

DOCTORAL THESIS

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**Current transformations of historic textile industry complexes and their
impact on the identity of medium-sized post-industrial cities in the 21st
century**

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The subject of this PhD dissertation is focused on the contemporary transformation of historical complexes of the textile industry at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries and its meaning regarding the identity of a few, carefully selected medium-sized post-industrial cities in Poland. An important aspects of the research conducted in this thesis are development challenges and the evolution of post-industrial cities after the political transformation of 1989.

New opportunities were accompanied by large industrial crisis (that echoed especially hard on textile industry) and the lack of tools, which could enable effective adjustments of post-industrial cities to fit in with new and changing circumstances.

A thorough overview of the phenomenon is supported by in-depth analyses and case studies conducted for selected Polish post-industrial cities.

First part of the thesis contains theoretical background concerning the main issues arising from the subject and from the assumptions of the dissertation – the history of the textile industry in Poland, the transformations which the historic textile factory buildings have and are undergoing, as well as the concept of the city identity.

On this basis, the methodology of further research and analysis was developed.

As a result of a multi-stage delimitation (based on the criteria deriving from the thesis' subject), 5 post-industrial cities were selected as the main case studies of this dissertation.

The next stage of the research included detailed analysis of the existing textile buildings in Pabianice, Tomaszów Mazowiecki, Nowa Sól, Dzierżoniów and Bielawa.

The analyses covered a comprehensive range of aspects of the historical textile factory buildings - physical characteristics i.e. location, building typology, degree of preservation, transformation, as well as spatial and planning aspects. Subsequently, the analysed features were identified as elements of the city identity theory, placed in its structure and assessed regarding its meaning and value as parts of the actual city identity of each city.

As a result of these extensive analysis, a number of conclusions were drawn. Final observations constituting the outcome of the research were confronted with the initial hypothesis, such as: the type of transformation of the historic textile factories is one of the main factors influencing the place of post-industrial heritage in the city identity structure, the location of the factories, usually related to the type and size of its buildings is another feature of importance defining the identity of each city.

Additionally, several general observations were made, some of which were that the continuity of use of post-industrial building is crucial regarding their day-to-day maintenance and prospective adaptation as well as bottom-up initiatives regarding successful transformations of the former textile areas are becoming more and more frequent (and important) occurrences, simultaneously demonstrating the growing awareness of the value and role of post-industrial heritage in the identity of post-industrial cities.