volume that connects the whole waterfront. The land use of this area is developed to provide to the built environment a higher number of green areas and in general public areas and to connect them in a green corridor. Furthermore, this first level can provide the establishment of slower means of transportation, such as bikes. Although the morphological characteristics of the city make this implementation often problematic, the border does not present important height differences.

The second level represents the ways to enter the land-sea border from the internal city areas. The lines therefore run from the sea-land border through the internal parts of the city, finally reaching the surroundings of Trieste, on the Karst Plateau. The lines follow a path to connect important public facilities of the city, such as educational and research institutes, public services. Throughout these lines, especially public transport should be implemented. The morphology of these routes does not allow to propose slower means of transportation on these lines, since the slopes would be difficult to bike on.

The third level is proposed to connect the surrounding smaller rural realities around the city. Also in this case the public means of transportation should be the priority. Alternative means of transportation such as bike are also possible, since the surrounding area of the city is a plateau and is therefore almost flat. The routes of this transportation can follow the ecological corridors that already exist.

The fourth level envisions lines that connect the city with the wider regional and national territory on the West and crossing the border and arriving to Slovenia on the East.

Lastly, the project envisions three cuts in the mentioned border, which represent the doors through which the local reality is able to create a dialogue with the global flows. These are further developed and discussed in the next pages.

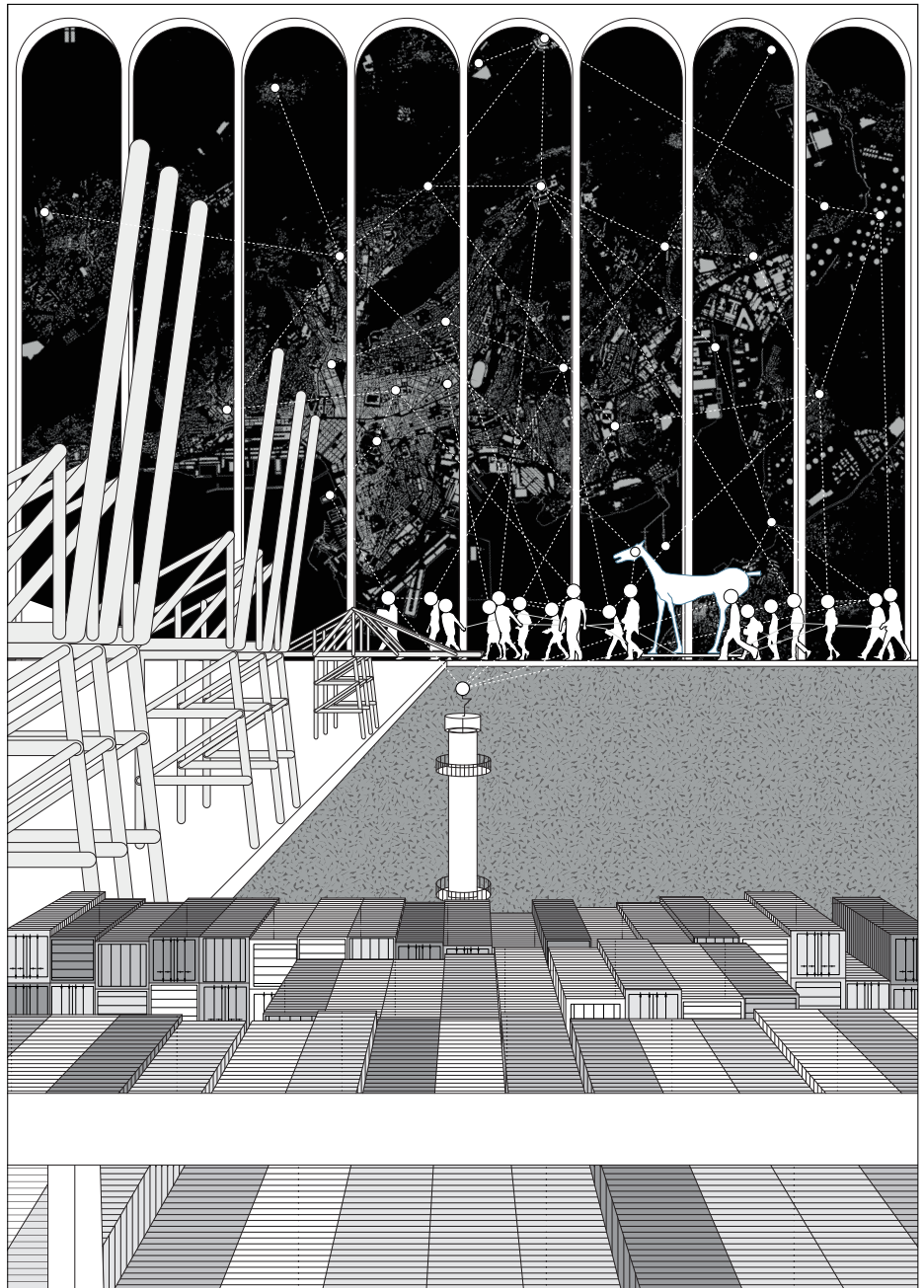




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## DESIGN PROPOSALS

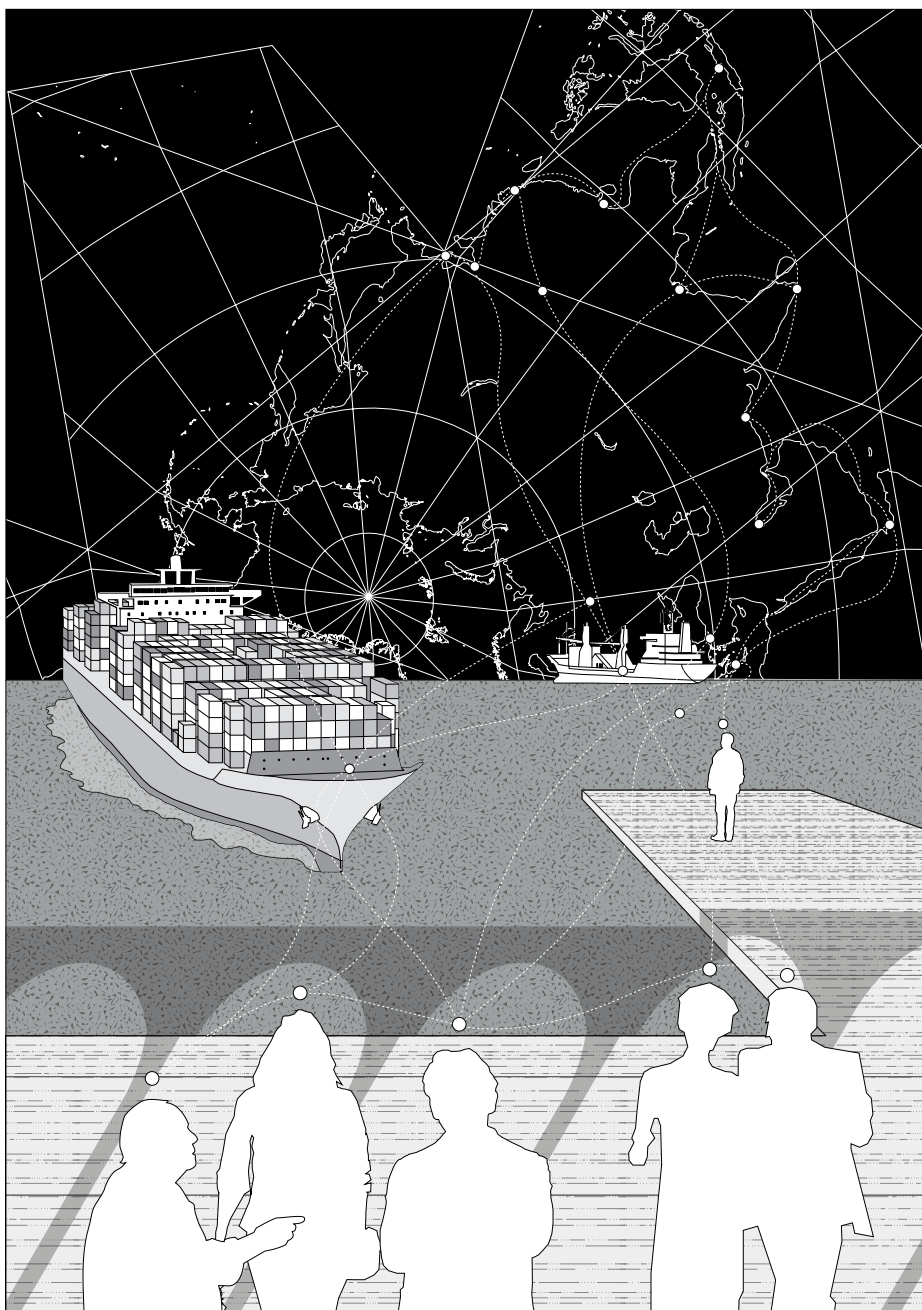
### Opening the Doors



The design proposals that are developed in the following pages focus on the three openings in the border between land and sea, that were localized earlier in the Vision.

The goal of the openings is to create a filter through which the complexities of the global flows and those of the urban environment can interact, by performing to each other, in a series of rituals.

The rituals are framed, conceptually designing the doors which Marina



Abramovic and Ulay lean to in *Imponderabilia*. Three different scales have been chosen. The first one, the scale of the urban block. The second one, the scale of the public building. And the last one, the individual scale. These three different scales have been chosen in order to later evaluate on what level is it possible to make the two entities interact.

## **THE THEATRE FOR THE BODY PERFORMING WITH**

### **A project for the area of Valmaura**

#### The site

The first design proposal addresses the area of Valmaura, an urban area which hosts the most significant sports facilities of the city. The area of the sports facilities is the beginning of a strip of urban fabrics that is closed on three sides by lines of infrastructure. On the northern side, there is a four-lane road that leads to the elevated fast road that connects all the southern coast of the city. On the south, there is a two-lane road and beside it, an abandoned railway that leads inside the harbour. On the western side, the site is closed by the elevated fast road. Therefore, the urban environment on the ground is characterized by the presence of massive pillars. The nearby port area was a significant industrial producer until just some months ago. The ironworks that has now closed provoked many health issues due to the extreme pollution. The area is also part of the Sito di Interesse Nazionale [Site of National Interest, literally translated by the author] of Trieste.

The closure of the factory leaves new possibilities for the site. The Piano Regolatore Portuale describes the future vision for the area: it will become another logistics platform.

The project described in the next pages envisions a different kind of intervention for the area. Within the theoretical framework that the thesis proposes, it can have a major role in connecting the citizen with the global flows. The design proposal is framed with the concepts of the border and the theatre. The urban strip from the sports facilities to the sea surface becomes a door of the border between the local territory and the global flows. The two entities in this area are drastically different: on one side the fragile human being. On the other, gigantic ships carrying containers and oil to the harbour. The goal of the project is to create a space where they can establish new relations between each other by synchronizing their movements.



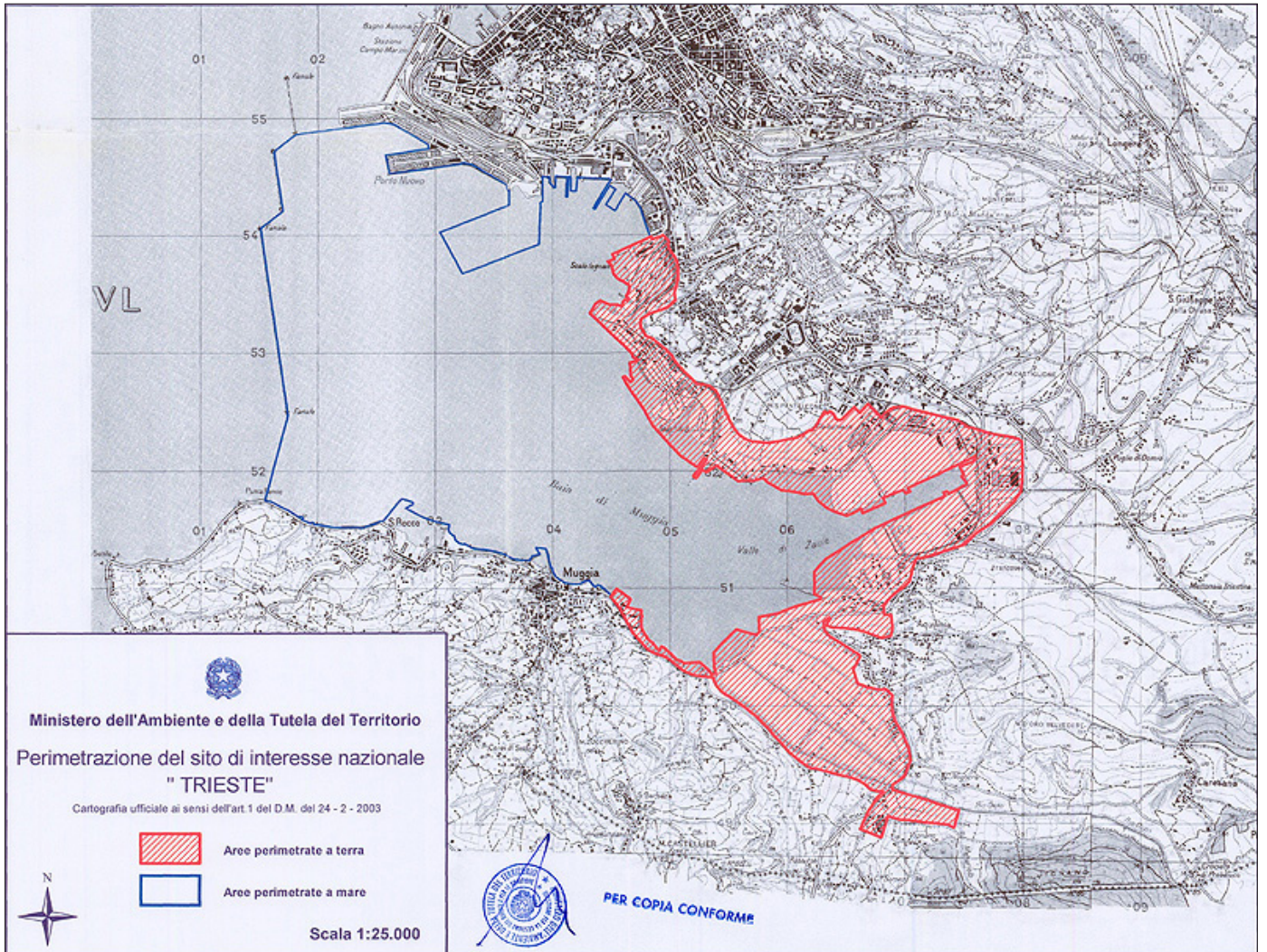
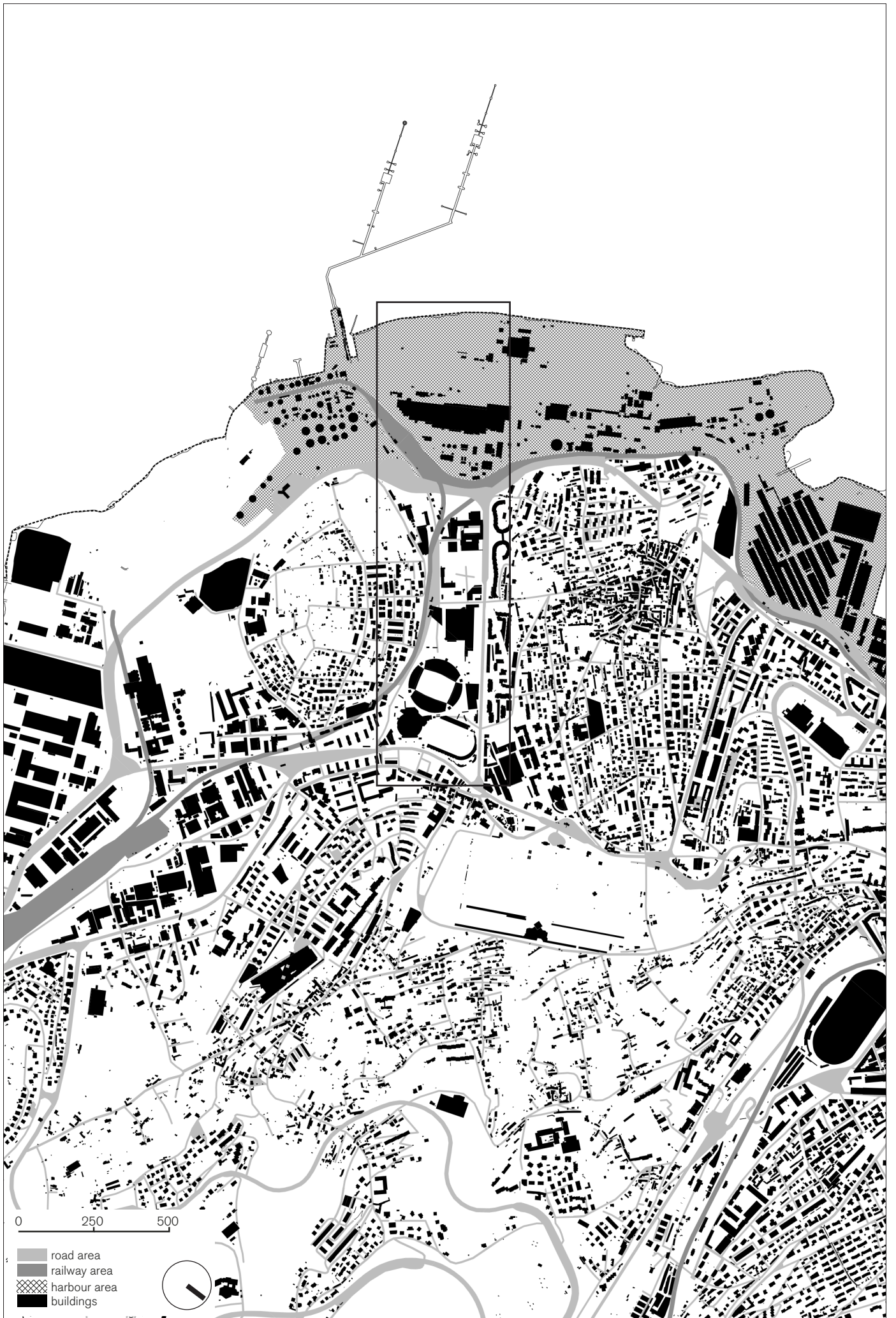


fig14: Map of the polluted area of the gulf, the area is registered as of "national interest".  
 Retrieved from: <http://www.ezit.ts.it/ambiente/s-i-n/>

### The site

The map shows the collocation and main characteristics of the site.

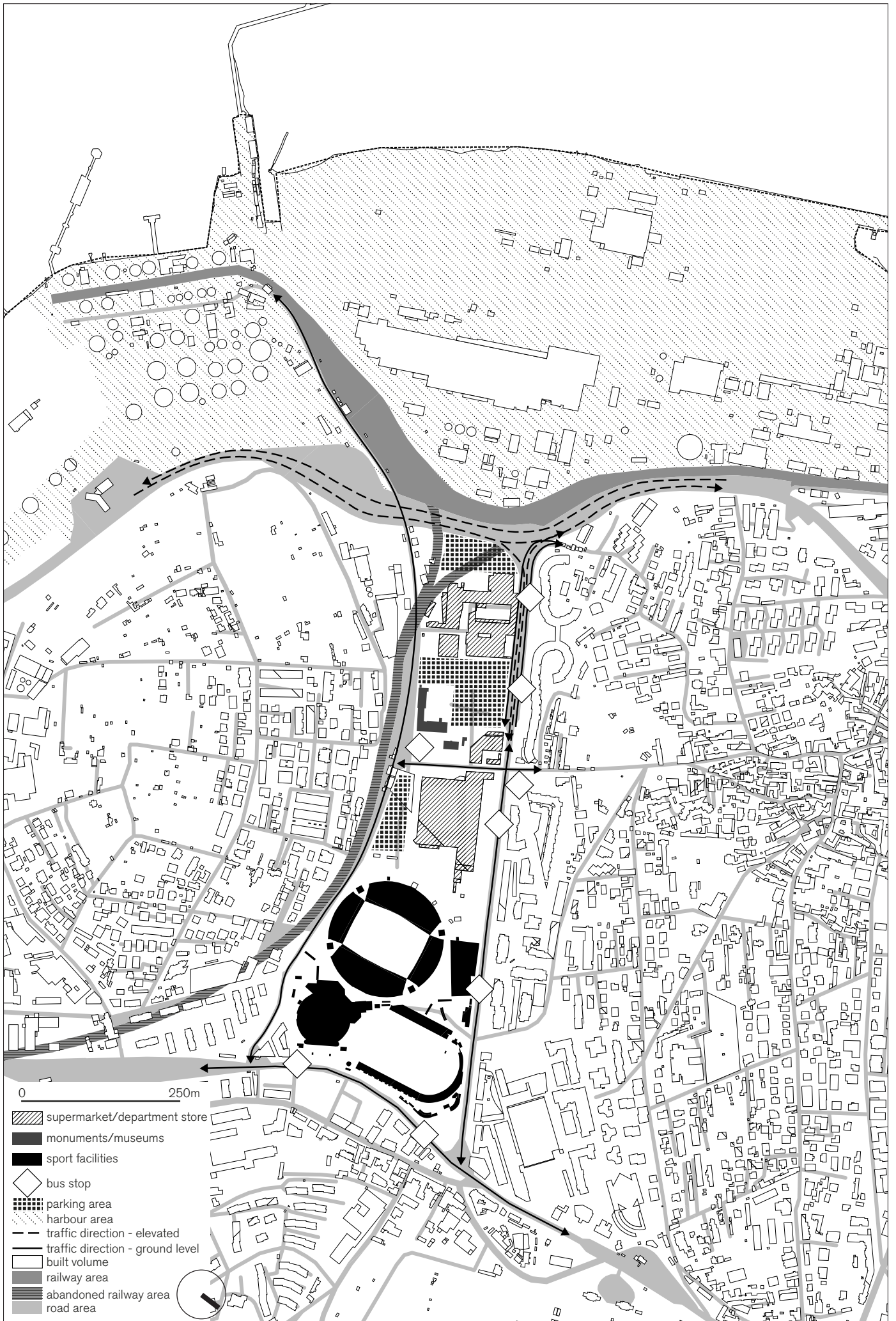
It is characterized by the presence of the former steel factory infrastructure on the south-western side, limiting the view on the sea and consequently blocking the accessibility from the city to the water.



### The current situation

The map depicts the existing situation of the site, focusing on the analysis of the functions, accessibility and traffic.

*Map from: <https://sites.google.com/site/triestepratica/home>*



## Design interventions

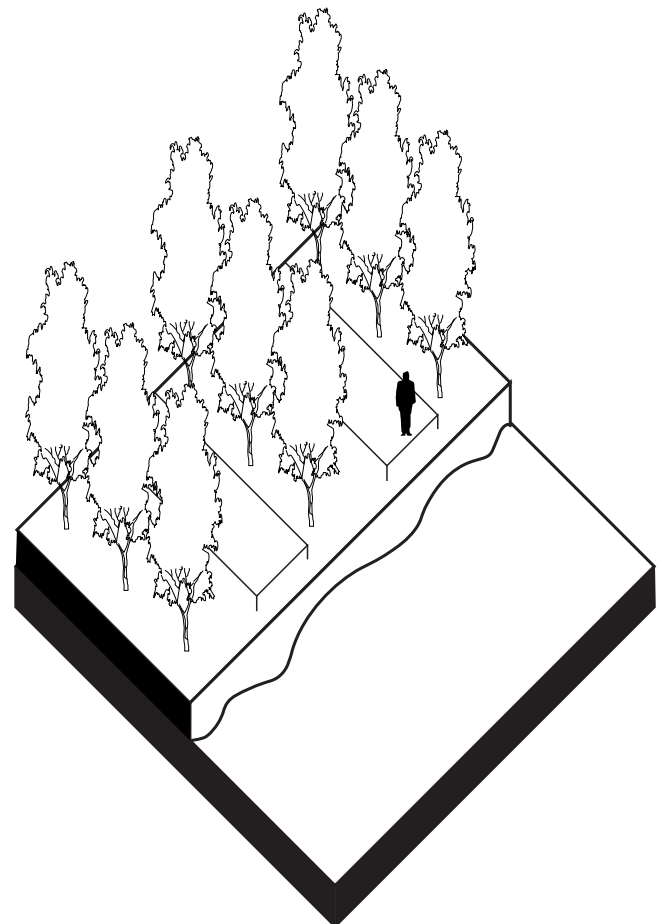
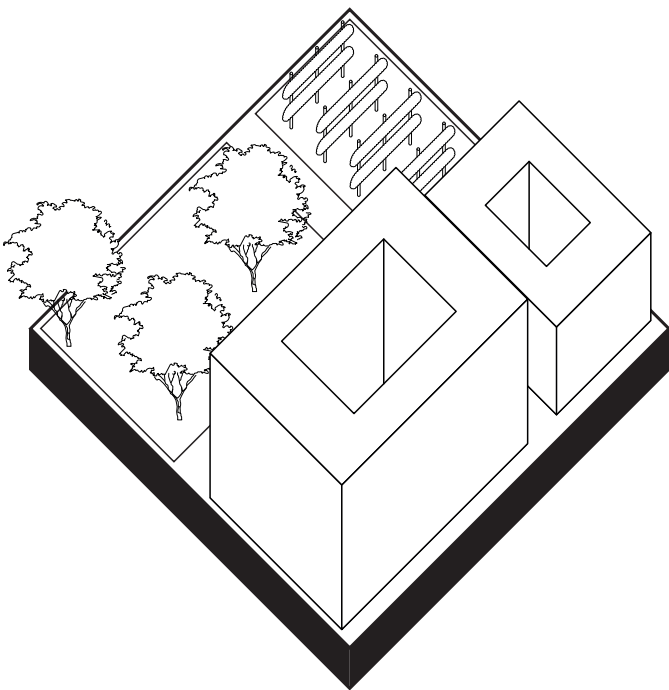
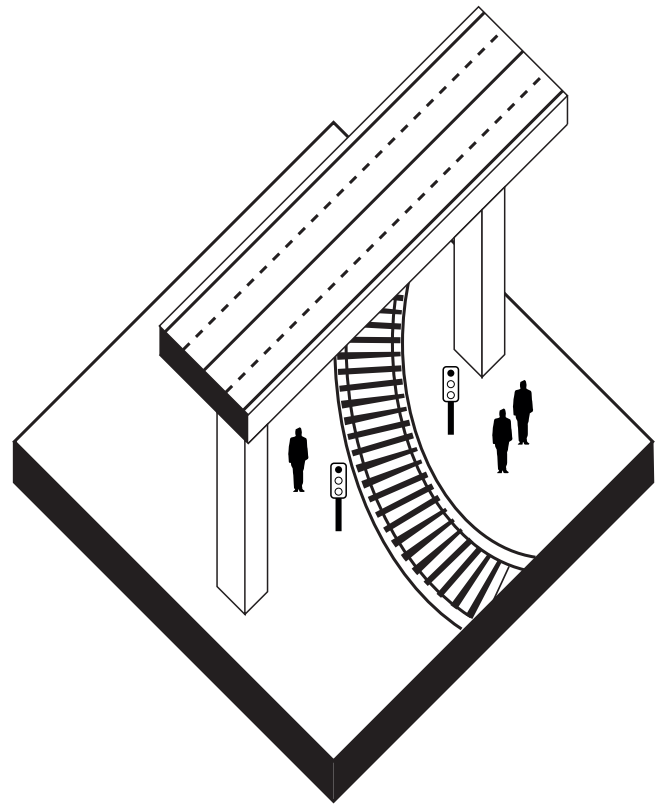
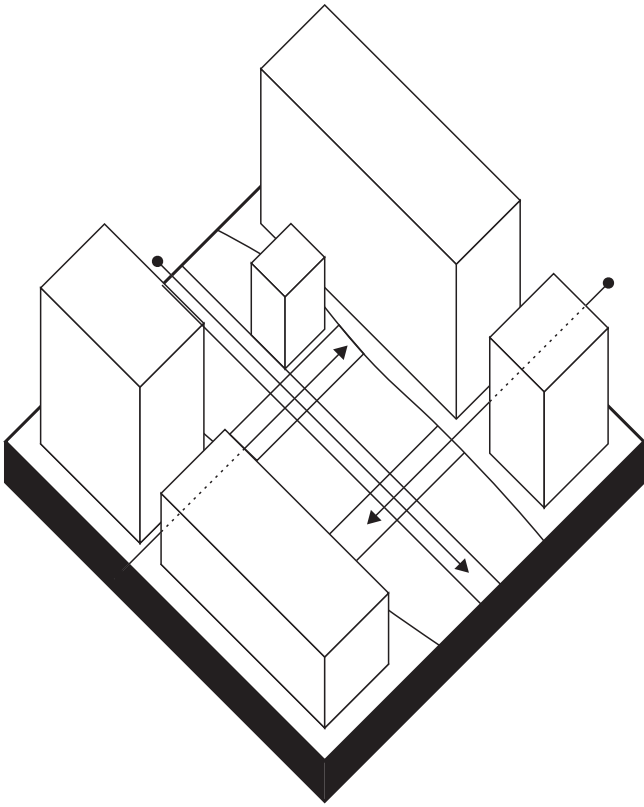
1. Pedestrian paths are obtained from the existing lines in the context around the site and from the position of important buildings inside of it. In this way, the design ensures a direct access from the streets and respect for the existing urban spaces.

2. There are two types of railway present in the area. One part is completely abandoned and does not run on the ground floor, but is built above ground on embankments. The part that runs through the site will be removed, in order to allow the passage of people on the ground. The other part of this line, which borders the site on the south (left in the maps), will be maintained, in order to be employed again if needed. By doing so, the potential future use is still possible. The other line present in the area is situated on the ground floor. It is used by the oil terminal that lies south of the site (or left in the previous maps). This line is rarely used, as most of the oil is transported by the transalpine pipeline or on road. Therefore, a system of traffic lights can be installed, to ensure the safety of the people crossing the railway.

3. The second part of the site is dedicated to the crystallization of the territorial identity. It is divided in two main sectors. The first one is dedicated to the display of the agricultural excellences of the territory: oil and wine. Therefore, there is a vineyard and an olive grove. The second sector is dedicated to the display and production of culture and knowledge in this territory: art, literature, science, memories. This space is highly dynamic. The buildings that host these activities are courtyard buildings that allow for a more private interaction in the internal open areas. Although, they are always at least partly visible from outside the project site and from the internal pedestrian paths. Furthermore, the site also hosts the monument of the former rice factory and Nazi extermination camp of the "Risiera di San Sabba". This place of memory is integrated in the rest of the new urban fabric, as a place of memory, crucial for the development of the future identity of the citizens.

The knowledge materials enter this place by flowing in the three lines depicted in the previous section of the vision and shown in the maps in this chapter.

4. The harbour area in the project site is heavily polluted from heavy metals such as zinc, arsenic, mercury, lead. To solve this problem, the project foresees the use of phytoremediation. The two plants that best perform in the highly saline environment of the coast are the *Populus tremula* and the *Brassica juncea*. The *Populus*, beside remediating the land, will be also employed for compositional matters, creating perspectives that guide the view and therefore create stronger relationship between the entities on the two sides. Between the rows of trees, the *Brassica* will be employed. To ensure the accessibility to the public, walkways elevated for 50cm above the ground will be installed between the rows of trees.

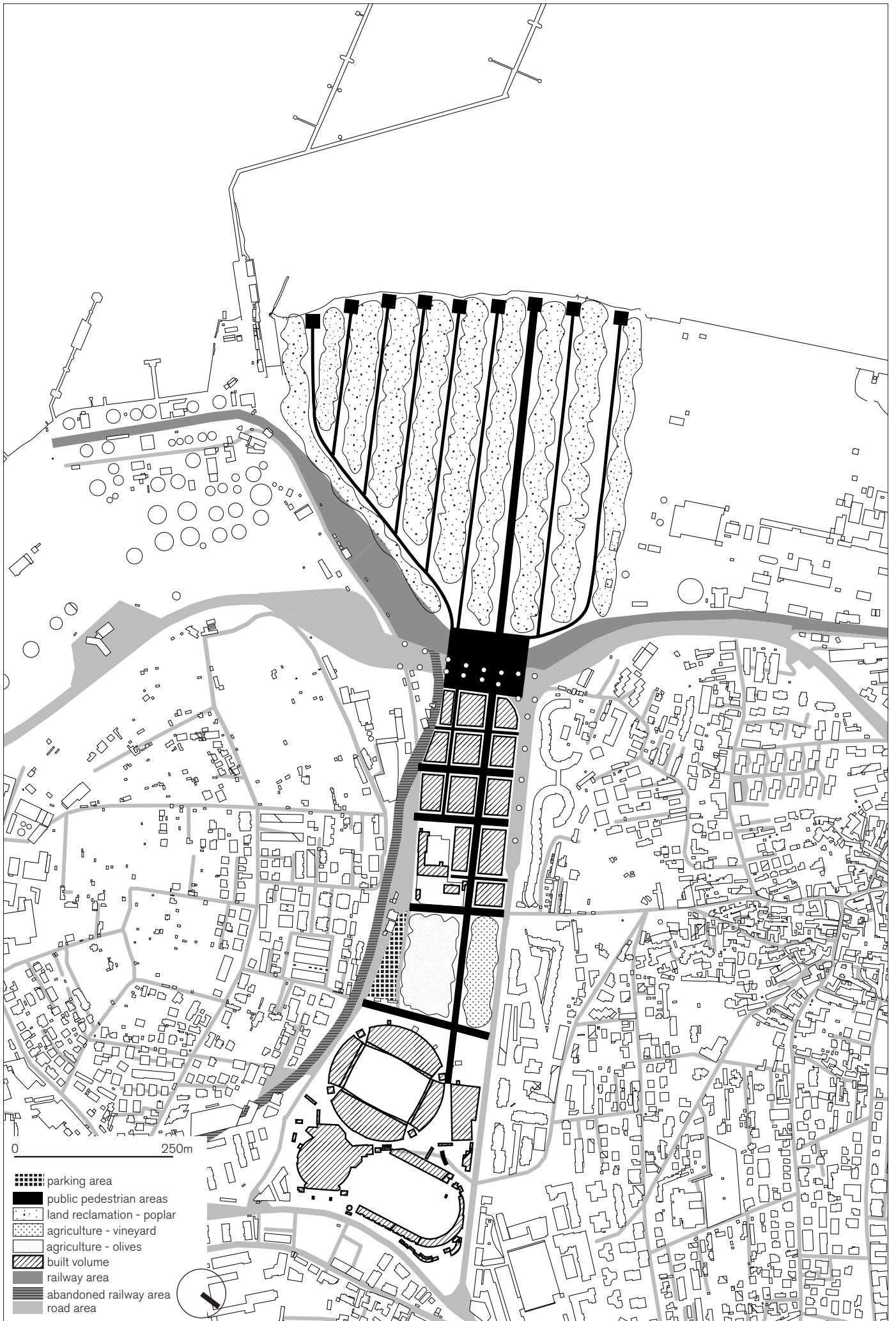


## The plan

The new organization  
of the design proposal.

*Map from: <https://sites.google.com/site/triestepractical/home/9---info>*





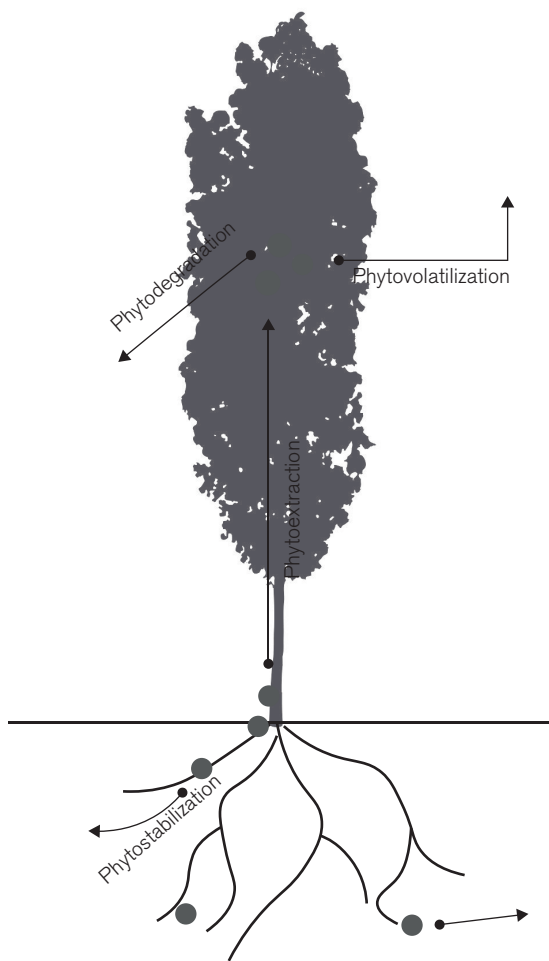
### The programme

The design foresees three phases of experience of the proposed space, framed under the rituals of the theatre. The first phase is about the preparation of the body. This occurs in the highest part of the site, the most radicated in the urban environment.

Afterwards, the individual enters the phase of the acknowledgement of the territory. The design proposes a dense urban environment that hosts the knowledge coming from all the territory's identities.

Continuing on the paths towards the sea, the body finally enters in the area where he is ready to visually connect with the global flows.





## Phytoremediation

Phytoremediation is a method that uses plants to remove, isolate or convert contaminants generated by industrial processes. This is an alternative to the practice of other methods, which foresees the removal and cleansing of the polluted soil, as these have a heavy financial impact.

The process consists in 4 points:

1. Phyto volatilization - plant takes up contaminants, degrades them and release them through transpiration.
2. Phyto stabilization - the plant absorbs the contaminants into its roots and converts it to a less toxic state.
3. Phyto degradation - the plant breaks down contaminants with a metabolic process, and degrades the pollutant and incorporates it, or brakes it down into the soil.
4. Phyto extraction- the plant absorbs the contaminant from the soil and stores them inside its leaves and stems. With this method, the plants need to be harvested and disposed as special waste.

*Data from: <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/research/phytoremediation-and-stabilisation/>*



*Brassica juncea* L.  
*Populus nigra*

*Populus nigra*  
3 y.o. (6m)

*Populus nigra*  
5 y.o. (9m)

### Creating the doors

In the case of the Valmaura site there has been an attempt to imagine a space that, through time, could trigger the reactions that the research proposed as the outcomes of the thesis.

In this case, the division, the wall consisted in the heavy infrastructure located on the site, as well as the soil pollution that the former steel factory left behind.

the doors of Imponderabilia have been developed with the use of natural elements.



## THE THEATRE FOR THE BODY GUIDING GLOBAL FLOWS

### A building in the gulf

This design proposal stands directly in the gulf of Trieste. As seen from the analysis, the global flows here mainly follow the rules of the VST (Vessel tracking Service), which address their movements inside the North and South channel to enter the harbour. The southern channel is used for all the ships transporting oil and other dangerous substances, which does not allow for any kind of intervention that also foresees the presence of the human being. On the other hand, the north channel is dedicated to all the other ships. These are mainly cargo and cruise ships. They enter from the northern channel and afterwards they are addressed towards the terminal of their interest.

The citizens of Trieste colonized every possible part of the coast to be able to execute their ritual of bathing in the sea. Since the coast of Trieste has always been mostly dedicated to the port, the coastal area is not always suitable for this kind of activities. The act of bathing in the city was liable to administrative punishments, as stated in an administrative notice from the 1809, signed by Cavalier Ignazio de Capuano:

*“Chiunque verrà trovato a nuotare nudo fra un Lazzaretto e l'altro sarà immancabilmente arrestato e punito, ed in quanto a' ragazzi, castigati verranno anche con vergate”*

*[Anyone who will be found to swim naked inbetween the lazarets, will be arrested and punished, and with regard to the boys, they will be chastened and beaten.] (literally translated by the author).*

As a consequence, the model of the floating bathing resorts arose, for the first time in 1823, with the project for the *Soglio di Nettuno*, designed by the rich merchant Domenico D'Angeli.

Therefore, the use of the sea is another time where the global flows and the local reality can synchronize, by sharing the surface of the sea. This project envisions a way to do this, by using the model of the floating bathing facility. It is placed in the gulf, at 1.5km from the coast, in an area of sand accumulation, which results in more shallow waters (9m), which represent a threat for the ships, but make the installation of the facility easier. This area is situated almost in the middle of the north channel, which represents the ideal position for a landmark that helps the ships orientating. It is accessible to the public, by using the local maritime traffic that already exists. The new floating facility is inspired by the model of the former *Soglia di Nettuno*, which had an external pier, where the bathing happens and a covered area, for other activities. The design this project proposes foresees the hosting of the theatre function as well.



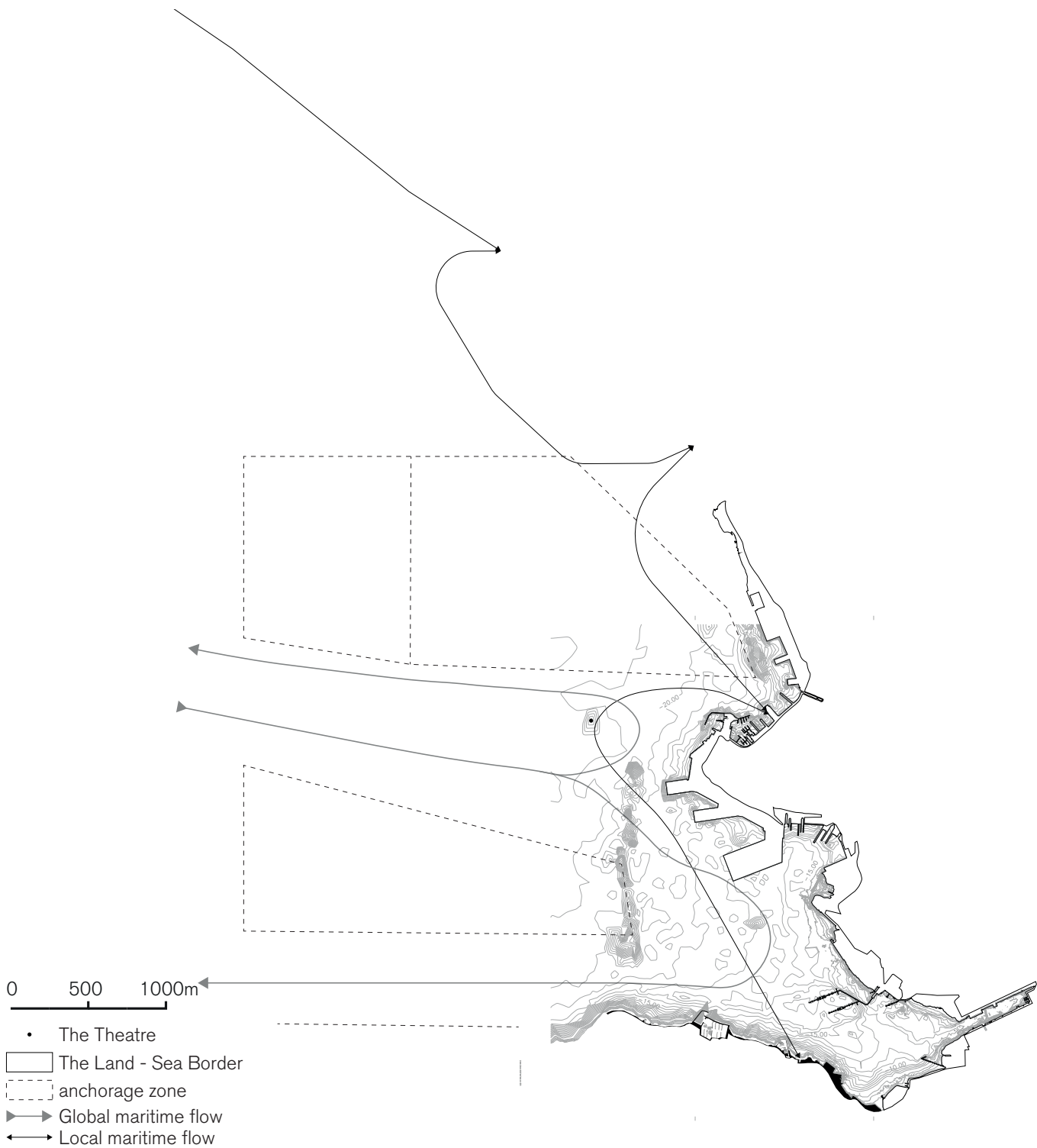


*Trieste Segreta*

*fig17: A floating bathing facility in the gulf of Trieste, built in 1823. Retrieved from: <https://triestesegreta.blogspot.com/2020/01/linvenzione-del-primo-bagno.html>*

### Guiding the global flows

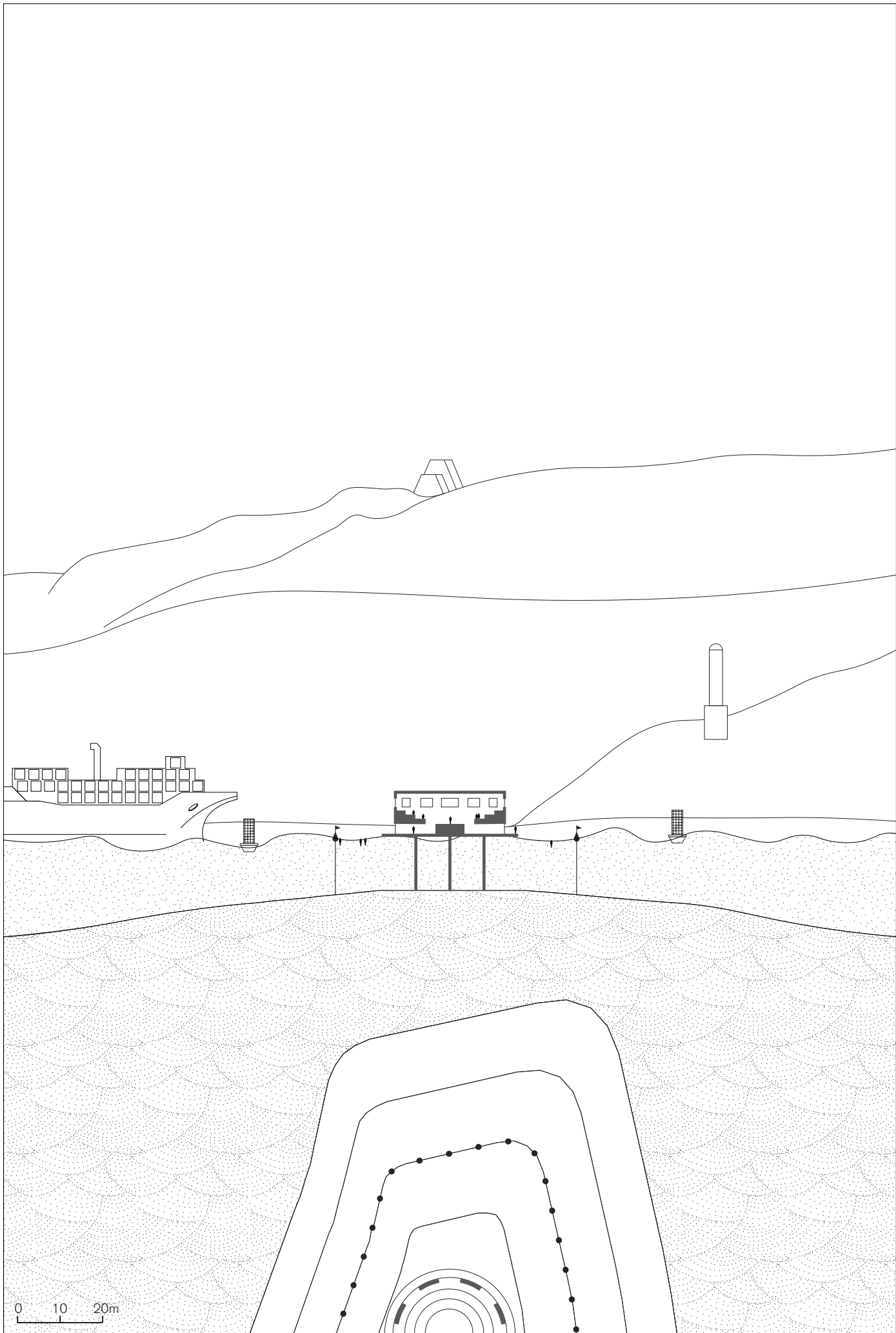
The map shows the position of the new floating facility and the maritime traffic that goes with it. The theatre works as a landmark for the ships that need to enter or exit the gulf. The route of the local maritime traffic is modified, in order to allow the access to the theatre.



### The Synchronization of the presence in the water

The theatre is accessible to anybody. It can host performances in its interiors, but it also has apertures, which open the perspectives on the sea, its traffic, and on the landscapes on the land. In this theatre the body is asked to observe. In the first place the outside world, through the windows. And finally also himself and the society to which he belongs.

The design adapts to the existing situation. The plan on the lower side of the drawings shows the buffer space that has to exist for safety reasons. The theatre is positioned in an area where the water is less deep, therefore dangerous for the ships.



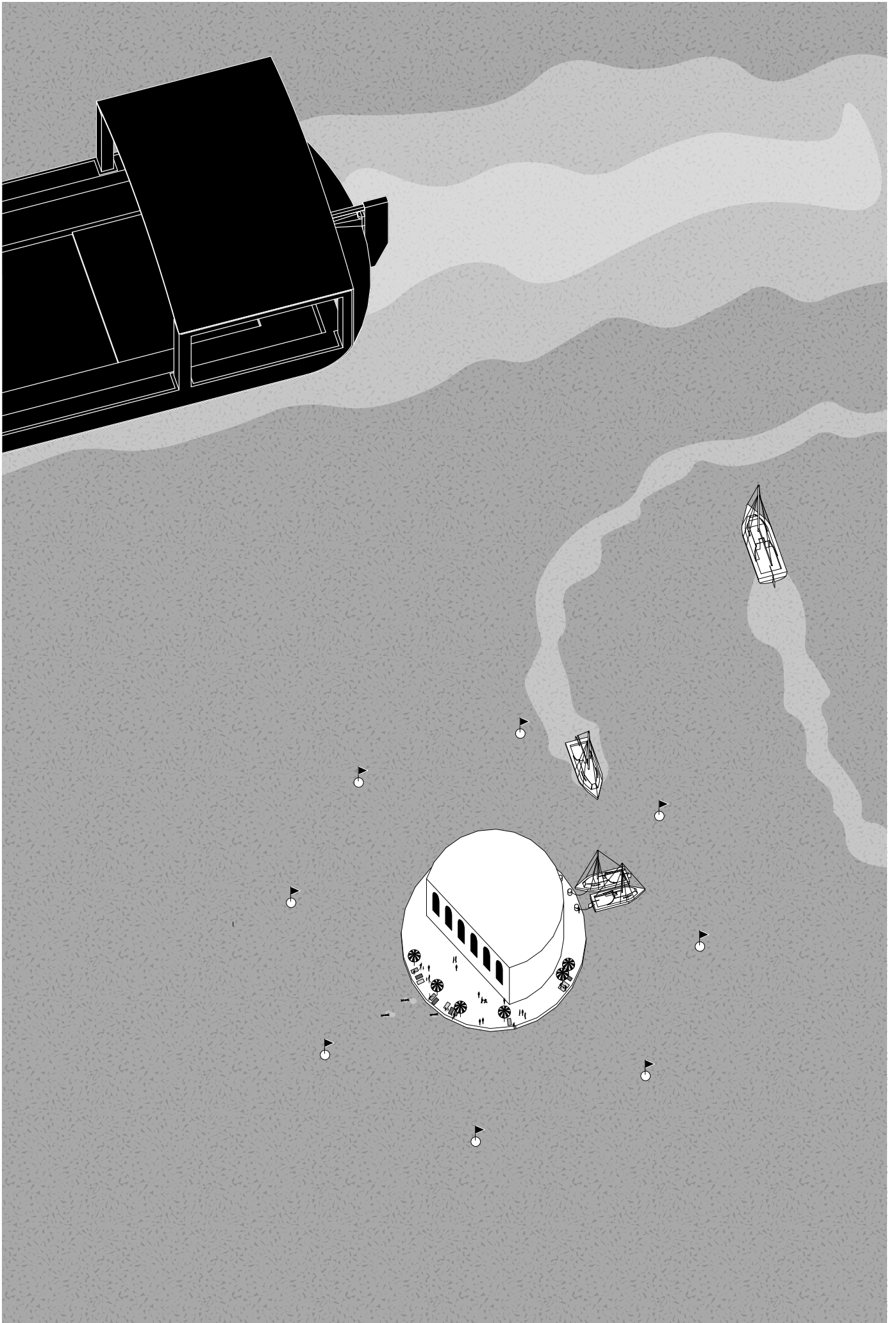
A building hosting the rituals  
of the citizens and guiding the  
ships

The building is constructed on a platform, that hosts the functions of a marina and of a bathing facility. The interiors of the theatre host all the services that the visitors might need. These are situated in the spaces underneath that of the sitting areas inside the theatre.

The facades of the building are mostly closed, except for the entrance, which is placed on the side of the small marina, and the windows that are directed towards the entering routes of the ships directed to the harbour terminals. The windows can be closed, but in the event they remain open, they allow the experience of multiple performances at the same time.

First of all, the one happening on the stage. The second, the performance of the ritual of bathing, that is happening on the platform in front of the windows. And last, in the back, there is the ritual of the ships entering the gulf.

This organization gives an immediate perception of the practice of sharing the maritime surface with the global flows. Although, the crucial aspect is that the presence of the people in this area does not represent an inconvenience in the routes of the global flows, but a guidance. Through inhabiting the space of the gulf, they mark the point between the different directions that the ships need to follow to enter and leave the harbour. At the same time, this structure warns the ships about the shallower waters in that point.



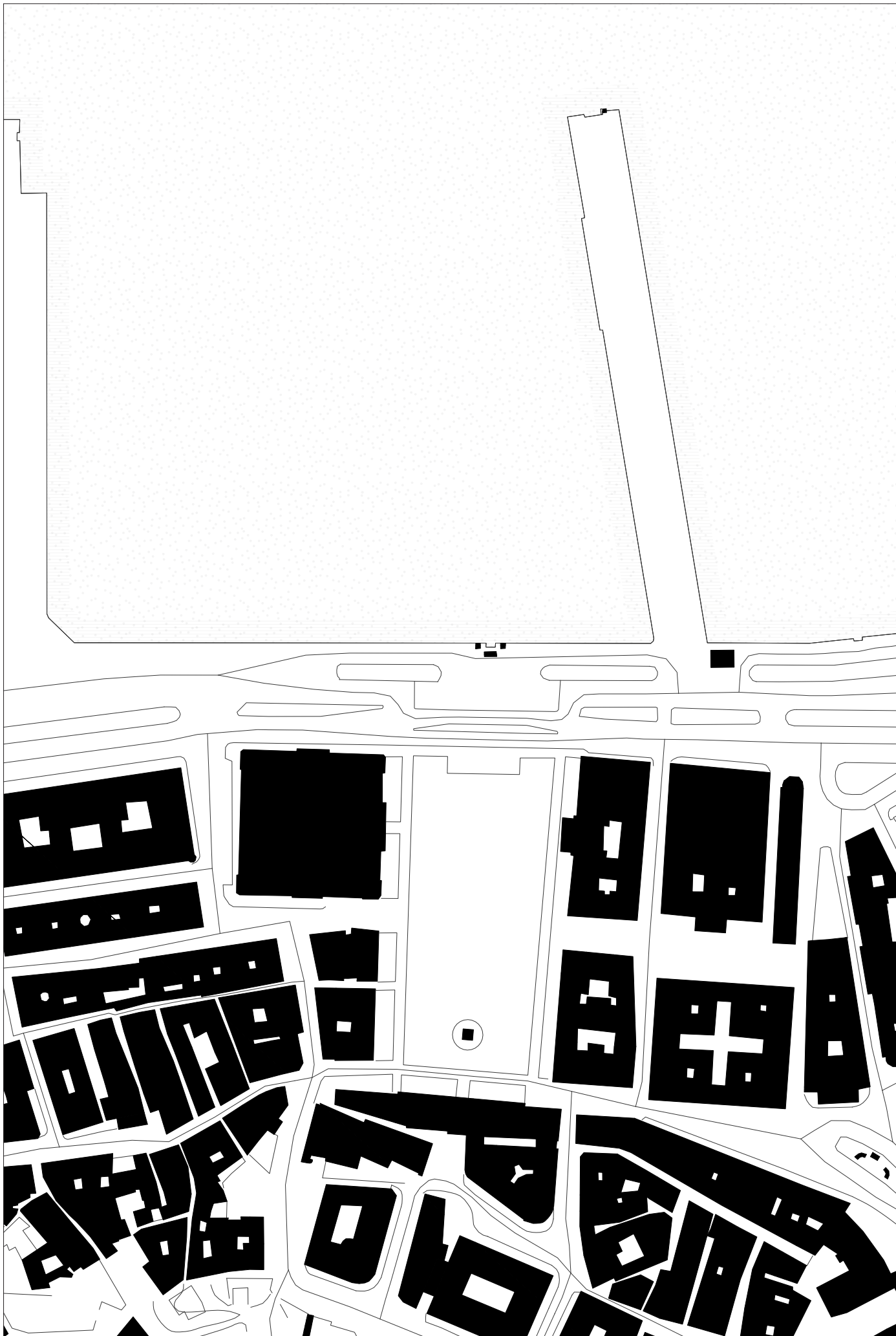
## **THE THEATRE FOR THE TRUSTING BODY**

**A project for *Audace***

The theatre of trust in an individual sacred space. The theatre is designed in the form of a simple box and placed on the extremity of the Molo Audace, a dock that through history became the most used public space of the city. Together with Piazza Unità, they are the space that constitutes the door to access the city from the sea. From this point has entered every event, every idea that changed Trieste. Still today, this is the place where people go in search of representation, in search of diplomatic help in the form of demonstrations, events, performances.

Therefore, the research envisions this place as the place of a conceptual synchronization between the global flows and the local realities. The design intervention is made for the scale of the body of one individual person.

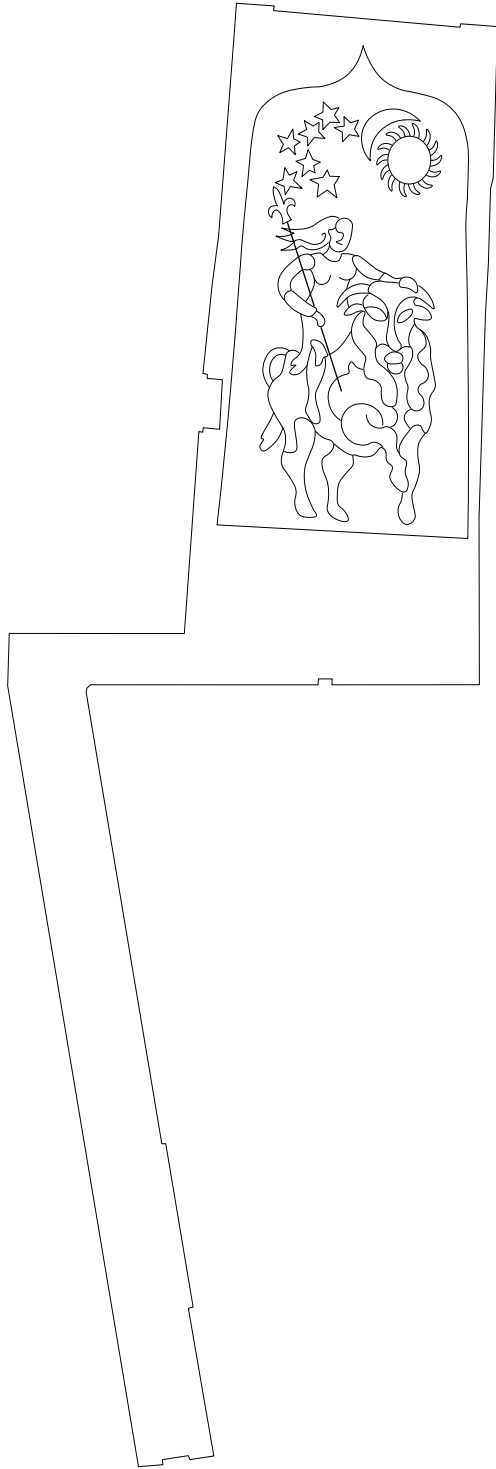


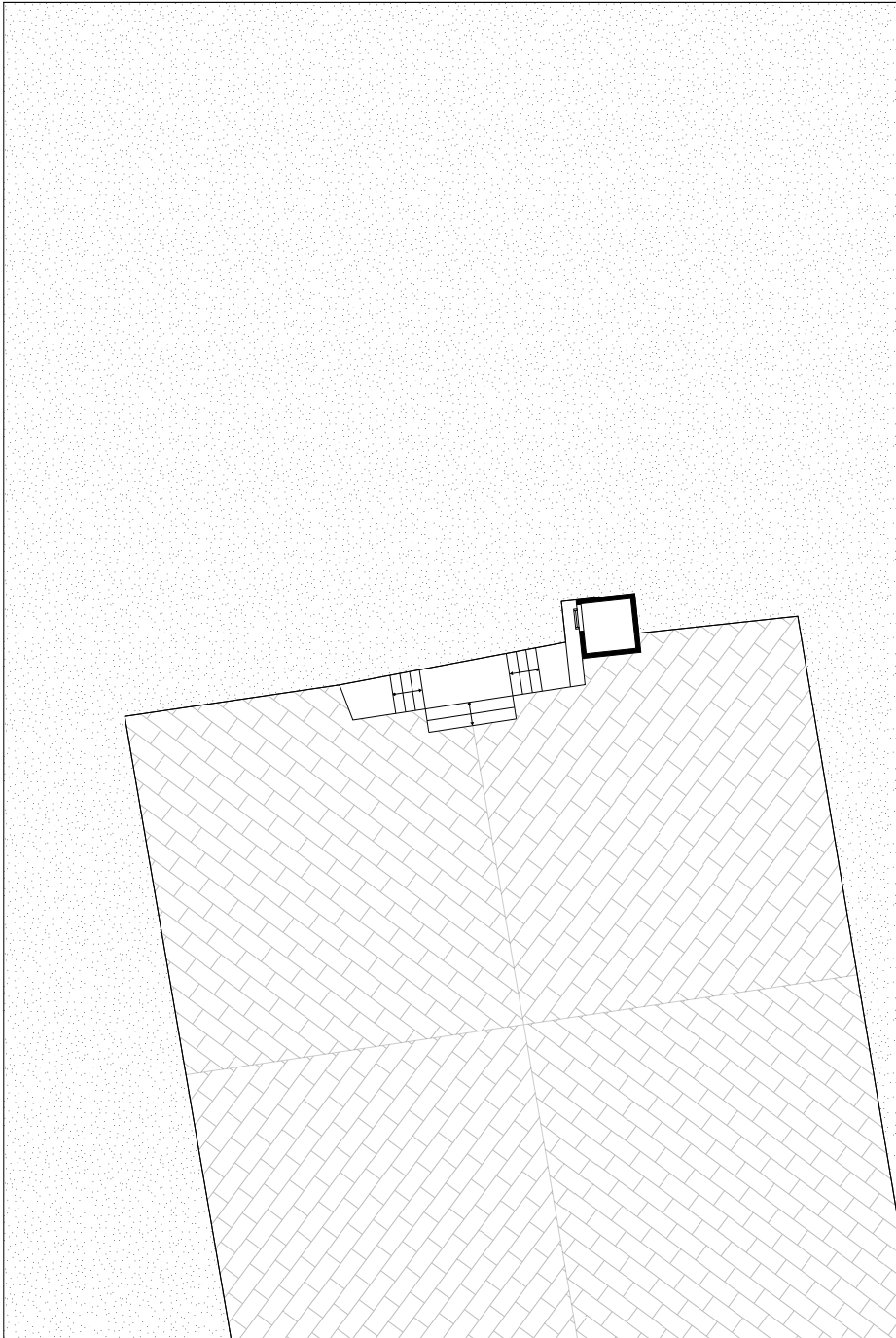


### Piazza Unità and Audace: the doors of the city

The site of the third intervention is the place that can be defined as the main door between the city and the sea. Piazza Unità and Molo Audace, as mentioned earlier, together form a highly representative space. Although, in the recent years the tendency to exclude some kind of presences in this place.

Piazza Unità, as its name says, should be a square of unity, equality, but not standardisation. That is why, this design proposal creates a space big enough to host an individual and its singularity and aims at triggering the consciousness of his role both as a citizen of the territory and as an active actor in the global flows.

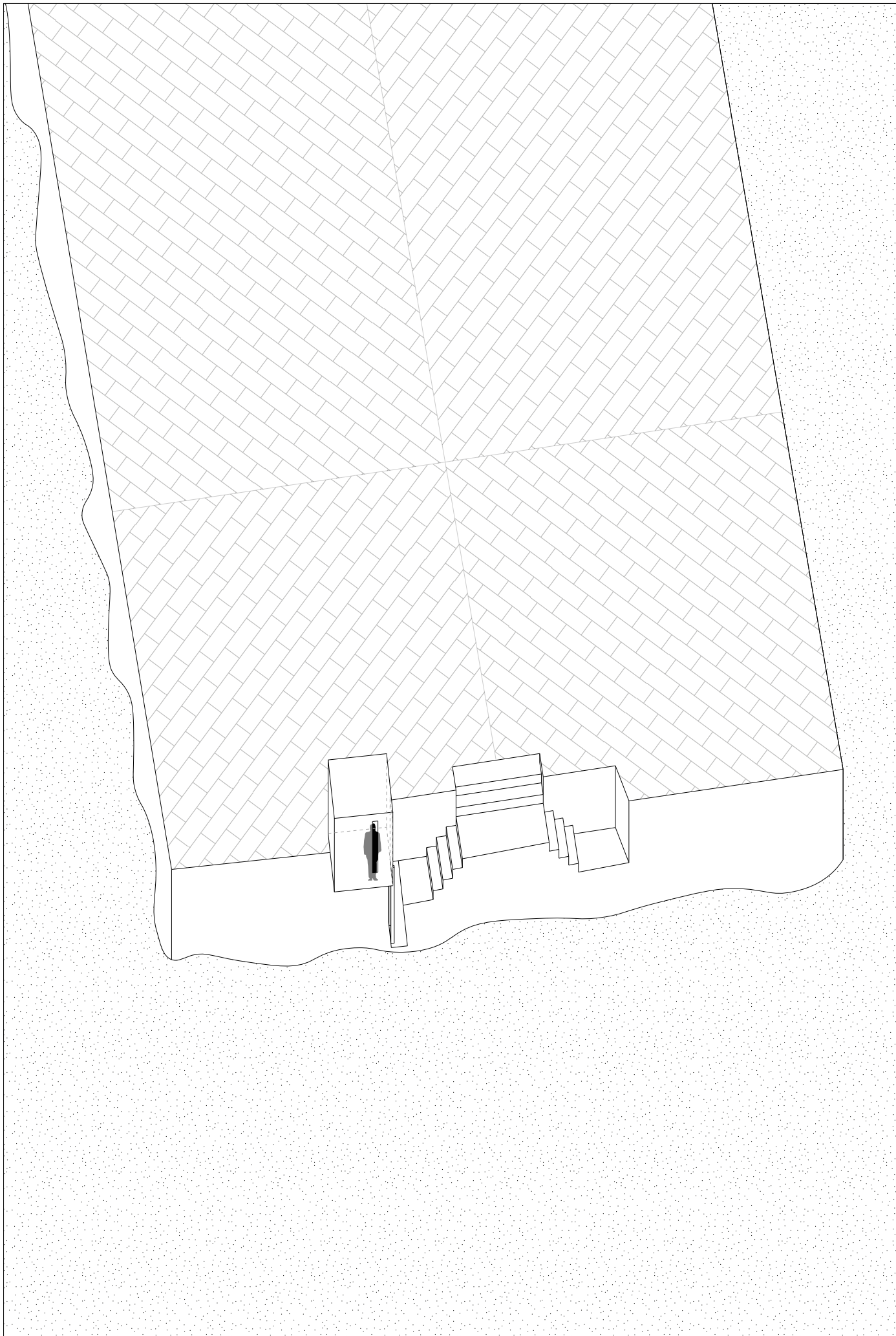




### The theatre of trust

It is accessible only with the use of the existing stairs of the peer. The person has to walk down the stone steps and reach the platform. Here, he needs to climb a ladder and enter in the theatre through a door. There is a window which is addressed towards the line of the routes entering and leaving the harbour through the north channel. Here the person can be alone and admire the global flows and the power of the networks, which bring in our lives the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the phones we use to communicate.

The interiors are equipped with everything the individual needs to perform his trust: regardless of his religion, ethnicity, social status, age... There is a kneeler, an arrow showing the Quibla, there is space for meditation, a shelf for scientific books, a table to make art, a wall to write your principles. The individual here is able to trust the flows in any form and way possible: through the beauty of its aesthetics, through his religion, through statistic, through politics.

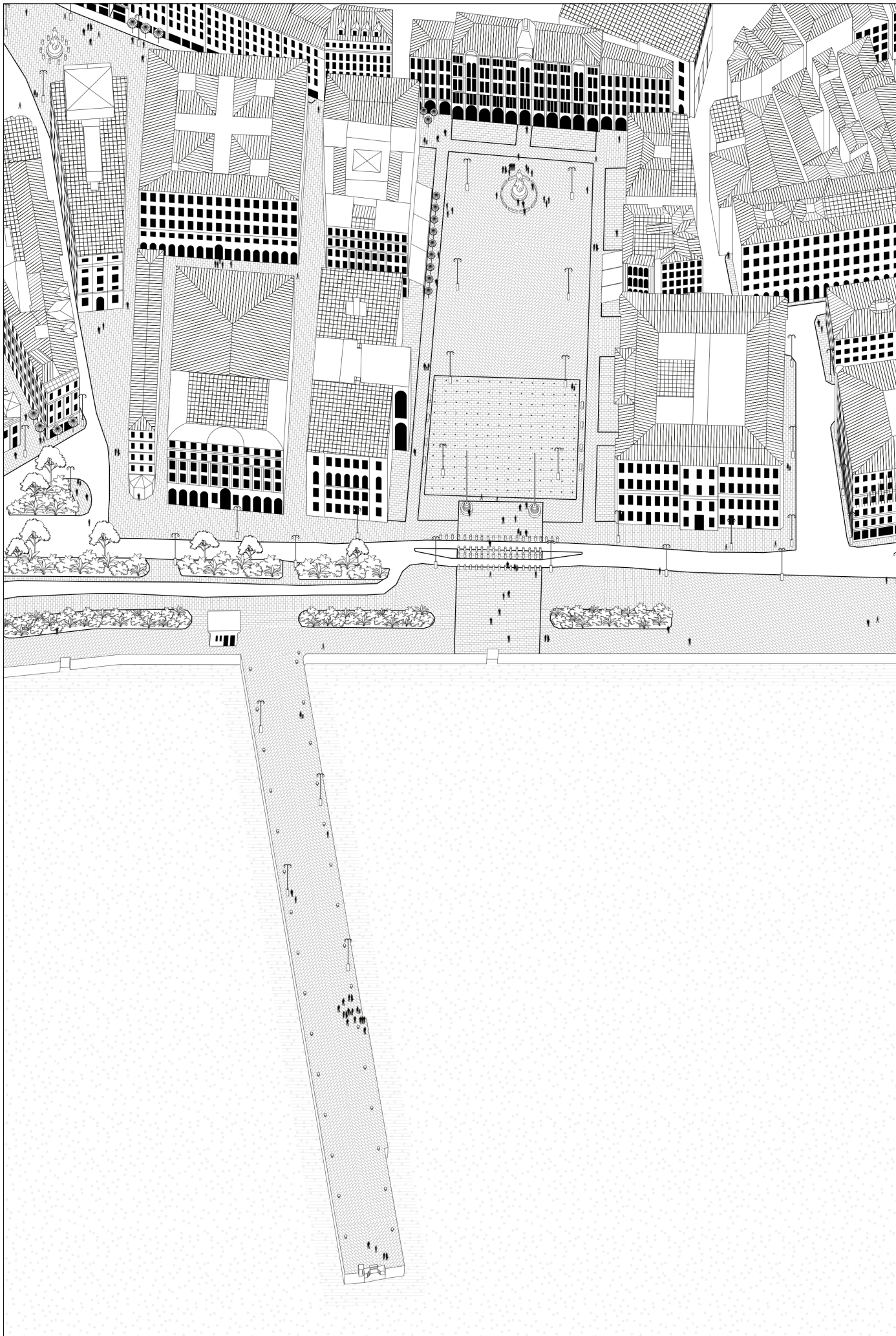




An individual space for a dual reflection

The choice of an individual space to design an experience of two realities may not seem a logical solution. The design in this case wants to make the user pass through the doors that he carries himself.

The coexistence of the rituals of trust and the visual connection to the movements of global flows, triggers a new reflection in the passer. He sometimes trusts entities that are not proven to exist, or actually help, or to be ethic, but they are part of it singularity. Looking at the ships through the window, which come and go always following the same rules and routes, finds himself asking whether his trust in the global flows is logical. And consequently he wonders whether the blind trust in the global networks that seem to be ruling the whole world, just like the some of the gods we worship. The experience of this space therefore terminates with the question of whether the trust, is actually belief.



## STAKEHOLDERS ANALYSIS

In the previous chapters it is presented how the vision is developed with a multi scalar logic. The design proposals impact the current organization of the land use and the built environment. Therefore, it is crucial to identify the stakeholders. First of all, they need to be divided between public sector, private sector and civil society. The diagram here explains the current relationships between stakeholders and places them inside a matrix relatively to the interest they may have in developing the vision and in their power in the decision-making process.

The actors who are involved in the process and in the spatial outcome of the proposals can be divided in four sectors: the public, the semi-public, the private sector and the civil society.

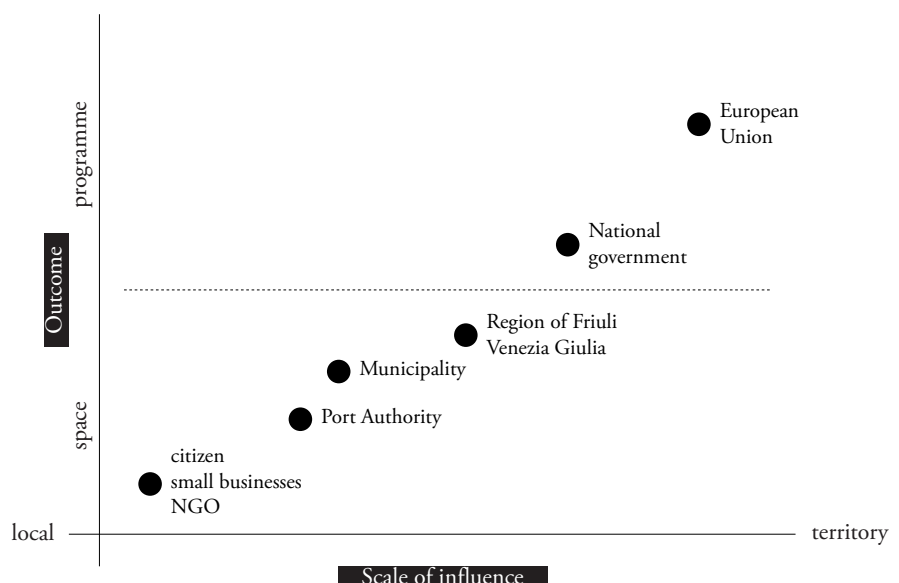
All the proposed interventions bring to the table the question of synchronization of the needs of the city and those of the handling movements of the harbour. If, on one side, some of the interventions, mainly the one in

**Public Sector +**  
 European Union  
 National government  
 NAPA  
 Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia  
 Municipality  
 Port Authority

**Semi-public sector +**  
 University of Trieste  
 Research Institutes  
 Local transportatin companies

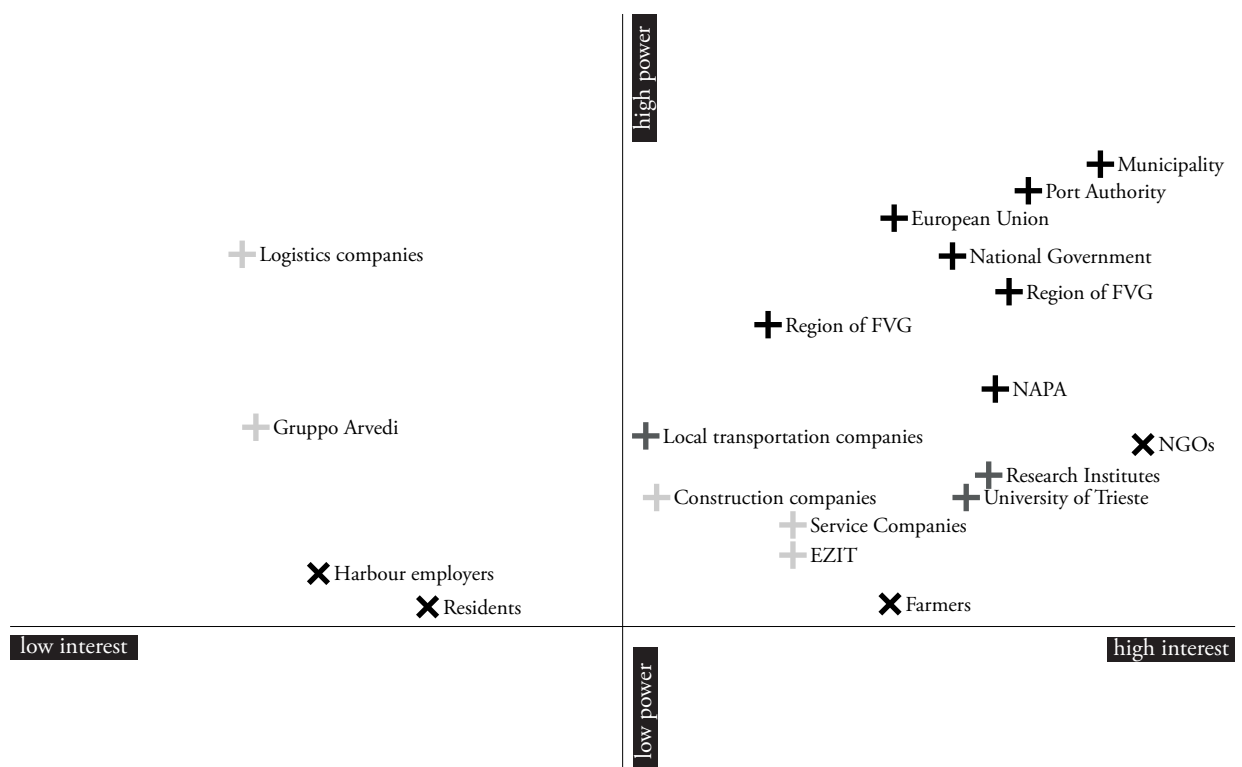
**Private sector +**  
 Logistics companies  
 Construction companies  
 Gruppo Arvedi (company who owns the former steel factory)  
 EZIT (industrial zone)  
 Service companies

**Civil Society X**  
 NGO  
 Farmers  
 Harbour employers  
 Resident



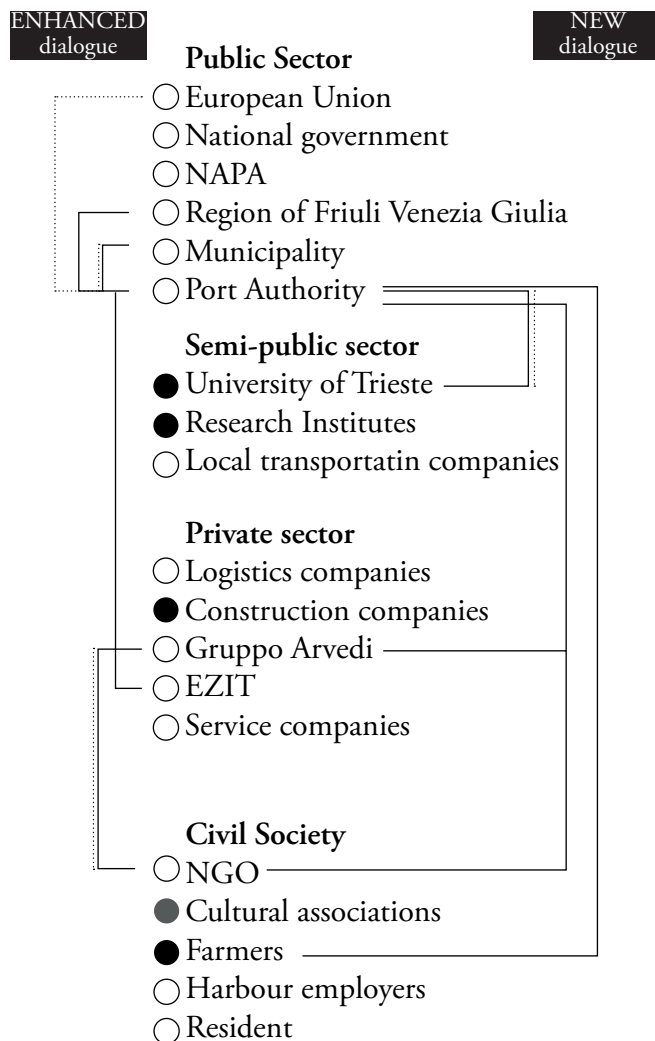


the area of Valmaura and the theatre in the gulf, the interventions try to colonize areas of the harbour, on the other side, they play an important role in the image of the port in the local and international scene. Therefore, they should be considered and enhanced with the logic of bringing awareness and consciousness to the citizens of the territory, which is eventually an aspect that can contribute to the economic growth of the city and of the harbour.



## Area of Valmaura

The key strategies that have been proposed for the vision of the site need to introduce some new, crucial connection between the actors. The most important one is surely the dialogue between the Municipality, the Port Authority and the Avedi Group who owns the land of the former steel factory. The municipality has the goal of enhancing the quality of the urban space. On the other side, the port authority and Avedi aim at redeveloping the area and use it as a harbour terminal. With the interventions proposed in the vision, it is possible to propose this place as a node in an ecological corridor. This allow the port authority to align to the demands of a lower carbon footprint and to reclaim the land polluted by heavy metals. In this way it is also possible to align with the desires of the NGOs who demand a lower environmental impact of the harbour. And last, the proposal brings in some of the actors present on the territory who will now play an important role in this interface, such as the farmers, the industrial services and education institutions.

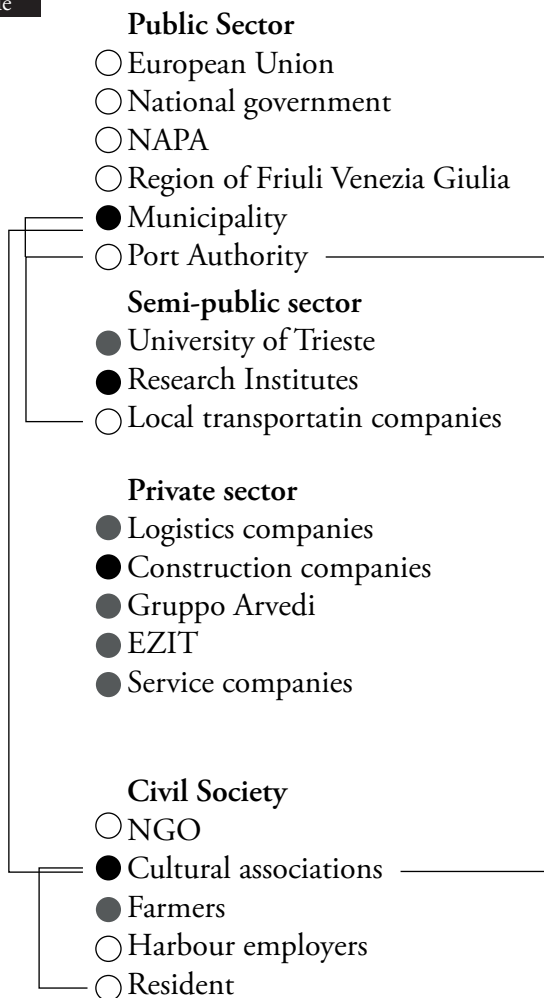


## Space of the Gulf

The project of the floating building in the gulf needs the coordination of mainly three actors: the municipality, the port authority and the local transport companies. The latter should redraw the usual route that the local maritime transport follows and densify it, in order to provide good accessibility to the site. The port Authority will need to take into consideration these movements as well when planning the movements of the global flows. There are new actors brought into the discourse, such as the cultural associations, to whom the space is ultimately crucial. Last, a dialogue with the NGOs of the city should be developed, in order to analyse all the impacts that the building could have on the ecosystem and eventually align to their suggestions in terms of technological solutions.

ENHANCED  
dialogue

NEW  
dialogue



Piazza Unità and Molo Audace

The intervention on Molo Audace needs coordination mainly between the actors of the public sector, namely, again, the Municipality and the Port Authority. There could be participation in terms of financing from the regional, national and european public institutions.

ENHANCED  
dialogue

NEW  
dialogue

**Public Sector**

- European Union
- National government
- NAPA
- Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia
- Municipality
- Port Authority



**Semi-public sector**

- University of Trieste
- Research Institutes
- Local transportatin companies

**Private sector**

- Logistics companies
- Construction companies
- Gruppo Arvedi
- EZIT (industrial zone)
- Service companies

**Civil Society**

- NGO
- Cultural associations
- Farmers
- Harbour employers
- Resident

- phisical outcome
- ..... programmatic outcome
- existing actors
- newly introduced actors
- non participating actors





## Evaluation

### Answering to the research questions

This final part of the thesis focuses on the research outcomes. In the chapter, the author summarizes the proposed solutions, and their outcomes. Furthermore, the possibilities for further research are highlighted, as well as the limitations of this research. To conclude, the author reflects on the transferability of the method and the proposals that have been presented, their societal and scientific relevance.

### Introduction

Hard divisions between spaces of flows and spaces of places, bring to light an intense lack of representation of the territorial characteristics in the new social and economic organization, developing around networks (Sassen, 2001). As a result, the citizen who inhabits contemporary landscapes, is increasingly isolated from the space and identity of his territory. At the same time, the global flows in the harbours, manifesting themselves in the form of naval gigantism and constant competition in the capitalistic system, do not allow the presence of his volume and ideas in them (Castells, 2000). They work independently, thanks to the deployment of various forms of infrastructure and especially thanks to the information technologies (Wiig & Silver, 2019). Their ultimate goal is uninterrupted flow, and everything that prevents it must be removed. The model of the harbor in the city of Trieste aims towards the solving of the fragmentation between these two entities, mainly with the means of labor: the interface between Land and Sea, i.e., between the landscape of the land territory of Trieste and the global flows of the maritime territory, is mainly enhanced by the positive economic outcomes that the harbour assures and passes on, to the citizens. Although, in light of the high risk coming from the organization around networks, it seems that such strategies are not enough anymore. To ensure that the city remains a node in the network, it needs to wear a mask and show that it can perform well in the network. This research proposes an approach that aims at activating the border between the space of flows and space of places, through urban design.

The main design outcomes of the research are a series of doors in the above-mentioned border. In fact, the element of the border is, by nature, capable of bringing at a small distance two significantly different realities. The thesis proposes doors which connect the global flows and the human body. To create an important role for the volume of the body, the project dresses it with the characteristics of its territory. By doing so, it is possible to achieve a double goal. First of all, the human being is able to reconnect with his cultural and natural heritages. Moreover, the territory is represented in the border, attracting global flows and lowering the risk of exclusion from the networks. The thesis is positioned within this new, arising urban paradigm, that Castells (2000) theorized in his trilogy.

## Drawing conclusions on the design proposals

The project *Imponderabilia* is part of the Transitional Territories graduation studio of the MSc Urbanism of the Faculty of Architecture. The graduation studio envisions the sea as a space of conflicts, flows, representation. In short, the graduation studio proposes to look at the territoriality of the sea. This thesis shifts from the general study case of the North Sea and positions itself inside another maritime region, that of the Adriatic Sea, precisely in the northern part. The port-city of Trieste became the study case of this thesis which tries to research the possible agency of the border between Sea and Land as the urban element that brings together diverse realities that are usually separated for various reasons. More precisely, this research focuses on the space of the border that is characterized by the presence of Sea, Land and the Harbour.

The border is envisioned as the place of collection and crystallization of the features of the territory where the border exists. From the ecological characteristics, to the cultural, to the economical. During the research, the theoretical and conceptual underpinning brought to light the fact that there are two points that allow to plan or design a proposal that makes the element of the border as an element that can connect the differences rather than alienate and divide them. One is about the apertures, doors or imperfections of the border: these are the places that allow the highest degree of intervention, depending also on the functions and urban fabrics that you find on the two sides. The second point is about the connection between these openings. This allows to deviate from the perception of the border as a dividing line, and transition to the imagery of the border as a volume. Inside of it, the movements of the urban environment on the one side, and of the global flows on the other, move in parallel to each other.

The general vision and the consequent design proposals of the openings in the border between land and sea bring to light different ways to activate a synchronization of the two sides. The first proposal for the Area of Valmaura brings to light the possibility of the synchronization of the needs and movements of the global flows and those of the territory. The project has to face the complexity of the area: the presence of transport infrastructure, of an area that needs to be reconverted due to the recent closure of a steel factory, the presence of important places of the city, such as monument and stadiums. The synchronization occurs in terms of the need of the global flows to find other things that just suitable infrastructure in harbours: the territory is shown through a series of visual cones that allow that the territory is seen by the flows and the flows are seen from the territory. The design of the second door highlights attempts to synchronize the permanence of the citizen and the global flows in the maritime surface. The intervention imagines a floating building, which derives from



the tradition of the floating bathing facilities that historically existed in the gulf.

Eventually, the design proposals want to provoke unexpected outcomes in the experience of the doors' spaces. In other words, the experience of such space does not end when leaving it: after the passer crosses the door, he will continue to experience it. By synchronizing the territory, the body, the trust with the global flows, the interventions inherently also highlight new conflicts between them. In the case of Valmaura, the trees moved by the wind Bora, do not only synchronize with the moves of the ships, but they also compete with them, in a game of permanence in the space. In the second case, the design frames the synchronization in the use of the maritime territory. The result is that the maritime surface is now claimed by both the citizens and the global flows. And finally, in the last intervention, the trust box is addressed towards the entrance of the flows in the harbor, so that the individual can eventually trust the technologies and infrastructures that bring them to him. At the same time, the space is equipped to accommodate any belief or trust that the individual has: trust in science, trust in God, trust in love, trust in art. A conflict arises again between the network logic and the individual. The first one has an infinite trust in the system of global networks, so it organizes everything around them. It's different for the individual: there have been many other things that have made his world go round: is he ready to give them up for his permanence in the network?

All the thoughts and reflections that the passer builds after experiencing the doors, are the final aim of this research. This is when Imponderabilia happen.

## **Limitations**

The research proposed in this thesis has been proved effective and successful in tackling the initial ambitions. The uncertainties that port cities experience in this historical era have challenged the development of this research. Eventually, the methodological framework envisioned in the previous chapters has provided a strong base upon which the design outcomes have been developed. However, the projects present several limitations.

First of all, the design that is here proposed is a subjective exercise, although emerging from clearly defined necessities or opportunities. However, it is crucial to highlight that there are infinite ways of addressing them, both in form and function. Therefore, the design proposals can be the starting point of new dialogues in the scientific literature about the paradigms of harbour cities.

The simplification of the high complexity of global networks is another limitation of the presented thesis. The elaboration given in this research does not comprehend how the cities and harbours interact. The analytical framework mostly focuses on the spatial characteristics of this interaction.

## On the Method

The thesis proposes a research-by design approach. The Authority of the harbour of Trieste and the local government have already presented plans and strategies for a future vision that sees an important economic growth of the territory. Especially in the case of the harbour, the ecologic question is partially addressed, to be more attractive in the logistics network. This thesis proposes an approach that looks beyond the mere planning of the future strategies for growth. Instead, it tries to answer the social and other ecologic questions that arise from them and that can co-exist with them. Therefore, all the design interventions presented throughout this research, accept the changes and visions that the systems of the global networks have introduced. It does not negate the existence and growth of the global trade flows, which define a harbor city. Rather, it tries to create a space that allows the functioning of the global networks and at the same time admits and makes space for the existence of territorial and individual identities in them. Urban and architectural design is the mean which allows it.

The design proposal frames two explorations: of processes and of spaces through which the individual interacts with the territory and the global dimension. The project then shifts them in the conceptual spaces and processes of the border and of the theatre:

The notion of the border brings into the project the ability of bringing together things that are usually opposed, on two extremes, or in conflict. It is framed as the place where the characteristics of the territory crystalize and are able to coexist within their conceptual and structural conflicts. Furthermore, the element of the border implicitly brings into the discourse that of the openings in it, the doors. This is where the design proposal is positioned: the space of the door allows new movements which are now transversal to the border line and therefore intrinsically connect the realities on the two sides. Lastly, such use of the physical element of the border allows to formulate a discourse of multiple scale. The territory, the region, the continent crystalizes in its limit, where it ends, and something else begins: the global scale.

The theatre is used as a mean to create interrelations that does not need to connect the actors of the discussion through physical contact and immediate proximity. But, through composition, and the design of views, it admits visual connections and consequently the acknowledgement and acceptance of the actors. Furthermore, with the employment of the performance, the project proposes a design of a space for rituals. When global flows enter the harbors, they follow defined procedures, movements, rules. As opposite to all the unpredictability of the global flows, these procedures are fixed, readable and foreseeable. Therefore, the final design interventions imagine spaces which give life to new rituals that every citizen can undertake to interrelate with the commercial flows of the harbor.

## Scientific Relevance

The research builds upon the body of knowledge on global networks by adding a new element to the discourse. That of the individual as an active actor of the dynamics elapsing between global flows and territories. The deployment of global infrastructures is at the basis of the economic growth and competition of cities worldwide. The existing literature has tackled the relationship with the territories they occupy only briefly and rarely from the point of view of the representation of the citizen. The research wants to fill this knowledge gap, in order to reframe the ways in which the design project addresses the individual citizen in relation to the territory he inhabits and the spaces of flows. The new tool the research introduces to the discourse is the use of the scale of urban design, of the public urban space. Many times, stakeholders carry out the deployment of new (global) infrastructure or the strengthening of the existing to accommodate extremely uncertain future needs. These are dictated by the resolution of existing economic formulas or statistic calculations that cannot overcome the uncertainty intrinsic to the problem.

## **Societal Relevance**

The thesis contributes to the social structures of the contemporary world in question in three ways. First, it gives access to the flows of knowledge coming from flows of tangible goods for trade. By doing so, it gives consciousness and education of different parts of the world, cultures, memories.

Second, the use of the border defines an urban element that does not divide anymore. Rather, it performs as the element where the actors and subjects of the wider (maritime and land) multi scale territories are represented and present.

Third, the research proposes a holistic approach for the understanding of the urban question arising from the territorial organization around global networks. By doing so it assures the understanding of the interrelation of three main scales: the body, the territory, the global and of three identities: the ecological, cultural and economic.

## Transferability

The interventions presented in the thesis are focused on the study case of the city of Trieste. The research proposes a design of the Land – Sea Border which reconnects structurally different entities: the body with the territory of Trieste, and the body with the global flows of the harbour of Trieste. Therefore, the proposed design is highly context-driven. The research carries out a conceptual framework where the definition of the border and of the theatre can be shifted to other functions and geographical positions. In this case, the global flows that interact with the citizen are those of the harbours. The research could therefore continue by establishing borders between the city and other places of global flows: airports, stock exchange buildings, governmental buildings, University campuses. In this thesis the author chose to mainly focus on the scale of the body, the building and the urban park. Although, the approach allows to imagine interventions on smaller and bigger scales.

To summarize, the approach can be translated to other urban environments and cities, while the design per se is fundamentally contextual.

## **Reflection**

### **The graduation topic and the alignment with the Transitional Territories graduation studio**

The studio topic “North Sea. Landscapes of Coexistence. A Topography of Chance” proposes the agency of design in territories between land and water. During the course, the studio proposed a conversation between six lines of inquiry. This research primarily focused on two of them:

#### The Pervasive Ecology of Flows Crisis of Representation

This research moved geographically and addresses the territory of the Adriatic Sea. Although, the methodology and the problem field align with the framework of the Transitional Territory graduation studio. The thesis envisions the maritime region of the Northern Adriatic Sea as a territory, a space of flows, goods and information. The presence of cities such as Venice and the Hapsburg Empire have made it a conflictual ground since the fourteenth century.

The studio claims that the North Sea should be seen as a territorial entity, in order to answer ecological, social, economic question through its employment. Parallely, this thesis addresses the territory of the Northern Adriatic Sea, focusing on the study case of the port-city of Trieste.

### **The graduation topic and the alignment with the Urbanism master track**

The first year of the master’s program represented the construction of a rich theoretical base, aligned with the personal interest of the Urbanism position within the new economic, social and political paradigms and discourses. At the same time, it was a phase of acknowledging the process of design in practice. This thesis is conceived as the synthesis of all the fascinations encountered in the theoretical and aesthetic discoveries during the last two years.

## Ethical Considerations and Personal Reflection

The thesis topic arises from my personal interest in the notion of the life on the border. My hometown, the city that I chose as the case study for the research, is itself a border from many points of view. Since I was a child, I have carried the consciousness and the burden of the diverse and multicultural reality of these territory's history. In my close family you can count antifascist who fought against Mussolini's and Hitler's regimes during WWII, a survivor of the Nazi's concentration camps and a collaborator who died in a Foiba (the name derives from a geological event, a sinkhole found in the Karst ecosystem; after the second world war, it also means the act of burial). Almost everyone in my family has two mother tongues, namely Slovenian and Italian. Some of them German as well, as a heritage from Hapsburg times. Growing up I have been able to better understand how the territories along borders are by rich by nature. Furthermore, I slowly understood that only the border represents me. I do not feel only Italian, I do not feel only Slovenian, I do not feel Austrian. But I feel a bit of all of them. And the only thing that is a bit of all of them it the territory along the border where I was born. This is what my thesis claims: everything exists only because its opposites, differences exist.

Unfortunately, in the contemporary times, the futuristic slogans proposed also by the European Union a la "United in diversity" are "harmful" for the minorities like the one I belong to. Minorities are radically fixed to their past and history: this was the time when they still had a role in the urban area and social developments. Similarly, globalization permits us to go wherever we want to go, to have whatever we want to have and whenever we want to have it. To accommodate the demand, the global flows have been growing and growing for decades. Rousseau wondered what the craving of endless economic development can bring to. Needless to say, he claimed that it is not possible to return to the "primitive" society, but the attempts to achieve a never-ending growth are not a solution. The new waves of the globalization processes cannot be reversed. But the solution should not be found in the consolidation of the borders as in a neo-feudal and neo-medieval action of "Fuga Mundi". We need to research new ways of interaction between the "inside" and the "outside" of the borders: between Hestia and Hermes, in the words of Augé (2009). This would allow a real representation of diversity in the current global reality. Eventually, we can find ways, forms, spaces, where we are able to perceive both what we are and what we are not, understand it, learn from it, finding ourselves sharing the same space.





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## Appendix





## Theory paper

# New Silk Road and the European urban environments

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## Abstract

The paper tackles the topic of the New Silk Road, also known as the One Belt One Road initiative, presented by the Chinese president Xi Jinping in 2013. After a general explanation of the initiative, the author presents a literature review, divided into two different chapters. The first part is dedicated to the body of research that compares the new Chinese initiative to three similar phenomena that took place in the past or that are happening nowadays, but in different geographical areas and include different actors: The Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Marshall Plan and the ancient Silk Road. The second part lists the points of view and approaches with which the initiative has been tackled in the literature. After that, the attention moves to the European context. An analysis is developed to individuate the different territories and urban landscapes that will be affected by the development of the initiative. In the end, the findings are discussed, and some guidelines are presented for future research in the same field.

## Keywords

New Silk Road, economic corridors, European urbanization, transnational territories, harbor cities

## Introduction

The global geopolitical context is nowadays characterized by two main actors which are at once also the two most powerful economies on earth, the United States of America on the West and the People's Republic of China on the East. The New Silk Road, also known as the One Belt One Road (OBOR) project is an initiative developed by the Chinese government and presented in 2013. It envisions a strategy that would allow strong connections between China, the rest of the Asian continent and Europe. This would allow faster and easier trade between these territories, in fact, bringing back to life the ancient Silk Road. This paper explores the topic of the new initiative by understanding its components and elements. The development of this project and the research concerning it is still at a germination point and so is the academic research that addresses it, even though more and more authors

are approaching and developing it every year, in a different direction, from the geopolitical to the financial, to the engineering. This paper wants to understand the effects that the OBOR will produce in urban landscapes, focusing mainly on the European cities and especially on European harbor cities.

This paper will be adopted as part of the master thesis of the author, a wider research project that will focus on the European continent and on the system of the harbors in the northern Adriatic Sea that are expected to perform as final hubs of the maritime corridor of the New Silk Road. The urban and natural landscapes of this region are not ready yet to undertake such a duty. It is therefore important to foresee strategies and projects that will be able to prepare the territory to the changes and transitions inherent to the realization of the OBOR developments. This paper, therefore, aims to the individuation of the physical elements, legislative

instruments that will be altered to satisfy the ambitions of economic growth and easier trade with the East. For this reason, the paper will, first of all, present an overview of the existing research agenda on the Chinese initiative. This topic comprehends many fields and scales. The paper addresses indeed those that have been given the most attention in the last years, but also to some minor branches of research. They shift from the common geopolitical analysis to reach topics regarding culture and knowledge and the spread and sharing of the latter.

The paper has a strong reviewing nature. To understand the phenomena of the New Silk Road the author decided to start with the literature review. The sources she mentions throughout the paper do not concern only the urban question, but also other fields such as the economic and financial, ecological and historical dimensions. After that, the paper draws a general analysis of the current European situation, individuating the different regions where the New Silk Road will eventually take place and their characteristics. Attention is also given to the institutions that could have an important role in transnational and regional cooperation. This allowed the acknowledgment of the elements and topics where the European Union and Europe, in general, should work to adopt an important role in the whole initiative. Here the element of the important European harbors is analyzed as well, to understand the different typologies and therefore the different approaches that are necessary when proposing plans or designs for such environments and landscapes. To conclude the findings are discussed.

### **Similar phenomena**

A way to understand the effects of the OBOR initiative and find possible solutions is to look

at similar phenomena that have happened through history or are happening in this historical moment but comprehend other actors and/or other geographic areas. Du (2016) explains the comparison between the OBOR initiative and again a US-led project, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). A difference he highlights is that the American TPP is an agreement, while the Chinese are proposing an initiative, without a proper agreement (Du, 2016). Furthermore, the New Silk Road appears to be much more inclusive: the TPP is led only by the US and requires the territories and countries to meet certain conditions so that they can participate. The Chinese, on the other hand, only initiated the new economic development, and (at least in theory) they are open for the participation of any country (Du, 2016). The Chinese are creating new networks with the construction of mega infrastructures with the investments of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank that will directly impact the landscapes and the economies of the territories. Instead, the partnership that the US is not proposing a direct physical connection, but rather virtual, economic ties and shared investments with member countries.

At the same time, a comparison has been made with the Marshall Plan, where Lairson (2018) again analyses the two phenomena mainly from the financial and economic point of view, researching the market dynamics that they create. The objectives of the Marshall Plan were to help the European continent to recover after the second global conflict. That would create a strong alliance in military and political terms. At the same time, Lairson points out that the United States wanted to reinforce its fundamental principles, namely the capitalistic system, democracy and economic integration (Lairson, 2018). Callahan (2016) claims that the Chinese aim for the same. However, the Chinese initiative is probably not going to trigger the global stability: although the American

continent is not involved in the wider initiative, the economic asset that China is proposing is still liberal and promotes the free market (Lairson, 2018). Lairson (2018), in fact, states that: “The USA needs to realize the best long-term outcome will be gained from a reaffirmation of the liberal order.”.

A very different approach is the one presented by Ling and Perrigoue (2018), that analyzes the ancient silk road and compares it to the new one proposed by China. They studied the testimony of two figures that experienced the ancient Silk Road firsthand, namely Marco Polo from Venice and Ibn Battuta from Tangier. The focus here is shifted from the political and economic questions and tackle the secondary effects that happen concurrently with this kind of initiative. They tackle the important cultural and knowledge dimension that was achieved in the ancient silk road and try to understand why that happened by coining the concept of the Silk Road Ethos. They claim that the initiative could represent an important source of new knowledge when looked at with “moral imagination” (Ling & Perrigoue, 2018). Through the analysis of the food trajectory in the cities and territories along the ancient silk road, the two authors presented four common practices. One of them, which could be crucial for understanding the urban question of the current situation, talks about co-production. To achieve this, the perception of the whole (route) and the individual (human) is important. In the cities, new buildings arose, to give life to places of learning, where knowledge from the different regions connected in the network of the Silk Road could be shared.

### **Different views on the New Silk Road**

While going through the existing literature it is visible that the majority of the research focuses on understanding the global scale and the

global implications. As already mentioned, the OBOR initiative could, in fact, radically impact the global geopolitics (Liu & Woo, 2018). Many authors from the academic world, along with even more journalists and columnists have written about what they call “real” goals that the Chinese government aims towards the development of this initiative. Clarke (2017) claims that the Chinese are mainly aiming at taking more control over some strategic areas in the neighboring countries and in the wider Asian continent. In this way, they aim towards the creation of a more homogenous legislative environment and therefore easier management of future developments.

Meyer’s (2018) argument is very similar, although addressed towards the economic assessment of the initiative. He claims China will try to share its economic organization among the other Asian countries, to achieve coherence of the economic dimension too. The dynamics are a bit different in Europe, where some countries still have not recovered from the financial crisis of the last decade. Therefore, countries such as Greece, but also Italy and some countries of Eastern Europe already signed the Chinese memorandum, while others are still reluctant to the idea of embarking in the initiative.

If we analyze the issue in strictly economic terms, the dynamics are similar. Because China is dealing with an excess of production, they need a wider market that could absorb the surplus (Harvey, 2014). Anyway, this is happening already when China invests in the development of new huge infrastructures that would connect these countries. Again, Clarke (2017) claims that to do so, the other countries would need to align with the economic principles, distinctive for the Chinese economy. At the same time, they are investing huge sums of money within the country as well, especially the western areas of the country. Thanks to their geographic position they inevitably

represent the first meeting point with the neighboring Asian countries and the West in general (Clarke, 2017).

Less attention has been given to the ecological question. China has big internal struggles because of provoked pollution, especially in terms of the produced CO<sub>2</sub>. The concern revolves around the threat that a bad environmental situation would spread with the spread of the initiative. It is true that with the increase in transportation and construction this is a truthful scenario. Additionally, one of the objectives of the OBOR initiative is to be able to extract more resources, to satisfy the demand in China, a country that is low in that field (Len, 2015; Zhang, 2016).

In literature, there have been some attempts to understand the urban question emerging from the initiative too, although they are very few. Williams, Robinson, and Bouzarowski, for instance, took the concept of the planetary urbanization to give a concrete space and dimension to this phenomenon (Williams, Robinson, & Bouzarovski, 2019). They explained the urban question from a geographic perspective, tackling mainly the field of energy and the spatial implications that will result from the infrastructure that will supply it. To understand it, they adopt the concept of planetary urbanization and its intrinsic socio-spatial relations. They argue that such theory is a: “powerful language for understanding the material and spatial relations of capitalism in the 21st century on the macro scale” (Williams et al., 2019, p. 9). They conclude with three guidelines for future research. The last one suggests shifting the attention of the literature and research from the Chinese to the other contexts that will concur in the OBOR initiative (Williams et al., 2019). In the next part, the author does that, by analyzing the elements of the European context that the Chinese project will most probably affect.

## **The European context**

The two main routes of the OBOR initiative will reach two maritime regions of the European continent. The land route is supposed to reach the North Sea, with Rotterdam (and Antwerp and Hamburg creating the system of the important harbor of the north) as the main hub that will welcome it. On the other side of Europe, the smaller harbors of the northern Adriatic Sea, Venice, Trieste, Monfalcone (all ITA) and Koper (SLO), will have the role of the final hubs of the maritime route. Many maps found today in literature and generally on the web, do not represent a connection between these two points, which intrinsically mean that Europe is still not unified in terms of the acceptance and will to participate in the initiative. While on one side, China is doing huge efforts in unifying the economic and political dynamics of its national area and promoting the same efforts in the other Asian countries, the situation in Europe is completely different.

The countries of the European Union have different opinions on the initiative. Only some of them signed the memorandum with the Chinese president. Consequently, there are no institutional figures that could allow smooth transnational cooperation in this sense. Although, this is also the case of Asia and China itself (Du, 2016). In this case, Europe could count on the ESDP (EC, 1999), a strategy developed in 1999, that encourages collaboration between member countries in terms of urbanization and infrastructure (Pain, 2011). A valid institutional figure could be the Euro-regions. These legislative areas divide the European continent, not on a political and diplomatic basis. Their limits are drawn based on historical, cultural and geographical criteria (Durà, Camonita, Berzi, & Noferini, 2018). The

European natural and urban landscape is very diverse throughout the whole continent. The area under assessment, in this case, stretching from the Netherlands to north-eastern Italy, overlaps with the area of the megalopolis that stretches from Liverpool to Milan, commonly known as the Blue Banana (Brunet et al., 1989). This megaregion is characterized by a high GDP and a very high population and urbanization densities. Although from the economic and financial point of view this area could seem quite uniform, from the geographic and urban point of view it is very different. If we only take into consideration the two regions where the OBOR initiative foresees the two routes to end, the differences are enormous. On the north, there is a multicentric urban model, with Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and Antwerp being the most important nodes of the network. On the south, stretching through some parts of Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia, the urbanization follows the model of the “La città Diffusa” (Francesco Indovina, 2009). The main difference in the two models is the While on the North the multicentric model allows the high concentration of activities, the città diffusa is a disperse city. Consequently, the blue-green systems and the infrastructural networks present divergences as well. Indovina claims that the Veneto model while being able to properly satisfy the needs of what he calls “attività mature e servizi banali”, literally meaning mature activities and trivial services, [translated by the author], its structure is not able to attract innovative activities and producers (Francesco Indovina, 2009). This happens, he explains, as a consequence of the decreasing importance of the “traditional localization factors” in the time of technologization and globalization.

A big role in the initiative will be held by some European harbors, as mentioned earlier. From an urban point of view, the big harbors of the

North Sea are very different from those in the Mediterranean. There is a completely different relation between the harbors and the city and in a similar way the perception and consideration of the port. After 1960 the big harbors of the north started moving out of the cities, to accommodate the containers that just appeared and to seek deeper waters. As Boeri (2001) explains, the harbors are not strictly divided on a functional basis. The touristic activities are often mixed with industrial infrastructure or fishing boats. Consequently, the harbor is inevitably part of the city and they are perceived as a buffer zone between the land and the sea (Boeri, 2001). On the other hand, the harbors of the North are trying to redevelop their image moving towards the model of the Asian or American harbors, where places dedicated only to leisure or tourism are made in the harbor, but still very separated from the harbor activity per se.

## **Discussion and conclusions**

The majority of the maps representing the extension of the New Silk Road usually show two separated corridors, namely the maritime route and the land route, both with one of the extremes in the Chinese country. The two routes then develop towards the west and end in the European continent, the land route in the hubs of the North Sea, the maritime route in the hubs of the Adriatic Sea. This kind of drawing gives the perception of the BRI being Chinese oriented. At the same time, the majority of literature analyzes the issue of the OBOR as exporting Chinese ideas, culture, economy, financial strategies, etc. It is difficult to come across writings that take a truly objective position and consider the dynamics and benefits as mutual flows in a two-way direction, as visible from the literature review at the beginning of the paper. By rethinking the lines and joining the two

corridors in a loop, the European continent suddenly becomes the “missing piece” of an initiative that could represent an opportunity for the countries involved.

The literature focuses mainly on the global dimension of the Chinese initiative. Therefore, the phenomenon results as a strategy or set of policies that the different countries and governments have to adopt. There is a need for strategies and plans of a transnational and regional nature. In Europe, the European Commission should rely on documents such as the ESDP (EC, 1999). Some institutions, such as the Euro-regions could be implemented and adopted for the cooperation between territories with similar characteristics that are in many cases already transnational territories (Durà et al., 2018).

Although, it is not sufficient to concentrate only on the virtual, legislative boundaries of the countries and regions. From the maps, it is clear that the biggest focus should be on cities and the connections between them. The country as an institution will be of course important and relevant, but the city is the space that will need to deal with the effects of the new economic flows, new infrastructural connections and the threats for the natural landscapes and at the same time trying to welcome the flows of intangible goods that will travel on these routes, such as knowledge and culture. Therefore, a multiscale and transdisciplinary approach is inescapable if we want to understand the phenomena of the New Silk Road and exploit also the unofficial and intangible dimension of the new flows. They shape everyday life, affecting even one of the most personal moments of our lives, our meals, as it is visible from the literature review. At this point, the Ethos of the Silk Road could be the key (Ling & Perrigou, 2018). Indeed, the situations and context nowadays are completely different from those times. At the very least, the

containerization that happened in 1960 cut the physical connection with the goods that are circulating, erasing the perception of these flows.

It is therefore advisable to adopt a multiscale approach whenever dealing with the urban question regarding the New Silk Road in this case, but also any other phenomena that foresee the movement of such an important volume of goods and other unofficial and intangible elements. To do so, it is important to rethink the hierarchical organizations that arise in Europe to withstand this kind of initiative. Adopting strategies or plans that give the most attention to the big scale would be meaningful. To exploit the possibilities embedded in the new Chinese initiative, we need to give the same attention to the smallest of the scales. In this way, we can ascertain the spread of new information and knowledge that are valuable goods circulating on economic corridors worldwide.

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