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dr Aleksander Pabian^{ABCDEF}

Czestochowa University of Technology

Faculty of Management

ORCID 0000-0001-7385-6035

**CULTURAL AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS
OF REVITALIZATION DETERMINED
BY THE POTENTIAL OF THE CREATIVE
ENVIRONMENT. AN EXAMPLE
OF THE RAKÓW – CZĘSTOCHOWA DISTRICT**

**KULTUROWO-SPOŁECZNE IMPLIKACJE
REWITALIZACJI DETERMINOWANEJ POTENCJAŁEM
KREATYWNEGO ŚRODOWISKA. PRZYKŁAD
DZIELNICY RAKÓW CZĘSTOCHOWA**

Abstract: One of the contemporary trends in the development of Polish cities is revitalization leading to improved functionality, aesthetics and improved quality of life for residents. An example of a district where revitalization activities are currently undertaken is Raków in Częstochowa. After the political changes of the 20th century, this working-class district fell into social degradation, opening up a space for unemployment, poverty and pathologies. Activities related to the restoration of functional, aesthetic, architectural and, above all, socio-cultural order became a chance for its reconstruction. The article presents revitalization activities carried out in this area in terms of the concept of a creative environment, as well as the conditions affecting their effectiveness. The article is of a review nature. The basis of the research was a library and internet query, as well as a critical analysis of the literature, used as part of the desk research method. The author also refers to the results of conversations with the inhabitants of the district and people involved in revitalization. The results of this study may be useful in initiating and carrying out any revitalization activities in post-industrial areas of other Polish cities.

Keywords: revitalization, creative environment, Raków Częstochowa district, post-industrial culture, socio-cultural values

Streszczenie: Jednym ze współczesnych trendów rozwoju polskich miast jest rewitalizacja prowadząca do poprawy funkcjonalności, estetyki oraz poprawy jakości życia mieszkańców. Przykładem dzielnicy, w której podejmowane są działania rewitalizacyjne, jest Raków w Częstochowie. Po przemianach politycznych XX wieku ta robotnicza dzielnica popadła w degradację społeczną, otwierając przestrzeń dla bezrobocia, biedy i patologii. Szansą na jego odbudowę stały się działania związane z przywracaniem ładu funkcjonalnego, estetycznego, architektonicznego, a przede wszystkim społeczno-kulturowego. W artykule przedstawiono działania rewitalizacyjne prowadzone na tym terenie w aspekcie koncepcji kreatywnego środowiska, a także uwarunkowania wpływające na ich skuteczność. Artykuł ma charakter przeglądowy. Podstawą badań była kwerenda biblioteczna i internetowa, a także krytyczna analiza piśmiennictwa, zastosowana w ramach metody *desk research*. Autor odnosi się także do wniosków z rozmów przeprowadzonych z mieszkańcami dzielnicy oraz osobami zaangażowanymi w rewitalizację. Wyniki niniejszego badania mogą być przydatne przy inicjowaniu i prowadzeniu wszelkich działań rewitalizacyjnych na terenach przemysłowych innych miast Polski.

Słowa kluczowe: rewitalizacja, kreatywne środowisko, dzielnica Raków Częstochowa, kultura przemysłowa, wartości społeczno-kulturowe

Introduction

One of the contemporary trends in the development of Polish cities is revitalization. This concept should be understood as a comprehensive organizational and investment process, leading to the revival of degraded, neglected or dysfunctional areas, most often urban areas¹. It is intended to reverse unfavourable processes and

¹ J.J. Parysek, *Rewitalizacja jako problem i zadanie własne polskich samorządów lokalnych*, „Rozwój Regionalny i Polityka Regionalna” 2016, no. 33, p. 19.

lead to improve functionality, aesthetics and improve quality of life for residents. An example of a district where revitalization activities are carried out is Raków in the city of Częstochowa. It was established after 1950 on the basis of the metallurgical plant of Huta Częstochowa. However, the negative phenomena related to the restructuring of the industry (including long-term unemployment) became visible in this area after the political changes of the 20th century². The district fell into social degradation, opening up not only for unemployment but also poverty and pathologies. Actions related to restoring functional, aesthetic, urban and architectural order, and above all social and cultural order, focused on local development, became a chance for its revival.

The goal of the study is to present the methods and revitalization activities carried out in this district in the context of using the potential of the creative environment, as well as the conditions affecting their effectiveness. The article is of a review nature. The basis of the research was a library and internet query, as well as a critical analysis of the literature, used as part of the desk research method. The author also refers to the results of conversation with the inhabitants of the district and people involved in revitalization. The results of this study may be useful in initiating and carrying out any revitalization activities in post-industrial areas of another Polish cities.

The creative environment in the light of terminological findings

Creativity (from Latin *creatus* meaning to be able to prepare something new) is a mental process involving the emergence of new ideas, concepts or new associations, links with already existing ideas and concepts. Creative thinking is thinking leading to original and appropriate solutions. An alternative, more everyday definition of creativity is simply the ability to create something new³. Creativity can support the processes of creating new ideas, development paths based on an original, inventive way of thinking. It is a kind of unifier connecting the world of science, entrepreneurship and art, which contributes to socio-economic development and opens it to new horizons, which are a response to changes taking place in the surrounding world⁴.

Researchers agree that creativity is, i.e. the basis for maintaining the potential and urban, economic, social and cultural development. A. Zaborska-Jagiello, based on the concept of developing the creative economy and creative industries by John Howkins and Richard Caves, as well as attracting and retaining Richard Florida's

² Autorzy Agencji Rozwoju Regionalnego w Częstochowie S.A., *Program Rewitalizacji dla Miasta Częstochowy na lata 2017-2023*, Agencji Rozwoju Regionalnego w Częstochowie S.A., Częstochowa 2022, p. 37.

³ K. Jaśkiewicz, *Kreatywność, rozwój inteligencji emocjonalnej*, https://www.am.szczecin.pl/themes/user/site/am/assets/img/pages/Skrypt_Kreatywnosc_rozwoj_inteligencji_emocjonalnej.pdf [access: 15.12.2022].

⁴ A. Raszkowski, *Rola kreatywności w funkcjonowaniu organizacji usługowych*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego. Problemy Zarządzania, Finansów i Marketingu” 2015, no. 850, p. 24.

Creative Class, as well as planning the Creative City according to Charles Landry, highlighted the role of revitalization carried out from the perspective of the assumptions of the creative environment, which “is based on creative resources”⁵. The creative environment is characterized by the following four components:

- activity (so-called: creative industries),
- people (creative individuals),
- place (space of creativity),
- infrastructure (soft and tough).

The researcher emphasizes that the term creative industry does not refer to the value of cultural and art goods, but means the way of managing, multiplying and distributing these goods and services. Its essence is, in short, the creation of wealth and employment through the production and use of intellectual property rights. Therefore, in the creative industry, creative individuals work together, consisting of super-creative individualists, i.e. researchers, explorers, artists, engineers, designers and, so-called: Creative Professionals, i.e. representatives of various fields, including: law, education, finance, health care. On the other hand, spaces of creativity are places that attract creative human resources where „cultural goods are produced, consumed and displayed”⁶. The infrastructure, which is the last component of the creative environment, is created by a package of amenities and benefits available in cities. In this context, it constitutes (both privately and state- owned), the basic, physical equipment necessary for the functioning of the urban community⁷. Soft infrastructure is distinguished here, i.e. instruments facilitating the implementation of the idea of social welfare, such as: projects, strategies and programs of assistance and financing as well as cooperation platforms and the so-called: hard infrastructure, providing the basis for an efficient city, i.e. properly oriented institutions, organizations, social and cultural institutions focused on providing support to creative people and companies. Only such a comprehensive approach to the revitalization of districts that require support can ensure success. An example of this is the revitalization of the Raków Częstochowa district discussed in the article.

The formation of the Raków metallurgical colony as a space for economic, cultural and social life

Even in the late 1880s, the authors of the Geographical Dictionary of the Kingdom of Poland and other Slavic Countries wrote under the entry Raków that it was a “forest settlement and wilderness”, located in the district of Częstochowa and in the

⁵ A. Zaborska-Jagiello, *Creative Enviroment as the Revitalization Catalyst*, “Technical Transactions” 2012, no. 12, p. 78.

⁶ Ibidem, p. 80.

⁷ K. Luger, *Contributions to economics*, Physica-Verlag, Heidelberg 2008, p. 25.

parish of Mstów⁸. At that time, it was a separate town, not very numerous in terms of population and poorly developed. However, due to its specific location in the middle of the ore-bearing area, 120 km long and 8-10 km wide, it soon began to develop rapidly in economic and demographic terms⁹. This was due to the shares of the industrialist Bernard Hantke, who conceived the idea of opening a metal products factory and building a steelworks in this place¹⁰. Factors conducive to undertake this decision were the presence of iron ore deposits in the area, the proximity of a coal-field, the existence of the Warsaw-Vienna railway line as well as relatively low prices of land, which, according to data from 1903: “compared to prices in such centres as Łódź and Sosnowiec had a ratio of 1 to 4 and 1 to 2”¹¹. Industrial expansion was also aided by the availability of cheap, though untrained, labour. Researchers point out that until the end of the 19th century, the development of industry did not require the employment of a large number of specialists. They were not needed because “the ease of learning of production techniques by very low-skilled workers, the marginal exploitation of labour and the consequent low cost of its reproduction, all reduced the capital costs of industrialization, which was achieved primarily at the expense of the exploitation of human labour”¹².

The year 1896 turned out to be a breakthrough for the industrialization of Raków, when the first tapping of iron from the blast furnace was carried out, which was synonymous with the launch of the Częstochowa steelworks, then also referred to as: “Raków” or “B. Hanke”. At that time, it was the second largest steelworks in the Kingdom of Poland, after “Huta Bankowa” in Dąbrowa Górnicza¹³. Nearby iron ore mines, such as “Józef” and “Konopiska” in the village of Jastrząb, and the “Elli” mine located near the settlement of Gnaszyn (now a district of Częstochowa) worked for its needs. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Raków steelworks

⁸ B. Chlebowski, W. Walewski, *Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów słowiańskich*, Warszawa 1888, p. 507.

⁹ J. Braun, *Częstochowa. Rozwój urbanistyczny i architektoniczny*, Wydawnictwo Arkady, Częstochowa 1959, p. 50.

¹⁰ Bernard Hantke (1826-1900), born in Warsaw, began his career as an industrialist by managing a farm in Drybus near Warsaw. In the years 1860-1870 he was a co-founder of the Rephan and Schaltze agricultural machinery factory in Warsaw. Later, he owned a nail factory in Warsaw, which in 1882 was transformed into a joint-stock company named: „Towarzystwo Akcyjne Zakładów Metalowych B. Hantke w Warszawie”. There were produced, among others: nails, wire, shovels, chains, tools and parts for agricultural machinery. Its branches were located in Russia (Metal Products Factory in Yekaterinoslav and Metallurgical Plant in Saratov). See more on this topic: F. Sobalski, *Przemysł częstochowski (1882-1914)*, Muzeum Częstochowskie, Częstochowa 2009, p. 125-127.

¹¹ F. Sobalski, *Wpływ Kolei Warszawsko-Wiedeńskiej na rozwój miasta Częstochowy do I wojny światowej*, [in:] M. Antoniewicz (ed.), *Droga Żelazna Warszawsko-Wiedeńska. 150 lat tradycji kolejnictwa w regionie częstochowskim. Materiały z Konferencji zorganizowanej 3 grudnia 1996 roku w Częstochowie*, Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna w Częstochowie, Częstochowa 1998, p. 35.

¹² B. Jałowiecki, M. Szczepański, *Miasto i przestrzeń w perspektywie socjologicznej*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 2002, p. 102

¹³ F. Sobalski, *Przemysł częstochowski (1882-1914)...*, p. 123.

boasted two blast furnaces, five hearth furnaces and a rolling mill. The cubic capacity of the second blast furnace, put into operation in 1901, was 425 m³, which means that “it was the largest and most modern facility of this kind in Poland at that time”¹⁴. From 1899, the number of employees in the steelworks increased systematically and the value of production increased, reaching its apogee in 1913, when the production of iron, compared to 1900, increased 4 times (114,629 tons), of steel 7 times (87 486 tons) and iron products 8 times (73,569 tons)¹⁵.

As a result of the operation of the steelworks, the rural landscape of Raków was transformed into a factory settlement, spatially organized in accordance with the rule of functionality in relation to the workplace. An integrated production and consumption space has been created, devoid of typical urban features. In Raków, the center was the steelworks (production space with the dominant role of the owner), to which all other types of space were subordinated. Between the years 1902-1903, in accordance with the principle of spatial functionality, workers' houses made of red brick were built in front of the steelworks, arranged in two rows (currently B. Limanowskiego Street) and houses for the engineering staff (currently W. Łukasińskiego Street). The latter had a higher standard. They were the only buildings with sewage system not only in Raków, but also in Częstochowa, which was at the time neighboring Raków.

The metallurgical colony became the main place of cultural and social life. It was there, that people met on important occasions, e.g. reports from cycling races were broadcasted through the megaphones of the radio station of the steelworks and were listened to. A feature of this local community was a strong social bond, resulting from the similarity of life experiences, marked by the ethos of work and profession, as well as the spirit of responsibility, cooperation and unity in sharing fate. The same living environment and stable work created the basis for mutual integration. Everyday life was subordinated to the requirements of the operation of the steelworks, and the work itself became a superior value that had to be respected.

The lifestyle of steelworkers and their families was homogeneous in terms of everyday existence, adapted to the requirements of work in the steelworks¹⁶. A lot of strength and energy was devoted to professional matters that overlapped with the private sphere. The working-class community of old Raków was characterized by order expressed in the acceptance of norms and values set by customs, tradition, morality and law. The steelworkers showed care for maintaining good interpersonal relations, neighbourly ties and social contacts. They all knew each other,

¹⁴ F. Sobalski, *Wpływ Kolei Warszawsko-Wiedeńskiej...*, p. 37.

¹⁵ F. Sobalski, *Przemysł częstochowski (1882-1914)...*, p. 133-134.

¹⁶ S. Domagalska-Wójcik, *Wychowanie dzieci w rodzinie robotniczej w dzielnicy Raków – wczoraj i dziś*, [in:] K. Rędziański (ed.), *Człowiek – Edukacja – Kultura*, Akademia im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie, Częstochowa 2006, p. 232.

worked together, met at work and in private. This situation persisted even after the settlement of Raków was incorporated into Częstochowa (April 1, 1928) and after the end of World War, the IIInd.

After World War II, steelworks was reactivated and nationalized under the patronage of Bolesław Bierut. As part of the six-year plan, it was expanded and modernized, as a result of which it grew into an important metallurgical plant in Poland. At that time, it was the largest after “Lenin” steelworks in Krakow. The district itself was also expanded. In 1949, the Raków I housing estate was built, then in the 1950s - Raków II, and in the 1980s – the large „Raków Zachód” housing complex. Along the so-called: Aleja Pokoju, rows of houses in the socialist realist style were erected¹⁷. Later, everything was built from a so-called: large slab. The concept of building a new communication system in the south-north direction was also undertaken, the axis of which was the Raków-Tysiąclecie thoroughfare in Częstochowa, connected by the only tram line in the city.

Work in the steelworks was taken up not only by qualified workers, coming from families with metallurgical traditions, but also by inhabitants of the village, trained for the profession. The steelworks offered good wages, social assistance and the possibility of finding a flat. The influx of rural population had to change the face of the city itself, leading to some extent to its ruralization. Researchers emphasize that in the post-war period many Polish cities were subject to this process¹⁸.

Revitalization of the Raków district in the context of the idea of a creative environment

Until the period of recapitalism of the Third Polish Republic, “the feature of the Częstochowa industrial center was the dominance of the iron metallurgy branch in the structure of its industry (first place)”¹⁹. After the political changes of the 1990s, the financial problems of “Częstochowa steelworks” became intensified. In 2005, the Ukrainian Industrial Union of Donbass (ISD) and its twelve subsidiaries became its owner. In 2010, another transformation of the shareholding structure was carried out, as a result of which 51% of the shares were allocated to Russia. Restructuring resulted in employment restrictions, which directly translated into

¹⁷ In 1955, during the expansion of the viaduct and the tram route at “Aleja Pokoju” route, a cemetery of the Lusatian culture from the early Iron Age (750-600 BC) was discovered. It became the basis for creating an archaeological reserve in this place.

¹⁸ L. Michałowski, *Utracona świadomość, czyli o mieście garść refleksji*, [in:] G. Gorzelak, M. S. Szczepański (ed.), *Człowiek – miasto – region. Związki i interakcje. Księga Jubileuszowa Profesora Bohdana Jałowieckiego*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Schola, Warszawa 2009, p. 90.

¹⁹ S. Podczarski, *Kierunki przemian strukturalnych przemysłu Częstochowy*, [in:] M. Batorek, A. Chojnowski, A. Misiak, J. Sętowski (ed.), *Almanach Częstochowy*, Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Częstochowy, Częstochowa 1996, p. 123.

a decline in the standard of living of the inhabitants of Raków, the regression of the district itself and the creation of poverty enclaves in it.

According to the report of the Local Community Organization Team, in 2010 in the Raków district, 42% of its inhabitants were unemployed²⁰. Compared to other districts of the city, the largest number of people used social assistance here, as well as the largest number of children were placed in care and educational institutions. The steelworks ceased to take care of the buildings of the former colony and handed over the entire housing stock to the city administration. The tenants have also changed. The oldest ones died, others (especially the young ones) moved to new blocks, and still others left in search of work. A small group of steelworkers remained, some of them infirm and without financial resources to improve their living conditions. Families with rent debts, including people with convictions, began to be relocated from all over the city to dilapidated, neglected and unrenovated tenement houses with bathrooms shared by many apartments. This place became to a large extent an enclave of social pathology, where interventions of the police and city guards were necessary. The historically oldest housing structure of Raków began to deteriorate and took on the features of a crisis area. The district's problems, determined by the deteriorating economic and social situation, had an impact on its common perception by the residents of Częstochowa as the most dangerous in the city.

In order to improve the image of the Rakow district and meet the expectations of the disillusioned residents, a comprehensive revitalization program was implemented, coordinated by the local state administration. Its aim was socio-economic development and increase in tourist and cultural potential of the area covered by the action plan. The Urban Revitalization Program was developed by the Częstochowa City Hall and updated by the Institute of Ecology of Industrial Areas in Katowice. It was implemented in the urban and spatial, economic and socio-cultural aspects. As the authors of the plans emphasize, subordinating infrastructural activities to social goals has become a priority. This process activated the local community, which also had to be creative in order to improve living conditions. The revitalization process was preceded by meetings with residents of the entire district who were willing to cooperate. They were undertaken under the slogan: "Future City Game". The residents themselves had to propose solutions that would be satisfactory for them and would help change the face of their district for the better. It was also about eliminating the bad stereotype of a poor and dangerous district. Meetings with residents were held, surveys were conducted in order to identify needs.

²⁰ P. Kidawa, J. Baron, *Mapa zasobów i potrzeb dla dzielnicy Raków ul. Limanowskiego 47 i 49. „Limanowskiego Reaktywacja”*, Częstochowa 2010, p. 109.

As a result of the actions taken by creative individualists and creative professionals, including leaders and residents of the district, the new arrangement of Raków's public space, implemented mainly by improving its aesthetics and functionality, has become a visible, tangible effect of revitalization activities. Multi-family buildings located on the main street - Aleja Pokoju - were renovated. A coherent colour design was developed for them, and care was taken to recreate the architectural detail (hidden under a layer of insulation), appropriate for the originally designed buildings. Residents emphasize that the general appearance of streets, squares and squares has also improved, which have been tidied up and supplemented with greenery.

More important than the visual ones, however, were the revitalization effects aimed at changing the mentality of the district's inhabitants. In this aspect, a lot of attention was paid to people living in working-class tenement houses of the former factory colony at Limanowskiego Street, as this place was particularly hard hit by the recession. In this aspect, the key to the success of the revitalization process turned out to be the commitment and genuine willingness to help on the part of local community organizers (this function was performed, among others, by employees of the Municipal Social Welfare Centre). They undertook numerous activities related to organizing the local community and counteracting the phenomenon of social exclusion. Developed a project on the creation and development of standards for social assistance and integration services. They made an environmental diagnosis, identified the needs of the territorial community by developing a map of resources and needs and in conclusion indicated the possibilities of making changes in the context of the history of the district and current events. The main standards they adopted in their work was the paradigm shift from "working for" to "working with, and by people", as well as moving from a client to a partner perspective. As the interlocutor explained, it was about organizing, supporting, helping, initiating activities, and above all, building a partnership for local activity, which was created here for Raków and this partnership works well. A necessary element of cooperation was the identification of potential leaders among the inhabitants of the district, i.e. people who were ready to actively engage in the revitalization process. Contact with leaders and cooperation with various institutions (partners of cooperation) contributed to a better implementation of the undertaken tasks, e.g. in the field of organizing outdoor events, educational and integration picnics or sports activities. Partners in the cooperation were science and culture institutions, non-governmental organizations and associations, such as: Częstochowa St. Brother Albert Aid Organization, Częstochowa branch of DR Clown Foundation, Association for children: "Let's Help Together", Public Primary School No. 20 as well as many others.

MOPS employees emphasize that together with the residents of the old factory colony, they also undertook specific physical work in order to improve the

appearance of the buildings and their surroundings (cleaning campaigns, development and extension of yards, planting shrubs and trees, hardening sidewalks, construction of a playground for children and a beach football pitch, etc.). As part of the local activity program, they conducted training and information programs that allowed many people to acquire new competences. They helped those interested in changing their profession in choosing the right courses. For children and teenagers organized the Environmental Club "Aleja Pokoju 13", where volunteers conduct cognitive and integrating activities (art, technical, humanities) to this day.

Their actions have brought measurable results. It should be emphasized that revitalization could not take place without social readiness for changes and without the involvement of the local community. Social activity was reflected in initiatives undertaken also outside strictly understood revitalization. For example, twice on behalf of the Association for the Development of the City of Częstochowa "Progresja", the district festival was organized under the name "Days of Raków". As part of it, various cultural events and exhibitions were held, such as a historical exhibition presenting the history of the RKS Raków football club. The Raków district has also become a place of the currently fashionable city games, coordinated by the Youth Volunteering, operating at the "Agape" association.

Conclusion

Revitalization processes in Raków, have become changing this district from unattractive place into space with new, more attractive face. The research, conducted in the area of the Raków district of Częstochowa, predisposes to the formulation of the following final conclusions:

- Revitalization is a process of bringing degraded areas out of crisis, conducted in a comprehensive manner, through integrated activities for the benefit of the local community, space and economy.
- Revitalization is a chance to revive post-industrial areas that have lost their original functions. It is focused on local development and achieving permanent social change in the form of creating and rebuilding community ties. It involves restoring the functional, aesthetic, urban, architectural, and above all, social order in the district.
- In the revitalization process, cooperation of various organizations and creation of cooperation network within the concept of a creative environment is needed.
- In the area affected by the crisis, the most important factor in the process of change is the social factor, i.e. individual and collective creativity of the inhabitants. It is necessary to change the attitudes of the local community, which must be done at the consciousness and mental level. Social workers' genuine willingness to help is indispensable, as they mobilize the local community to act with their own commitment (transition from helping to self-help).

- In the process of change, a comprehensive approach is important that uses the assumptions of the creative environment, involving the creative activity of people (i.e. creative individuals), space for creativity as well as hard and soft infrastructure.

- The role of creative leaders, recruited from local residents, these who are able to infect others with their example, is very important. However, they must be convinced that the undertaken actions will bring measurable social and cultural benefits to the local community.

Revitalization of Raków, despite the first successes, is not a closed process. Its implementation is a complex, difficult and costly problem, as indicated by e.g. previous experience. The district requires further multithreaded and comprehensive activities, which can only be carried out with the acceptance, initiative and support of the local community. The revitalization activities carried out so far confirm the need to conduct them not only in the spatial and urbanization, economic and legal dimensions, but above all in the aspect of cultural activation of the local community.

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Author's resume:

Aleksander Pabian – assistant professor at the Department of Logistics at the Częstochowa University of Technology, Faculty of Management. He is also a member of the Organization and Management Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Katowice. Author and co-author of three scientific monographs and over 70 scientific articles published in Poland and abroad, including in the central scoring journals of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. Co-organizer and participant of numerous international conferences, organized both in Poland and abroad.

Nota o Autorze:

Aleksander Pabian – adiunkt w Katedrze Logistyki Wydziału Zarządzania Politechniki Częstochowskiej. Członek Komisji Organizacji i Zarządzania oddziału PAN w Katowicach. Autor i współautor trzech monografii naukowych oraz ponad 70 artykułów naukowych, opublikowanych w Polsce i za granicą, w tym w głównych pismach punktowanych Ministerstwa Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego. Współorganizator i uczestnik licznych międzynarodowych konferencji, organizowanych zarówno w kraju, jak i poza nim.

Contact/Kontakt:

Dr Aleksander Pabian
Politechnika Częstochowska
Wydział Zarządzania
ul. Dąbrowskiego 69
42-201 Częstochowa
e-mail: aleksander.pabian@hotmail.com