Abstract: The paper deals with spatial-functional problems of functional transformations of post-industrial areas in the center of Bielsko-Biała under conditions of free-market economy. The object of the analysis was the scale and causes of the formation of such areas in particular periods of times, the course and the problems associated with the process of their transformation as well as the range and character of the transformation of their spatial-functional structure

Key words: post-industrial areas, functional transformations, deindustrialization, restructuring, deglomeration, revitalization.

Introduction

Under the influence of Poland’s political system transformations following 1989 deep changes have taken place in social-economic conditions of the country. The process has contributed to a reconstruction of the spatial-functional structure and a change of social conditions in Polish cities and towns. A particular phenomenon accompanying the transformations was a crisis and collapse of industrial areas and a process of their re-management.

In the 1990s a deep crisis affected companies from the traditional branches of industry- textile and electric machinery. In the period of command-distribution economy the areas covered by the plants, owing to their economic significance in the city, the surface and the number of people associated with them, constituted one of the most important elements of urban space. Following the system transformations the enterprises have inherited large surpluses of extensively-used industrial areas, over-employment, big debts, outdated technologies and the unreasonable management organization. These factors, combined with the collapse of traditional
COMECON markets and with the inclusion of Poland’s economy into the system of world economy, have brought about a decrease in the demand on the manufactured products and in consequence a crisis situation in most enterprises (Domański 2000, Kaczmarek 2001). The scale of transformation was additionally deepened by the process of their privatization and the impact of real rules of spatial economy which included among other things; the necessity to pay land tax or bringing in payments for land lease, thriftiness in managing raw materials and media, introduction of new technologies requiring different spatial structures and transport connections, also on individual areas the development of new types of activities (Lorens, Załuski 1997). In consequence the enterprises were compelled to carry out property, organizational and technological changes. Many of them were unable to meet the demands and declared bankruptcy and liquidation.

The process of the appearance and the spatial structure of post-industrial areas in the center of Bielsko-Biała over 1990-2002

The process of the emergence of post-industrial areas was initiated in the 1970s following the implementation of a plan of restructuring and modernizing the Bielsko-Biała textile industry. Its principal assumption, carried out to a little degree, was a deglomeration of industrial plants from the city center and their reconstruction in the southern part of the city. The period proper of the emergence of post-industrial areas began in the 1990s. In order to overcome deadlock the enterprises rented and sold out unnecessary objects and grounds. The restructuring of the economy forced, unfortunately, mass liquidation of many plants in the city center.

The greatest intensification of the process took place over 1999-2002 when 34.9% of post-industrial areas had appeared in the city center and 71.9% on the remaining areas of Bielsko-Biała (Fig. 1). Initially the liquidation involved chiefly the plants situated in the southern part of the city center along Zamkowa and Partyzantów Streets and in north-eastern part in the vicinity of Lwowska Street, while in successive years the process reached north of 11 Listopada Street and east of 3 Maja Street (Fig. 2). With the passage of time an intensification of plant collapse process was observed and its expansion towards the urban outskirts (Białka 2003). The tendency was only resisted by these enterprises which, among other things, were capable of modernizing production, getting rid of extra terrain, changed their organization and which after their privatization could gain investors.

The restructuring of traditional branches of industry (especially textile) took the form of de-industrialization the manifestation of which was a limitation of the number and surface of industrial areas and a development of trading and service areas. Over 1991-2002 the acreage of industrial areas had dropped by 59.2% in the city center and by 28.6% in the area of the whole city. In consequence, many unmanaged post-industrial areas have come into being most of which have undergone essential functional changes in recent years.
Transformations of spatial-functional structure of post-industrial areas in the center of Bielsko-Biała over 1990-2003

The susceptibility to transformations of post-industrial areas is decided by their features such as location, transport accessibility, condition, size and form of building, legal and property conditions in addition to conservation constraints (Domański 2000, Gasidło 1998). The city-centre post-industrial areas, created in Poland after 1998, reveal favourable features for transformation, which places them among the most attractive areas for locating new forms of economic activity. Their transformation is facilitated by their scattering and location in the vicinity of areas with varying land use, also by their small surfaces (Piech 1999).

In March 2003 28.4% of the number of city-centre post-industrial areas was used by trading-service activities. The successive 26.9% were grounds with multifunctional use and only 7.5% areas with industrial-trading and industrial-service functions. Taking into consideration the size of areas on which the objects fulfilling various functions are located we can see that 41.6% of the total surface of post-industrial areas were multifunctional areas and 26.5% trading-service areas. For trading-service purposes smaller plots are usually chosen as compared to areas with multifunctional use. These used to be located chiefly in the city-centre and on its peripheries. Instead, industrial-trading areas, industrial-service and multifunctional areas which in most cases are covered by production activities and wholesale trade are usually concentrated on the city-centre margins, chiefly in its north-eastern and southern parts.
According to rough estimates by the author for 1996 the post-industrial areas of the city-centre were taken by some 140 businesses and at the beginning of 2003 by as many as some 780 ones (more than 5.5-fold increase) The increase was chiefly brought about by a growth at the end of the 1990s of the supply of post-industrial areas in the city and by the growth of initiative. In 1996 33.6% of establishments were engaged in retail trade, 17.1% in wholesale trade and 12.9% in service activities. As a result of the management of the existing and of the post-1996 industrial areas, in 2003 45.8% of the establishments created on them carried out retail trade, the successive 10.2% was specializing in quasi-business services and 9.4% in wholesale trade (Fig. 3). Over 1996-2003 the fastest increase was observed in the group of establishments engaged in retail trade (increase by 760%) and those offering quasi-business services (by 736%), the slowest one in the group running wholesale trade (by 304%) and production and building activities (by 317%). Areas situated in the city-centre, on account of a smaller investment risk, usually at once, sometimes on investing big capital, were transformed into grounds fulfilling mid-centre functions (trade, administration, culture and other services). Areas outside the city-centre, especially within the downtown industrial zone were re-used by industry, wholesale trade or by, though to a lesser extent, motoring and building services. With the passage of time the share of the above forms of activities on the relevant areas was losing its importance in favour of downtown services (Białka 2003).

The downtown industrial areas constitute not infrequently potential post-industrial areas. One of the phenomena taking place within these areas is hiring of the unused spaces by production plants to other companies running both production as well as non-production activities. The encroachment on the industrial areas of small companies and institutions from beyond production branches is dictated by a search by companies of additional sources of capital either through the sale of separated plots and unused objects or their transfer at a relatively small price to other small economic subjects. On the area of 14 separated areas of that type in the city-centre of Bielsko-Biała non-production activities were carried out by 64 establishments. Most of them i.e. 31.3% were specializing in retail trade, 26.6% in wholesale trade while the successive 7.8% offered motoring services.

Fig. 2. Spatial distribution of post-industrial areas in the center of Bielsko-Biała created over 1975-2002

Ryc. 2. Przestrzenne rozmieszczenie terenów poprzemysłowych w śródmieściu Bielska-Białej powstałych w latach 1975-2002

Source: Author’s own results based on materials of the Office of Urban Development in Bielsko-Biała and of press sources

Źródło: Opracowanie własne na podstawie materiałów zebranych w Biurze Rozwoju Miasta w Bielsku-Białej oraz źródeł prasowych
Summary

On the area of the Bielsko-Biała center the process of both liquidation and transformations of industrial areas was intensifying since the beginning of the 1990s till the first years of the 21st century. These changes included in the first place industrial areas situated in the city-centre and in successive years those in the remaining areas of the city. On account of the state and kind of transformations the reconstruction of post-industrial areas in the center of Bielsko-Biała is now at the initial phase of transformation, namely its functional revitalization.

References

Przekształcenia funkcjonalne terenów poprzemysłowych śródmiejskiej części Bielska-Białej

Streszczenie

W artykule przedstawiony został proces upadku i likwidacji przemysłu w śródmieściu Bielska-Białej oraz przemiany struktury przestrzenno-funkcjonalnej powstałych terenów poprzemysłowych.

Likwidacja przemysłu w śródmieściu na masową skalę nastąpiła po 1989 r. Proces ten nasilał się wraz z kolejnymi latami, osiągając swoją kulminację na przełomie wieku, kiedy powstało 34,9% powierzchni terenów poprzemysłowych. Od połowy lat 90. objął także obszary pozaśródmiejskie. W wyniku zmian spadła o 59,2% powierzchnia terenów przemysłowych w śródmieściu oraz o 28,6% na terenie całego miasta. Wraz z upływem czasu następowało wzmaganie procesu upadku zakładów przemysłowych, postępujące od centrum miasta w kierunku jego peryferii.

Zintensyfikowanie przekształceń funkcjonalnych terenów poprzemysłowych nastąpiło pod koniec lat 90. W centrum, jako pierwszy na tereny poprzemysłowe, wkraczał handel detaliczny (zwłaszcza wyrobami przemysłowymi) oraz działalność usługowa (głównie usługi otoczenia biznesu). Większość obiektów pofabrycznych, położonych poza centrum, przystosowywana była najpierw do handlu detalicznego, działalności produkcyjnej, handlu hurtowego i usług motoryzacyjnych. W kolejnych latach powyższe typy działalności wypierane były głównie przez handel detaliczny oraz usługi otoczenia biznesu. Zasięg i skala przemian zależna była głównie od lokalizacji terenów poprzemysłowych względem centrum i głównych arterii komunikacyjnych oraz od rodzaju poprzemysłowej zabudowy i uwarunkowań prawno-własnościowych.

Przeprowadzone badania wskazują, że obecnie proces przekształceń bielsko-białskich terenów poprzemysłowych znajduje się w początkowej fazie przebudowy-rewitalizacji.

Marcin Białka
Institute of Geography and Spatial Management
Jagiellonian University
Cracow
Poland