

Report

Industrial Location and Urban Areas

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During the recent years there have been great changes in the location of industrial activities. Everywhere the same phenomenon has been noticed: the departure of industry from towns and urbanized suburbs and, as a parallel, the implantation of transferred or newly-created establishments on sites in the outskirts of built-up areas, sometimes even in rural areas. In many countries this tendency has been encouraged by the existence of industrial zones and estates which are often developed and managed by local authorities. The principle of the Charter of Athens, i.e. the separation of functions and the zoning of built-up areas, has therefore turned out to be a true success as far as industry is concerned.

At the present time, however, this new distribution of production activities calls for careful consideration. Should absolutely all industrial concerns be located in specific places? Have we not gone from one extreme to the other, from urban disorder to the segregation of developed space? How and under what conditions is it possible to integrate unharmed industrial activities into the heart of the habitat?

The aim of this paper is to try to answer these questions, first by examining the causes and consequences of the recent de-urbanization of industrial activities and, then, by analysing the present nature of the problem.

I – The recent de-urbanization of industrial activities

A. Causes of de-urbanization

The many causes are due to both the firms and the local authorities and are therefore spontaneous and intentional.

In all, six factors become apparent:

- pressure by the land market;
- deterioration and maladjustment of available real estate;
- problems of access and transport;
- difficulties of proximity;
- the policy of local authorities;
- changes in the structure of industrial concerns (in particular, the possibility of separating production from the other activities).

Generally, the factors of expulsion dominate and are due, above all, to problems of space which exist in the place of origin. Factors of attraction are also partly responsible for motivating the choice of a new location, but the basic incentive for the latter is the desire or necessity to allow for urban space.

B. Consequences of de-urbanization

As far as towns and built-up areas are concerned, the transfer of jobs in industry to the outskirts has resulted in a de-industrialization of the urban network, a phenomenon which is often accompanied by a tertiarization of centers and by the multiplication of industrial waste land on the outskirts. Indeed, the search for cheap land often

leads to urbanization by leaps and bounds and to an anarchic growth of the outskirts which still further increase the consumption of the urbanized space.

As far as the population is concerned, one notes an increased migration of work, moves, and, in the center which has been re-appropriated for luxury activities, large social and economic changes in the local population.

As far as the firms are concerned, there are also a number of problems and, in particular, difficulties due to de-urbanization.

II – The present nature of the problem

A. Foundations

The present line of thought is based on two ideas:

- The co-existence of function is an essential factor of urban life;
- An integration of functions ensures a better-balanced distribution of the population.

B. Principles

The fundamental idea is the need to integrate all the functions on the condition however that mutually harmful effects be avoided. It is therefore necessary to broaden the set conception of zoning.

It is also essential to promote the renovation of the existing industrial network and to create a harmony between industrial buildings or districts and other buildings or districts.

C. Industries to be maintained or encouraged to move to urban areas

Four criteria must be established:

- small size and little ground requirement,
- few harmful effects,
- high degree of ability to fit in with urban activities,
- a high rate of female labor.

D. Conditions for the smooth integration of industry into the urban area

1) Elaboration of a new policy for the development of urban areas: Town planning is to be reconsidered not from the point of view of renovating only the center but with the intention of re-organizing and restructuring all the developed areas. Insofar as the causes of de-urbanization are, above all, due to problems of space the correctives and incentives to be proposed as a remedy to the evolution must be of the same kind. Industrial concerns which meet the previously given requirements must therefore receive help if they remain or are implanted in urban areas.

2) Systematic survey of all the spaces where a renovated secondary sector could be implanted:

The size of these spaces will vary according to the distance from the center. In the outskirts recovery and renovation of many disused sites are absolutely necessary.

3) Elaboration of new formulas especially for urban areas:

Three formulas must be promoted:

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- vertical industrial structures,
- individual buildings with “urbanized” frontages,
- small industrial estates.

Vertical structures are groups of superposed premises lacking distinction which accommodate light activities requiring a limited amount of space and having relatively few harmful effects.

Industrial edifices with “urbanized” frontages are buildings designed to blend with the architecture and the landscape of the zones of habitation which surround them. Like some other tertiary activities, these factories have their underground parking, in an interior courtyard, or/and on the roof; they can also consist of several floors.

Small industrial estates are small zones for light industry and tertiary activities (offices and warehouses). Their size could be between 2 and 10 squaremeters, but limited to no more than 20 squaremeters. These estates would be situated in places that are easy to reach and that have good transport services.

III—Conclusions

In order to end the unstructured development of industrial building and working class housing, many countries promoted a multi-

plication of industrial zones and estates in the outskirts of urban centers. At the same time the difficulties faced by industries implanted in the urban network resulted in the management of many companies leaving the towns and setting up their plants on these new sites.

There exists a widespread tendency to de-urbanize industry which is causing big changes in the heart of built-up areas – not always on the positive side. Consequently, a new policy is gradually being developed to aim at a better integration of industrial activities with urban areas.

Undoubtedly, industrial areas should be restricted to the outskirts for heavy industry with its harmful effects of space requirement. The present migration of many industrial concerns should be halted if a true re-organization of existing urban areas is desired.

In order to achieve this, town planning policies should be reviewed and certain formulas elaborated to enable a true integration of industrial functions with other functions.

The location of industrial activities, therefore, seems to have reached a new turning-point in its history. Careful consideration in all urban areas, whether they be new towns or other areas, is absolutely necessary to achieve a better organization of space, which is the ultimate aim of Applied Geography.