

Introduction

Research problems of changes of industry structures in a period of transition to a market economy are a live issue and they require improvement of theoretical and model formulation and development of empirical research. Simultaneously very large differentiation of geographical space on account of nature conditions, the level of socio-economic and cultural development, makes the transformation process performing with different intensity in local, regional, national and international systems. Particular places in geographical space are distinguished by different level of competitiveness and attractiveness for civilising development including industry.

In the process of modern changes, which in global system are shown by transformation to a new stage of socio-economic development, the crucial research problems are very complex adapting processes of various economic schemes of Central-Eastern European countries to changing conditions of world economy. The problems of transformation of hitherto existing economic, social and cultural structures of particular countries, belong to basic tasks of many scientific branches, including also industry geography.

Those problems were the subject of 13th scientific conference entitled „Problems of transformations of industrial structures in a period of transition to market economy” organised by Institute of Geography of Pedagogical University of Cracow with the co-operation of Industry Geography Committee of Polish Geographic Society in Warsaw.

In the conference participated academic workers from almost all universities, who give lectures in geography of industry. The participants of the conference were also workers of Polish Academy of Sciences, Academy of Economics and others, who are occupied in transformation of industry structures. The important role was played by foreign visitors from Ukraine and Czech Republic who are interested in adapting processes of regional economic and social systems to a new market economy. They represented University of

Lviv, regional authorities of Lviv voivodship and Technical University in Ostrava. During the conference 17 papers were presented including 5 papers of foreign visitors.

The chairmen of the following sessions were Stanisław Misztal – ex-president of Geography of Industry Committee of Polish Geographic Society and now one of its vice-president; Henryk Rogacki – vice-director of Geography Institute of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań; Stanisław Dziadek – the head of Economics of Transport Department of Academy of Economics in Katowice; Eugeniusz Rydz – the dean of Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Science of Pedagogical University in Słupsk.

In the introduction paper entitled „Changes of industry location conditions”, presented by Henryk Rogacki (the Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań); the author presented a new approach to determination of the role of industry localisation factors in economic activity distribution drawing special attention to the following issues: „learning” localisation, rising importance of globalisation processes, giving productive activity credits and rising localisation freedom of many industrial companies. Stanisław Misztal (Polish Academy of Science, Warsaw) in his paper „Regional effects of industry privatisation process in Poland in 1989–1995”, referred to large freedom in explanation of some conceptions such as an industrial plant, a company, a firm and adopting often separate rules of classification of industrial plants according to their potential and branch structures. Zbigniew Ziolo (Pedagogical University, Cracow) in his paper „Problems of international integration of industry in a period of transition to a market economy”, indicated global conditions of processes of economic changes taking place in Poland. He underlined particular importance of large, multinational companies in the range of intensification of production internationalisation.

In the following papers were raised issues connected with changes of regional industry structures taking place under conditions of economic changes.

Stanisław Dziadek (Academy of Economics, Katowice) in his paper „Changes of industry in Ziemia Cieszyńska in a period of transformation to a market economy”, presented the results of empirical research in the range of changes of production and branch potential and ownership structure taking place on the borderland between Poland and Czech Republic. Henryk Rochnowski (the Nicolas Copernicus University, Toruń, „Some directions, objectives and conditions of Polish industry in a period of transition”), presented changes in

various structures of national industry and also in regional systems and showed its critical estimation. Eugeniusz Rydz, Paulina Barańska (Pedagogical University, Słupsk, „Selected problems of dairy industry in słujskie voivodship in 1990–1996”), presented changes of milk supply connections of dairy in Słupsk. In the face of regress of local agriculture, the present range of influence of the plant embraces vast areas of Northern Poland. Paweł Czapliński (Pedagogical University, Słupsk, „Wood industry in Pomorze Środkowe in a period of economic transition”), presented changes in the size of production and organisation,

ownership and market structures of wood industry in słujskie and koszalińskie voivodships. Wiesława Gierańczyk (the Nicolas Copernicus University, Toruń, „The influence of political transition on structural changes in industry of toruńskie voivodship”), presented the changes of branch and spatial structures of toruńskie voivodship industry in light of the

measures of employment and production value. Mariusz Czepczyński (University of Gdańsk, „Regionalism in global economy – the attempt of analysis of tendencies of territorial production”), discussed general features of global world economy and, on that background, presented regional conditions of industrial production. Agnieszka Kwiatek-Sołtys (Pedagogical University, Cracow, „The position of industry in functional structure of small towns in krakowski region”), discussed the role of industrial potential in the structure of economic base of small towns.

The important part of the conference was foreign visitors' presentation, who discussed the present problems of industry and the whole economy transition.

Miron Jankiw (vice-voivode of Lviv, University of Lviv, „Methodological aspects of analysis of the structure of the agriculture-industrial complex in a period of transition to a market economy”), discussed the tendencies of changes in reconstruction of Ukrainian agriculture. Eugeniusz Mnych (University of Lviv, „Changes of the structure of Ukrainian industry during economic reforms”), presented issues of reconstructing of organisation, branch and ownership structures of Ukrainian industry. Bogdan Szurgot (University of Lviv, „Current directions of restructurization of Ukrainian economy”), presented main circumstances of changes and economic instruments leading to economic activation of Ukraine. He drew special attention to geopolitical location of Ukraine and its economic connections concerning mineral resources and transport infrastructure. Eugeniusz Cikało (University of Lviv, „Special economic zones as a main factor of economic reconstruction on the example of Jawor region”), discussed the role of special economic zones as factors of economic growth of regional systems. Oswald Milerski (Technical University, Ostrawa, „Selected relations of transformation of industry structures in a process of transition to a market economy”), presented the role of regional resources in imparting dynamism to economy of spatial schemes.

During the whole discussion it was underlined that, on the present level of economic development, important role is and will be played in the future by the dominating section of economy which is industry.

In the new condition, however, its role is going to change. Industry is losing its hitherto importance as a leading factor of economic activation of human resources through creating wide-spread labour markets. On the other hand, its role is increasing in modernisation of socio-economic life through supplying more and more supreme and effective work instruments, better in quality products of consumption, especially high technology equipment. To realisation of those aims, the conference participants admitted the necessity of organising next meetings devoted to the problems of transformation of various industrial structures in the following years.

The representatives of foreign research centres taking part in the meeting highly appreciated the course and the problems of the conference. They fully supported the proposition of organising next international meetings devoted to the issues of reconstructing of industrial structures. They declared not only participation but also undertaking common research on economic transition processes.

The conference allowed:

– the outline of new directions of geographic-industrial research, connected with the problems of current processes of transformation of national economy in which the basic role is played by industrial companies and their local, regional, national and global schemes.

– indication of the necessity of individual approach to research concerning companies and building for them suitable strategies of developments, depending on the functions they fulfil in spatial structure of industry,

– connection of research of transformation processes of industry and national economy on the background of international conditions, mainly with the intensification of impulses flowing from economically developed European Union countries,

– the necessity of more direct connection of industry research with the problems of the national economy, in which industry still plays leading production functions, especially with the activity of local governments in increasing competitiveness of local or regional schemes,

– indication of various regional conditions, which, often in a different degree, influence on the same categories of industrial companies,

– the necessity of conducting detailed empirical research on behaviour of industry companies of different types in different regional surroundings,

– the improvement of research methodology in industry geography, adapting it more to changing conditions of industrial and civilisation development.

In the last part of the conference a discussion was undertaken over directions of activity of Industry Geography Committee of Polish Geographic Society in new term of office. In the broad discussion remarks presented above were accepted as essential and additionally it was accepted what follows:

– elaborating of a handbook in geography of industry on the academic level,

– organisations of workshops for young academic staff and

– continuing care about modernisation of educational contents in geography of industry.

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