LOCALIZATION OF COMMERCIAL SUBURBANIZATION SUBJECTS IN MLYNÁRCE DISTRICT

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Abstract: Areas of commercial suburbanization can be found mainly along major communication lines on the periphery of cities. These, used to have primarily residential or agricultural function. Due to a boom of commercial activities, process of commercial suburbanization can be observed also in Nitra city intensively. The aim of this paper is to evaluate the progress of localization of commercial areas in Mlynárce district between 1998 and 2016. Mlynárce district (Nitra city) recorded an increase in commercial subjects from 18 in 1998 to 156 in 2016. Comparison of aerial photographs combined with field research lead to an assessment of the intensity of growth of commercial activities. In addition, it enabled recording of real number of commercial activities in the observed area. Moreover, basic localization conditions of commercial suburbanization were identified.

Key Words: commercial suburbanization, localization conditions, Nitra city, Mlynárce district

INTRODUCTION

Urban planning in the 1990s is considered to be liberal (central government) as well as highly individualized by ad hoc decisions made by local politicians in the vast majority of post-communist countries (Suditu et al. 2014). Significant transformational changes affecting political, social and economic life gradually spread across Slovakia in this period. One of the most significant economic changes in this period was the increased interest of foreign investors in entrepreneurial activities in Slovakia. As a result, substantial growth of foreign capital as well as boom of commercial subjects established by international companies can be observed (Midler and Dubcová 2014). Today, there is a strong increase in business activities by multinational companies in the vast majority of larger towns in Slovakia. As a result, former rural character of suburban areas of major towns was transformed by those companies. These areas became suitable zones for localization of new commercial facilities for retail and wholesale units, various logistic and production halls, storehouses as well as administrative buildings. The described process is called “commercial suburbanization” in the specialized geographical literature. Commercial suburbanization can be identified by its significant dynamic character. The development dynamics of commercial suburbanization depend on several factors such as appropriate geographical location of the city, its availability and accessibility (mainly by road), qualified workforce, scientific base as well as industrial potential of the surrounding region.

The aim of this paper is to point out the development of commercial suburbanization and its characteristics in Mlynárce district (Nitra city) between 1998 and 2016.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE RELATED TO THE SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

Commercial suburbanization is generally associated with the decentralisation of industrial, commercial, retail and administrative as well as high-tech sector (Champion 2001). This process leads to the formation of commercial areas consisting of hypermarkets, shopping centres and galleries, industrial zones with production halls, storehouses and distribution centres in the peripheral parts of cities. According to Maštálka and Valíková (2014) supermarkets, hypermarkets, extensive areas occupied by warehouses or logistic centres belong to commercial areas. Commercial suburbanization compared to the residential suburbanization is strongly bound to the morphological process of ribbon
development. Commercial areas are usually located on territories with very good transport possibilities along highways, motorways and important transport hubs (Sýkora 2002, Matlovič 2004, Masný and Dubcová 2010). In addition to the mentioned factors, commercial suburbanization is influenced by e.g. sufficiency of free areas allowing new construction activities or existing areas suitable for revitalization or construction of necessary large parking spaces for clients and employees.

The commercial suburbanization in Slovakia is studied mainly on the example of major Slovak cities representing regional centres. Aspects of commercial suburbanization focused on the area of city of Prešov was studied by Sédláková (Sédláková 2005). Danielová (2008) conducted a research focused on the residential changes caused by commercial suburbanization in the city of Trenčín since 1989. The processes related to suburbanization in the Nitra city were assessed by Repáška (2012) and by Repáška and Masárová (2013). The mentioned suburbanization processes influenced also changes in the Radvaň and Kremnička districts in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia. These processes were evaluated by Masný and Dubcová (2010). Development of commercial suburbanization in Bratislava was explored by Šveda and Krížan (2012). Among Czech geographers, aspects of commercial suburbanization were studied by Sýkora (2002), Konečný (2010) on the example of the city of Brno, Štefánek (2010) on the example of the municipality of Rudany pri Prahe, Nemeškal (2013) or Krejčová (2014) who focused on Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic. The growing importance of monitoring the aspects associated with commercial suburbanization was documented also by Chuman and Romportl (2011). They established a methodology for monitoring the extent of commercial suburbanization in the Czech Republic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Localization and forms of commercial suburbanization in Mlynárce district

The city of Nitra is one of the examples of cities with clear impact of commercial suburbanization. The city belongs to 5 biggest cities of Slovakia and is divided into 13 districts. Commercial suburbanization can be mainly observed in 5 districts: Mlynárce, Horné Krškany, Dolné Krškany, Čermáň and Chrenová. Although Mlynárce focus of our study is the 4th smallest district with area of 379 ha, it is the most developed district. Mlynárce had a dominant residential function with few production facilities until the 1990s. Additionally, rural character of Mlynárce district is formed by construction of residential units (n = 605) and by low public facilities. The impact of commercial suburbanization on the target area is also demonstrated by decrease in the number of inhabitants (from 599 in 2001 to 555 in 2014).

Amount of commercial subjects increased from 18 to 156 between 1998 and 2016 (Figure 1). The most important factor influencing the development of commercial suburbanization of Mlynárce is good accessibility of important roads. The 1st class road 65 (Bratislavská road) is directly linked to the expressway R1. The expressway R1 is connecting Nitra city with the capital city Bratislava. Another important road is the 3rd class road 1674 (Štúrová street) connecting Nitra city with Hlohovec town. Commercial areas are located along these two main lines in area of almost 105 ha representing more than 27% of Mlynárce’s territory.

Commercial suburbanization in Mlynárce has two forms based on the intensity and character of built-up area along Bratislavská road and Štúrová street. On the one hand, Bratislavská road is characterized by large areas of the free plots as well as functionless production areas. Underused but large enough plots for production halls (eg. the area of the former Zelokvet) provide ideal conditions for the location of new commercial entities. Formation of new commercial subjects on free plots leads to the development of clusters (e.g. Turancar Travel Agency, large areas of retail stores with extensive parking spots of OC Gallery Tesco, Kärcher Slovakia, Síko, Decodom).
Development projects and construction activities on former open space (Figure 2) cause an extensive non-renewable degradation of fertile land, elimination of greenery. In general, commercial activities affect the environment extensively (e.g. Turancar Travel agency, OC Gallery Tesco).

Figure 2 Example of the construction of subjects of commercial suburbanization at former open space

Area OC Gallery Tesco 1991
Area OC Gallery Tesco 2016

On the other hand, Štúrova street is typical for higher density of family houses that do not offer much space for construction of new commercial areas. Hence, commercial activities were established into existing areas on both sides of the street. One of the significant consequences of use transformation of the area are changes from the original residential purpose into commercial function. As a result, residents move from peripheral parts of cities to other city districts. Eventually, they sell or rent their properties and move to nearby municipalities (e.g. stores Boel, installation and heating material Praktik, ironmongery Mikulášik or other commercial subjects). Commercial suburbanization process in the Štúrova street is characterized by transformation of area use of existing properties. Due to revitalization of abandoned and devastated areas, this transformation has a positive influence on the environment (Figure 3). Demolition of premises of former sugar factory and consequent construction of Merkury Market retail store represent a typical example for this process (Figure 3).
The development of commercial suburbanization in the peripheral parts of the city caused that the former function of the area was replaced by new commercial function. Mostly, logistics prevails. Areas of commercial suburbanization are e.g. areas of the former asbestos factory called Ferrenit, whose premises are currently used as logistic halls or halls for car repair services.

Based on the diachronic aspect, the prevalent sector in analysed district was wholesale and retail store along with repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles in 1998. They reached 56% of all commercial areas (Hagard: Hal, Kartel, AUTODRUKOS, s.r.o., Auto-Nitra-Peugeot, gas station, coal warehouses and two car services). Industrial production covered 33% of the commercial area represented by 6 commercial subjects: Ferrenit, Bramac, Nipek (today Penam), ICT Polysack, RST s.r.o., Služba VDI (Figure 4). Information services (SPS), communication services (6%) and water supply represent the least spread industries in the analysed district in 1998.

Development of commercial suburbanization was reflected in change of structure of the industry. The most dominant sector is wholesale and retail, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles characterized by an increase in commercial subjects from 8 subjects in 1998 to 86 subjects in 2016. Additionally, there
is a change in the industrial production. Establishing of new commercial subjects leads toward restructuring and streamlining of production. Moreover, decrease in unemployment is observed. Generally, the industrial structure in the observed area changes as new commercial subjects are established.

Based on the character of particular commercial subjects, car industry is dominant represented by repair and service of motor vehicles (13 commercial areas), sale of cars and light motor vehicles together with car rentals (16 commercial areas), transport and warehousing (9 commercial areas). Free greenfield areas were occupied mainly by large-area retail stores e.g. OC Gallery Tesco, Merkury Market. In addition, small retail stores and service providers are located in individual residential areas. Micro-enterprises were dominant in the structure of commercial subjects (50.6%) together with small enterprises (19.2%) in 2016. Medium-sized enterprises achieved just 9% of the total amount of commercial subjects. Large enterprises reached the 4.5% share of all commercial subjects within the studied district. 16.7% of commercial subject in Mlynárovce do not belong to any of the above mentioned classifications (Table 1).

**Table 1 Structure of commercial areas in Mlynárce based on the number of employees in 2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of employees</th>
<th>Commercial subjects</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>abs.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less than 10</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>50.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–49</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50–250</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250 and more</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unidentified</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>156</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: www.zisk.sk, own elaboration

**CONCLUSION**

Commercial suburbanization recorded a sharp increase of 138 areas in the Mlynárce district between the years 1998 and 2016. The increase in the number of commercial activities is the result of the very good geographical location, availability of infrastructure facilities as well as overall economic growth in the city of Nitra. The development of commercial areas in the studied area was affected also by undeveloped and inexpensive plots, sufficiency of workforce as well as availability of good infrastructure that connects Nitra with the capital city Bratislava. Commercial areas in the studied district are located along the 1st class road 65 (Bratislavská road) and 3rd class 1674 road (Štúrova street).

Commercial areas along Bratislavská road were localized in a number of mutually isolated commercial clusters. Commercial areas along the Štúrova street were localized in the linear row on both sides of the street. It was caused by different forms of built-up areas along these communications. On the one hand, extensive free plots as well as existing functionless industrial areas along Bratislavská road enable localization of several commercial subjects within the same plot resulting in building of clusters. On the other hand, Štúrova street is characterized by higher density of family houses that do not offer sufficient space for construction of new commercial areas. Therefore, there are commercial activities located into the existing areas on the both sides of the street. Revitalization of abandoned and devastated areas results into the functional change of area.

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